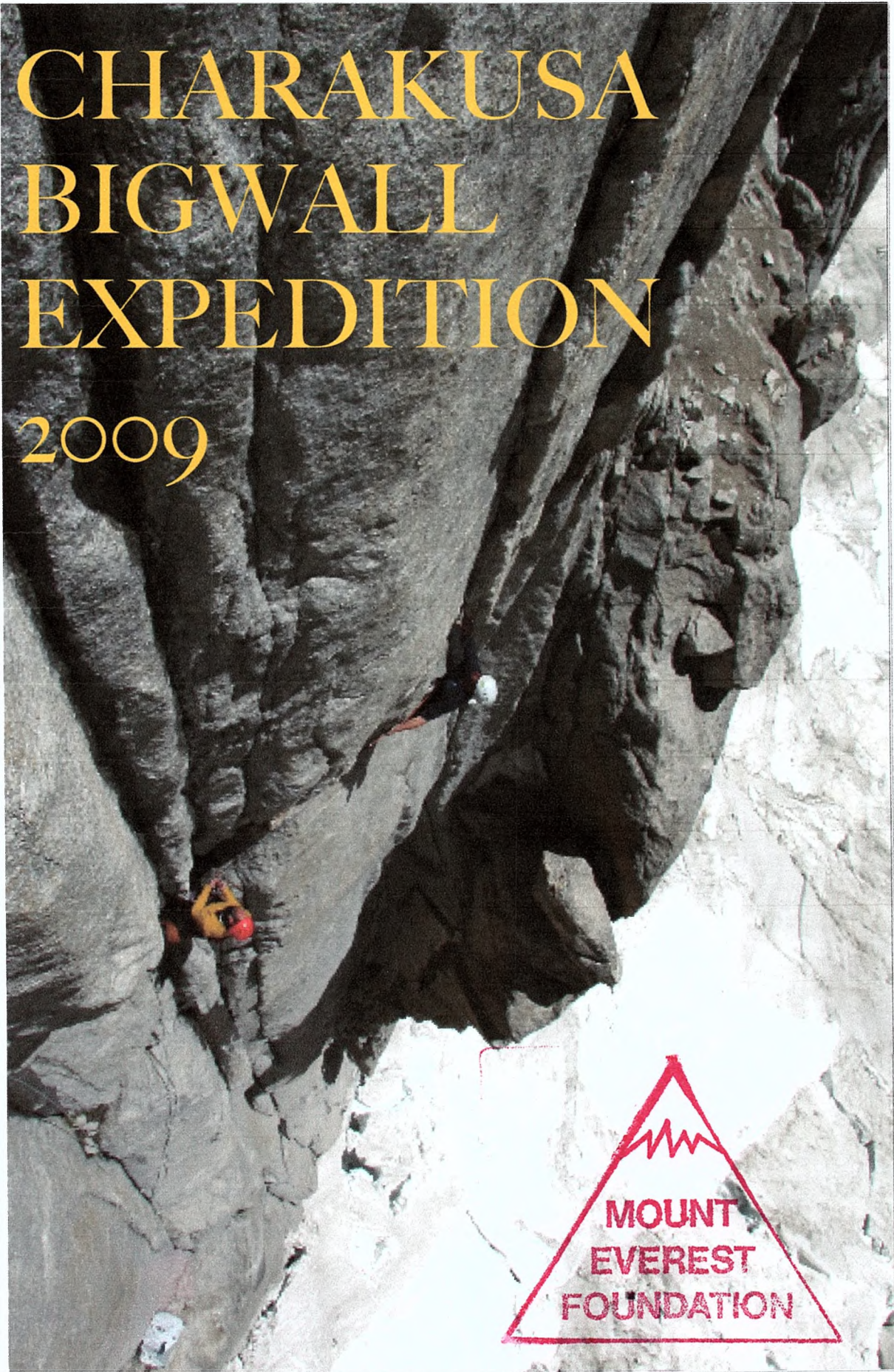


CHARAKUSA BIGWALL EXPEDITION 2009



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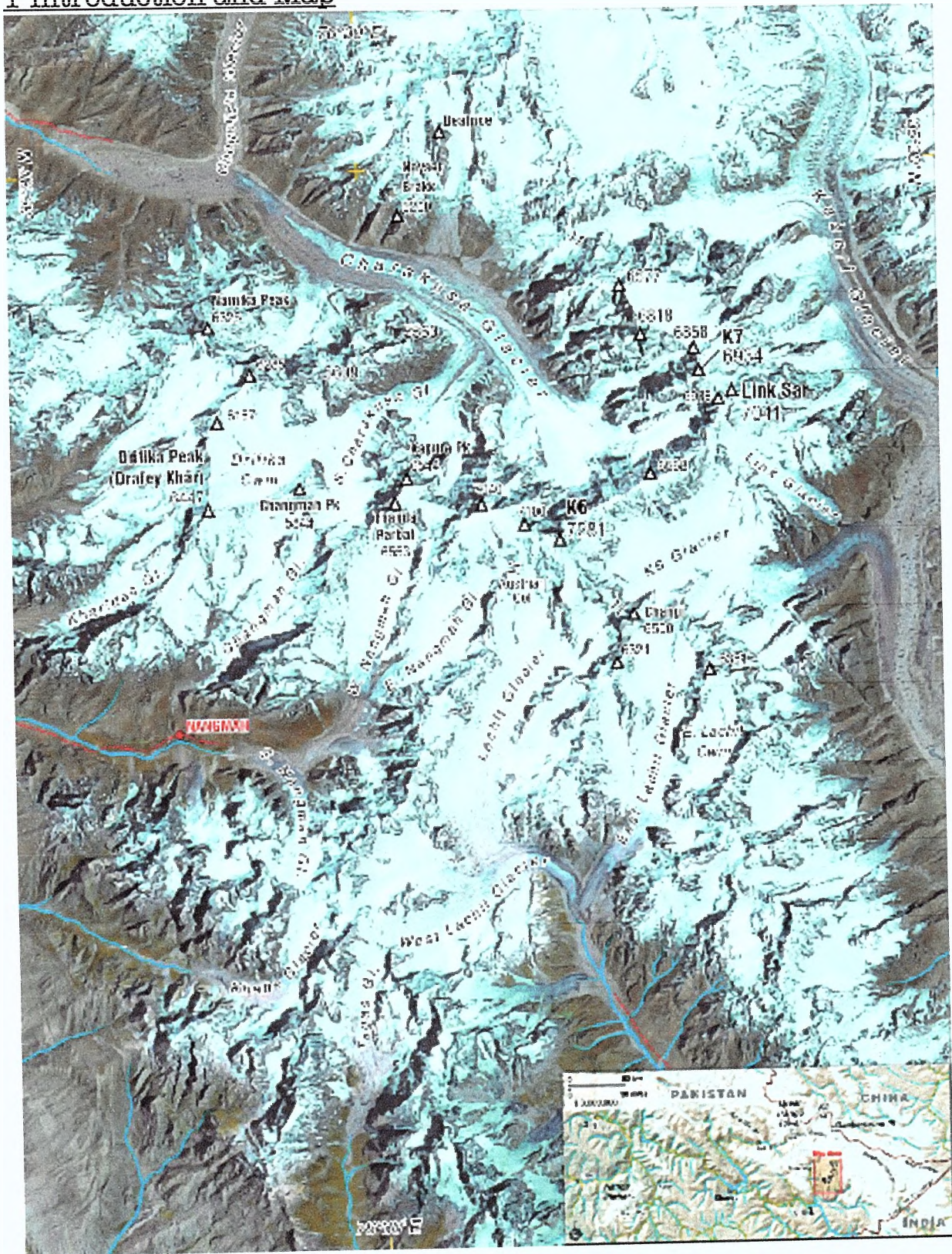
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1 Introduction and Map



The big walls of the Karakoram, Pakistan, offer some of the hardest and most sustained high altitude free climbing in the world.

We had a month in Basecamp (mid July- Mid August.) This is between Naysar Brakk and K7 on lateral moraine at 4200m. It has pit toilets, a good water supply and great camping, with grass, flowers and wildlife. A fantastic campsite.

We established a new route on the West Wall of Nafees Spire, a sub-peak of K7, climbing a direct and beautiful line on this huge granite buttress. The Route was largely climbed by Jon and Adrian, named "Naughty Daddies" 19 pitches, up to grade 25 (7b). We believe that it is the hardest free technical rock-route climbed at altitude by New Zealanders or Australians. We also climbed the original line on Naysar Brakk (5200m) -a beautiful spire above basecamp.(10 pitches, 6a) For a complete account see the Expedition Diary.

The Charakusa is an exciting and worthwhile destination for Alpine rock and mountaineering. There is staggering potential for new routes. The North side and two of the major peaks of K6 along with Link Sar (7041m) are unclimbed. Most peaks have had only one ascent.

The area is notable for its spectacular spires. Rock quality is variable.

