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cover: An ice dammed lake formed by the

1965-66 Steele Galt Glacier surge. G.K.C. Clarke.

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Per Temba sherpa on Bosson Glacier, Chamonix Chic Scott

## THE OLD ALPINIST

He sits back with his pipe  
one mild evening  
to gaze over rows  
of imaginary peaks  
snow-streaked and solemn.  
His back curls  
like an old photograph,  
his beard is a mat  
of bleached moss.  
I ask him about  
the past, but he stares  
deafly out the window.  
I leave, wondering if  
he can hold together  
the tatters of the past  
with old summers in his mind  
and old photographs of which  
he's more and more a part.  
Can he discern his friends  
or are they  
lustrous ghosts in half-cold air  
waving across meadows,  
succumbing to the shadows  
that draw near and  
touch his window?  
Gordon Burles

## The Alps

*The 'coldest' hour is just before the dawn.*

To me the Alps of Europe offer the greatest combination of mountain experiences. Rock and ice of all difficulties, thousands of fine routes, altitude, serious weather considerations, the concentration of many fine climbers of all nationalities from whom to learn and of course the history and tradition. There is even solitude if one chooses the right places and times to seek it. For five seasons now I have been climbing and guiding in the Alps. These are some of my experiences and discoveries.

### THE CLIMBS

#### *Aig. de Triolet, North Face*

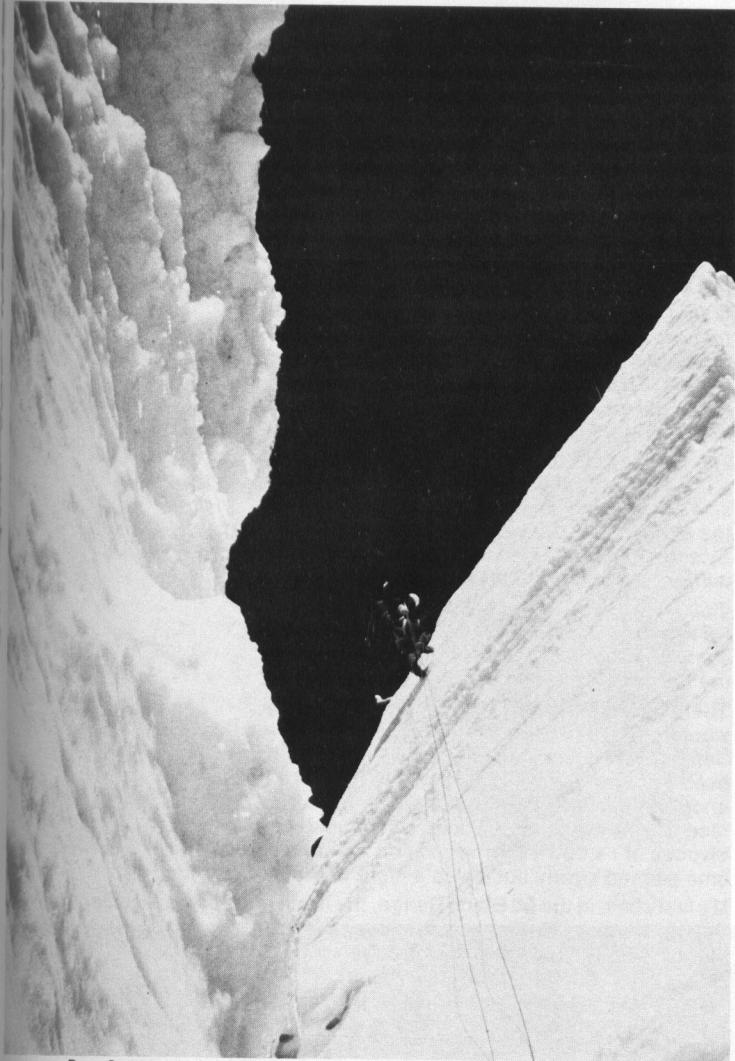
*Almost as mindless as ski touring. A valid comment on ice climbing. The North face of the Triolet is 2600 ft and except for a 'plateau' in the upper section, smooth and unbroken; about 60°.*

*The joy of the climbing is in the rhythm and freedom of movement. Pitch after pitch, front pointing, step after step, the ice and time flow by with the same mechanical functions and pattern. There are no ledges, no overhangs, nothing to hide the exposure; nothing to conceal the aesthetic quality of this magnificent sheet of ice.*

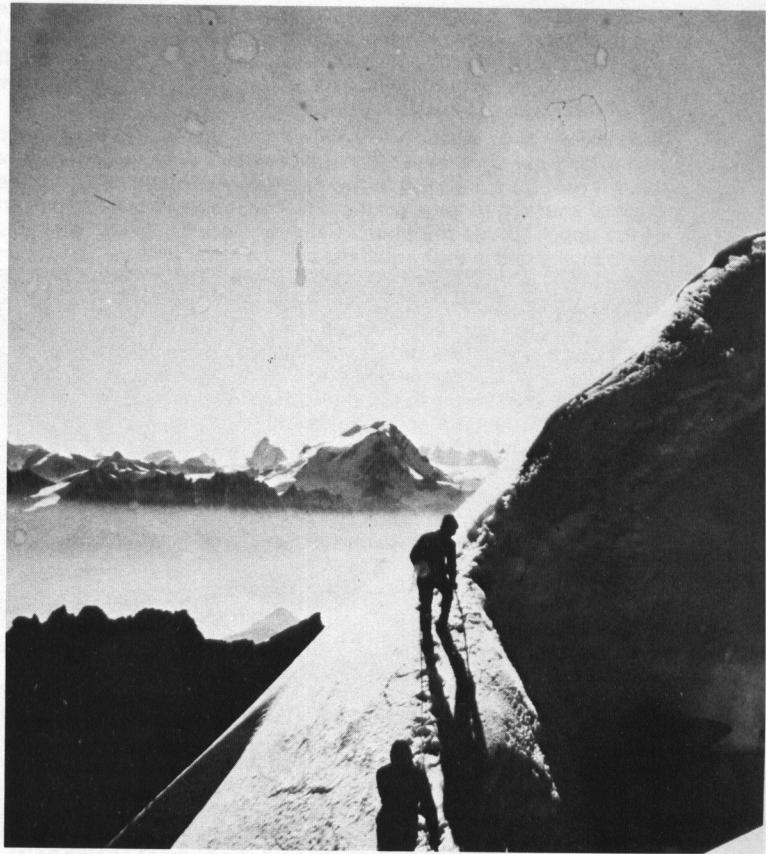
*The roping up at 2 a.m. by headlamp, amidst avalanche debris and the initial pitches in the dark beneath unseen seracs add some spice. The silence, stars, splintering ice, sounds of axe and crampons, the sunrise and unbroken line reveal the beauty.*

This I wrote several summers ago. I made the climb with Matt Hale, a fine climber from the eastern US, and began to discover the joy and technique of ice climbing. There is no finer place than amongst the granite spires above Chamonix. Here one can spend seasons choosing one ice route after another.

