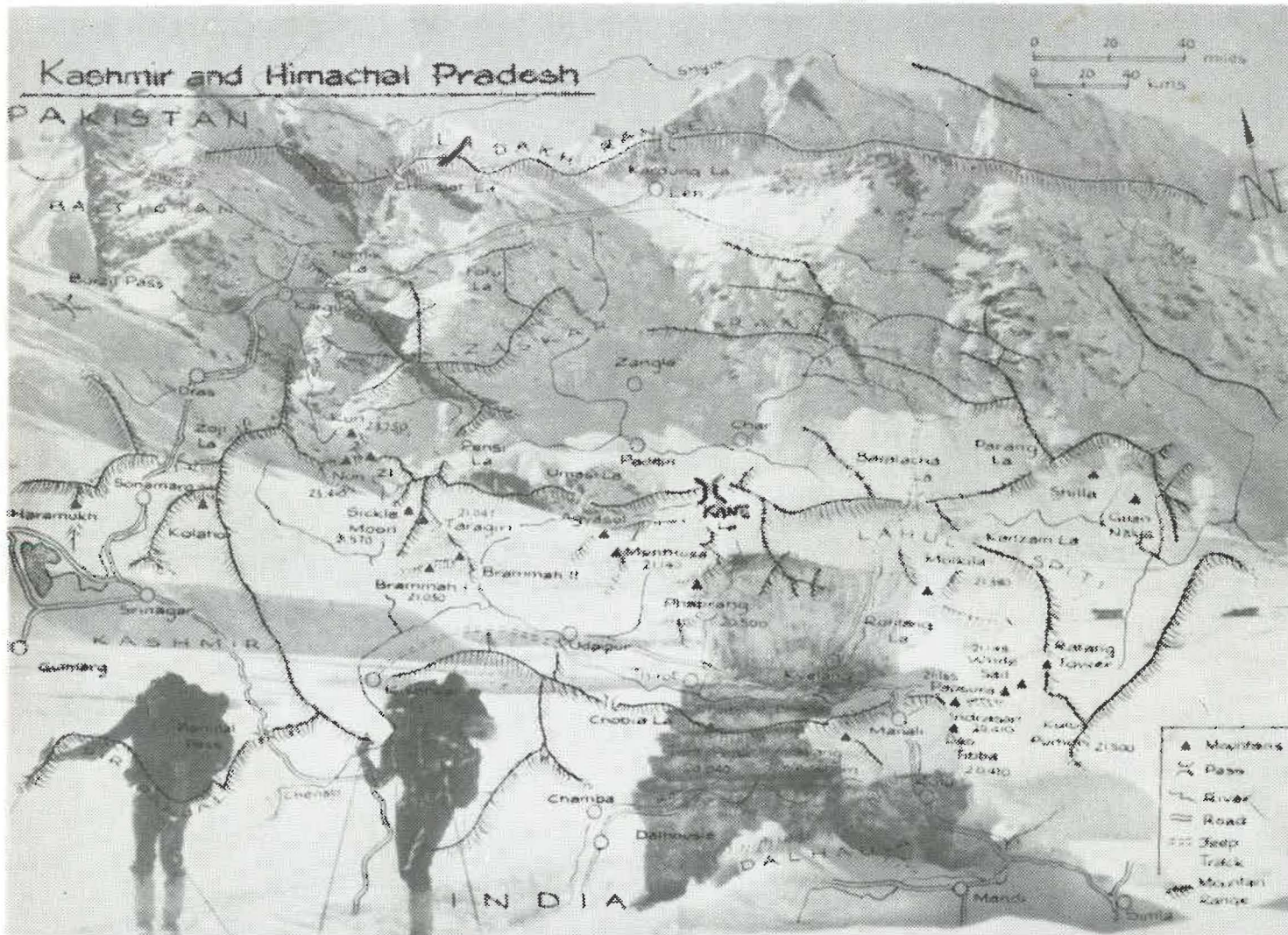


A JOURNEY ON SKIS through the WESTERN HIMALAYAS



26th FEBRUARY - 30th MARCH, 1981

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80/17

A WINTER JOURNEY THROUGH THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

An account of a 600km journey on skis from Srinagar in Kashmir, through Ladakh, Zaskar and Lahaul to Manali in the Kulu Valley, 26 February - 30 March 1981. By Guy Sheridan.