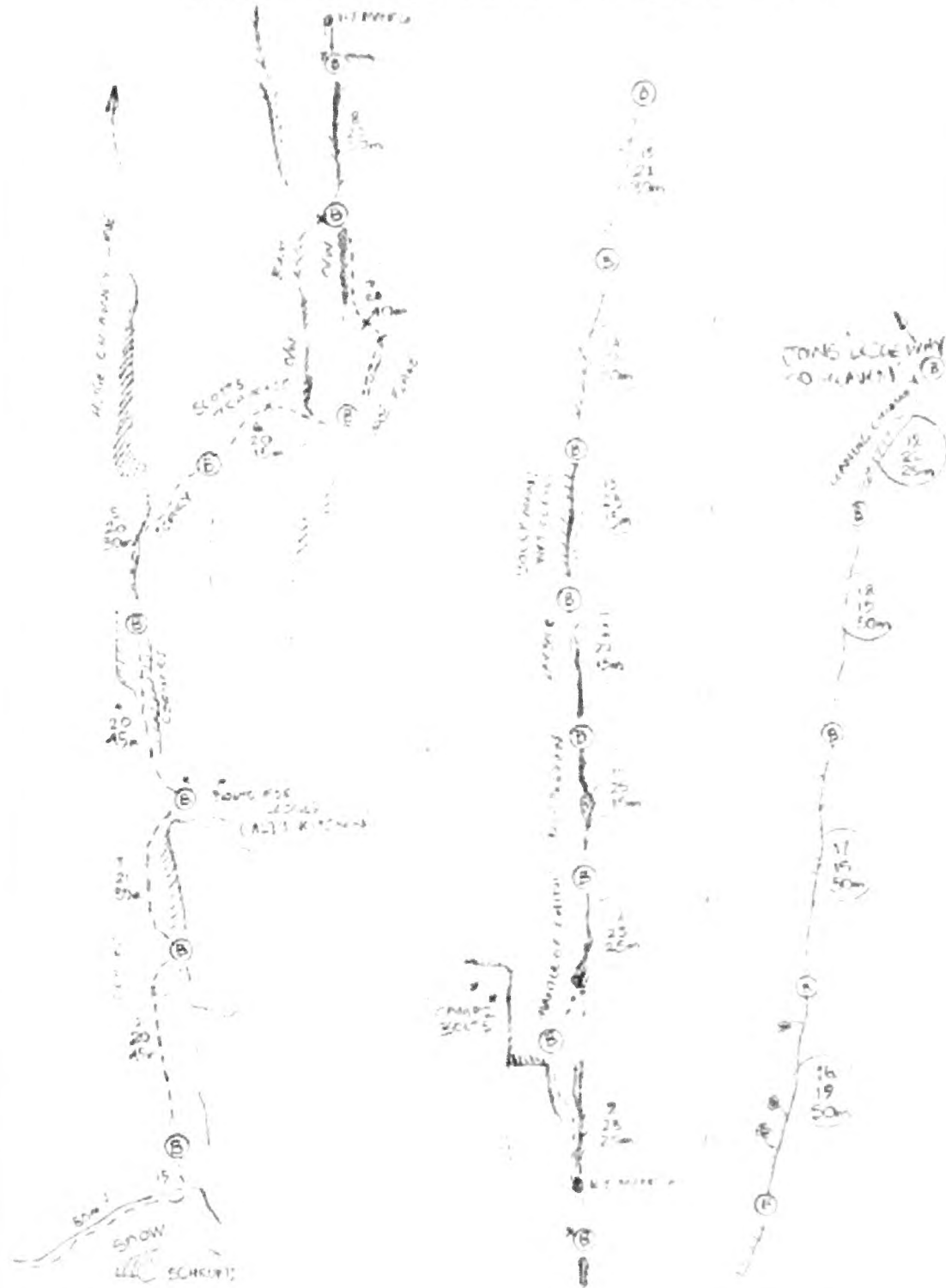
We had excellent weather. Temperatures tend to be extreme with hot days and cold nights. At altitudes less than 6000m there is little wind and the area has little precipitation.

Access to many of the walls on the massifs such as K7 are often threatened by icefall. This was the greatest danger on our route on Nafee's .



NAUGHTY DADDIES

ACROSS LAING
3041 3042 4/6 '05



2 Expedition Members

Bruce Dowrick (NZ):

Builder/ rigger/ cartoonist

- NZ 1986 to present- Ascents of many classic NZ alpine routes in summer and winter.

- Major contributor to new rock climbs in the Darran Mountains, Fiordland.

- Rock-climbing and mountaineering in North and South America, Antarctica, Greenland, Europe and the Himalayas.

Onsight free ascents of Squamish Grand Wall, British Columbia

(16 pitches/ 5.11d) Myopia, Elephants Perch, Idaho(10 pitches/ 5.11c) and Taniwha, Matukitui Valley, NZ (9 pitches/ grade 25)

Probable first ascent Unnamed 800m Rockspire Tombstone mountains, Yukon Territories

Highlights:

- 1987 Peru -Ski descent of Huascaran(6768m), Ascents of Ranapalca, Alpamayo, Tocllaraju, Churup, Artensonraju

- 1988-89 Member of first British transit of Arctic North West Passage.

- 1990 India North face Thaley Sagar (6904m) expedition

- 1990 Urban "buiideering" ascent Wellington BNZ office tower

- 1995/96 Sailed from Canada to Patagonia and then Antarctica. Attempted Monte Sarmiento, Tierra del Fuego. First Ascent Mt Foster, Smith Island, Antarctica (For which our expedition was awarded the Tillman medal)

- 2001 Guide/Rigger for "base-climb2" expedition to Pakistan Baltoro Region. Ascent of Great Trango Tower (6286m)

- 2002 Wienke Island Ski Mountaineering trip Antarctica

- 2005 Sailing/ Mountaineering trip (with Matt Evrard) To Antarctica. First ascent 'Chocolate buttress', Mt Wandel and Mt Cloos, Attempted Highest Spire- Cape Renaud Towers, Lemaire Channel

- Present: Much time developing new routes in the Darran's Mountains.

Scott Standen (Aus):

Builder

- 1996: Started Climbing in the Blue Mountains National Park

- 1999-2002: Started to complete first accents of new

routes throughout NSW up to grade 22

- 2002: Climbed extensively throughout Alaska, Canada, and USA.
- 2003-2008: Moved to New Zealand to concentrate on alpine climbing. Climbing many of New Zealand's classics and developing new routes and first ascents in ice, rock, and alpine styles.

Jon Seddon (NZ):

Wanaka (NZ) builder

- 1995 Started climbing at Mt Eden quarry and on ignimbrite, in the Central North Island
- 1996/97 Went to North America and climbed for two years at numerous places including Yosemite Valley, Indian Creek, Joshua Tree and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison
- 1998 Climbing in Australia for six months on the east coast; Arapiles, Grampians, Blue Mountains, Frog Buttress, and many more
- 1999 Numerous first ascents at the Castle Hill Basin
- 2000 Moved to Wanaka to develop local sport climbing
- 2001 Lived in North America for six months, climbed numerous Black Canyon multi-pitch routes including my first grade V free climb, the southern arête 5.11 ,15 pitches
 - Also climbing in Unaweep Canyon, Arizona
 - 2002 Mexico two months El Potrero Chico. On sighted first 5.12(25), redpoint first 5.13(28)
 - Second ascent of Dark side of the Moon 5.10+ ,A3+ Grade V, first ascent of , Mostly American route 5.11 A3 grade V, Zion national park
 - 2004 Started developing new routes at Babylon, Fiordland National Park
 - 2005 Twenty first ascents in Wanaka and Fiordland
 - 2006 Two month trip to Arapiles and Grampians, Australia
 - 2007 More new development at little Babylon, Fiordland
 - 2008 First ascent of Tormentum Vigilae Wanaka, grade 30. Climbed Humble grade 30.

