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1987
British-New Zealand
GASHERBRUMS EXPEDITION
EXPEDITION REPORT

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 Guy Haliburton
 Jean-Pierre Hefti
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 Carol Nash
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 Iain Peter
 Donald Stewart
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 Ehsaan Ullah -Liaison Officer

Patron: Lord Chorley
Film Adviser: N. Kelly

Introduction

The two years of planning and preparation and ten months of hard work which preceeded this expedition would have all been for nought had it not been for the help and assistance we received in securing our peak permit. To this end we are indebted to the officials of the Alpine Club, British Mountaineering Council and Mount Everest Foundation for their unfaltering support.

Without the wide range of assistance afforded us by our many sponsors (their names appear overleaf) an expedition such as this would be impossible to organise. No price can be put on the value of helping others realise their dreams and we are indeed grateful for the generosity of our sponsors.

The help of many Pakistani officials and the people of Pakistan is essential for the progress of any expedition. The kindness, warm hospitality and hard work which was extended to us not only gave us the best possible chance of success but provided an extra dimension to the enjoyment of our visit to Pakistan. Our sincere thanks goes to all who helped us.

This report is compiled with the assistance of all the members of the expedition. We hope that at least in a small way it helps you share our experience in the Karakoram.

With thanks to all those who made the project possible,

Roger Payne, Julie-Ann Clyma-Payne

Acknowledgements

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Walk-In

The expedition left Dusso on 19 May with nine team members, 84 porters, one liaison officer, one sirdar and one cookboy, and arrived at the Gasherbrum Base Camp on 31 May. Ehsaan, our (civilian) Liaison Officer, was excellent at helping to organise the porters, etc, and helped us in many ways during the walk-in. Twenty four porters were paid off en route, hence 60 reached base camp. The sirdar and cookboy did not carry loads, and were fully occupied by dealing with porter

problems and liasing between porters and expedition members. Having an efficient cookboy in an expedition of our size was extremely valuable.

Eleven days were spent walking (6 on morraine and glacier) and 2 days resting (one day for bad weather and one as agreed with the porters). The initial 3 days we camped on village land, with a fee of 50 Rs total for the group per night. Food was available in these villages (hen 100Rs, egg 3 Rs) with Askole having the greatest variety and quantities available (flour 5 Rs/kg, ghee 24 Rs/kg, and sugar 20 Rs/kg). It seems the headman of this village, Ajee Mahdi, is something of a racketeer. We were obliged to buy fresh meat for our porters here in the form of sheep or goats, at inflated prices (900 Rs for a large goat and 700 Rs for a small goat). Hiring an extra porter to drive the animals was 'recommended' to us, but we preferred to avoid the extra cost and took on the task ourselves. Askole can in fact be avoided on the walk-in, condensing Hatto to Korophon into a single 7 hr day. We would definitely recommend other parties to consider this.

The walk-in programme was as follows:

- May 19 Dusso to Aapa Ali's Gondh (5 hours, of which 2 spent on rests and tea breaks. Easy walking along road.)
 20 Hatto (8 hours with few rests. Intermittent rain all day).
 21 Askole (4 hours. Intermittent rain all day).
 22 Korophon (5 hours. A shorter day than expected due to very heavy rain.)
 23 Korophon (rest day due to continueing bad weather. Poor shelter here for such a large number of porters).
 24 Paiju (8 hours. Clear, hot, sunny day. The Panmah river was fordable on foot so that the diversion to Jola could be avoided. 9 porters paid off).
 25 Paiju (rest day for porters to cook chapatis, slaughter goats and gather firewood in preparation for coming 7 days on glacier).
 26 Lilligo (5 hours. Hot and sunny. A dirty and dangerously situated site beneath crumbling mud towers, one porter paid off.)
 27 Urdukas (four porters paid off).
 28 Ghoru (two porters paid off).
 29 Concordia (two porters paid off).
 30 Sharigh (six porters paid off).
 31 Base Camp (c.5,280m) Abruzzi Glacier.

From Urdukas onwards cases of snowblindness arose from porters not wearing their sunglasses. Parties walking into the region early in the season should be aware that bad weather can halt expedition progress for a long enough period for porters to run out of food (as happened to an American team in front of us). It is recommended that extra flour be taken, not only for the expeditions own use, but for porter emergencies.