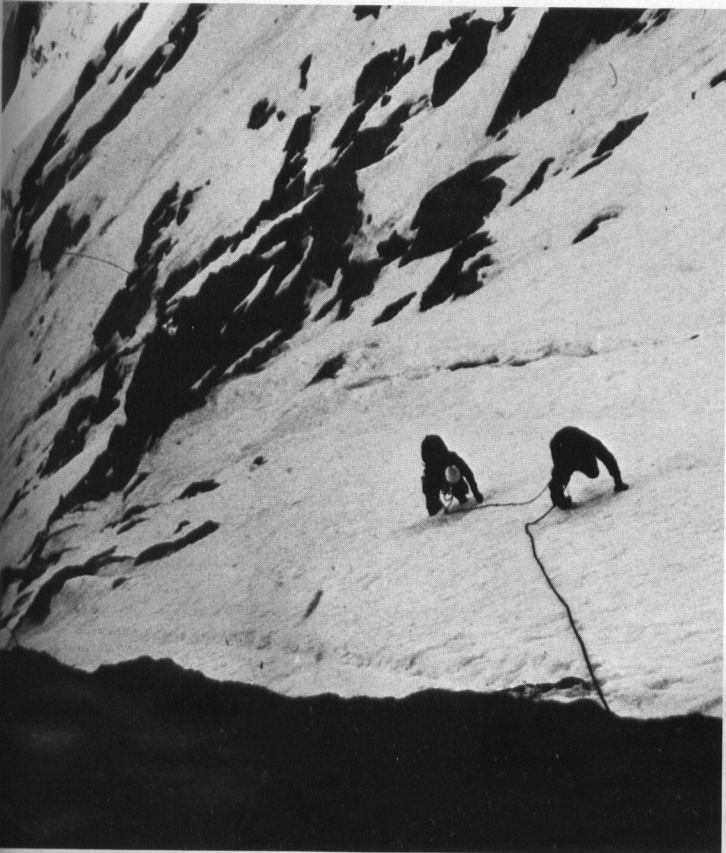
*Dent d'Herens North Face.* Early the next year Dave Smith and I casually wandered from Zermatt to the Schonbuhl Hut, bound for the famous Dent d'Herens north face. One of Willo Welzenbachs greatest ice climbs it is an ice climbers dream — 4000 ft, with a barrier of seracs at half height offering some complex climbing and finishing with a 1500 ft headwall of 55° to the summit. The evening was from a Swiss postcard. Bivouaced beside a boulder we make our brew — the face directly across from us shone in the setting sun. Round us sheep foraged around with tinkling bells. In the black of midnight we started out by headlamp. As it slowly grew light we soloed the first 2000 ft of snow and ice and broken rock sections. As the sun rose we ran up against the famous serac barrier, the key to the climb. A meandering pitch of 60° led to a vertical wall of 80 ft, gently overhanging at the start. I led up with a pterradactyl and a curved axe. After 10 or 12 ft hanging by a sling from the pterra' I went a screw. Then off again with my crampons just barely touching the ice and my full weight on the 'meathooks' in my hands. Another dozen feet and another screw. A great place to try out the modern ice technique — on overhanging walls, 2000 ft up. After about 30 ft the wall laid back to the vertical then towards the top to about 80° and I could climb on my feet. Dave jumared and led off on the next pitch. We had reached a crevasse which seemingly split the wall



Dave Smith rappelling into the crevasse on Dent d'Herens North Face *Chic Scott*



With client on summit ridge of Les Courtes *Chic Scott*



With client in upper part of Whympre Couloir on Aig. Verte *Chic Scott*



Two clients in Spenser Couloir on Aig. de Batière *Chic Scott*

from one side to the other. Into the crevasse and a lead of 60° to the top of the lower side — the upper lip would involve a full pitch of overhanging ice. We found ourselves on a thin ridge, the gulf in front of us 140 ft deep and 100 ft across. We traversed along the top to the other end. More of the same.

But there did appear to be a way. Off a snow mushroom we rappelled and swung out underneath the seracs where they spewed over a 1000 ft rock face. Belayed to two screws we climbed easily up the edge of a serac hanging over the cliff. The top was barely 20 ft short of the upper lip and the plateau above. Once again the wall was overhanging and in the heat of the sun the snow and ice had begun to melt and our axes would not hold. Resorting to traditional aid techniques we hammered in the shaft of an axe, then another, then the pterra', then down on the rope to retrieve an axe to use above. Finally we were on the top. In late afternoon we climbed steadily pitch after pitch up the headwall and as the sun set we scrambled over the top, 100 ft from the summit. In the black we found a ledge to revel in the cloudless night and await the morning. Above the stars, below their counterparts, the lights in the Italian valleys. Sunrise, a brew and then the short walk to the summit and the top of one of the finest pure ice routes in the Alps. It is something to remember that these two routes and most of the other great ice classics were done in the '20s and '30s, long before pterradactyls, curved axes, front points and ice screws.

*Mt Blanc de Tacul, the Gervesutti Pillar.* But it's not all ice in the Alps. 5 a.m. and a flaming red sunrise found Matt and I at the base of Mt Blanc de Taculs Gervesutti Pillar. Above, 2500 ft of Chamonix granite. After debating the weather ('Red sky in the morning...') Matt took the first lead — fine V sup., immaculate rock and cold hands. For 1500 ft it was sustained. Mainly moderate V's with some IV and some short aid sections. This had to be one of the most pleasant rock climbs in the area. All around were the spires and ice of the Mt Blanc Massif. Nearby rose the Grand Capucin whose east face I had climbed in '68, my first season in the Alps. 2000 ft of aid, it would hardly inspire a Yosemite climber with all the pins in place, but I had found it exciting. It was my first aid climb, first hanging belays and the angle never eased off. The weather held and after eleven hours, seven less than guidebook time, we found ourselves on the summit. The last 1000 ft though easy had been slow — the top is 14,000 ft and above 12-13,000 ft you begin to notice it. Probably overgraded with an ED rating it is still a superb climb. All face climbing, a pack is not a hindrance and as it faces south east it is regularly in condition.

