

Canadians conquer Mount Everest

Two Canadians, in separate attempts, have reached the summit of Mount Everest, the highest point in the world.

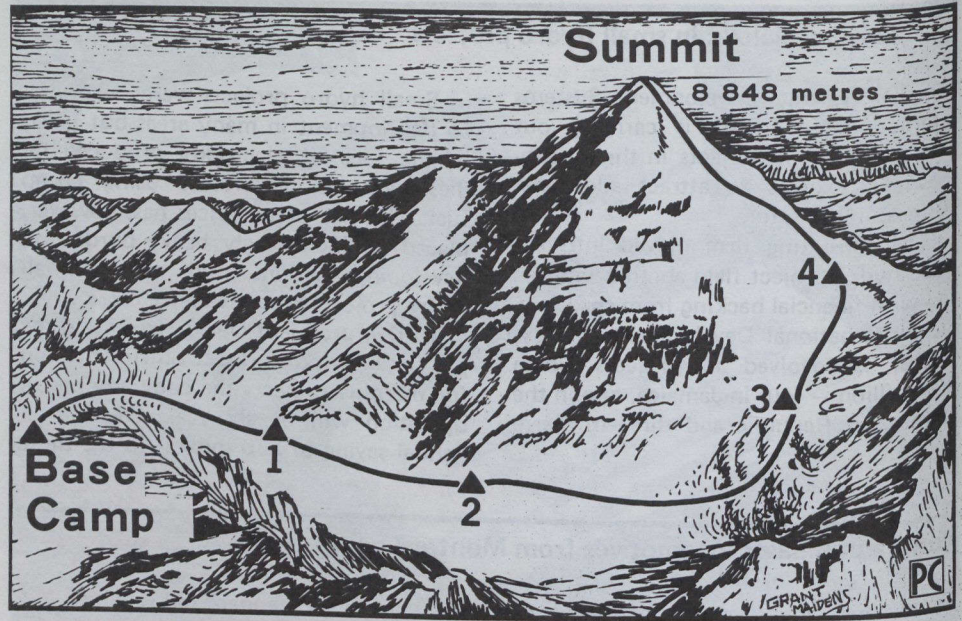
Laurie Skreslet, 32, of Calgary, Alberta and Sherpa guides Sungdare and Lhakpa Dorje were the first to the top on October 4. Three days later Patrick Morrow of Kimberley, British Columbia and two other Sherpa guides reached the summit.

The two Canadians were members of the eight-man Canadian team which was the twenty-sixth expedition to complete the 8 848-metre climb to the top since Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay first stood on the summit in 1953. Other members of the team included: expedition leader William J. March and David Read of Calgary; deputy leader Lloyd Gallagher and Alan Burgess, who was in charge of climbing and also made an attempt to reach the top falling short by 457 metres owing to equipment failure, of Canmore, Alberta; Gordon Smith of Golden, British Columbia; and Dwayne Congdon of Invermere, British Columbia. The Canadian climbers were accompanied by 16 Sherpas.

Other Canadians assisting the venture either in Kathmandu, Nepal or at the base camp, were expedition manager John Amatt of Canmore, base camp manager Peter Spears, cook Kurt Fuhric and *Calgary-Herald Southam News* jour-



Laurie Skreslet was the first Canadian to reach the summit.



Map of Mount Everest showing base camp and four campsites.

nalist Bruce Patterson. Dr. Stephen Bezruchka travelled as far as the second camp.

Major funding for the climb came from Air Canada which was the official sponsor of the event, and more than 100 companies contributed donations and equipment. Teleglobe Canada set up transmission equipment at the site and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation paid for television rights.

Used South Col route

The Canadian team made the climb up the traditional South Col route after abandoning plans to scale the mountain via the South Pillar route which no one has ever scaled to the summit.

Early in the expedition, the team had been ahead of schedule, but the weather and the deaths of three Sherpas and North Vancouver cameraman Blair Griffiths cut short the advance. A lingering monsoon season dumped snow on the mountains for nearly two weeks, creating several avalanches, particularly on the Khumbu icefall.

The icefall, a two-kilometre glacier is one of the major obstacles facing Everest climbers and is considered one of the most intimidating stretches of terrain in the mountaineering world. As the heavy snows slowly push down the mountain faces, enormous pressure builds up on the glacier below, where it is forced between a narrow gap in the mountains and over a steep ridge. Numerous crevasses and ice towers are created on the glacier. It was an avalanche rolling down the mountain that killed the three Sherpas on the ice-

fall and a falling serac — an ice tower — that killed Mr. Griffiths.

Following the tragedies six members of the original Canadian team decided to leave the expedition.

Five camps set up

Base camp was established by the Canadians on a rocky moraine at 5 846 metres above sea level — only slightly lower than Canada's highest mountain, Mount Logan in the Yukon. From there it took two days of scouting and three days of climbing to push a route through the Khumbu icefall and establish camp one above the icefall at 6 023 metres. The Canadians and Sherpas set bridges over the crevasses in the icefall and anchored them deep into the snow to provide a "highway" for transporting food and equipment to camps above.

Three more camps were set up, one more above the Khumbu icefall at 6 641 metres and two on the South Col. The fourth campsite at 7 925 metres was only 923 metres from the summit.

In order to receive permission to use the South Col route, the Canadian team was required to wait above the Khumbu icefall for the four-man team led by Peter Edmund Hillary, the son of Sir Edmund, to proceed ahead through the Western Cwn (Cwn is a Welsh word meaning valley) in its bid to scale the 8 371 metre Lhotse, a sister peak of Everest.

From the fourth camp, the two small groups of climbers made their final assault on the mountain ascending the sharp Southeast Ridge to the South Summit, past the treacherous Hillary Step and