Introduction

In 1977, Odd Eliassen, from Asker in Norway, and I completed a journey on skis across the length of the Zagros mountains in Iran. The experiences of that journey and personal knowledge following visits to Himachal Pradesh in Northern India in 1970 and 1976 convinced us that a similar journey through the Western Himalayas was possible. Indeed the idea was conceived whilst on the journey in Iran and the intervening years were devoted to expanding the original plan not only in scope but also to include a third person - Erik Boehlke an established lawyer from Oslo. After much discussion, most of which was taking place by post across the North Sea, and during several visits to Norway, our concept was evolved. Conscious of the distances and heights involved, we decided on an ultra lightweight journey; we were even more conscious of our intention to enjoy the skiing without the distraction of oversized and overweight rucksacks.

Early in the planning the three of us had agreed that we would not depend for food on local people in the high valleys through which we would pass. We agreed this for three reasons: we wished to maintain our physical performance by having a carefully chosen diet, we wished to avoid the probability of debilitating stomach disorders which local food would cause and more importantly, we wished to avoid having to rely for food on local people who were at a subsistence level existence during the long winter months. Thus our commitment dictated a summer visit to the area to place out dumps of food, fuel and spare equipment. This would also serve the purpose of confirming the actual route we were to ski and the high passes we were to cross.

Easter 1980 found the three of us in the Jotunheimen Mountains making our final decisions on ski equipment, ski waxes and the composition of our food packs. Thus in late August 1980, we flew out to Srinagar in Kashmir with all our food and equipment pre-packed and ready for placing out on our route.

The Summer Reconnaissance

Our three weeks summer holiday was barely long enough to complete the many things we had to do. We agreed that the five of us (we had been joined by Erik's brother Knut and Douglas Keelan, a brother officer in the Royal Marines) would, in very simple terms, go by truck to a point near the centre of our route in the Suru Valley where we would split into two groups. The Norwegians would head Westwards crossing three high passes, placing out one dump of food and eventually arrive at Srinagar which was to be the start point of the winter journey. Meanwhile, Douglas Keelan and I would

continue by truck to Padam in Zaskar placing two dumps of food on the way, and then walk South to cross a little known pass at 5600m to get into the top of the Miyar Nullah. This would lead us down to the Lahaul Spiti area finally ending up in Manali and a rendezvous with the Norwegians in Delhi before flying home hopefully in time for work.

Coincidentally, another Royal Marine, David Nicholls, was going to be in the Miyar Nullah for his attempt on the NW face of Phabrang, and he very kindly agreed to place our final dump of food at Karpot, the small village where he sited his base camp.

In short, the summer reconnaissance was very successful and 40 days food and fuel, spare skis, sticks and other vital equipment were safely deposited to await our return in the winter. The Norwegians reported that we would have to modify our route to avoid the extremely steep and, in winter, dangerous slopes between Baltal and the Anamath Cave and the Gulol Gali pass. Apart from this, our original plan needed no further changes and our finalised route was agreed as Srinagar, Sonamarg, Zoji La Pass (3500m), Dras, Umba La Pass (4400m), Sankho, Ringdum Gompa, Pensi La Pass (4600m), Padum, Tema Shah Nala, Kang La Pass (5600m), Miyar Nullah, Udaipur, Tandi, Rhotang Pass (4000m) and Manali - a distance of nearly 800km.

The Winter Journey

During the summer reconnaissance we had attempted to find out from people along the length of the route the conditions of weather and snow during January, February and March. Commensurate with our lightweight concept was the need to have settled weather and good snow conditions. Our original plan was to begin the journey at the end of January but the information we had gleaned about the snow conditions likely at this time suggested deep powder with little effect from the sun and very cold temperatures. We eventually decided that the end of February would provide the most settled time in Kashmir for our start and that as we progressed South Eastwards it would get warmer and good snow conditions would prevail. Thus we got a taxi in Srinagar on 27 February to take us up to the end of the road near Gund which at 2200m, was the lowest that snow lay in sufficient depth to allow us to ski.