*Aiguille de Dru North Face.* Not so the Dru North Face. Cold and icy, it's in the traditional north face style. In training for the Rassemblement International, Lloyd MacKay and I were thinking of greater things and the Dru was a warmup. 'Watch out for those fourth class pitches' is a general comment on the Alps and a true one. Narrow squeeze chimneys with a large pack can become desperate and those corners, trickling with water and covered with verglas, ferocious. A solid line of pins ten feet to the right witness someone else's struggle under worse conditions. The section around 'The Niche' supposedly the hard part was a pleasure. Bordering the west face, it's dry, the granite is flawless and the protection excellent. But then another fourth class pitch! Fashioning etriers from slings and hero loops, a ten foot wall took three aid pins, in place of course. Only fourth class? With a black storm looming in the west we bivouaced about 300 or 400 ft from the top. Hurrying over mixed ground, with no runners and a poor belay, nicking steps in the ice with my hammer I almost came off, so we stopped on a convenient ledge. A few sprinkles of snow in the morning spurred us on to the top and the rappels down the other side. The weather held till we reached the glacier then the heavens opened. For a month it stormed and there went our plans.

*Les Courtes North Face, the Swiss Direct.* Lloyd and I had managed one other fine route before the Dru so the summer was not completely lost. The Swiss direct on the north face of Les Courtes had a hard reputation and was listed as one of the half dozen or so most serious ice climbs in Europe. Friends warned us of its terrors but undaunted we continued up to the Argentiere Hut. After a late 2 a.m. start the sun was already on the face when we reached the 'schrund. Some near vertical moves and a steep wall above led to a rib of loose rock which we followed to the start of the main difficulties, a 300 ft section of thin, 70° ice. Climbing next to the rock for solid protection, three leads took us up. It was steep enough to necessitate cutting a step from which to place a screw and one was thankful for a pterradactyl to keep one on the vertical. As we climbed over the rim onto the wide, 55° slopes above, a huge bird-like object winged through the air. The rock crashed, spurring adrenalin. No damage but we regretted our late start. Pitch after pitch followed. An afternoon storm sent down streams of spindrift but cleared as we reached a small ledge 300 ft below the top. We stopped here for the night and

in sunshine the next morning continued to the summit and down the other side to a welcome drink.

*Aiguille d'Argentiere, North East Face Direct.* It's hard to find a line for a new route in the Alps but Douglas Haston spends much of his spare time browsing through climbing journals and several springs ago came up with one. The north east face of the Aig. d'Argentiere had a fine, steep ice gully running up it into a wide icefield above. The spur immediately to the right had been climbed by Messner but not this gully so we went after it. Shortly after the climb I wrote:

*As usual, another early start. 2 a.m., threading crevasses by headlamp. Silence reigns at this hour and everything is at peace. Only the occasional murmur from the ice or the crack of a solitary rock leaping to the glacier below breaks the stillness. At this hour all is frozen.*

*First light and you wrestle gear and ropes with numb and painful fingers. Two or three pitches and you're ready for anything. Then the angle steepens and your axe holds you on; pulls you up. It was never meant to be a walking stick anyways.*

*Two pitches of 70° over plates of snow and ice, with poor protection follows. Everything hits rock but sometimes the protection is in the skill and the caution. Then the angle eases onto the lower edge of the icefield. Six or seven pitches of 50°, under a new hot sun, step by step lead to the final ribs and gullies. The final slopes arrive and with them once more the clouds and mist.*

*Quickly, over the edge and down into the gully. The rope comes off ('Better one than two.') and 2000 ft of step kicking, each with his own thoughts brings the glacier again. An evenings stroll follows to the hut for a hot brew and a pleasant sleep.*

There have been many more good climbs over these five seasons. It would be hard to forget that overhang on the west face of the Third Sella Tower in the Dolomites. Swinging like a monkey on jugholds over a square cut six foot roof was a new and exhilarating experience. And so was the wine and spaghetti at the bottom. The north face of the Lyskamm in deep new snow gave us an unexpected bivouac at 14,000 ft with no gear on a clear and cold June night. The time passed slowly but it was a night to remember.

My first climb in the Mt Blanc Range, the north ridge of the Aiguille de Peigne is one of the finest in the area. 2000 ft of the best granite in the world, the final 1000 ft is sustained and strenuous Vth class climbing. A group of Chamonix guides and guide aspirants taking their exam above us belied the guidebooks by using their etriers on the difficult sections. Then there was the incident of the rock with Lloyd on the Old Brenva route. Lloyd was hit but unharmed although the rope fared a little worse and was finished.

My first outing in the Alps was perhaps the worst, but the experience prepared me for what was ahead. It was perhaps a warning and a reminder as I set out on my way. Crossing an 11,000 ft pass above Zermatt we came upon a party in trouble. Having fallen down 400 ft of steep ice and bounded through several 100 ft of boulders and ledges one was seriously injured while the other was only bruised. My companions skied to the valley for assistance while I remained with the pair. The night passed, cold and blowing snow. All the down gear protected the injured pair. There were only cigarettes for comfort. As a golden sunrise lit a plume off the Matterhorn I vainly gave mouth to mouth and heart massage to a dying man. After an hour there was no point. It's a dangerous place.

No, I never climbed the Eiger North Face, the Walker Spur or the Matterhorn North Face, although I thought about them a lot and even prepared to head out on one of them twice, only to be foiled by the weather. They will wait and so can I. I have had five enjoyable and safe climbing seasons in the beautiful peaks and valleys of the Alps and perhaps some day things will click and I may get a go at these too. Rather than simply climb these great walls I would like to climb them and enjoy them.

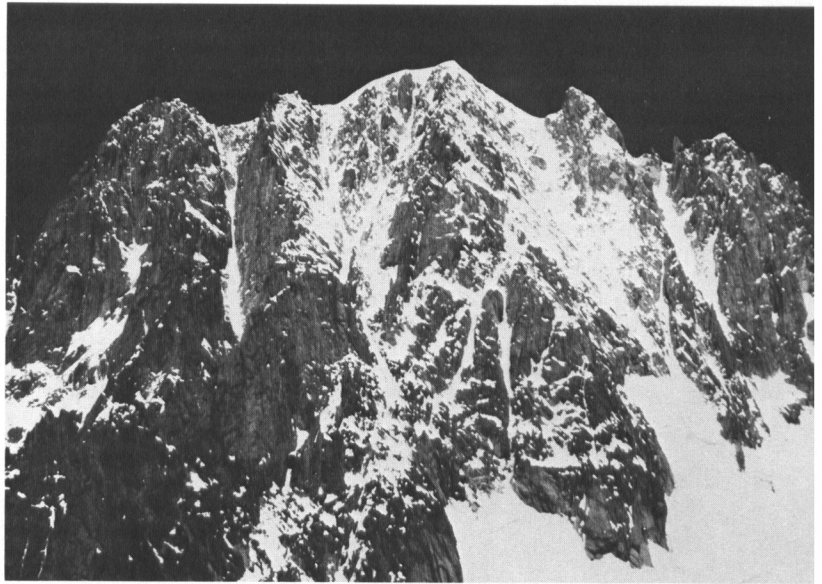
#### GUIDING

The normal flow of guides has always been east to west, Swiss and Austrian guides coming to Canada. In 1968 I was asked to work at the International School of Mountaineering in Switzerland and have done so now for five summers. I suppose I am the first Canadian who has reversed the trend and guided in the Alps. The range of experience has varied from the 40 ft walls of the Leysin quarry to the 4000 ft walls of Mt Blanc. Private climbs I squeezed in between work weeks. It has been difficult operating in 'the home of it all' beneath the noses of the European guides. Rates and wages have been low so living has generally been on close to a starvation diet but I got what I was searching for — the experience.

