

sif in north-central Nepal, a landslide caused by constant rains buried a cluster of houses and lodges, and six foreign trekkers — a German, an Irish woman, a Brit and three Canadians, plus local residents — also died.

As soon as the dimension of the November disaster was realized in Kathmandu, the Nepalese government set up a search and evacuation task force, and helicopters were sent into the northeastern quarter of Nepal daily from November 11 to find and airlift to safety everyone who needed help because of the very deep snow or landslides in Khumbu, the basecamp areas of Manaslu, Makalu and Kangchenjunga, the Langtang Valley and Manang. Within about a week, 541 people, including 250 foreign nationals, were evacuated to safer places. No mountaineering expedition members were amongst the evacuees, but the climbing season had come to an abrupt and dramatic end.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

PAKISTAN

K2, Abruzzi Ridge. It was reported that Ronald Naar (Netherlands) led the first Dutch expedition to K2. Their attempt was successful, and involved around 3000 meters of fixed rope. Summitters were Ronald Naar, Hans Van Gerd Mulen, Rajab Shah (Pakistan), Mehrban Shah (Pakistan), and Alan Hinkes (U.K.). (*High Mountain Sports* 157)

K2, Northwest Ridge Attempt. Matt Culberson, Lyle Dean, Larry Hall, Ron Johnson, Dr. Allen McPherson, Jay Shotwell and I arrived in Base Camp on June 11. We hoped to climb K2 by the unrepeatable Northwest Ridge, first climbed by Pierre Beghin and Christophe Profit in 1991 (*AAJ* 1992). This route had not been tried by Americans since 1975. Advanced Base Camp was occupied at 5200 meters on the Savoy glacier on June 16 with the help of six ABC porters. Camp I was placed at 6000 meters with the aid of skis and sleds, in the protection of serac wall, by June 27 after a spell of bad weather. After fixing for five days on a direct access route of excellent mixed terrain that by-passed the American Towers, Camp II at 7000 meters was placed on the northwest ridge proper on July 3. Camp II-A was reached on July 5 and placed on top of the leftover 1991 French camp on a large protected snow dome. Larry Hall sustained two broken ribs and a wrenched shoulder from falling rock while moving up to Camp II to relieve Lyle and me. Alan helped him to the bottom of the fixed ropes and the following day Lyle and I helped Larry reach Base Camp. Camp III was reached after easy to moderate snow and rock on July 17 as another two-day storm started. We were hampered all summer by two- to three-day storms and

major wind. The temperatures also seemed higher than normal, causing an increase in rockfall. It was decided that Lyle and I would be the first summit team. We left Base Camp early on July 17. All members were in Camp I; Jay and Alan went down to rest in Base Camp, while Matt and Ron would help Lyle and me move up to Camp III. We reached Camp II-A on July 20 and Ron turned back due to an increasing problem with severe headaches, even though he had been to Camp II earlier. It started snowing that night and stormed for six days. Unfortunately Camp II-A was very exposed to the wind. Radio contact was lost with the lower camps because of an electrical storm, and use of the radios resulted in electrical shocks. We sustained average winds of 55 mph for this period. On July 27, as the storm was breaking up, we attempted to go down, but could not find the fixed lines due to severe snow loading. On July 28 we decided to carry to Camp III and retrieve extra rope to use for an alternate route back to Camp II. Matt, being wasted from the storm and two weeks in a row at 7000 meters, decided he should go down. We fixed ropes down as close as we could to Camp II and Matt descended safely on very precarious slopes. Lyle and I moved up to Camp III on July 30, only to find that the ravens had eaten our cache. Apparently there was so much snow in the valley that the birds were forced to forage on the upper wind-blown slopes. We radioed down to Jay and Alan, who were on their way up now to attempt the summit, to bring more food. On August 2 the four of us moved to Camp IV which was placed on the north ridge where the two ridges merge at 7800 meters. The upper slopes looked wind-blown and the weather was fine. The next morning we awoke to increasing winds and a large lenticular cloud above our camp. Lyle, Alan and Jay decided to try for the summit in hopes that the clouds would blow off. They reached 8100 meters before turning back in deteriorating weather. That night the storm started for real and snowed off and on for four days. Our retreat was hampered by avalanches and deep snow, but we managed to reach Camp I on August 5. We were helped down by Matt and Ron who had been cleaning up the lower mountain. The Northwest Ridge is a very long route, but offers some very good climbing, safe camps and is free from the crowds.

JOHN CULBERSON

K2, Ascent and Tragedy. In late May, the American team of Rob Slater, Scott Johnston, Jack Roberts, Richard Celsi and Michael Toubbeh arrived in Pakistan and proceeded via the Karakoram highway to Skardu and then on to K2 Base Camp. The remainder of the climbing team, which included Kevin Cooney and British climbers Alison Hargreaves and Alan Hinks, arrived in Islamabad June 12. The first group established an Advanced Base Camp at the start of the Abruzzi Ridge and Camp 1 at 20,000 feet by the time