We left our first camp site to negotiate the Sind River gorge at 0530 on 28 February so as to be clear of the dangers of avalanches in its 8km length at the coldest time of the morning. It began to snow and became mild, and after crossing some enormous avalanche cones we were safely through by 0800. Many of the avalanches had completely filled the gorge which in places was so narrow that they were 30-50 metres deep. With heavy snow now falling and the temperature barely on 0°C, we were thankful to be clear of our first obstacle and into the safer valley of Sonamarg. It snowed for another 36 hours and when it stopped, 75cm of heavy new snow made progress up the valley slow and exhausting. At dawn on 2 March, it was -18°C and beautifully clear and from Baltal we were able to observe the Zoji La, our first pass. We needed two clear hot days to allow such a heavy fall of snow to avalanche off the pass which we knew to be dangerous. The alternative to climbing straight up over the pass was to follow a gorge, 1½km long with sides up to 300m high and a width of only 30-50m. This was a death trap and while we waited, a gale blew up

from the North East and prevented us from moving at all. A depression now overcame the three of us and we were confronted with a decision to either sit out the gale and go short on rations till we reached the next dump or to retreat and get round this particular obstacle by flying to Leh, the Capital of Ladakh, and getting a jeep to take us to a point near Dras, about 50km from the other side of the pass. As time and food were precious we opted for a retreat and skied back down the Sind River gorge in failing weather and fearful of the wet snow avalanches crashing down about us.

We had to wait in Srinagar for two days before we got a flight to Leh on 9 March. The next morning we took a jeep over the bare Ladakhi mountains to the Suru Valley and we were able to start skiing again from a point that was only about 60km from the Zoji La. We reasoned that to have missed this short distance of our journey was a better price to have paid than to have faced the enormous dangers confronting us on that pass. Our spirits were high, as was the barometer, and on 11 March in -11°C , we set off on our first day of proper skiing. We passed Nun and Kun, those lovely mountains at the bend in the Suru Valley, and in the evening of 15 March arrived at Ringdom Gompa where we had a dump of food and fuel. The snow conditions were appalling but in the 100km we had covered we had gained altitude from 3120m to 4190m and all in clear weather. The snow conditions had prompted me to write in my diary on 14 March:

"They (snow conditions) have meant trail breaking changing round every 1km and too often the snow seems to be baseless - the poor fellow up front going in it up to the thigh. Rhythm is lost and it is exhausting getting going again. All this doesn't help Erik's back either and today Odd and I have shared most of the work so as to give Erik a break."

Erik had jarred his back and seemed to have resurrected an old spinal injury during our retreat down the Sind River on 4 March. This was a cause of concern not only for Odd and I who would have to think of how to get him out if it got worse, but also for Erik himself who had set aside so much for this ski journey. Our stock of pain killers helped him get through each day but it was a worry that went with us throughout the journey.

On 16 March we were at the foot of the Pensi La Pass and at dawn it was -24°C . The snow conditions were better at the greater altitude and we were able to cover 25km. We had our first stretch of downhill skiing from the top of the pass down onto the DuruDrung Glacier but, regrettably, it was all too short and not on very good snow. On 17 March it was -30°C at 0600 but having lost a little height we were back on bad snow which continued all the way to Padum which we reached at lunchtime on 19 March. Padum was the middle of our journey and we had originally intended to spend four days skiing around the central Zaskar Valley visiting the monasteries and villages. Our dump of food and fuel was sufficient for this period of rest and change and included a bottle of malt whisky to help us sleep soundly. However, the five days we had lost as a result of our false start, dictated that we must change our plans, finish the whisky in one and at 0600 on 20 March we departed. We had come nearly 250km and had over 350km ahead of us.

I wrote in my diary on 20 March: "The snow conditions got worse and after a few Kilometres from Padam we dropped down steep slopes to the river. Here we were able to walk on the ice on the side and occasionally had to cross to avoid the places where the ice had gone with the current". In this manner we passed Burdum Gampa perched high on a knuckle of rock and seemingly barring further progress up the valley. We stopped for lunch having only covered 12km in 6 hours and the last 1km in over an hour. Again my diary reveals our anxiety: "Not one of us can recall skiing in such terrible snow and we are changing the lead every 100m. You break through the thin crust, which suddenly collapses, and you sink up to the thigh in sugar. It is physically impossible to push your way through the crust and the only way forward is to lift the ski completely clear and move it forward to gain $\frac{1}{2}$ a metre. It is exhausting and our spirits were low when at lunchtime we discussed abandoning the journey if the same conditions continued for a further day or two." Happily, shortly after that lunch stop we gained height and with that came better snow and faster progress. At that same lunch stop, I had to manufacture a black eye patch for my left eye which was being snow-blinded by sunlight getting through the gap in between the glasses and my cheek. Judging distance for 3 days thereafter was not easy.

