

04/29

MEF REPORT 2004**By Dr M.E.Monasterio****Name of Expedition:** ILLAMPU/ ANCOHUMA "WIPHALA EXPEDITION".**MEF Reference:** 04/29**Country/ Area:** Bolivia, Northern Cordillera Real (Eastern and Western Aspects)**Expedition Members**

1. Dr M.E. Monasterio (Bolivia/ NZ and expedition leader).
2. Mike Brown (NZ)

Leaders Name: M.E.Monasterio**Address:** 122a Centaurus Rd, Huntsbury, Christchurch 8002, New Zealand.**Home Tel:** (00643) 3376402 **Work Tel:** (00643) 3391148**Email Address:** orko.MEM@xtra.co.nz**Objective of Expedition:**

First ascent of Northeast Pillar of Illampu.

First ascent of Northeast Pillar of Ancohuma.

First ascent of Pico Emma Maria, East butress.

Expedition Dates:July 15th to August 15th 2004.**Itinerary:**

1. July 15th Christchurch, NZ to La Paz, Bolivia (via Buenos Aires, Argentina)
2. July 17th -20th initial acclimatization and shopping in La Paz (alt. 3850m).
3. July 20th travel by bus to the town of Sorata (Northern Cordillera Real, 154 Km northeast of La Paz).
4. July 21st and 22nd trek to high Camp of Pt. 5573m (DAV Map) with the help of mules and two local porters.
5. July 23rd and 24th New Route on Pt. 5573m, later named "Pico Wiphala".
6. July 25th descent back to Sorata with two porters.
7. July 26th and 27th rest.
8. July 28th travel by jeep to village of Coco on eastern aspect of northern Cordillera Real (6 hrs) and ascend to low camp, c4400m next to Cocooyo- Jahuira River.
9. July 29th porter equipment to high camp, c5400m on eastern glaciers of Illampu/ Pico del Norte Massif.
10. July 30th forced rest day due to stormy weather.
11. July 31st ascent to high camp.
12. August 1st attempt on unclimbed southeast ridge of Pico del Norte. Successful ascent of South Face on Gorra de Hielo.
13. August 2nd rest day in c5400m.
14. August 3rd successful first ascent of Aguja Yacuma.
15. August 4th descent to c4400m.
16. August 5th rest day.
17. August 6th ascent to high camp, c5000m Pico Emma Maria.
18. August 7th successful first ascent of Southeast Face on Pico Emma Maria.
19. August 8th descent to c4400m, walk out with porters to Coco and jeep back to Sorata.
20. August 9th and 10th rest due to Mike Brown affected by stomach infection
21. August 11th ascent to camp c4450m, Laguna Chillata western aspect of northern Cordillera Real.
22. August 12th attempt on unclimbed peak Pt 6070m western subsidiary peak of Ancohuma abandoned due to ongoing illness of M. Brown. Descent with porters to Sorata.
23. August 13th travel back to La Paz.
24. August 15th expedition concluded.



Introduction to Expedition

2004 was a very dry year with the Bolivian Andes experiencing little precipitation during the monsoon months. As a consequence the big mixed ice/rock walls were quite bare, exposed to rockfall and often threatened by unstable seracs. The weather however, was very stable. The extremely dry conditions made the proposed routes on Illampu and Anochuma unattainable. Frequent rockfall, unstable summit ridge seracs and very poor quality ice made conditions prohibitively hazardous. Whipala expedition members reached the foot of the Northeast Pillar of Illampu, but did not venture on route due to serious objective risk factors. The expedition therefore concentrated on other impressive peaks in the region. All ascents were on unclimbed routes.

All routes were accessed from the town of Sorata, 154km northeast of the city of La Paz. Transport to Sorata was by regular local bus transport from the "Cementerio" region in La Paz.

Route Descriptions:

1. Pt. 5573m- Pico Wiphala

Access to Route: From the town of Sorata it took two days to reach a high camp at c4700m. Mule drivers (2) and porters (3) assisted with transport. Base camp is gained by ascending along local trails along San Cristobal and Lakathiya Rivers to the abandoned Titisani Mine (day 1) and then traversing south along moraine directly beneath the Illampu and Anochuma massifs to the foot of the route.

Route: Monasterio and Brown acclimatized by climbing a new route on the subsidiary peak on the Western aspect of the Illampu-Ancochuma Massif, south of the Laguna Glaciar Base Camp. DAV Map Pt. 5573m has had one previous ascent, via the long Southwest Ridge, *Rebeldia de los Condores* (Enz/Rauch, reported in MountainInfo July 1999). On July 23rd at 6 am, travelling light without bivouac equipment and with only two liters of water, we set off and reached the base of the wall two hours later. The route started at a point approximately 400m North of the Enz/Rauch route and ascended directly up the West face. The line initially ascended on the left-hand (North) wall of an obvious gully. After the first pitch (60m), we were forced back into the gully, simul climbing for two hundred meters and then once again ascending the line of least resistance on the face to the left (North) of the gully. By evening we had climbed a total of 14 pitches and still not within sight of the summit were forced to endure hypothermia and sit out the night in temperatures down to - 20C. Mike Brown initially exhibited pronounced symptoms of altitude sickness, which fortunately improved through the night. The next day the route was completed in a further four pitches and summited on the glacier, West of the Ancochuma Mountain. As we had not carried ice-climbing equipment, we were forced to cross 200m of glacier by cutting steps into the ice, then rappelled onto the moraine and descended to the Laguna Glaciar Base Camp (base camp for the normal route on Ancochuma). The route was long, very cold, exposed and dangerous as it was threatened by frequent rockfall. It required a total of 18 (60m) pitches, with a crux of F6a rock and an overall American Alpine Grade V (French TD). The hitherto unnamed peak was christened Pico Wiphala, and the route named "Acclimatizacion" (Acclimatization). The Wiphala is the multicoloured, original Inca Flag that symbolizes the wisdom of the wind and is carried by locals in their protests and search for justice and equality.