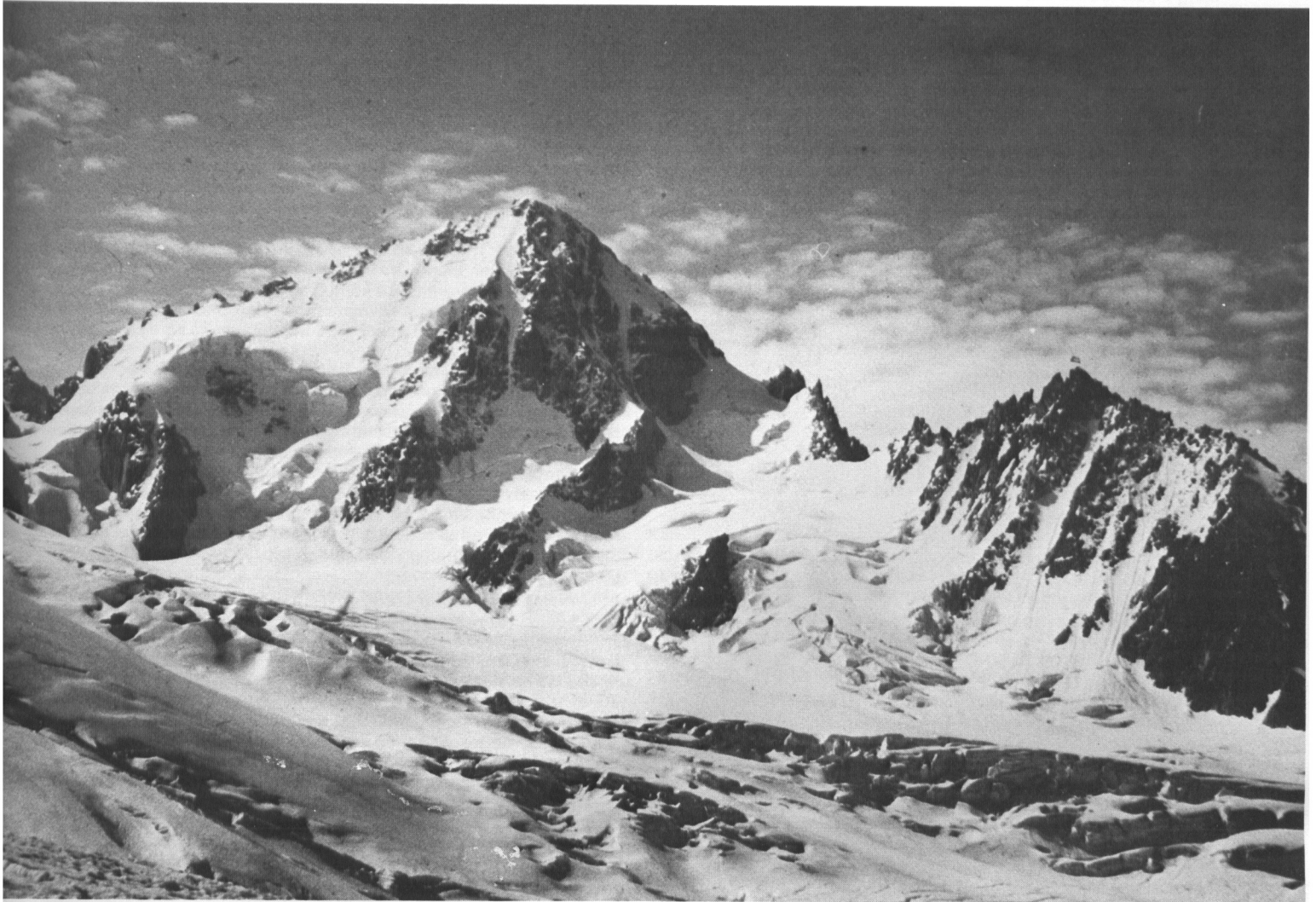
*The Matterhorn.* It would be only right to start off with the Matterhorn, the worlds most classic guided ascent. After a phone call, a day on the train from Chamonix to Leysin then on to Zermatt I arrived in this Swiss village at the foot of the peak. I located my client then, as I had not eaten all day, found a bar for a midnight snack.



The Grand Capucin. Route follows right hand skyline Chic Scott



Aig. Verte with Whympier Couloir descending from just right of summit Chic Scott



Aig. de Chardonnet with north buttress descending directly below summit Chic Scott

We had a late start and in the afternoon pleasantly walked up to the Hornli Hut at the foot of the ridge, the ridge of Whympfer and Croz. Having never climbed the peak before I was looking forward to the experience, despite its 'trade route' reputation. Darkness brought an incredible lightning storm. Flashes danced down the ridge as I pondered the possibilities. At midnight snow was still coming down. By 3 a.m. it was clearing and the hut keeper felt it would be a good day. I woke my client. After a quick breakfast we were on our way. Soon the trail became easy second and third class scrambling but because of the snow we belayed our way up the ridge. It was the first climb of the year for my client and regularly it was necessary to scratch around beneath the snow to find a hold. As the sun rose we neared the Solvay Bivouac Hut. A Swiss guide and his client passed, climbing rapidly together. The client asked his guide why they were not belaying. 'Because we do not want to spend a night on the mountain.'

By the time we reached the shoulder occasional clouds were blowing in and it was becoming cold. There seemed to be no large front moving in so we kept going. The fixed ropes were encased in ice and a cold wind blew as we came onto the summit slopes. Above 14,000 ft now we climbed slowly together into the clouds and mist until the Cross and visions of Whympfer and his party appeared — presumably the Swiss summit. A few pictures and we turned down. It was becoming late and 'We did not want to spend a night on the mountain.' It was advisable to belay most of the way down as fatigue was beginning to set in so it was nearing 6 p.m. when we reached the Solvay Hut. We had another two hours of light left and it was two hours to the Hornli Hut but rather than risk a slip or being caught in the dark we awaited the morning — alone with our thoughts, tea, the wind and the history of the ridge. The weather held and in the morning we descended to our 'victory beers' below. My companion safely reunited with his wife (on his honeymoon?) I was soon on the train back to Leysin.