Adrian Laing (Aus)

Professional Fireman, Adventurous Training Instructor with the Australian Army (1992 - 2009).

- 1996 Learned to Rock Climb on a 16 day course with

the Special Forces, Australian Army. Traditional and sport climbing in Australia, New Zealand, France and Italy to Grade 26

- 2000 -2004 Raced mountain bikes semi-professionally, specialising in endurance races. Winner of multiple races in Australia, I still hold the race record for the Simpson Desert Challenge, a 560 km race across Australia's harsh Simpson Desert.

- 2005 Sideswipe 30m 24 Mt Buffalo, Victoria, Australia, a traditional climb on alpine granite. Unrepeated

- The Totem Pole(free route) 70m 25.

- 2006 Candle In The Wind 105m 25 at Cape Huay, Tasmania, a traditional multi-pitch climb on a remote sea cliff overlooking the Totem Pole. Completed with Steve Monks.

Unrepeated

- Serpentine 70m 29, a 2 pitch mixed climb up Australia's famous Taipan Wall, Victoria. The second pitch is rated one of the finest pitches in the world.

- 2007 Arch Enemy 40m 27 Blue Mountains, Australia. A photo of myself on this route appeared on the front cover of Australia's premier climbing magazine, Rock, in 2008.

- 2008 Weakened Worriers 100m 24, Blue Mountains, Australia.

- Stone Poem 120m 27, Blue Mountains, Australia . Hard, multi-pitch sport route. Unrepeated.

- Date with Density 140m 25, Blue Mountains, Australia.

- Slipstream 105m 23, Blue Mountains, Australia. Multi-pitch sport route established with Jon Sedon

- Walk the Chalk 70m 27, Blue Mountains, Australia. Hard multi-pitch mixed route established with Jon Sedon.

Unrepeated

- Mr Lucky 30m 28, Blue Mountains, Australia (top and bottom pictures). Photos of this route are to appear in a 2010 world climbing calendar and on the inside back cover of the next issue of Rock and Ice, June 2009.

- Ozymandias 280m 28. A hard traditional multi-pitch climb at Mt Buffalo, Victoria. On alpine granite, this serious route has only had 2 free repeats since it was established 20 years ago, despite many attempts.

- 2009 Lost Crack 120m 23, Blue Mountains, Australia. Established ground-up, on-sight using only traditional protection, this climbs a remote pillar. Established with Mike Law.

3 Background and research

We became interested in the area after reading an account of the Favresse brother's incredible first ascent of Nafee's Cap - a 1300m line with difficulties up to 7c. We were able to contact him and Steve House who is responsible for the majority of modern hard alpine routes there. Steve was an invaluable source of information. His best advice was recommending Bluesky Treks and Tours to support us. They were half the price of other quotes we received and the service was impeccable. Geoff Gabittes and Jonathon Clearwater, New Zealand climbers, were also of assistance. There was not a lot of relevant information available on the internet. The American Alpine Journal had a few useful articles. Guy Cotter of Adventure Consultants was incredibly helpful.

Bruce visited Pakistan and climbed Trango in 2001 and so had some local experience.

4.1 Logistics and organisation

Our organisation was relatively loose with only token leadership and the difficulties of organising a trans-Tasman team. Initially our team was entirely from New Zealand but we lost two members as we approached departure. However, our planning worked well and we had no major problems.

We assigned areas of responsibility and had frequent meetings and email forums and a timeline to work to. Most difficulties revolved around being in two countries and trying to co-ordinate and get the best deal on freight and travel and to sort equipment.

We operated a joint account and remitted invoices for expenses.

All our logistics in Pakistan were covered by our contract with Bluesky. Using a trekking company in Pakistan was inexpensive and made our travel there a luxurious pleasure.... It would be false economy to do otherwise and there would be a great risk of wasting a large amount of time or losing gear.

We generated a 'live' gear and food list that evolved as we got closer to leaving.

4.2 Training and preparation

We all climb a great deal and were naturally fit, especially for endurance. Access to big granite cliffs and the style of climbing we expected was more limited. We intensified our training in the months before we left. Unfortunately as it was the middle of Winter it was more difficult to climb outside especially in the

mountains, leaving training indoors as often the only option. We also added more aerobic exercise.(walking, running and mountain biking) We also attempted to put on a little weight as reserves for sustained work at altitude but had difficulty doing so.

We climbed as much as possible with the equipment that we were taking, especially specialist gear such as portaledge.

All of the gear we took needed to be thoroughly checked and in good condition as replacement or repair would be difficult or impossible in basecamp. We experimented with meals for on the wall.

4.3 Permission and permits

As we were not climbing above 6500m we only required a trekking permit. This was arranged by Ghulam Mohammad of Bluesky and only required transferring a deposit and our personal details and itinerary.

We had some difficulties with the Pakistan Consulate in New Zealand. They issued a visa for only one month and charged again for the correction. This cost in the end a total of NZ\$1000 for the 3 of us and we had little time to spare before we left.