Gasherbrum 2 and 6

During the early part of the expedition there was a large enough quantity of snow on the South Gasherbrum glacier to make the use of skis quite an advantage. Trail breaking was made much easier and the benefits of a quick and enjoyable descent are obvious. As the summer wore on and much more glacier ice became exposed the advantage of using skis between base camp (c.5,280) and the foot of the mountain (c.6,000m) diminished. Given that the seven pairs of skis we took constituted two porter loads (and had to be carried back out) there would probably be no advantage using skis if arriving at base camp from the end of June onwards.

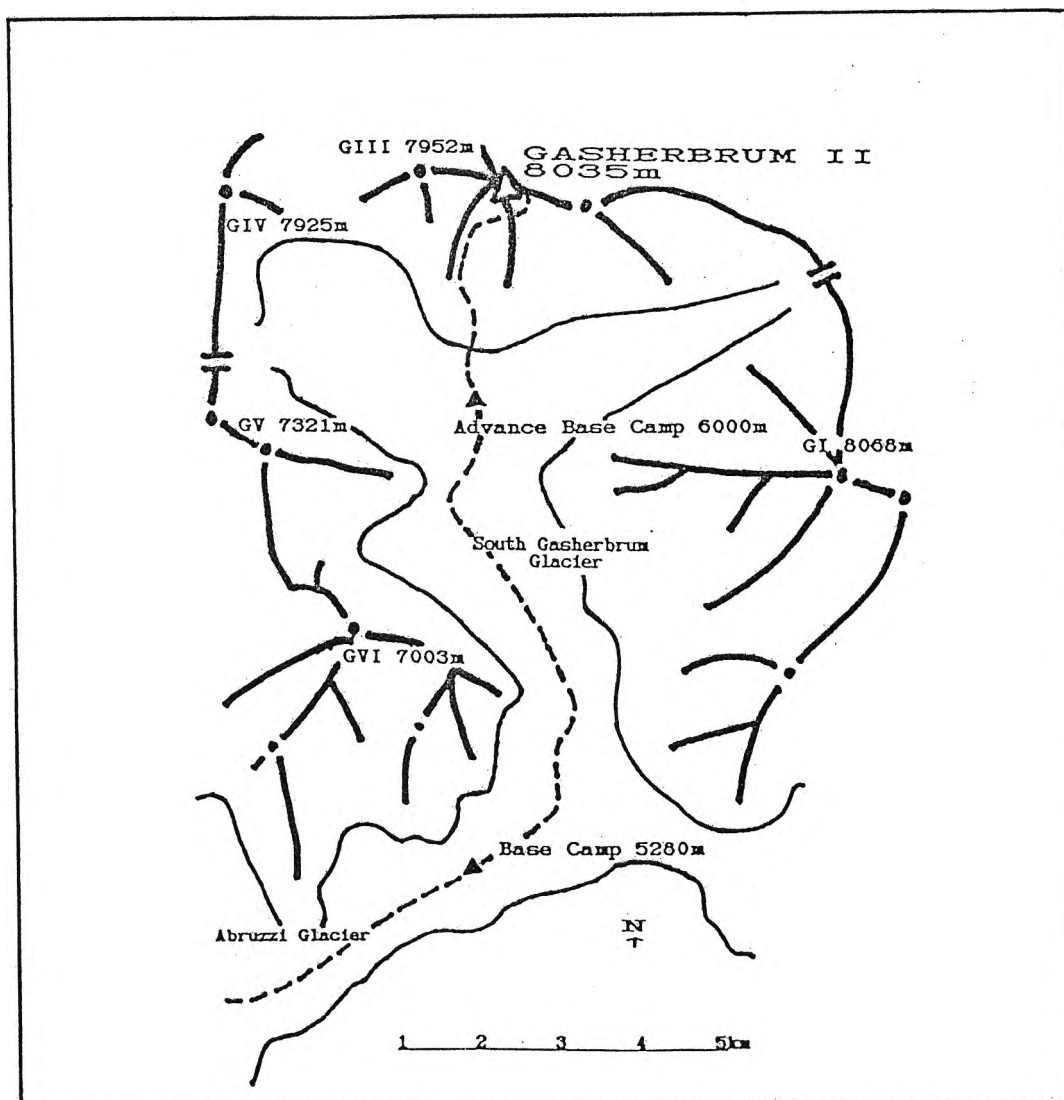
The South Gasherbrum glacier is regarded as one of the most difficult and dangerous in this part of the Karakoram. Although this may be true, by careful route finding a safe and relatively straightforward passage was established. Once beyond the ice fall we took a line near the true right bank of the glacier towards Gasherbrum 5 because (as we found to our cost, losing a tent) avalanches sweep down

from the north west slopes of Gasherbrum 1 across the glacier endangering any route along the true left bank.

