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## NEWS OF THE P.A.T.C. MOUNTAINEERING SECTION

1718 N Street, N.W. Washington DC 20036

Volume 36, Numbers 7 & 8

July-August 1981

### A BIG WALL RESCUE IN AUSTRALIA

by Don Barnett

January 19, 1981 was cool and clear on Mount Buffalo, Victoria, Australia. Sixty tired rescuers and a few reporters watched the blue and white helicopter lift off and turn toward Melbourne.

The climbers present were thinking something like, "There but for the grace of God go I," as we silently gave Paul Anderson our slim hopes for the recovery of the use of his legs.

Twenty-four hours earlier, Paul and two other Australians were ascending the granite North Wall of Mount Buffalo via a crack and chimney route called Fifth Column. Michael Rheinberger was leading up a chimney, belayed by Jerry McPhee. Paul was resting. When Mike's foothold (a tuft of grass) gave way, he fell about 20 feet. The belay stopped him; however, he struck Paul, knocking him over backwards so that his lower back bent too far over a horizontal tree trunk.

Tourists at a lookout opposite the North Wall reported the accident to the park rangers, who called doctors, an ambulance, the state police, and the state emergency service. Then the rangers looked for other climbers who could help. My two Australian friends and I were the only other climbers on the mountain.

We fixed ropes down the route from the top, took water to the victim, and brought Jerry up so that he could help the rescuers (led by trained state policemen) plan their operation.

The victim was about 300 feet from the top of a big wall and at least that far from the bottom. The terrain below was a steeply descending valley filled with boulders and trees; access by any means would be very laborious.

Access to the top was easy: There were trails from road level and clearings suitable for the helicopter, which brought several 100 and 250 meter ropes and other equipment from Melbourne.

A cold front arrived shortly after the helicopter, bringing early darkness and drenching showers, and terminating thoughts of performing the rescue on the day of the accident. Fortunately, the victim's party had bivouac gear; it was that kind of route. So Paul spent the rainy night on a ledge at the bottom of a chimney in a sleeping bag in a bivouac sack. Mike stayed with him. They got little sleep; their pain pills weren't strong enough.

In the morning we cleared an area above Fifth Column and laid out the long ropes. Then we lowered two policemen who were trained both as climbers and as medical technicians. A third policeman was lowered with the litter.

Paul could not be rolled into the litter because there wasn't room. He had to be lifted out feet first. He required intravenous morphine and an anti-nausea drug before he would allow himself to be moved.

Then came the big lift: Four ropes were hauled simultaneously by human muscle power over a vertical distance of almost 100 meters. Those ropes brought up the litter, two men guiding it, and a third man above it with a saw on a sling. I belayed the litter with two 9 mm ropes 100 meters long.

Then Paul was carried to the helicopter. After the crowds left, we went back to Fifth Column with Mike and Jerry to recover gear left on the route. We had no cheer for each other; some of the joy of climbing had died that day.

So ended my January climbing trip to Australia. I visited four climbing areas in South Australia and Victoria. The most impressive was Mount Arapiles, Victoria, which offers hundreds of routes with a variety similar to Seneca and the Shawangunks combined. The locals still talk of Henry Barber's exploits (freeing aid routes) there several years ago.

A BET ON RED

by John Teasdale

During a recent convention in Las Vegas, I had the pleasure of spending a weekend in Red Rock Canyon National Recreation Lands just ten miles west of town. Some unexpected similarities between this park and its neighboring city occurred to me during the trip. By night Las Vegas casinos invite you into an intricate architecture of tempting beauty in a manner similar to the majestic canyons west of town which abound in unseen dropoffs and unplanned dead ends. The color green is a precious commodity in both worlds and can often blind you to the thorns and pain which await the unwary adventurer. The temptations come easily, and without warning you are on the rocks.

And these are not the solid rocks which provide security and familiarity; the best looking holds are paper thin and crumble like chips when you need them the most, inviting cracks smooth into oblivion just as the top is within reach; the walls lean and warp in unpredictable ways just when you think you have all the angles finally figured out, and you are forced to conclude that the odds are against you. This is a substance which requires patience, analysis, and madness to understand but the relationship can never be one of trust, only fascination.

I am still haunted by the invitation of those immense and brilliant walls. But this is no place for a novice sandstone climber. Yet, even for the initiated, this truly would be the territory of adventure, an adventure which never could be anything less than a gamble.