On 21 March it was -8°C , snowing and blowing hard. We gained height all day gradually progressing up the Tema Shah Nala until we turned off the main valley to strike up a glacier which leads to the Kang La Pass. We camped that night at 4775m at the snout of the glacier. The pass is little known and even less used, although it is a relatively straightforward glacier approach all the way to 5600m. However, it is very remote and not possible to find from the 1:250000 map. Ram Seeger, a friend from England, had been over it two years previously and reported its feasibility as a ski route and I had covered the ground the summer before. On that occasion, Ram's directions to me were: "Turn left at a bluff that looks like the Buchaille and you will come to the pass." I was glad of this knowledge gained on the summer trip and it boosted my confidence as navigator for this stretch. We crossed the pass at noon on 22 March in a temperature of -16°C .

Ahead and below us lay the Miyar Nullah, the top of which is a great amphitheatre of peaks rising to 6400m. It was a magnificent and immensely beautiful place and we had to stop to admire it all. Down below us the glacier snaked away to the South and out of sight behind a spur. Where we were, the glacier was 3-4km wide and it seemed to maintain a width of about 2km as far as the eye could see. At its edges, great icefalls and peaks rose precipitously to heights well over 6000m. Regrettably, it was too cold to stay long in this beautiful place but we really did relish the fact that this was virgin skiing, and that for 80km gravity would take us from 5600m to 2600m. We camped a little way down the glacier at 5200m and while we cooked our food the thermometer dropped from -16°C at 1830 to -20°C at 1900 and -24°C at 1930. It was chilly and a 30 knot wind made the impact greater.

We covered 35km on 23 March and it was quite the most exhilarating skiing I had ever experienced. The final 7km of the glacier is a wildly turbulent mass of moraine and ice which was the devil to negotiate in the summer. Now with 2m of snow safely covering the unstable moraines and the bare steep section of ice, we were able to take a straight line down and through it.

It was all too short and we were soon on the level valley at 4000m. Here in the summer we had camped in a sea of Edelweis but now we were on good hard crusty snow and going strong. We covered the same distance on 24 March with gravity doing much more work for us - what a refreshing change it was after so much uphill. We used the river gorge as our line of descent because it was cold and we were early enough to get through before the sun gained sufficient warmth to spring avalanches from the steep slopes to the West. It was exciting skiing with a fall or a late turn certain to pitch you into the river. Odd broke a ski stick which we mended by splinting a fibreglass tent pole to the break with fibre glass tape. Not long after this, we arrived at the tiny village of Khanjar, the highest habitation in the Nullah. Odd was wearing a face mask to protect his nose and lips which had been badly burned by the sun and as he schussed to a stop in the village, the people took to their heels having never seen skis, nor foreigners before at this time of year. It was sometime before they plucked up courage to come out and see who these strange people were.

We skied down through juniper forest, past tiny little villages and isolated houses their roofs creaking under the weight of the necessities of winter-hay, firewood and dried dung - and as we passed, their owners clambered up onto the roofs to watch us glide by. We glided on down past Gumba where the route up to Menthosa, the highest peak in the area, leaves the main valley and on to Karpat where we picked up our last dump of food and fuel. At these lower altitudes, for we were now at 3000m, the snow was soupy by noon and the South facing slopes were often free of it. Nevertheless, we were able to ski down to Shakoli, a small hamlet that guards the entrance to the final gorge of the Miyar Nullah. We had a walk down this impressive gorge for 8km to Ukaipur because it was too steep and dangerous to ski. We stayed the night of 25 March in the attractive little PWD rest house which had been kept open throughout the winter by an Indian Army Doctor and an Engineer. They were extremely pleased to see us and we were privileged to enjoy Indian Army beer for the rest of the day.

By noon on 28 March, we had covered the 110km to the top of the Rhotang Pass and all that remained of our journey was a 2000m descent to Manali. It was not easy choosing a line down which to ski from the pass; it was very steep and it was mid afternoon. We had decided to ski down in the afternoon when the snow was soft because we had reasoned that to ski down in the early morning would be foolhardy for a fall would result in an uncontrollable and dangerous slide down bone hard névé with no chance of stopping. While we therefore accepted that there would be a greater risk of avalanches, we calculated that the risk would be worth taking. After a thrilling descent we got down safely to the snow line at the Kothi resthouse. We thumbed a lift in a PWD lorry full of workers who had been working on clearing the road of snow, and arrived in Manali as dusk was falling.