By 7 June a possible site for advance base camp was reached at c.6,000m a safe distance from possible avalanche danger from the south face of Gasherbrum 2. By this stage we had seen most sides of Gasherbrum 6 (7003m) for which, with Gasherbrum 2 (8035m), we had permission to climb. Possible routes on G6 were evident but it was decided to put our initial effort into attempting G2 and completing our film, etc, leaving G6 for the end of the trip.

In all our time after arriving at base camp we did not have anything that could be described as a period of good weather. Hence, with time needed for load carrying and filming it was not until 25 June that we were in a position to commence climbing above advance base camp level. Through a combination of factors including the complication of filming and the presence of fresh deep snow the whole expedition set off on the original route of ascent: the Moravec south west spur (1956 Austrian). Our intention was to ascend the mountain with two camps and film two members of the team making a ski descent of the mountain.

On the 26 June all members of the team climbed the elegant lower spur past the normal site for camp 1 (c.6,500m) to camp on a broad shelf at c.6,650m below some seracs. Next day everyone moved up without difficulty through the seracs and deep snow to the usual site for camp 2 (c.7,000m) at the foot of a mixed rib which leads to the summit pyramid. From two other expeditions there were also five American and two German climbers spending the night at this camp also hoping to reach the summit the next day.



The 28 June started with some indecision. Fresh snow and cloud brought doubts about the weather, and route finding on the mixed rib or adjacent deep snow proved problematical in the dark. Hence, by mid-day everyone in our party except Donald, Jean-Pierre and Richard were back at camp 2. Iain and Steve stayed there but during the afternoon, in poor visibility and avalanche conditions Carol, Guy, Julie-Ann and Roger descended to advance base camp. Meanwhile, in the early afternoon Jean-Pierre reached the summit followed some time later by Richard (three of the Americans and the two Germans also reached the summit). Very close to the top Donald turned back worried about over exhaustion. During the descent Richard fell some 300m distance: luckily without injury. From c.7,700m Jean-Pierre used skis for his descent. Both summit climbers were helped back to camp 2 during the last stages by Donald, Iain and Steve.

Jean-Pierre and Richard were exhausted and showed early symptoms of acute mountain sickness. The pair took lasix tablets to reduce risk of oedema and were provided many drinks to alleviate dehydration. The next day all five set off to descend to advance base camp. Jean-Pierre used skis for his descent while the others came down on foot. At c.6,750m Jean-Pierre decided to traverse off the route which had been used for ascent so he could ski down the south face proper. Tragedy struck at this point; apparently losing control of his skis on a patch of ice, Jean-Pierre slipped and fell 700m to the foot of the face with fatal consequences. The next day, with the greatest possible dignity, Jean-Pierre was moved to a nearby crevasse and buried.

During the following days at base camp it was decided that Steve should leave for Islamabad to initiate the correct procedures and ensure the Hefti family were informed of the tragedy as soon as possible. It was also agreed that we should carry on with our attempts on the mountain and complete our film which we wanted to dedicate to Jean-Pierre.

On 5 July the seven remaining members of the team ascended to the usual camp 1. Next day Richard returned to base camp because he was still suffering from the exertions of his summit climb and was hence unable to carry on filming much above base camp. The other six set off for camp 2 in the cool of the afternoon but were delayed by very deep snow. Camp 2 was not reached until late that night with at least two of the team dangerously near the limits of safety from cold injury. Next day Roger was suffering from stomach pains (caused by eating insufficiently cooked dehydrated food at camp 1) so he and Julie-Ann set off later than the other four and did not climb for long before turning back. Donald also soon turned back feeling drained. Iain, Carol and Guy were stopped at c.7,300m by the deep snow and breathing problems suffered by Carol. Hence, all six were back at camp 2 early that morning. In the afternoon two German climbers arrived.

Next day (8 July) everyone except Carol set off for the summit. Debilitated by dehydration Roger was climbing slowly so turned back at 7,500m and was accompanied down by Julie-Ann. With the two Germans, Iain, Donald, and Guy reached the summit in late afternoon and arrived back at camp 2 just after dark. Iain was able to use his skis to descend from 7,500m (which he had carried up on his previous attempt) and over the following two days was filmed by the other members of the team while he skied down to advance base camp.