## Nelson House

On Memorial Day weekend unauthorized users broke into two of Mr. Nelson's sheds. To discourage the use of Nelson

House by such people, the combination will be changed frequently. Call Vivian Mendenhall, Martha Hale, or Ed Cummings if you count on using Nelson House.



UP ROPE

UP ROPE is the monthly newsletter of the Mountaineering Section (MS) of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) of Washington, D.C. Climbing articles, letters, and comments are welcome and should be addressed to Lin Murphy, 2314 N. Harrison Street, Arlington, VA. 22205. Deadline is the 20th of each month. Subscriptions for MS members are included in the dues. The annual subscription price for nonmembers is \$4. Current PATC members interested in receiving UP ROPE may obtain a subscription at no charge. MS members must belong to PATC. Applicants for membership and PATC members can join the MS by obtaining sponsorship from a current MS member. Send subscription and address changes to Mountaineering Section-Secretary, 1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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## MOUNTAINEERING SECTION ACTIVITIES

The MS holds meetings at PATC headquarters (1718 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.) the second Wednesday of each month except August. There is a brief business session followed by a slide show, film, or other form of entertainment. Sunday trips to nearby climbing areas and/or weekend trips to more distant areas are sponsored every weekend. Check the climber's calendar for scheduled trips.

Beginning and intermediate training are offered once a month. Anyone is welcome to participate in MS activities, although some restrictions may be placed on participation in club trips. The Sunday trips are usually to areas where there is a complete range of top rope climbs. However, we ask that you have some experience or training prior to the trip. The weekend trips are usually for lead climbers only, and you are expected to find your own climbing partner.

## Conservation Report

### PAVED NEW WORLD

In early June Marriott won permission from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to build its \$78 million hotel/condo/convention complex at Lake Minnewaska. Conservation groups have decided to challenge the decision. Here is probably the last chance you will get to take a stand on this issue.

The Boston AMC and a Pittsburgh climbing club were among those groups that gave moral and financial support to the citizen groups that tried to limit the size of Marriott's project. While scattered local climbers have supported the limitation effort, our MS has done nothing. An attempt to discuss whether MS could help the citizen conservation groups was blocked during

a general meeting last year. Thereafter the Executive Committee declined to submit the issue to the MS membership for their determination. There are two kinds of losers when a conservation effort fails: the place itself and the people who would not defend it.

This is not just a local issue for the northern clubs. The Shawangunks are our climbing place too. Those of us who spend 12-14 hours driving there for a weekend can take the minutes required to write the people who will decide forever whether Minnewaska is paved. And can't you give, just once, the price of one evening's beers to help the citizens' groups? Don't let this chance go by. As individuals or as concerned climbers acting together we must try to make a difference.



Citizens to Save Minnewaska  
P.O. Box 871  
New Paltz N.Y. 12561

June 20, 1981

- STRUGGLE TO SAVE MINNEWASKA MOVES TO PARK COMMISSION
- D.E.C. GRANTS MARRIOTT CONDITIONAL APPROVAL
- COURT BATTLES LOOM AS EFFORT TO SAVE MINNEWASKA ENTERS THIRD YEAR
- SIERRA CLUB, APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB FIGHT TO PROTECT CONSERVATION EASEMENT

The N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation (D.E.C.) has approved the Marriott Corporation's entire proposal to build a massive hotel/condominium complex at Lake Minnewaska. But the decision, rendered on June 2 by Commissioner Robert Flacke, also requires Marriott to prove that it has a sufficient water supply before beginning construction.

As you know, Marriott plans to build a 400-room hotel plus 300 condominiums and a conference center along the edge of beautiful Lake Minnewaska. Ninety miles from New York City, this crystal blue mountain top lake, bounded by sheer white cliffs, has long been a favorite destination for hikers and nature lovers.

The D.E.C. Commissioner's report acknowledges that "the new buildings would be...approximately 6 times the surface area which is presently or was formerly occupied" by all other buildings on the site. Adding Marriott's proposed new parking lots for 1500 cars, new roads, tennis courts, shops, 10-acre sewage pond, 18-hole golf course and other extensive recreational facilities, the huge complex will be more than 10 times the size of the previous resort. In our view, Marriott will literally "pave over" the mountain.