Appendices:

1. Timetable of Events
2. Notes on Food, Fuel and Dumps
3. Notes of Equipment
4. Medical Equipment
5. Notes on Personal Clothing

TIME/TABLE OF EVENTS

APPENDIX 1

Date (a)	From (b)	To (c)	Temperature (d)	Weather (e)	Distance (f)	Altitude (Camp) (g)
27 Feb	Srinagar	Gund (By Taxi)				
27 Feb	Gangangir	Near Munahoi	- 1°C	Overcast	6 km	2300 m
28 Feb	Munahoi	Near Baltal	0°C	Heavy Snow	24 km	2850 m
1 Mar	Near Baltal	Baltal	- 2°C	Snow	6 km	2850 m
2 Mar	Baltal	Zoji La and back	- 18°C	Clear	8 km	2850 m
3 Mar	At Baltal		- 15°C	Clear/Gale		2850 m
4 Mar	Baltal	Near Munahoi	- 11°C	Clear/Gale	28 km	2300 m
5 Mar- 8 Mar	At Srinagar					
9 Mar	Flight to Leh					
10 Mar	Leh (By Jeep)	Sankho	- 5°C	Overcast		
10 Mar	Sankho	Near Karpakhar	- 5°C	Light Snow	5 km	3120 m
11 Mar	Karpakhar	Panikher	- 11°C	Clear	24 km	3320 m
12 Mar	Panikher	Near Pharkatse	- 13°C	Clear	23 km	3560 m
13 Mar	Pharkatse	Near Gulmatango	- 15°C	Clear	22 km	3940 m
14 Mar	Gulmatango	Ringdom Gompa	- 15°C	Light Snow	23 km	4050 m
15 Mar	Ringdom Gompa	Foot of Pensi La	- 13°C	Clear	22 km	4190 m
16 Mar	Pensi La	Near Cherukurma	- 24°C	Clear	25 km	4150 m
17 Mar	Cherukurma	Kushol	- 30°C	Clear	25 km	3820 m

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
18 Mar	Kushol	Dettung	- 20°C	Clear	25 km	3740 m
19 Mar	Dettung	Padam	- 8°C	Clear	20 km	3640 m
20 Mar	Padam	Tema Shah Nala	- 5°C	Overcase	18 km	4160 m
21 Mar	Tema Shah Nala	Glacier Snout	- 8°C	Snow/Gale	15 km	4775 m
22 Mar	Glacier Snout	Miyar Nala	- 16°C	Hazy Sun	20 km	5200 m
23 Mar	Miyar Nala (Top)	Gumba Nala	- 15°C	Clear	38 km	3980 m
24 Mar	Gumba Nala	Near Karpat	- 22°C	Clear	38 km	3160 m
25 Mar	Karpat	Udaipur	- 8°C	Clear	19 km	2670 m
26 Mar	Udaipur	Kirting	- 5°C	Clear	38 km	2800 m
27 Mar	Kirting	Near Sissu	- 5°C	Clear	38 km	3100 m
28 Mar	Sissu	Manali	- 11°C	Clear	55 km	1800 m

Passes Crossed

16 Mar	Pensi La	4600m
22 Mar	Kang La	5600m
28 Mar	Rhotang La	4000m

NOTE:

Altimeter readings made on the journey may not correspond to the true heights.

NOTES ON FOOD, FUEL AND DUMPS

1. Food. All food was sorted, divided and packed into a 24 hour pack for 3 men and each one was sealed in a plastic bag. There were four menus which we calculated would provide sufficient variety to maintain culinary interest. The supper meal in each pack was visible through the plastic so that, at a glance, the menu could be chosen. A breakfast and lunch pack was enclosed in separate polythene bags. The pack weighed 2.6kg and contained approximately 4500 calories per man.

2. Forty 24 hour packs were segregated into thick polythene sacks, and sealed for placing in 6 dumps. These were at:

Srinagar	- 9 days
Sokhniz	- 4 days
Panikher	- 2 days
Ringdom Gompa	- 7 days
Padum	- 10 days
Karpat	- 8 days

The number of packs in each dump included a percentage additional to cater for weather, bad snow conditions and other delays. The whole lot was flown air cargo to Delhi in May 1980 to await collection at the end of August for placing out during the summer reconnaissance.

