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25th October 1986

British Hindu Kush Expedition 1986

Members

Steve Callen, Lindsay Griffin, Michael Woolridge, David Harries, David Wilson, Michael Aughey, Steve Hart, Hilary Young (Medical Officer).

Objectives

Tirich Mir (7706m) in alpine style without the use of high altitude porters or oxygen.

Leader

Steve Callen

Preliminary report

The team left England on 20th July and established base camp on 10th August at 4900m at the foot of the Upper Tirich Glacier in foul weather conditions.

The team split up into climbing units each independant of each other and choosing which peaks to climb. The following teams chose their respective routes after a reconnaissance by each team:- Steve Callen and Mike Aughey would acclimatise on Dir Gol Zom (6778m) and attempt the Czech route on the NW face of Tirich Mir. Dave Harries, Steve Hart and Dave Wilson were to attempt the Italian route on Tirich Mir up the West Ridge. Lindsay Griffin and Mike Woolridge were to attempt the Czech route on the NW Face of Tirich Mir and join forces with Steve Callen and Mike Aughey if conditions ruled this would be a safer proposition.

The weather turned good on 12th August and between the 14th and 26th August all teams had done load carries up the glacier establishing three camps with food and equipment dumps. This was particularly arduous as the glacier was 14km to the foot of Tirch Mir rising from 4900m to 6400m and having to trail break through soft snow upto 2ft deep all the way.

On 27th August Steve Callen and Mike Aughey climbed Dir Gol Zom at the head of the glacier by the NE Face and descending the East Ridge. The route involved Scottish Grade 3 climbing with waist deep snow encountered in the upper steep part of the face and took 10 hours from camp 3 on the glacier.

On 29th August Dave Harries, Steve Hart and Dave Wilson climbed Dir Gol Zom by the East Ridge.

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On 1st and 3rd September all three teams were moving up the glacier to attempt Tirich Mir when a storm came on the evening of the 3rd bringing heavy snow. Lindsay Griffin, Mike Woolridge, Dave Harris and Steve Hart had a particularly exhausting and dangerous time descending from Camp 4 where 2 metres of snow had fallen; the only injury being slight frostnip to the fingers of Mike Woolridge. The storm lasted until 15th September with snow falling each day at base camp.

Lindsay Griffin and Dave Harries left base camp on 14th September to try and find Camps 3 & 4 to retrieve equipment but both camps had disappeared in the heavy snow and the expedition was abandoned when they returned on 23rd September.

Cost

Estimated total cost:- £8,500.