*My Best Client.* I was a little shaken when Dougal informed me that there was a 16 year old who wanted to do the north face of the Dru. Regaining my composure a bit I made the introduction and we discussed plans and past climbs and decided to start with something a little less and see how it went. Thereafter followed ten fine days of climbing rather than guiding. Twice my companion complimented me by admitting that I had led something which he could not. He was partially wrong — he could probably have led those two pitches as well. He had only been climbing one full year but it had struck him with a passion. He had begun the previous summer with another instructor in Leysin and had spent the winter back in the States working on it.

We soon headed for the Albert Premier Hut above Argentiere in France. Here there was a good selection of climbs for any eventual-ity. We started with a gully up the centre of the Aig. de Tour. It presented a few steep ice pitches, a nice summit, some altitude and an easy descent. Apart from a snow storm on the summit everything went smoothly so we looked for something greater. Nearby the Aig. de Chardonnet, with a 1500 ft buttress on its north face invited. It was a mixed climb and at the moment was very snowy and icy. A cold and early start and we were once again on our way in perfect weather. Ahead climbed two friends and two Austrians — impressed by my young friend's presence.

Powdery snow over rocks at the start soon led to a snow ridge. After this the climb became more interesting with granite gullies filled with ice. Several difficult pitches on water ice and a few snowy mantleshelves brought us above the seracs and below the 50° headwall to the top. In shirt sleeves we climbed the final three pitches to a grand view of the Argentiere basin on the other side and an easy descent to the valley.

Several days of rain sent us back to Leysin for a rest and a rock climb. Four pitches with some easy sixth class posed no problems but I was running into the difficulty of satisfying a young tiger. There was no choice — it was a big route. I was still leery of the Dru north face, particularly in the event of a storm but my companion was satisfied with a go at the Brenva Face of Mt Blanc, the icy east face of the mountain. It offers some of the finest and most direct routes to the summit and the Sentinelle Rouge was our choice. Once again I had never climbed the peak (as in the case of the Tour and the Chardonnet) so it was an adventure for me, in the best spirit of guiding — exploratory rather than the same route and peak 20 times per summer.

In the afternoon we climbed to the Trident Hut, dried our gear and prepared for an early start. By 10 p.m. we were on our way! The face is exposed to ice avalanches from the seracs which form its upper rim and it is necessary to traverse many major and minor gullies at the start. We wanted to be at the base of the rib which forms the upper half of the route before the sun hit the face. A distant lightning

storm over Italy entertained us and the moon etched out the profile of the Eckpfler Buttress as we crossed the glacier, climbed to Col Moore and headed out onto the face. After several hours, climbing together over mixed ground, we reached the edge of the Grand Couloir. Up and across we climbed for six or seven pitches on 45° ice with one screw for a belay — not enough for a leader fall. Speed was essential on this most exposed part of the route. Below the face was beginning to sprout more twinkling headlamps as other parties began to scatter out onto the various routes. As the sun rose we reached the base of the rib for breakfast and in the warmth continued up. We were above 14,000 ft so progress was slow. The last thousand foot summit slope, most above 15,000 ft, dragged on at a measured pace. Eventually we reached the summit, the highest in Europe. The trail down the normal route was well broken. We descended to the Vallot Hut, passing the same two Austrians we had met before. Once again they were amazed at the success of one so young. After a cold night in the hut at 15,000 ft we continued on down to Chamonix for coffee and croissants.

*A Good Week.* The summer before a week of good weather yielded three fine guided climbs. We, another young client and a friend looking for some routes, centred ourselves at the Couvercle Hut, showpiece hut of the French Alps. The south ridge of the Aig. de Moine was a good starter — third and fourth class with an easy descent and one of the finest views in the area. The ridge was a little crowded but we 'played through', taking in the fifth class variation for sport. After a rest day we decided on the traverse of Les Courtes, noted as being perhaps the most enjoyable and scenic ridge climb in the Mt Blanc range. After a 2 a.m. start we cramponned up superbly frozen slopes to the ridge and in impeccable weather traversed to the summit, marvelling at the wall of the Argentiere basin below. Back at the hut by noon we relaxed in the sun, the north wall of the Grand Jorasses our 'TV' as we sipped our beers.

For our final climb we chose the Aig. Verte. A big 4000 m peak, it offers no easy routes and is a serious undertaking. We chose the simplest, Whympfer couloir route, and by headlamp found our way over the glacier to the 'schrund'. The climbing was once again excellent, with many 50° ice pitches at the top. By 9 we were sitting in the sun on the summit. But even 9 a.m. is late for this route since the couloir becomes an avalanche channel in the heat of the day. Soon we began making our way down. The top of the couloir was still safe and well frozen but lower down we sought out minor ribs for security until we could traverse to safer ground. A nudge by a small avalanche just as we crossed the 'schrund' onto the safety of the glacier reminded us of our good fortune. With three fine climbs, all new for me, under our belts we descended again to the smoky dens of Chamonix.

*Tea Sahib?* Anyone who has been to Nepal will recognize this familiar morning greeting. This past summer I had the pleasure and honour of spending most of ten days with Per Temba, one of Nepal's finest Sherpas. Courtesy of a Dutch friend he was being treated to a tour of Europe and Britain and had chosen to spend some time at The International School of Mountaineering. Back in Nepal he would be the guide and he wanted a solid grounding in modern rock and ice technique. Having been the highest carrying Sherpa on the British Mt Everest South West Face Expedition (making a solo carry in bad weather without oxygen to camp VI at over 27,000 ft) he had already learnt much. I felt a little foolish instructing a man with a background as solid as his. I took great pleasure in our reversed roles, he being the paying Sahib and I the servant, but years of practising humility in Nepal made the game a difficult one. The finest aspect was after the day's climbing — relaxing, having a drink and listening to some music and breaking down the Sherpa/Sahib barrier. Most of our time was spent on the very basics he would be instructing back in Nepal. Belaying, setting up anchors, placing pins, and basic movement on rock were covered over and over. On the off days he would make a climb with Dougal on the local cliffs. A trip to the Bossons Glacier in Chamonix dealt with modern ice technique and the use of the modern tools. Finally a trip to the Vignettes Hut and an ascent of the Petite Mt Collon gave us a good outing and a fine view of the ranges of the Western Alps. In company with the rest of the School this was truly an interesting outing — participants being from Scotland, England, Nepal, USA, Sweden and Canada. From Leysin Per Temba continued his adventures on to some friends in Southern France then to Britain for a month.