Yet the D.E.C. decision virtually ignores the devastating visual and aesthetic impact of the project, the large quantity of vegetation and trees that would be destroyed (80 acres will be cut down next to the lake), the danger to flora and fauna, and the intolerable traffic congestion that would be created in nearby New Paltz.

## Conservation Report (continued)

Public access to the lake, hiking trails and the magnificent 80-foot high Awosting Falls with its natural swimming pool, would be on a "space available basis," which essentially gives Marriott the right to exclude the public on weekends. Indeed, hikers are likely to find many of their favorite destinations on the Shawangunk ridge off limits completely. Marriott proposes to construct condominiums right on top of two of the most scenic trails—one along the edge of Lake Minnewaska and the other along the edge of the spectacular ridge overlooking the Wallkill Valley. Marriott also plans to build a water pumping station right next to the base of the Awosting Falls and to do blasting for water pipes along the trail leading to the falls.

Throughout the long environmental hearings, from July 1980 to March 1981, opponents of the project, including the Sierra Club and the Appalachian Mountain Club, had argued that the excessive size of the Marriott complex would be enormously destructive to the fragile mountain top environment and would permanently scar a place of unique natural beauty. Presenting detailed testimony from dozens of expert witnesses, we urged the D.E.C. to reject Marriott's application or, at least, to order the corporation to scale down its plans. And we argued that Lake Minnewaska should be preserved in as unspoiled a state as possible for public enjoyment.

Yet despite our deep disappointment that Marriott's entire project was approved, we scored one important victory that may enable us to win our case in court. On the most crucial scientific issue, water supply, the D.E.C. *accepted* major parts of the evidence presented by local hydrologists Dr. Stephen Egemeier, Charles Liff and Paul Rubin, whose extensive studies showed that Marriott's proposed water usage would eventually drain the rain-fed lake. Commissioner Flacke ordered Marriott to use wells, and not the lake, as its primary water source, and to stop pumping lake water if the level fell more than four feet. The D.E.C. also accepted Egemeier and Liff's contention that Marriott's pump tests were highly inaccurate and the Commissioner stated that Marriott "has not conclusively proven" that it has enough ground water for the project. The D.E.C. decision allows Marriott to build its project in *phases* if and when it can prove that it has enough water for each phase.

The two issues we can challenge in court are:

- 1) The D.E.C. should not have granted a water permit for the entire project without proof that Marriott does, in fact, have a viable water supply for the entire project; and
- 2) The D.E.C. has established no procedures to allow our local scientists to monitor Marriott's well tests. (As the last set of tests showed, Marriott cannot be trusted to monitor its own tests.)

### PUBLIC CONSERVATION EASEMENT CHALLENGED

Even as we contemplate a court challenge to the D.E.C. decision, the focus of the struggle has shifted to the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (P.I.P.C.), which owns a conservation easement over 239 acres of the Minnewaska property. The easement, which covers 50% of the land Marriott wants to buy, including the lake itself, was purchased in 1977 with public money for the express purpose of *restricting* development.

The purpose of the easement, as stated in the D.E.C. decision, is "the conservation and preservation of unique and scenic areas; (and) the environmental and ecological protection of Lake Minnewaska and its watershed." Under the terms of the easement, Marriott could not build its golf course nor cut any trees west of the lake, nor could it lower the lake level beyond historical usage. Marriott has stated that it will not go ahead with its project unless the P.I.P.C. amends the easement.

Last Monday, June 15, the P.I.P.C. held a stormy meeting, attended by 200 people, at Bear Mountain. N.Y. State Park Commissioner, Orin Lehman, was also present. Regional leaders from the Sierra Club, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, the Adirondack Mountain Club and many others spoke at the meeting and insisted that the Park Commission uphold the easement in letter and in spirit. What is the purpose of an easement designed to prevent development, they asked, if it is changed to suit the first developer who comes along?

The Sierra Club stated that every easement in the United States could be challenged by private developers if the P.I.P.C. set such a dangerous precedent. Conservation easements are one of the most effective ways of protecting state and national parklands, coastlines and rivers. This precedent could undermine the work of decades of conservationists. We also questioned the *legal* right of the P.I.P.C. to sell a sacred public trust, and we argued that the easement was non-negotiable. Special thanks to Loni Gross of the A.M.C., Paul Lowy of the Sierra Club, and the many other dedicated conservationists who have come to our assistance on this vital issue.