The whole team were back at base camp on 12 July. Other expeditions were now arriving at base camp with reports of more groups following. Members of our team became anxious to use porters from the expected arrivals for our walk-out. Carol, Julie-Ann and Roger wanted to make another attempt on G2. On the 16th in poor weather the three set off. Carol stayed at advance base but Roger and Julie-Ann were obliged to go to camp 1 where their sleeping bags, etc. had been left. Snow conditions were dangerously poor presenting extreme avalanche risk. On the 17th Roger and Julie-Ann descended from camp 1 to advance base and from there with Carol carried down expedition equipment to base camp where porters had been hired. The walk out started on the morning of 19 July.

Walk-out

The walk-out took only 5 days. Hence, we arrived in Skardu on 23 July. Twenty-five porters were employed from an incoming expedition. Our cookboy acted effectively as Sirdar. On the second day from the roadhead, one of the porters was sent to Dusso without a load to order jeeps for the journey from Dusso to Askole. Because food was available from villages on the final 2 days, a lot of expedition food was given away en route.

The itinerary was as follows:

July 19	Base Camp to Ghoro
20	Lilligo
21	Jola. ('bridge' toll between 10-12 Rs per crossing).
22	Hatto ('bridge' toll between 10-12 Rs per crossing. Camping fee 30 Rs).
23	Dusso to Skardu

Accounts

Income

Grants	2,043.81
Donations	3,866.13
Sponsorship	5,000.00
Member's contributions	8,000.00
Member's supplements	219.69

Total £19,129.63

UK Expenditure

Administration	911.36
Peak fees	1,968.00
Equipment	623.18
Insurance	788.01
Food	156.16
Air fares	3,528.00
Airfreight	807.85
Excess baggage	138.00
Return freight charges	76.00
Film costs	547.04
Misc. (including first-aid, repair, and LO costs)	239.83
Sub-total	9,783.43

Pakistan Expenditure

Pre-arrival costs	204.22
Food and accommodation	865.84
Hire of labour	5,623.91
Porter food and equipment	598.88
Porter and LO insurance	285.81
Liason officer costs	231.23
Supplies and equipment	578.91
Transport	572.74
Airfreight	296.27
Misc.	88.39
Sub-total	9,346.20

Total £19,129.63

Balance £00.00

£00.00

Medical Report

Hygiene, particularly on the walk-in with dubious drinking water, requires special care. Boiling all drinking water is essential (we also treated ours with iodine based tablets as an added precaution). Fortunately, we avoided any dysentery which could have easily jeopardised the expedition. With hundreds of porters using the same small camping areas, conditions can easily become unsanitary. Villages usually have only dubious water supplies. The cook needs to be trained and supervised to ensure high standards.

Adequate protection from the sun can save much discomfort and even sickness. The urge to bare oneself to the sun's rays has to be restrained. A few cases of sunburn, and even mild sunstroke proved unpleasant. A large silk or cotton scarf to wrap around one's head and face provided good protection. Porters would not always wear their sunglasses resulting in acute snow-blindness. A check is necessary in the mornings as they leave camp.

There can be few places in the world with such extremes in diurnal temperature variation; this certainly made it hard for the body to adjust. Lots of drinks and keeping out of the midday sun helped.

There were no cold injuries, although there were very low temperatures at night especially in early June. Cold feet and hands had to be watched even with the good equipment we had. Ronicol was carried but not used. A 1/4 aspirin was taken daily by some of the party as an added precaution.

Acclimatisation presented no serious illnesses largely due to the long approach (some two weeks from Dusso at 2,500m to base camp at over 5,000m). Only Ehsaan, our Liaison Officer, suffered a high pulse rate and palpitations at base, so consequently returned to Skardu (this was later diagnosed as a heart murmur). Cheyne stokes breathing/snoring was a common phenomena but with no adverse effects. A period of three weeks between 6000m and 7000m breaking trail and establishing an advance base camp, sitting out bad weather, all helped acclimatisation. Above this altitude people's performance varied, but it was certainly not easy for anyone. During the days and nights spent at 7000m there were headaches and loss of appetite. Diamox was not used. After the first summit attempt Jean-Pierre and Richard were given Lasix. They showed signs of extreme exhaustion and acute mountain sickness.

Minor ailments included mouth ulcers, some dry coughs a lot of indigestion and heartburn for which we could have done with a lot of antacid.

Equipment

Keeping warm did not present too much of a problem; however, high temperatures during the day caused considerable discomfort at times. This means that versatile clothing was essential. Down suits were not considered essential. Neoprene over boots were worn by most members and were very good. Clip on crampons were the norm. Sun hats and scarves were essential garments. Snow holes proved useful sheltering places from the heat as well as secure, comfortable places at night (good quality shovels are essential for this). Ski poles were used by everyone and the adjustable variety were probably most useful. Marker wands for the glacier were also important.

