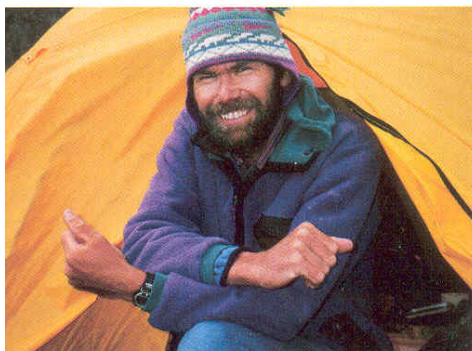


EIGHT DEAD on EVEREST



ROB HALL COLLECTION/HEDGEHOG HOUSE

Rob Hall, who stayed high on the mountain to help a client, became one of the storm's fatalities.

New Zealander Rob Hall summited Mount Everest for the fifth time on May 10, setting a record among Westerners. Tragedy followed immediately on the heels of success, however, as Hall and seven other climbers from various teams were trapped by severe weather above the South Col and perished.

Reported dead were Hall, Andrew Harris (New Zealand), Scott Fischer and Douglas Hansen (US), Yasuko Namba (Japan), and T. Samanla, Tsewant Palmor and Dorje Morup (India). Samanla, Tsewant and Morup also reached the summit, becoming the first Indians to climb Everest from the north.

Hall reached the top sometime between 1:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m., along with Namba, Hansen, Harris, Jon Krakauer (US) and Michael Groom (Australia). Hansen and Hall were the last to descend and consequently got benighted above the South Summit, where they ran out of bottled oxygen. Hansen died during the night, and Hall was forced to endure an open bivouac at 8,750 meters without tent or sleeping bag.

Meanwhile, lower on the mountain, at

least 20 climbers, many of whom had summited earlier in the day, were desperately trying to locate Camp 4 in the extreme blizzard conditions. By 1 a.m., the few who had managed to find their tents were banging metal and shining headlamps in an effort to signal the others. Throughout the night, climbers straggled into camp, many suffering from exhaustion, dehydration, frostbite and snow blindness. The very strong Russian climber Anatoli Boukreev went out into the storm several times during the night and literally dragged fallen climbers by their harnesses to their tents.

When dawn arrived, two Sherpas initiated rescue efforts.

Namba was found dead 300 meters from camp on the South Col. Harris, a guide, was seen near the tents when he returned from the summit, but was missing in the morning. In radio contact from the South Summit, Hall said he was unable to move due to the extreme cold but told his wife, Jan Arnold, not to worry. When informed the Sherpas had abandoned their rescue effort due to high winds and severe cold, Hall said he would wait another day. Then he spoke one more time to his wife, who is pregnant with their first child, and turned off his radio for good.

Fischer, leader of a team of Americans who had successfully summited the previous day, and Makalu Gao, leader of a Taiwanese expedition, were found near one another at about 27,000 feet. Gao was responsive but Fischer was barely breathing, and the rescue team was unable to revive him; they left Fischer with extra clothes and oxygen and concentrated on getting Gao down alive. Although repeated attempts were made to reach Fischer over the next two days, extreme conditions thwarted the efforts.

Seaborn Weathers of Dallas, part of a Swedish expedition, stumbled into the South Col on the 11th after spending 20 hours in the open. In a daring helicopter rescue executed by the Nepalese air force, Weathers and the severely frostbitten Gao were airlifted from the Khumbu Icefall and flown to Kathmandu.

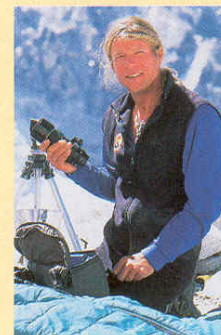
Hall's heart-wrenching call to his wife from his deathbed on the South Summit was only one of the extraordinary uses of telecommunications equipment on Everest this season. Earlier in the year, according to British newspaper reports, a rescue was initiated when an English climber whose partner was ill called his wife in Hong Kong from 5,000 feet above Everest's basecamp, via satellite phone, and asked her to contact authorities. A helicopter successfully reached the stricken climber. — **John Burbidge**

in memoriam SCOTT FISCHER

The climbing world was shocked and deeply saddened to hear of the death of Scott Fischer, the leader of the 1996 Sagarmatha Environmental Expedition on Mount Everest. He and eight members of his expedition reached the summit on May 11 and were hit with an epic storm during the descent. Exhausted and possibly without oxygen, Fischer never made it back to Camp IV.

A professional mountain guide for more than 25 years, Fischer had his start in mountaineering through the National Outdoor Leadership School in the early '70s. In 1979, he founded Mountain Madness, an adventure-travel company based in Seattle.

Among his numerous accomplishments were the first American ascent of Lhotse, the world's fourth-highest mountain, and the fourth American ascent of Everest without oxygen, in 1994. Fischer also summited K2 without oxygen in 1992 as the American leader of a joint American-Soviet Expedition, and he had climbed to the top of six of the seven continents.



Scott's concern for other climbers extended well beyond his clients, and he risked his life many times to ensure others' safety. It is a tribute to him that the eight other members of his summit team survived the storm without injury.

Scott's love of the mountains was reflected in his efforts to clean up the tons of trash left behind by previous Everest expeditions. He was the recipient of the American Alpine Club's David Brower Award for the pioneering conservation work he did with the first Sagarmatha Environmental Expedition in 1994. Scott was also a talented photographer, with work published in *National Geographic*, *Outside*, *Rock & Ice*, *Sports Illustrated* and many other magazines.

Although revered for his ability in the mountains, Scott is best remembered by his friends for his incredible generosity of spirit and love of life. He is survived by his wife, Jean Price, and his two children, Andy, 9, and Katie Rose, 5. Contributions may be directed to the Fischer-Price Children's Fund, established for his children at SeaFirst Bank in Seattle. — **Bill Holmes**

STOP PRESS

Jack Roberts and Jack Tackle climbed an extreme new route on the North Face of 13,900-foot Mt. Kennedy in mid-May. It was their second attempt on the 6,000-foot wall, located along the Yukon-Alaska border in the St. Elias Range.

The new route, Arctic Discipline, began with a 21-pitch big-wall mixed climb, of which only two pitches could be protected with ice screws; the rest involved dry-tooling and thin, brittle ice. Protection was difficult in the compact granite. The two climbers bivouacked in a portaledge on this section, enduring one 48-hour storm. Above the steep wall, 55-degree snow and ice led to the North Ridge at 12,500 feet, where another storm pinned them for two days. They were then forced by avalanches to rappel the North Ridge without reaching the summit. The pair spent 11 days on the route.