3. Fuel. A Trangia stove was chosen as our cooker. It is so simple that it needs no spares and is safe from flash and fumes. After much difficulty, 35 litres of crude methylated spirit were bought in Delhi in August 1980. This was then decanted into 1 litre plastic containers and placed in the food dumps as follows:

Srinagar	- 5 litres
Sokhniz	- 4 litres
Panikher	- 1 litre
Ringdom Gompa	- 5 litres
Padum	- 7 litres
Karpat	- 6 litres

The remaining 7 litres were used for cooking during the summer reconnaissances.

4. Dumps. These were placed out at approximately 7 days skiing interval. The interval was an estimation only and could have become greater if bad weather and snow conditions delayed progress. Our dumps were placed in houses at the start and in the high villages on our route. These were as follows:

Srinagar. The Rev John Ray, Principal of the Tyndale Biscoe School very kindly allowed a large dump of additional equipment to the food to be left in his house. This included skis, waxes and clothes.

Sokhniz. The Forest Rest House chokidar was given the assurance that a retainer would be forthcoming when the packages were collected in the winter. In the event, this food was not used and the Rev John Ray had first refusal on it should he be in that area subsequently.

Panikher. The school teacher, Mr Habibollah, kindly took care of this small package.

Ringdom Gompa. The Venerable Tondup Sonam, the Head Lama of this remote Monastery, took care of the dump which included one spare ski stick. He kept it all in his own cell.

Padum. Mr Punchok Dawa, son of the King of Padum, looked after our large dump. In addition to the food and fuel were a pair of skis, spare ski waxes, ski stick baskets, and three small bags containing personal clothing such as a change of socks and under-pants. There was also a litre bottle of malt whisky!

Karpat. A dump was established by David Nicholls at the house of Moti Singh whom had been his base camp caretaker during the ascent of North West face of Phabrang.

EQUIPMENT

1. Skis. Aasnes cross country skis from Bergen in Norway were used. Each was 210cm and had metal edges down half of each side and were made of fibreglass. They were very strong and robust although the tail laminate began to rise towards the end of the journey.

2. Sticks. Cane sticks were provided by Liljedahl of Lillehammer, Norway. These were chosen in favour of metal sticks because we knew that metal was more likely to snap and thus be impossible to mend. We argued that cane would split and would be reparable with strong fireglass tape. The baskets that came with the skis were unsatisfactory and were designed for use on well prepared tracks. They broke easily and our stock of spares were completely used up. The baskets gave little or no support in the snow that we encountered for 2/3 of the journey and we had to attach larger plastic baskets over them which we had taken for use in very deep snow.

3. Bindings. Rottefjella 75mm Nordic norm bindings were fitted on all skis, thus enabling interchangeability.

4. Waxes. We took virtually the complete range of Swix ski waxes, most of which had been left in dumps during the summer. The quantities were:

<u>Srinagar</u> .	Klister	- 3 violet, 3 blue, 3 red
	Stick	- 2 blue, 3 green, 2 extra cold, 3 violet and 2 special
	Stick Klister	- 2 yellow
<u>Padum</u> .	Klister	- 3 violet, 3 blue, 1 red
	Stick	- 2 blue, 1 green, 1 violet, 1 special
	Stick Klister	- 1 red, 1 yellow

At the last moment before departure from Europe, we decided to take an additional 6 of each colour Klister. Waxing corks and a wax scraper for removing wax from the skis were carried and the waxes were shared out between the three of us to distribute weight.

5. Boots. Odd Eliassen used rubber ski boots while Erik Boehlke and I used leather. We carried two tubes of waterproofing paste although the main waterproofing protection we had were rubber oversocks. We started with two pairs each and collected a further two pairs from our dump at Padum. We also had boot oversocks of nylon fur for use in extreme cold. Goretex snow gaiters provided by Bergans of Norway were worn throughout the journey.

6. Tent. A waterproof self supporting tent with an inner lining was provided by Bergans. It was remarkably roomy and comfortable for three men. It weighed 3.8kg. 3 spare tent poles were carried which doubled up as splints for broken ski sticks.

