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North America 1994

Alaska

The most remarkable climbs done in Alaska in 1994 were two new ascents on the N buttress of Mt Hunter (4441m). This very difficult 1200m high buttress has for some years attracted climbers and had three routes on it, the most prized being the 1981 *Moonflower Buttress*. In 1994, Bill Belcourt and Randy Rackliff made this route's fourth ascent and two other strong parties failed.

In early May, Marc Twight and Scott Backes climbed six pitches on a route to the left of the Moonflower route, but backed off, feeling it was not appropriate for their speed-dependent style. At 1am on 15 May, they started up a line to the right of the Moonflower route. They climbed through four difficult rock bands and up ice as steep as 90° until finally at 6am on May 17 they surmounted the buttress and started up the NE ridge, which leads to the summit. They called their route *Deprivation.* The other new route, *Wall of Shadows*, was climbed by Michael Kennedy and Greg Child. It lies to the left of the Moonflower Buttress and to the right of the 1984 French route. This pair climbed in a more conventional fashion and spent two days fixing six ropes. The route follows ice runnels linked by serious rock pitches. On 25 May, Kennedy and Child set out with ten days' food and fuel. The climbing here was extremely hard; after the third bivouac, it took Child a whole day to climb two A4 pitches.

On **Mt McKinley (Denali)** Mark Aspery, Ron Bauer, Marcus Brown, Tahoe Rowland, Mike Vanderbeck and Tom Whalen made the first ascent of the entire 12-mile-long S buttress. Austrian Andreas Orgler and a companion climbed the W faces of **Eyetooth** and **Sugartooth** above the Ruth gorge. Jeff Apple Benowitz and Michael Litzow made the first ascent of the N ridge of **Mather**.

New routes were also climbed on **Stalagmite Spire**, **Flattop**, **Nevermore (Kichatna Spires)**, **Mount Torbert (3479m) (Tordrillo Mountains)** and **Burkett** (SE Alaska).

Canada

There was much activity on Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic, in particular on the North Tower of Asgard, where Noel Craine, Paul Pritchard, Steve Quinlan and Jordi Tosas climbed *Hyperborea* (*see 'Hammering the Anvil', pages 47-51*).

A second remarkable ascent, made by Americans Chris Breemer and Brad Jarrett, was named *Valkyrie*. This line ascended the N face. The pair had only two days of really good weather, but persisted despite the extreme difficulties and reached the top in late July. A Swiss team attempted the W face between the two previously mentioned ascents, reaching halfway in miserable weather. Germans also made some fine new routes, in particular one they called *13 Pieces of Candy* which lies behind **Mt Breidablik**. Canadians Ben Webster, Claude Berube and François-Guy Thirvèrge climbed the SW face and ridge of **Mt Thor**.

Canadians were busy making new routes in **Yukon Territory.** Graham Rowbotham, Tony Hunter, Bob Koen and New Zealander Andrew Scrase climbed the E peak of **McArthur Peak (4308m)** by the S face. A new route on the NE face of **Pinnacle Peak (3714m)** was made by David Scott, Grant Streatham, Mark Austin and Mike Dare. John Chilton, Rich Prokaska and Jim Condon made the first ascent of **Atlantic Peak (4879m)**, which lies close to **Lucania.**

In the **Logan Mountains** of the North West Territories, Kurt Smith and Scott Cosgrove made the fourth ascent of **Proboscis**, by a hard new route on the SE face. Farther south, in late August, Greg Child, Greg Collum and Steve Maseoli climbed a long new route on **Mt Combatant** in the **Coast Range** of British Columbia. At the end of July, Gray Thompson, Steve Sheriff and Jon Turk made the first ascent of the W face of **Little Snowpatch Spire** in the **Bugaboos.** This seems to have been only the second ascent of the peak.

Continental United States

In **Yosemite** the highlight was Lynn Hill's 23-hour free ascent of the *Nose* of **El Capitan** on 19-20 September, accompanied by Steve Sutton. Scott Franklin and Steve Schneider made a 13-hour free climb, the first, of the 23-pitch regular NW face of Half Dome.

On the *Muir Wall* Kurt Smith and Scott Cosgrove were cited by the Park Service for having used a power drill to place belay anchors in a Wilderness area after climbing 31 pitches of the 34 pitches free and then aiding to the top.

In the **SW Deserts**, Cameron Burns and Luke Laeser climbed a new route on the 500m E face of **Shiprock**. Climbing there is illegal except when permission is given by the Navajos. This was done and the pair spent many hours picking up tourist trash as a token of thanks.

Jeff Lowe has developed the art of ice climbing to a fine point. His ascent of *Octopussy* near Vail, Colorado was accomplished with the use of possibly the most advanced ice technique yet seen.