2. Gorra de Hielo (5760m)

Access to Route: 1. Private jeep transport to the town of Cocoo, 150km east of Sorata (over the Chuchu Pass). 2. Camp 1 reached with the help of llamas (6) by ascending along the true left side of the Cocoyo Jahuira River to an altitude of c4400m and camping on flat ground where river bifurcates. 3. High camp reached with the help of porters (2) by ascending up steep grass fields southwest (cairned) to join moraine and camp on moraine boulder fields at c5400m.

Route: On August 1st, climbing from a high camp at c5400m. on the eastern aspect of the Illampu-Pico del Norte Massif, we attempted the unclimbed Southeast Ridge of Pico del Norte (6070m). The newly exposed rock on the ridge was composed of broken unstable granite boulders and was suicidally dangerous. Mounting fear and a nostalgic attachment to life prevailed and the attempt was abandoned after four

itches. We rappelled off the east face before crossing a basin of thigh deep snow (2 hours) and on the same day climbed a new route on the south face of Gorra de Hielo (5760m). The 300m route, "Gorra Directa", provided superb ice conditions and followed an old avalanche gully. It was graded American Alpine IV (French D+), AI 4. Argentinian climbers G. Minotti, M. Falconer and L. Bromessard who repeated the route a week later confirmed the grade.

3. Aguja Yacuma (6072m)

Access to Route: From Gorra de Hielo camp.

Route: From the same high camp at c5400m, on the 3rd of August a new route on Aguja Yacuma, 6072m was climbed. The route, "Ojo de la Aguja" (Eye of the Needle) ascended the unclimbed East face of the central rock tower and required 3 pitches of technical climbing (F6b, 6a and 5+). The approach to the base of the tower took 7 hours and crossed the east glacier at the foot of Illampu, (6372m). Aguja Yacuma lies directly south of the Illampu Massif and is clearly visible to the south of the Sanchez/Mesili Pass. There are many possibilities for new routes on these towers, which offer short but excellent quality granite rock.

4. Pico Emma Maria (5531m)

Access to Route: The impressive rock peaks of Punta Badile (see MountainInfo July 1999) and Pico Emma Maria lie east-north-east of Pico del Norte and Gorra del Hielo. We approached the peak, climbing directly up from the Cocoyo-Jahuirra River (DAV Map) to establish a camp on the foot of the East Face, at c5000m.

Route: There is still some confusion as to the altitude and location of Pico Emma Maria; In Jill Neate's book, "Mountaineering In The Andes" (Royal Geographical Soc., 2nd Edition 1994) it is described as point Pt. 5715m and in the recently published Mesili and Monasterio guide "The Andes of Bolivia: Adventures and a Climbing Guide" (Producciones CIMA, 2004) it is described as Pt. 5531m. General consensus by the Bolivian climbing community and the locals of the region place it as described in the Mesili/ Monasterio guide. This obvious rock tower is clearly visible from the village of Coco. It had its first recorded ascent via the Southwest Ridge in August 1953, by the legendary climbers Hans Ertl and A. Hundhammer. In 1983 A. Mesili and C. Hutson added a second route, the East Buttress Route, a mixed route graded French TD. There have been, to the author's knowledge, no other recorded ascents. On August 6th (Bolivia's Day of Independence) our attempt on the peak nearly came to a premature end as locals set fire to the grass fields directly beneath Pico Emma Maria. The valley became engulfed in thick, acrid smoke and we stumbled blindly through the choking fumes to eventually find their base camp. On the 7th of August, the smoke cleared and we struggled on with severe throat and eye irritations. The route ascended the southeast face and the climbing was varied and sustained over solid and compact granite, of complex architecture with roofs, dihedrals and delicate corner systems, which were often choked with ice. Conditions deteriorated through the day and by 2pm it began snowing. The summit was reached in white out and stormy conditions at 5pm. Struggling with poor visibility and frozen ropes we rappelled into the night, leaving pitons, wires and slings. We finally reached camp at 11pm. The route, "Humo e Independencia" (Smoke and Independence) was 500m long and required 11 sustained (60m) pitches (Max F6c, A0).

Weather Conditions:

Generally the weather was very stable, with cold dry conditions. In total there were two days with snowfall, one a rest day and the second during the Pico Emma Maria climb.

Accidents/ Illness:

Mike Brown experienced mild to moderate symptoms of altitude sickness on Pico Wiphala, but these were self-limiting and uncomplicated. Porters remained healthy throughout expedition.

Additional Funding:

NZ Alpine Club grant NZ\$ 1500.

Total Income for Expedition was NZ\$ 1500 (NZAC) + NZ\$ 450 (MEF) = NZ\$1950.

Total Expenses for Expedition were NZ\$ 4500 (airfares) + NZ\$ 800 (porters) + NZ\$ 3000 (food and stores) + NZ\$ 700 (insurance) = NZ\$ 6300.

Sponsorship:

Mike Brown received material support from Fairydown Alpine Sport equipment and Erik Monasterio tested equipment for Macpac during the expedition.