*Filming the Eiger Sanction.* It took me quite a while to decide whether I wanted to be involved. I received a letter asking if I wanted to work on the filming of *The Eiger Sanction*, a Hollywood thriller involving some mountaineering. Made by Universal it starred Clint Eastwood. Needless to say it was a very attractive offer but after reading the book I was unsure. The author had derived all his information and story line direct from *The White Spider* and to me had made a bit of a parody of a number of tragedies. Weaned on *The*

*White Spider*, I was reluctant to be involved in what appeared to be an insult to the dead. Eventually I sent an affirmative reply. Foremost in my mind I thought I might be able to have some effect on the movie. I even had thoughts, dreams rather, of them rewriting the whole script. As well it would be good money as I was in debt \$6000 for an Himalayan Expedition. It turned out to be an incredible experience. Although the story line remained essentially the same many parts were modified. It remains to be seen exactly what will make the screen after editing.

Action really started with the arrival of Reiner Schoene, Germany's Rock 'n Roll star. We met him at the station in Aigle near Leysin. Our instructions were merely the time of arrival and that he would be 6'5" and carrying a guitar. Dave Knowles from Scotland and I met the train. He took one end, I the other, and as the platform cleared at the far end appeared the man. Dave slowly advanced down the platform to meet him, almost thinking he was in some western movie, shook his hand, grabbed his guitar and we were off. Reiner, to play the role of the German climber, was to remain in Leysin for two weeks getting fit, learning basic climbing techniques and getting used to exposure. Over the next few days Michael Grimm, cast as the Austrian climber and Jean Pierre Bernard as the French climber arrived. The casting director had spent three weeks travelling Europe to locate the trio and his choice was excellent.

It didn't take long to sense what was happening and to run through the whole production. The psychology of it all. If you are to play a top notch climber and you are a good actor you must believe that you are what you are supposed to be. Oh, oh — that could be dangerous. For the next two months the name of the game was separating the fantasy from the reality. It produced some amazing situations — the meeting of the fantasy world of Hollywood and the very real world of climbing (i.e. just what to do on a small ledge with 6 or 8 ropes, which one to untie, which one to rappel on etc.).

For two weeks the training of the actors went on while Dougal, already at Kleine Scheidegg below the Eiger, prepared the locations. With him was Mike Hoover, chief cameraman on the mountain. Our arrival at Scheidegg was heralded by an incredible storm — thunder and lightning reverberating off the mountain walls, rivers swollen and raging, hail stones falling the size of golf balls. As the skies cleared dozens of huge waterfalls were visible cascading down the face. Two people from the wardrobe department shuddered as they realized that this was the Eiger and checked their blood pressure. The rest of us leaned from the train windows marveling at the site and discussing the routes. Walking into the hotel we were greeted by the chief accountant who, feeling very much like Santa Claus I'm sure, presented us with \$230 each for the week's expenses. We met some of the others involved, Norman Dyhrenfurth the Chief Co-ordinator, Eastwood and Jim Fargo the First Director.

Next morning we were dropped off at the 3.8 km tunnel (the Gallery Window) onto the face. Dougal, Mike and Eastwood climbed the fixed ropes above, over the Difficult Crack and up to the Rote Fluh, to check the location and get a few starter scenes. Dave Knowles and I climbed down and across to the Shattered Pillar, fixing ropes along the way, to set up a climbing scene, i.e. put in the pins and fixed ropes leading to the location for ease of movement when filming. It was a great day, my first time on the face, and Dave who had climbed it before filled me in on all the landmarks.

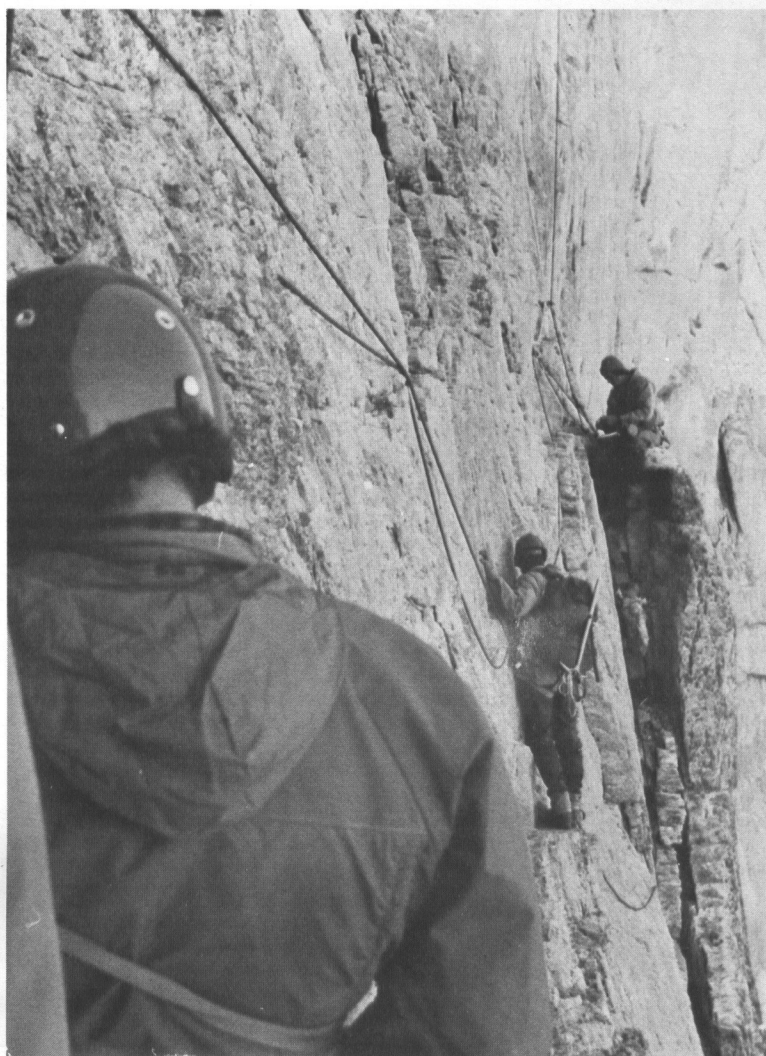
The following day it was onto the face again, this time up the fixed ropes to a point about 200 ft up the overhanging Rote Fluh. The exposure was incredible as Martin Boysen on one side and myself on the other placed pins and bolts as anchor points for the cameraman's ropes. Two free rappels with a hanging station took us to the top of another half dozen rappels back to the window.

On the third day filming started in earnest. The most difficult scene was first, where the French climber is hit by rock fall, knocked off a small ledge and pulled back on again. The location was half way up the Eiger's west ridge where we could drop over the edge onto the face. A vertical wall and 2500 ft of exposure made for some sensational shots but for tricky work with a dozen or so people. The helicopter picked us up in the morning and deposited us by winch on the ridge and we went to work. I had been asked to double the Frenchman and do a 20 ft fall over an overhang but as I was a little reluctant another double was found. I received a job a little more to my liking — checking everyone before they rappelled over onto the face, belaying them and alternately lowering or pulling up ropes as they were needed.