Adrian had no difficulties in Australia.

In Pakistan the Tourism Ministry was very friendly and helpful. We had no problems with bureaucracy or authorities at any time.

4.4 Finances and budget

We were honoured to receive three grants that covered a bit more than half of our costs. These were from SPARC, the NZ Alpine Club and the Mount Everest Foundation.

We operated a joint BNZ "not for profit organisation" account to manage our finances and kept track of and reimbursed individuals costs. All expenditure was balanced regardless of differing costs based out of New Zealand and Australia.

We kept a cash slush fund, US\$2000, for Pakistan to cover extra meals, tips and other costs such as donation of school supplies to three local schools.

In addition to this we had to take US\$1500 each in cash as deposit with Askari Aviation as a helicopter rescue deposit. This was refunded without problem on return to Islamabad. A portion of this was spent shopping and to return freight equipment.

Travellers cheques are not easily used in Pakistan and cash is recommended.

Income

(in US\$)

SPARC Grant		\$ 10125
NZAC		\$750
MEF		\$826
Team Contribution		\$12018
<u>Total</u>		<u>\$23719*</u>

Expenditure

(All Expenses in US\$)

NZ - Pakistan Tickets	(NZ \$7502)	\$4501
Visas ex. NZ	(NZ\$996)	\$598
Metolius order		\$1595
Bluesky - Exp. Support		\$7644
Food and consumables NZ	(NZ\$1517)	\$910
Insurance ex NZ	(NZ\$ 1898)	\$1139
Sat Phone		\$375
Auss Visa	(A\$70)	\$53
Auss- Paki Ticket	(A\$3000)	\$2280
Bolts	(A\$170)	\$129
Medical	(A\$240)	\$182
Ex Auss Insurance		\$503
Freight to AKL and Ins		\$360
Freight to Pakistan		\$950
Freight Pak-Auss		\$500
Ground costs in Pakistan		\$2000
<u>Total</u>		<u>\$23719*</u>

* At Time of travel this was NZ\$39532 or A\$31209
(NZ\$ -US\$ @ 0.60 A\$ - US\$ 0.76)

4.5 Medical

I am still waiting for the medical and equipment list from Adrian who is away climbingagain.

His wife, Claire, is a doctor and prepared this for us. I will send it later as an appendix. We supplemented our kit with medicines and equipment we bought in Skardu. The pharmacy in Skardu was well provisioned much less expensive than New Zealand or Australia.

Bruce has ulcerative colitis and had prednisone in case of a flare

up but had no problems. Scott has mild Asthma and this was not an issue.

Fortunately, we had little in the way of medical misadventure. Bruce and Scott had head colds, which they acquired in Australia, enroute. On the approach Scott and Adrian suffered from a gastro illness (Probably from the Masherbrum Hotel in Skardu) which largely abated with time, but required antibiotics on return to completely resolve. Scott had difficulty acclimatising after this. We all used a short course of diamox to ease the symptoms of and to speed Acclimatisation.

Our cooks helper fell ill, with flu like symptoms and went home. Fida Ali, our cook, suffered from severe toothache and a swollen jaw. He was treated successfully with painkillers and antibiotics. On return to Skardu Jon and Bruce contracted the stomach bug that they had avoided on the approach.

We donated our supplies to the local doctor in Hushe on our return.

4.6 Travel, freight and insurance

We flew with Emirates.

They and Thai are the only airlines from New Zealand flying into Islamabad. The ex NZ flights were competitive, approx NZ\$2500, but ex. Aust. was A\$3000. Emirates has a 30 kg baggage allowance so overall this was still the best deal. We sent 200kgs ahead to Islamabad with Pacific Network Global Logistics. From Wanaka with insurance this was about NZ\$2200. It arrived and was picked up with no problems and we were not charged any duty. One bag (Adrian's) did not arrive and we had to make do until it caught up with us in base camp a week late. (He lost his harness from the pack but fortunately we had been supplied equipment by Metolius and had one spare. This could have been disastrous otherwise.) Freight on the flight to Skardu is ridiculously cheap and was covered by our contract with Bluesky. On return we had less stuff and sent a box to Australia, with items for the Kiwi team to collect from Adrian later. This cost US\$500. The rest we got home with our carry on baggage weighing about 15kg each. The New Zealand team are members of the Alpine Club and used their insurance which was about NZ\$650 each. Adrian used IHI for about the same price. We posted the US\$6000 cash bond with Askari Aviation which is a bond necessary for a helicopter rescue in Pakistan. The cost of an evacuation is likely to be much higher than this.

4.7 Equipment and food

2 double Portaledge
Packs, day packs ,Haul bags
mats
2 x Sleeping bags each
bivvie bags
Stoves + gas (purchased in pakistan \$8each)
Pots, plate/cup/F K S
lighter/matches
Water jugs (purchased in pakistan)
drink-bottles, pee bottles
Purifier- tabs
coffee pot
repair kits + sewing, wire, glue, patches, elec. tape, cord, File, Saw, Swiss army , pliers,
screwdrivers, leatherman tool
head torch + batts
Poo pots
Bags Zip lock and garbage
toiletries and personal medication., sunscreen
Towel
Medicines and first aid equipment.