At base camp it should be remembered that Pakistani fuel is notoriously dirty and proper filtering facilities should be taken. If local stoves are to be used then large supplies of every conceivable spare part should be taken as well. Spare mugs, plates and cutlery should also be taken, as well as plenty of matches and lighters. Pressure cookers are invaluable. Water purification should never be overlooked, even at base camp.

Base Camp Food

During the course of an expedition it is at base camp that the majority of food is eaten. At higher altitudes the appetite is diminished, so it is at base where recovery takes place and the shortfall of food not eaten at altitude is made up.

Unfortunately some of the problems that exist cooking food at high altitude are also encountered at base camp. Boiling temperatures are significantly lower and hence pastas, etc. do not cook properly (either remaining hard or sticking together in one mass even if a pressure cooker is used). Instant pastas, etc, are the only practical type. A pressure cooker should be considered mandatory for rice, lentils and any beans to reduce cooking time and to ensure proper cooking.

The main failing of our base camp food was a lack of variety and snacks. A nearby German team was a favourite for afternoon tea -serving a selection of cakes with their coffee!

Foil packed cakes, sweet biscuits (our supply ran out early), nuts, dried fruit, chocolate, etc. can all be consumed in any quantity at base and are an important part of the diet.

There can never be enough flour. Pancakes, scones, pikelets, chapatis, paranta, etc. can all be made with a few extra ingredients providing snacks and extras with a meal (as well as providing some occupational therapy during bad weather). Cheese in all forms was a favourite of which we did not have enough. It is extremely good food value. A selection of sauces can liven up meals near the end of the trip when variety is getting low.

Apart from lentils we had no bean meals. With a pressure cooker beans can be cooked quickly and provide a variety of inexpensive meals high in protien. Sprouting beans, especially alfalfa, may be possible (base was usually very hot during the day) and would provide very welcome fresh food.

High Altitude Food

When considering high altitude food, we had three criteria to fulfil: the food should be appetising, light to carry, and contain sufficient calories to meet our daily energy requirements.

We had varying success in the three areas. Our initial 'ideal' menus were changed as sponsorship arrangements were made. In the end we managed to have the food light enough but perhaps it could have been more appetising.

It is always a problem at altitude to eat and it seems impossible to cater for every individual taste. We made the mistake of packing high altitude rations in man/day packs before departure. All that happened was that people became selective in the items they took on the route negating the time and effort spent in packing. Transporting the high altitude food in packs made damage to certain items unavoidable during the walk-in, etc. It is hard to generalise, but items requiring little or no cooking eg. pate, chocolate, soups, honey, etc, seemed the most popular.

Filming

Making a mountaineering film is an undertaking not to be taken lightly. Fortunately we had both experience and willingness in our team so we were able to make an excellent effort with our two filming projects (a promotional video for The North Face and a 30min film for BBC's World About Us programme to consider). At the time of writing the film is being transfered onto video tape for viewing, hence, no worthwhile comment can be made now about the quality and likely use of our results.

We worked in 'Super-8' using a Beaulieu 6008S camera with 1.4 6-70mm power zoom lens. We did not have the resources to take a second camera (which we would strongly recommend) but having two tripods saved a lot of extra carrying. Cold, as

usual, caused some equipment running problems by tightening the camera drive unit and film cassettes. Using heat pads and silent film helped to overcome these difficulties. Duracell batteries provided reliable power. For sound we used two small cassette recorders.

For stills photography the team had between them 15 cameras. Most of these were made by the same manufacturer so exchanging lenses was possible. Few problems were encountered despite cold and rough treatment (it was very difficult to protect cameras from dust and dirt during the overland journey and walk-in). Getting correct exposures in the extremely bright light above the snow line was not always easy. Kodachrome 25 coped well in these conditions while Fujichrome and Konicachrome 100 provided excellent quality during the walk-in, etc.