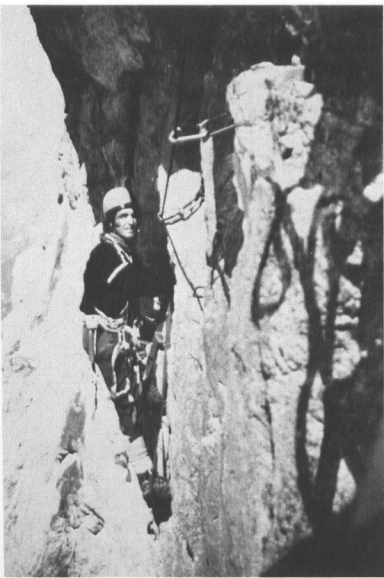
Filming went well for two days. The scene was 'in the can', and by the end of the second day everyone had been lifted off the mountain except three experienced climbers. Dougal and I went down with the last of the actors. As we climbed out of the helicopter it came over the radio that there had been an accident. Someone was badly hurt.



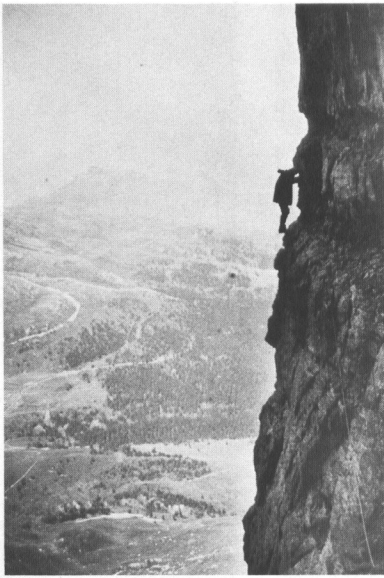
Dave Smith climbing headwall on Dent d'Herens North Face Chic Scott



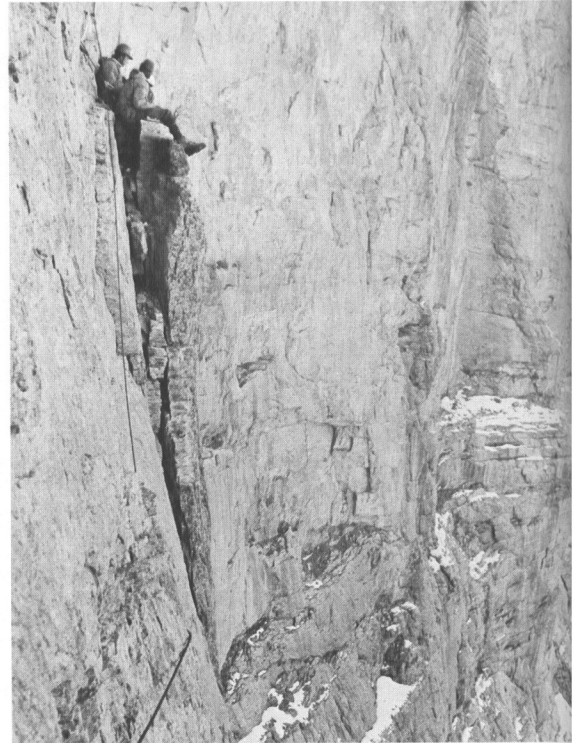
Eastwood climbs across, 2500 ft up, while Mike Hoover on far ledge prepares to film him. Scott



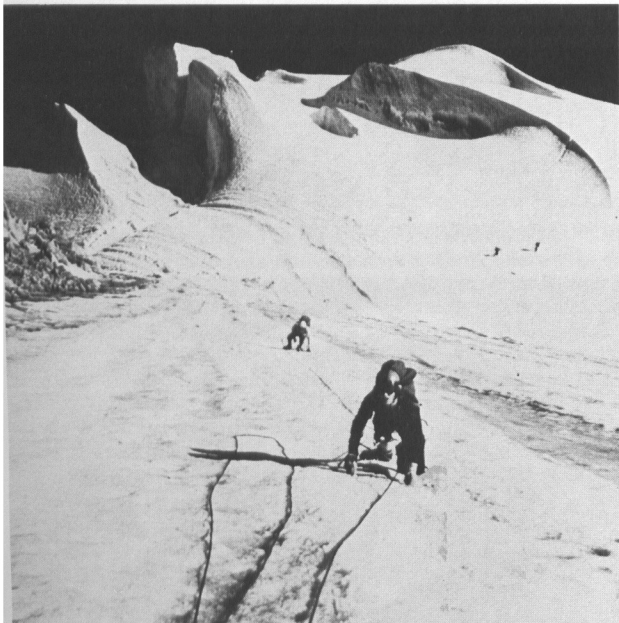
Myself fixing ropes on Rote Fluh. Hinterstoisser traverse in background Chic Scott



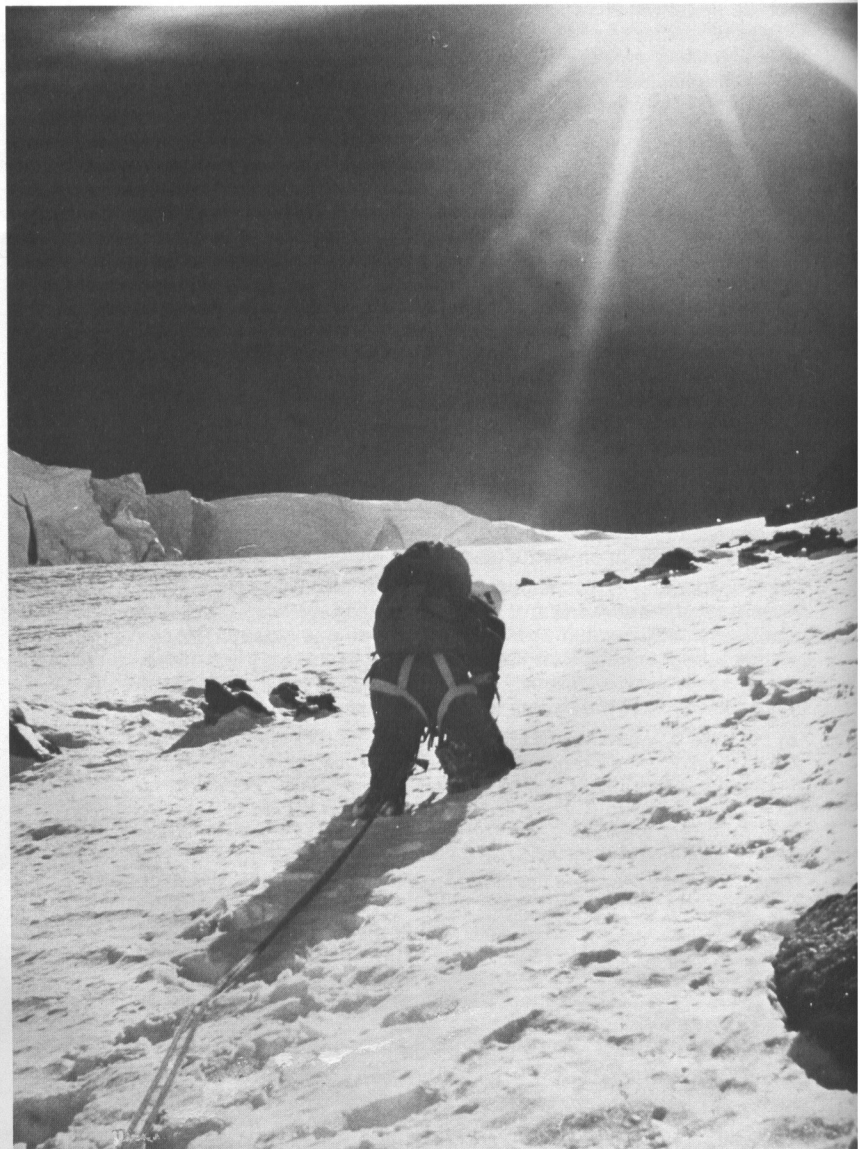
Matt Hale on north face of Aig. de Triolet Chic Scott



