
Canadian Arctic and Alaska 1989

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Auyuittuq National Park Reserve had only three climbing parties in 1989. Earl Redfern and a companion tried to climb Mounts Thor and Odin but failed because of bad weather. Julie Munsell and Stephen Roberts flew to Broughton Island,¹ crossed to Maktak Fiord by snowmobile and ascended Maktak glacier, crossed the Penny Icecap and descended to the head of South Pangnirtung Fiord. Christopher Holloway, Pia Cole, Josée Auclair, Richard Weber and three dogs crossed the Penny Icecap from Okoa Bay to Pangnirtung Fiord in about 13 days in 1988.² Dave MacAdam made his twentieth consecutive summer trip to Baffin Island and continued his lone journeys, visiting Tasialuit valley, which is between and parallel to North Pangnirtung and Kangert Fiords. He climbed one peak of about 1325m, which had been already climbed by a British expedition in about 1978, and several smaller peaks.

G van B Cochrane³ of the Explorers' Club returned to the Virginia glacier on the E coast of Baffin Island, near Cape Dyer, which he and his companions had surveyed in 1967 to 1977. During the 10 years of the first survey there were only early signs of recession, but marked recessions of many glaciers were reported from their 1989 survey. They deduce from this, somewhat trivially, that the recessions are caused by environmental changes. Four first ascents were made.

The 1988 report from Kluane National Park was too late in arriving, and so is reported this year. There were 60 people in the St Elias Mountains and they spent a total of 1329 nights there. Bob and John Jonas, Jeff Desbecker and Jim McLatchy ski'd in 45 days from the Bagley glacier in Alaska through the Seward glacier and out by the Kaskawulsh glacier in Kluane National Park Reserve. They used specially designed parachutes to help them across the icefields. Paul Hemstride, Chris Jones, Rhonda Markell and Roderick Leighton climbed some mountains near Pinnacle Peak and had eight days of good weather.

Several attempts were made on the E ridge of Mount Logan. A group of 10 from the Canadian Forces failed because of bad weather and avalanches. John Cathro and three others tried the E ridge. One member joined Max Lautenbacher and climbed the E peak. The party ski'd out by the Kaskawulsh glacier. Four members of a Mount Logan expedition were unsuccessful on Alaska King Peak, but four members reached the summit of Mount Logan. Grant McCormack and five others tried the E ridge of Mount Logan but failed because of snow and avalanches.

The W ridge of Mount McArthur was climbed for the first time by Chic Scott, Tim Friesen and Ken Wallator in association with a group calling themselves the PGOE East Ridge Logan. In Denali National Park, the coldest recorded temperature during the winter of 1988-89 was -60°C at 5200m. David Auble and Charlie Townsend made the first ascent of the E face of Mount

Russell on about 18 May 1989. The first winter solo ascent of the W rib of Mount McKinley was made by Dave Staeheli on 12 March 1989. On 13 May 1989, the first parapente descent from the N peak to the 5000m camp on the W buttress was made by Bertrand Doligez and Serge Tuaz.

James Quirk and David Nettle made the first complete ascent of the W face of Mount Huntington about 24 May 1989, and made the second ascent of the German route on the Moose's Tooth. Tod Bibler and Doug Levin made the first ascent of Peak 2300m in the Ruth Gorge, by the W face to the SW ridge. Seth Shaw and Conrad Anker made the first ascent of the W-ridge variation of Mount Hunter. The second ascent of the Infinite Spur on Mount Foraker was made by Jim Nelson and Mark Bebie on 24 June 1989.

Accidents in North American Mountaineering is edited and published by the American Alpine Club and the Alpine Club of Canada. It reports mountaineering accidents in North America, and the 1989 edition reports one accident in Nain, Labrador, one on Mount Marcus Baker in Alaska, eight on Mount McKinley and one on Mount Blackburn. It is well worthwhile owning copies for the lessons we can learn. They can be obtained from The American Alpine Club, 113 East 90th St, New York, NY 10128-1589, USA, or The Alpine Club of Canada, PO Box 126, Banff, Alberta, TOL OCO, Canada.

REFERENCES

- 1 J Munsell and S Roberts. *Can Alp J* 72, 64, 1989.
- 2 R Weber. *Canadian Geographic*, Feb/March 1990.
- 3 G van B Cochrane. *The Explorers' Newsletter* 21, Nos 3 and 4, 4, 1989.

Józef Nyka adds:

Japanese Mount McKinley Tragedy

Three well-known Japanese mountaineers, Noboru Yamada, Teruo Saegusa and Kozo Komatsu, were killed attempting a winter ascent of North America's highest mountain. They were seen for the last time on 22 February 1989 at 5200m. On 13 March their bodies were found lying beneath the traverse to Denali Pass by an aeroplane searching for them.

This is a heavy blow for Japanese mountaineering because all three were among the country's leading 'himalayists'. Yamada (39) in 1988 became 'number one' among Japanese Himalayan climbers. Between 1978 and 1988 he collected ascents of nine 8000m peaks, three of them carried out in December, and he climbed Everest three times (in 1983, 1985 and 1988). In 1981 he made the first ascent of Langtang Ri (7205m) and in 1984 the first ascent of Mamostong Kangri (7516m). A series of four eight-thousanders, including Everest, completed within 11 months gave him world-wide publicity. His climbing partner Teruo Saegusa (31) ascended four eight-thousanders,

conquering Everest twice. In December 1987, accompanied by Yamada and two other companions, he climbed the British route on Annapurna S face; all four members of this team have now died in three separate accidents. The third victim of Mount McKinley, Kozo Komatsu (35), ascended in 1975 the dangerous Dhaulagiri IV (7661m), and in 1979 he was a member of the party which completed the striking traverse of Dhaulagiri II (7751m), III (7715m) and V (7618m).

During last year a new record-breaking idea had captured the imagination of Yamada. He decided to climb the highest summits of all continents – in winter! He had already ascended wintry Aconcagua, Kilimanjaro and Mont Blanc. After McKinley Elbrus was to follow. It should be recalled that Naomi Uemura, another great Japanese mountaineer and adventurer, disappeared in February 1984 during a winter ascent of Mount McKinley, the first ever solo.