Guitar (purchased in pakistan)
Ipod/music, Drawing pad, Books
Solar charging+ adpts, Batt adapter
Camera/video
Binoculars
Sat phone

Mountain Boots
Crampons
Ice tools
Rockshoes
Harnesses
Chalk-bag / chalk
30 screw gate biners, 48 Draws
4x full racks rps, nuts, cams, pitons, nut tools
4 snow stakes 8 ice screws
2 Gri-gris, Belay devices
tiblocs, 2 Mini traxions
4x1 1mm 4x9mm 50m dynamic Ropes
250m 9mm Static rope Prussiks, slings
Helmet
finger tape
Drill+ bits, 30 50x8mm ss trubolts
Wall hammer + spanner
jumars lanyards/aiders
slings/cordage
hooks/pitons
Shell , Down jacket, Primaloft jacket
Soft shell, fleece, Thermals, socks and undies
Gloves, Gaiters ,boots/shoes, warm and sunhats
Lightweight/causual clothing
shorts
sunglasses
scarves

Food shipped from NZ.

Muesli 1kg toasted 3
One Square meals 32
Vitawheat crackers 5

Blackball Salami 4
Travel wipes 8 packs
Muesli & Bumper Bars 76 packs
Muesli 2 boxes
Instant Noodles 65 packs
Milk Powder 3kg
Corn Thins 4 packs
Dehy veges 7 bags
Replace sports drink 2 tubs
Smoked mussels 5 cans
Kaweka Meals 32
Dried Basil 2 sachets
Peppermint Tea 80 bags
Dehy Mash 8 boxes
Couscous 11 boxes instant
Instant Puddings 18
Biscuits 4 bags farmbake
Coffee&Milk 3 nestle tube
Coffee 6x250g bags
Peanut Butter 3 big 2 small pottles
Tomato Paste 16 sachets
Jam 6 pottles
Nutella 4 large
Zip Lock Bags 75 small 30 large
Chucks Wipes 2 packs
Bounty Bars 20
Snickers 20
350g various blocks of chocolate 16

4.8 Environmental impact

We were determined to have as little as possible impact on this special and vulnerable area.

We packed with minimal wrapping and planned to produce as little rubbish as possible.

We used bio-degradable waste bags on the mountain and deposited them in the pit-latrines at Basecamp. These toilets were built recently and contribute greatly to the ambience of this beautiful campsite.

Trekking Companies are generally aware of the importance of environmental concerns to many visitors and they make an effort to keep camp clean and tidy. There are however little waste disposal options in northern Pakistan and taking rubbish out invariably means littering another area. All burnable materials are incinerated and cans and bottles buried. We were disappointed to have to collect much rubbish from previous groups but hope that this is changing with a growing awareness of the need to reduce our impacts in areas such as this.

5 Trip Diary

July 13th. NZ based team leaves New Zealand for Australia.

14th. Jon and Bruce go climbing with Ado at Bowen's Creek. Repack and sort at Ado's.

15th. All to Sydney airport. Much haggling over luggage. Get all in except one 60m length of static. Carry on bags about 15 kg each.....

16th. Crazy day in Dubai. 45°C and smoggy. We visit the 800m high Burj Dubai and the huge indoor skifield. Bruce shares his bad cold with Scott. We feel very poor and travel everywhere on a 10 trip bus ticket. Beer's at the airport are \$17.

17th. Arrive in Islamabad. 42°C Met by Abdullah, Sarjit and Ghulam. One of Ado's bags fails to arrive. Spend most of the day shopping for a guitar. Jon and Ado have a mysterious midnight mission to retrieve our freighted box of food and equipment.

18th. Wait at airport for hours watching monsoon rains and waiting for the plane to leave for Skardu. Meet our cook Fida Ali. A bit more shopping and another repack for porter loads. 31°C. Stay at the Masherbrum Hotel which is nice enough but the food is a bit dodgy.

19th. Perfect day. Pack gear into landcruisers and drive to Hushe. Road much more sane than road up Shigar to Baltoro. Lunch at Machulo with fantastic views of Masherbrum. News that there are no porters so will have to wait a day. Good news for Scotty as he is too sick with the flu and Diarrhoea to go anywhere.

20th. Perfect day. Rest Day before we have started. Hanging out with the innumerable children of Hushe. Sort out the solar system. Short walk up to waterfall.

21st. Cloud and sun. easy 3 hr walk to Satcho. Meet Claire (David Hamilton's wife) and Guy Mckinnon who is looking worse for wear after epic on G3. Buy Pepsi for porters at \$4 a bottle. (3400m)

22nd. Fine and a few showers. Walk to camp on Moraine ledge past Chogalista Glacier. 4-5 hrs. (4000m) Top rope some easy slabs in evening.

23rd. Snow clearing later. Walk 2 hrs to K7 base camp. (4200m). Scott still not well. Great bouldering round in the afternoon.

24th. Cool and cloudy. Walk up to base of "ledgeway to heaven". Lots of slots and obvious danger from seracs above. Stop at 4700m. Ado dumps 2 ledges at base of Nafee's.

25th. Fine, some cloud. Sorting and packing day. Also major

boulder session.

26th. Fine some cloud. Leave at 730am to walk up to base of "ledgeway". Set up portaledges ABC. Scott and Bruce up through icefall to scope the line. Then Scott Ado and Jon tackle Schrund and and fix rope up to base of rock.

27th. Fine and sunny. Up from ABC to base. Scott and Bruce carry loads up the icefall while Ado and Jon haul over the Schrund. Very hot in the sun. Ado leads and fixes 50m grade. Big day exhausted from conditions and altitude. Descend to base camp.