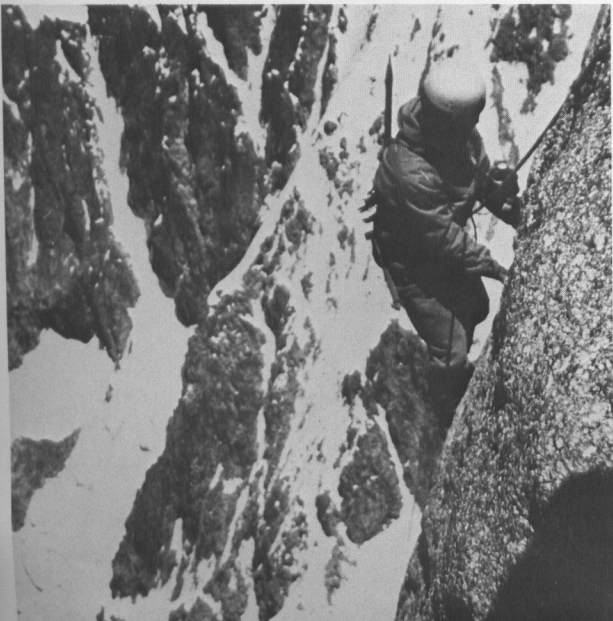
Lunch break on Eiger north face about 2500 ft up. C. Eastwood, Mike Hood (camera man) and Dougal Haston at base of Rote Fluh Chic Scott



Two clients in Spenser Couloir on Aig. de Blatière Chic Scott



Dave Smith on north face of Lyskamm Chic Scott



Client on north ridge of Aig. de Geant Chic Scott



With Martin we flew back up again. As we came into the location there was the scene we had been enacting for two days. A pillar of rock had broken off falling on Dave and Mike below. Dave was hit and killed, Mike luckily only badly bruised. There was little to be done. Such a meeting of fantasy and reality I could not have imagined. For two days we did nothing — collecting ourselves and preparing anew.

For the remainder of the production the attitude towards safety grew. As actors and film crew gradually became aware of the risks involved a more conservative approach was adopted. Many scenes were filmed on the fringes of the Eiger. Rock climbing scenes were filmed lower down on the west flank and soon all may marvel as Martin Boysen climbs an overhanging wall through a small waterfall. Some of the rescue scenes were filmed near a tunnel entrance here as well. After several weeks an attempt was made to film on the face. It was to be a major operation with the four actors, the four doubles, two cameramen, soundmen, etc. It was a warm and dripping morning and Dougal, Mike and Clint headed out first to have a look. After about half an hour a radio call came back saying that it was too dangerous. As the group appeared at the doorway the reason for the change in plans was evident — Eastwood's hand was bathed in blood, the product of a falling rock.

Some incredible scenes were filmed high on the west ridge. A metal ladder was suspended over the steepest and longest possible drop. While safely belayed, Clint climbed to the edge of the ladder and was lowered into a hanging position about ten feet down. Mike then crawled out onto the ladder and shot vertically down through the rungs. One day the camera, tied to the end of 100 ft of slack rope and protected by a steel container, was thrown off here about six times. A true view of a fall.

Ice climbing scenes were filmed on a small peak, the Mathildenspitz, close to the upper terminal of the Jungfrauoch railway and bivouac scenes near here as well.

Attempts were made to film the rescue scene from the 4.2 km tunnel doorway. It was necessary to erect in position a 28 ft extendable tripod to suspend Eastwood well out from the wall. Rock fall and avalanches from a heavy snowfall eventually made this suicidal.

Several days were finally spent filming in the vicinity of the Difficult Crack. The first day, Mike and four doubles scrambled around and again one can marvel as Martin Boysen climbs the Difficult Crack and the rest of us do some minor scenes. On virtually the last day of filming Eastwood again ventured out onto the face for a very successful day of shooting. By 4.30 a.m. we were waiting first light to head up the ropes. The day was spent alternating between filming from the helicopter (with many zoom type shots) and Mike filming close-ups. At one point Clint spent over two hours hanging in a harness on the end of a rope doing gigantic 80 ft pendulums.

These fine adventures did not all happen quickly. The start was slow and not without some discomfort. My first season was spent mainly in the local quarry doing introductory rock schools. It rained virtually without stop for one month but we went out every day. An occasional climb of 300 or 400 ft on the local cliffs provided some variety. It was worth only \$200 a month, six days a week but one can't complain — it was a break and they don't come every day. One summer's guiding in Canada in 1970 was enjoyable but only confirmed that my true path remained back in Europe.

The working atmosphere with Dougal has been excellent. For two years we hardly spoke a word. He just let me get on with it. We were in charge of our own ropes and our own operations — it's terrific when someone has some confidence in you.

Each year it's a long way back to the Alps and I don't know what the future will bring but it was my break and my chance and I'm grateful for it. It's truly a mad, mad world. My experiences in Europe have ranged between sleeping in ditches, on small ledges, and in private hotel rooms. There's always plenty of action on the Continent. If anyone's looking for a place to climb I'd recommend it. As Eric Shipton says:

*But even now the Alps themselves are potentially what they were, if only a man goes to them in the right spirit.*

*Chic Scott*