7. Sleeping. Helsport HIMALAYA down sleeping bags proved to be excellent and extremely warm. Each weighed 1.8kg. Full body length closed cell polyurethane sleeping mats made an excellent insulating floor to the tent and were also used consistently for day time stops.

8. Rucksacks. Our rucksacks were provided by Bergans and were robust, comfortable and stood up to the journey very well. The outer material was not waterproof and it was necessary to enclose everything inside plastic bags inside the sack. Detachable pockets were useful for carrying fuel and a system of straps on the side allowed skis to be attached.

9. Tool Kit. This was an essential item to carry on such a journey. It contained:

Rapid Araldite Adhesive
1 Pair Ski Bindings and Screws
Spare Heel Pads for Skis
Heavy Duty Needle and Waxed Thread
Screwdriver
Rolls of Insulation and Glassfibre Tape
Nylon Cord
Housewife Sewing Kit

10. Miscellaneous. Thermos flasks were carried as a fuel economy measure. They were most useful and enabled speedier departures in the early morning cold. We each carried a 15m avalanche cord. A good lightweight shovel was carried.

11. Pooled Stores. These were items which were for communal use and were therefore pooled to be divided equally in weight between the three of us. They were:

Cooker)	
Tool Kit)	Carried by Eliassen
Tent)	
Spare Poles)	Carried by Boehlke
Shovel)	
Medical Equipment)	Carried by Sheridan

12. Maps. We carried two sets of 1:250,000 maps cut down in size to cover only our route. Each was sealed by a special clear film of plastic.

13. Cameras. We carried two Olympus OM and one Pentax SE cameras with 50mm, 28mm, and 2 x Tele Converter and one zoom lens for the Pentax. Individuals carried their own requirements of film although we had about 30 rolls between us.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

1. Our medical stores were contained in a waterproof zipped bag and consisted of the following:

- 1 x Shell Dressing
- 1 x 5cm Crepe Bandage
- 1 x 10cm Crepe Bandage
- Plastic Hinged Box containing:

- Assorted Plasters
- 25 grams Cotton Wool
- 2 Thermometers
- Lomotil Tablets
- DF118 Painkiller Tablets
- Septtrin Antibiotic Tablets
- Codis Headache Tablets
- Streptatoid Tablets
- Piriton Tablets
- Senekot Tablets
- Diazepam Tablets
- Anthisan Tablets
- Water Purifying Tablets
- Dequadin Throat Lozenges
- Cavit Emergency Tooth Filling
- Tubes of Lasonil, Bulidin Antiseptic and Anthisan Creams

2. In addition to the medical bag which was considered, for carrying purposes, to be pooled expedition stores, each individual carried his own Lipsalve and sun protection creams.

3. We used Lomotil initially after leaving Leh where we had been eating food other than our rations. Otherwise, use of the medical stores were restricted to headache, DF118 pills and some of the creams.

PERSONAL CLOTHING

1. In order to remain lightweight, we ruthlessly reduced our clothing to a minimum which seemed ridiculously little when we packed. There was a need to exclude bulky items since we needed the space for food packets in our rucksacks. This eliminated down clothing from our list and once we had adjusted to that, which took some time because we expected -30°C temperatures, we were able to prune away all the 'nice to have' to be left with the barest essentials.

2. The spare clothing we each took were 2 pairs of socks, long johns, a vest, a pair of gloves and a hat and we each had a spare pair of glasses. We realised that what we wore would get extremely dirty and smelly but accepted that there was probably little chance either of each other noticing or, for that matter, any local people we met.

3. Our skiing clothing consisted of the usual windproof trousers, sweater and anorak and to replace bulky Duvet jackets we took thin padded ski jackets and overtrousers of the same material. All in all our clothing for the journey weighed approximately 4.5 kgs. We were always adequately warm, often in very cold temperatures and some extreme wind chill.

Major FMC Sheridan Rm

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13 Aug 81

Dear Brigadier Barker Wyatt,

This is to let you know that I am putting the finishing touches to an account of our ski journey across the Western (Indian) Himalayas which was successfully completed at the end of March.

I apologise for the delay in getting things finished - I have been involved in an exercise and it takes time for the drafts to cross the North Sea, find my Norwegian companions, get their approval and corrections, and have them returned. Nonetheless I hope to have a copy with you by the end of September.

Yours sincerely

FMC Sheridan