Porter Considerations

Loads can never be organised enough. It is suggested that:

i). porters be given permanent tags for numbering so that a particular porter can be identified with a particular numbered load.

ii). different coloured bags etc. be used for different types of load.

iii). hard containers eg. waterproof cardboard boxes, plastic tubs, etc. be used for loads. (These can then be used for seating and storage at base camp).

iv). porter tarpaulins (for shelter at night) may be better brought from the UK where lightweight varieties are available (rather than the heavy, unweildy canvas available locally).

v). giving porters money in lieu of clothing may save time and effort; especially as the porters tend to hoard their new clothing to sell.

vi). quality clothing and equipment is recommended for the cookboy as he is regularly first up and last to bed in a cold environment.

vii). it is worth taking extra care to find a cookboy who can speak a little english and has some initiative. We found our Shinar cook much better than Balti cooks on other expeditions.

viii). if possible avoid buying livestock in Askole and consider such alternatives as buying goats in the previous village, or even Skardu, (or bring out some dehydrated meat rations).

ix). keep load contents out of sight of porters to save demands for equipment.

x). trust the Sirdars judgements of his men and his decisions in porter discussions. As much as possible leave it to the sirdar to decide day to day matters such as where to stop for lunch breaks, and sleep for the night, etc.

xi). at the time of briefing in Skardu make a written agreement between the expedition members, L.O. and Sirdar on rates of pay. This should include details for bad weather and rest day payments, and should be adhered to. Avoiding bonuses and rounding up payment figures seems to help prevent inflating future costs.

xii). the porters value written references. Some partly prepared forms might be useful for this purpose.

xiii). extras such as boiled sweets, squares of plastic (to keep individual loads dry), and plastic bags (used to protect socks in wet or snowy conditions) are all appreciated by the porters and may avert a crisis if a problem occurs. Also, a quantity of simple drugs such as aspirin are useful in alleviating routine complaints such as toothache and headaches.

Expedition Time Chart

May	05	RP and DS depart for Islamabad (meet GH and CN from NZ)
	10	rest of team depart London
	11	arrive Islamabad
	12-13	buy provisions, make travel arrangements, meet LO, etc.
	14	briefing at Ministry of Tourism
	15	depart Islamabad
	16	arrive Skardu

18 Dusso - complete porter selection
 19 to Aapa Alis Gondh - day one of walk-in
 20 to Hatto
 21 to Askole
 22 to Korophon
 23 Korophon rest day due to bad weather
 24 to Paiju
 25 Paiju rest day for porters
 26 to Lilligo (first day on glacier)
 27 to Urdukas
 28 to Gore
 29 to Concordia
 30 to Shangria
 31 to Base Camp (porters paid off and begin return to Dusso)
 June 01 BC rest day (Ehsaan ill; return to Skardu)
 02 recce of route through ice fall
 03 rest day
 04 continue recce of route through ice fall
 05 load carry up to half-way dump
 06 RP and JC to half-way dump, recce route towards ABC site
 07 push route through to head of South Gasherbrum glacier to ABC site, Return to BC.
 Rest of team carry loads to half-way camp, film in ice fall
 08-10 rest days BC due to bad weather
 11 some of team carry loads to halfway dump
 12 all up to half-way camp
 13 carry loads up to ABC
 14 carry up to ABC, DS GH CN down to BC for further supplies
 15 rest day at half-way camp
 16 up to ABC
 17 return to BC (bad weather)
 18-19 rest day BC
 20 attempt to reach ABC but all turn back due to bad weather except CN and GH
 21-23 rest days, CN GH return,
 24 all to ABC
 25 rest day
 26 begin ascent of GII - to Camp 1 6650m
 27 continue ascent to Camp 2 7000m
 28 summit attempt, All turn back except JPH RT DS, JPH RT Reach summit 6pm,
 RP JC GH CN descend to ABC, IP SJ remain at 7000m to help others,
 29 IP SJ RT DS and JPH (on ski) begin descent to ABC,
 JPH killed in 700m fall on South face,
 JPH buried, All to BC
 July 01-04 rest days BC, Steve departs for Switzerland
 05 to ABC am, and continue to 6500m late afternoon
 06 to 7000m late afternoon
 07 rest day
 08 summit attempt, All turn back due to illness, tiredness, poor conditions,
 09 summit attempt, RP JC turn back 7500m, IP DS GH continue, Reach summit 6pm, Return 7000m 8,30pm,
 descent, RP JC to BC, Others to 6500m,
 10 rest days BC
 11-15 RP JC CN to ABC am, RP JC to 6500m pm,
 16 descend after retrieving equipment due to acute avalanche conditions, Clear ABC, Descend to BC
 17 pack loads for departure
 18 to Gore
 19 to Lilligo
 20 to Jola
 21 to Chongo
 22 to Dusso, Continue by jeep to Skardu
 23 Skardu
 24 travel to Islamabad
 25-26 day spent at customs with freight
 27 depart Islamabad
 28 arrive London
 29