28th. High cloud. Rest Day and more food and equipment sorting.

29th. Snow showers. rest day.

30th. Fine and some snow showers. Carry up big loads to base of the route. Jon climbs to ledge. Run out of time and Bruce and Scott set up poor camp above schrund.

31st. Fine. Haul rest of gear to ledge. Attempt right hand crack unsuccessfully. Ado and Jon climb and fix next 2 pitches from ledge up left hand cracks and traversing to above ledge.

1st August. Fine. Scott and Bruce up to high point. Slab traverse wet and unprotectable. Pendulum to R. crack systems and try to climb off-width. Retreat exhausted by effects of altitude. Jon aids O/W and bum crack.

2nd. Fine. Bruce laid out by the altitude. Scotty still weak but manages to bolt and free traverse. Ado bolts and frees Righthand flake and move left into and up wet squeeze chimney. Jon frees next pitch.

3rd. Still fine. Ado and Jon jumar back up. Ado climbs "too gripped to film" pitch to ledge (camp 2). Jon climbs "the Mantle of faith and Scotty bolts for ledges. Ado climbs another pitch before descending.

4th. Fine. Bruce and Scotty jug up to second camp and haul all stuff up in one monster load. Rap back down and return to base camp. Bruce loses 9mm rope down crevasse.

5th. Fine. Jon's Birthday Party.

6th. Fine forever? Bouldering and sorting gear for return to wall.

7th. Rain/showers. Scrabble.

8th. Rain and Snow. Scrabble etc....

9th. Fine. Away at 7.30. leave with 7 days more food and 80m extra rope. Huge avalanche has come down couloir- all a bit shaken. Scotty still not well. Scotty and Bruce quit route and descend from camp 2 and sleep on rock in tablelands. Jon and Ado

set up camp.

10th. Fine. Scott and Bruce feeling sorry for themselves, slowly walk back to Basecamp. Ado and Jon ascend to high point and climb 4 more pitches, fix and rap to camp.

11th. Fine. Scott and Bruce up to glacier above camp and bivvy out. Ado and Jon back up lines and climb another 4 pitches to join the "Ledgeway to heaven" at the ridge. Bivvy on ledge.

12th. Fine. Scott and Bruce back down to camp for lunch and then up to tablelands slab for night. Jon and Ado climb 2 pitches of Ledgeway before stopping due to snow and ice conditions and descending to portaledge.

13th. Fine. Scott and Bruce up icefall to meet Jon and Ado who have descended with all equipment. Carry 40kg+ packs back down to base camp. Exhausted.

14th. Fine. Repack and sort. Up gully in afternoon to camp at col North of Naysar Brakk. Perfect starry night.

15th. Fine. Climb Naysar Brakk. 10 pitches on good rock up to about grade 20 (6a). Awesome summit ridge cheval.

16th. Rain and snow. Ado and Scott both sick (gastro)

17th. Rain showers. Ado Bruce and Jon bouldering in upper meadow between showers.

18th. Fine then Snow showers. Ado and Bruce out for walk up Fati Brakk. Great views. Scotty and Jon climb small tower on ridge line above camp.

19th. Snow. Boulder down valley.

20th. Heavy snow. Clearing later.

21st. Occasional Snow showers. Big day bouldering on moraine and glacier.

22nd. Cloudy. Bouldering on moraine. Porters arrive. Prepack for departure.

23rd. Fine. Up early and walk out to Hushe. Ramazan so porters do not eat or drink! Hot in afternoon. Fida Ali prepares an even bigger feast than usual.

24th. Fine. Visit local Greg Mortenson School and give out stationary. Drive to Halde for lunch at Fida Ali's house. Boys take turns driving 4WD back down the valley to Skardu. Play tourists and go shopping.

25th. Fine. Visit Sadpara lake and dam. Out on boat.

26th. Bad Weather. plane grounded.

27th. Fly to Islamabad.

28th and 29th in Islamabad and then fly home....

6 Conclusion.

We had an enjoyable and successful trip.

Rock quality in the area is somewhat variable but overall our spire seemed to be the best of it. Unfortunately there was a lot of ice/ meltwater on the route, possibly because it had been the heaviest snowfall Winter for many years. The approach was fraught with exposure to massive avalanche potential and we were not happy about that. Daily temperature extremes make for often difficult conditions for free-climbing.

We jumped on the route almost immediately as we were not sure the good weather would hold and as a result suffered to more or less extent from the effects of the altitude. Bruce and Scott found they could not keep up and did not join the others for the final push. The line is compelling and the climbing very challenging but ultimately achievable.

This is a fantastic area to visit as access is relatively straightforward and basecamp beautiful. There is a wide range of quality new route potential. The weather below 6000m is fairly benign so far as high altitude climbing goes (certainly for climbers used to climates such as New Zealand's or to Patagonia). At least half the days were fine and windless.

Snow ice conditions are often as bad as can be expected in a dry climate with large daily temperature extremes.

Many people were concerned about the Political situation and threat from the Taliban. Indeed visitor numbers were about half normal for this climbing season. There is a small risk in Islamabad and more if you drive the Karakorum highway, although traffic accidents are still by far the gravest threat. Once in Skardu there are probably few safer destinations and the Northern Mountain areas away from the border to Afghanistan is completely free of any such risk. The people of this area depend to a large extent on tourism and are suffering from a drop in numbers. Visitors to the area will be greeted warmly.

We bought shalwar Kamiz on arrival and lived in them when not on the mountain. They are perfect for the climate and the locals appreciated seeing us dressed in them.

A guitar was a hit with all the kids and great night time entertainment at basecamp.

We took a Satphone and were able to receive forecasts which is a great asset and reassuring planning an ascent. Many web sites have accurate 5 day forecasts and these were forwarded to us as necessary. We took an Iridium prepaid but satellite cover is not good and a Thuraya would have been better.

Most Western food and Medicines is available in Islamabad and Skardu so it is not necessary to bring everything. However shopping cuts into basecamp time and cruising the malls of Islamabad is hot and sweaty work.

The Karakorum Highway is impressive but is in poor repair and desperately slow and has some danger of Taliban attack. Flying is hit and miss and it is worth budgeting some days to wait for the plane.

Bluesky were impressively efficient and friendly. We wholeheartedly recommend them.

The people of Baltistan are friendly and welcoming. Although they are fairly conservative Muslims, they are remarkably tolerant of our Western ways and crazy adventures.

We would like to thank the many people who helped us have a fantastic and memorable expedition. There are many more but these are the most obvious ones.

S.P.A.R.C., the New Zealand Alpine Club, the Mount Everest Foundation, Metolius, Jacklinks, Anna Simmonds, Hugh Barnard, Marty Beare, Guy Cotter, Steve House, Ghulam, Fida Ali and Abdullah of Bluesky, and the awesome people of Baltistan.

7. Photos

Attached.

8. Appendices.

Key contacts

New Zealand Consulate General
10B/11 4th Zamzama Street
DHA Phase V
75500, Karachi, Pakistan
0092 21 583 7291
nzcgp@gmail.com

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Ghulam Muhammad
Link Road Girls High School
Kushu Bagh, Skardu, Pakistan.
0092 5815 452456

Askari Aviation

Address: Askari Aviation H # 59
Lane 2 Chaklala-1 Rawalpindi
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DRIFIKA



K6 NORTH SIDE



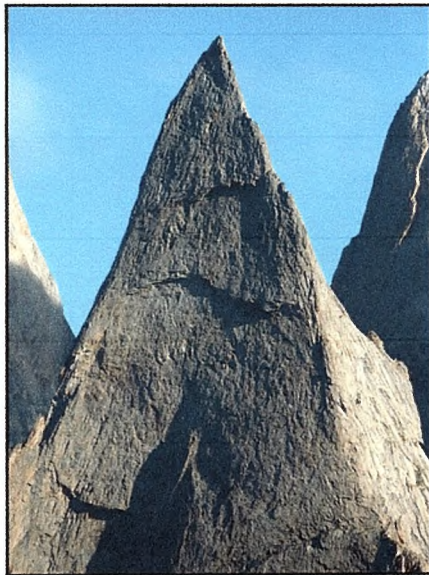
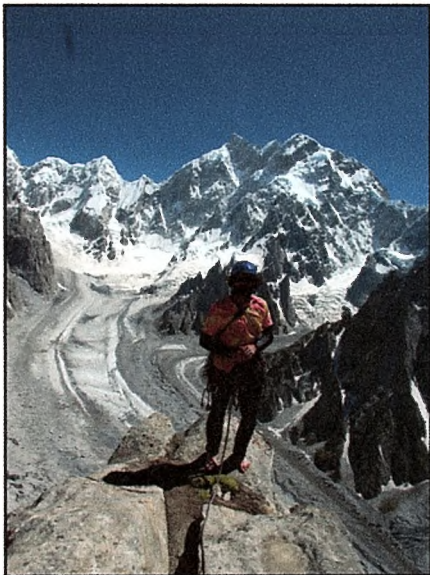
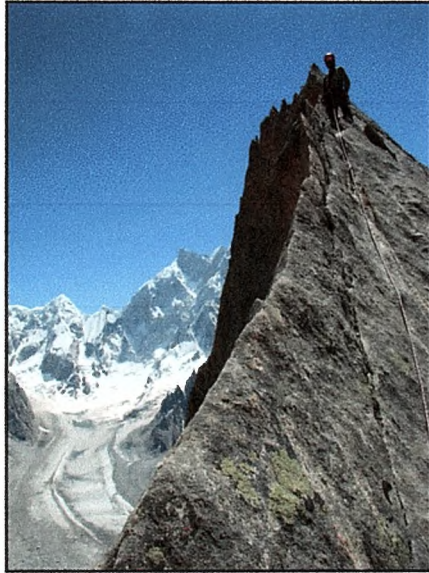
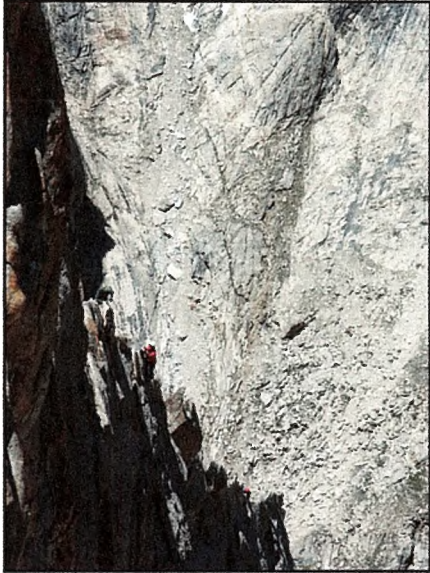
K7 GROUP + LINK SAR



NAYSER BRACK AND SPIRES



Naughty Daddies 620m ,25 (7b)



NAYSER BRACK.