Despite our appeals, the P.I.P.C. decided to appoint a team of five to negotiate with Marriott for one month. Marriott has offered a "trade"—it wants to give the P.I.P.C. an easement over 90 additional acres in exchange for an amendment that will let it build its golf course. But these 90 acres are on steep,

## Conservation Report (continued)

rocky land that is not suitable for development anyway. The purpose of an easement is to restrict development on potentially *developable* land.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

The P.I.P.C. will make its decision on the easement July 20. The meeting will take place at the Overlook Lodge at Bear Mountain, probably at 5 PM. If you can attend, please confirm the meeting time and place with us.

Most importantly, we urge you to write as many letters as possible to the Park Commissioners insisting that they uphold the conservation easement at Lake Minnewaska and reject Marriott's request for an amendment. After all, the easement was bought for \$210,000 with taxpayers' money—your money—and you have a right to insist that your investment be protected.

The following people are on the P.I.P.C. negotiating team:

Commissioner Laurence Rockefeller,  
Natural Resources Defense Council,  
122 East 42nd Street,  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Commissioner Jon Hanson  
235 Moore Street,  
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601

Mr. Nash Castro, General Manager and Mr. Albert Caccese Esq., Counsel for Parks,  
Palisades Interstate Park Commission,  
Bear Mountain, New York 10911

If possible, you should also write to the following Park Commissioners who will vote on the easement, and to N.Y. State Park Commissioner Orin Lehman

Office of Parks and Recreation,  
Agency Building 1, 20th Floor  
Albany, New York 12238

Peter Dudan  
100 Greenbush Road  
West Nyack, NY 10994  
(914) 358-4582

Charles A. Agemian  
Garden State Nat'l Bank  
10 Forest Avenue  
Paramus, NJ 07652  
(201) 488-6800

Mrs. Shirley C. Fisk  
180 East End Avenue  
New York, NY 10028  
(212) 249-8166

Ugo J. Lisi  
226 North Central Ave.  
Ramsey, NJ 07446  
(201) 327-5569

Malcolm A. Borg  
The Record  
150 River Street  
Hackensack, NJ 07601

Dr. Mamie Phipps Clark  
Northside Center for  
Child Development  
1301 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10029  
(212) 860-1616

George Imperatore  
A-P-A Transport Corp.  
2100 88th Street  
No. Bergen, NJ 07040  
(201) 869-6600

George W. Perkins, Jr.  
Wallbridge Farm  
RR 1, Box 30  
Millbrook, NY 12545  
(914) 677-3947

If you do not have time to write to all of these, we suggest you write one or two letters and send copies of these letters to the other commissioners. There is no more important time to write letters than now—we must indicate how important we feel the easement is.

We also ask that you circulate the enclosed petition in your community. You may xerox more copies if you can fill more than one page. Please return the completed petitions to us as soon as possible. We intend to present them to the Park Commission at the July 20 meeting.

### 'SAVE THE MOUNTAIN' ALBUM RELEASED

Local musicians have completed a superb album of music with many original songs celebrating the beauty of Lake Minnewaska and vowing to protect it. The songs have been an inspiration to all of us in the last year and they are now available to you on the "Save the Mountain" album, for \$10, which includes shipping and handling. \$6 from each album sale is a donation to Citizens to Save Minnewaska, to help us carry on the struggle. Special thanks to Michael Klein, Hali Hammer, Kurt Henry and all the musicians who produced the album, for their continuing dedicated support.

### UPCOMING COURT BATTLES DEPENDENT ON YOUR SUPPORT

This month we enter the third year of our struggle to save Lake Minnewaska and its trails and waterfalls. Without your generous support Marriott would have started to build, as intended, last fall. Together with Friends of the Shawangunks, we raised \$15,000 for the environmental hearings, which paid for the outstanding legal services of attorney Philip Gitlen, formerly legal counsel to the D.E.C. Attorney Gitlen's expert presentation of evidence, especially on the water issue, forced Marriott to request a 6-month adjournment to conduct further water studies, and brought about a D.E.C. decision which raises major questions on Marriott's water supply. He has also done excellent work on the easement and other legal questions. It should be noted that attorney Gitlen is working for less than half his normal fee, and our total expenditure of \$15,000 compares to nearly \$1 million spent so far by Marriott.

## Conservation Report (continued)

This is not a struggle which we can win in one blow. It is a long slow war of attrition in which we are pitted against a billion dollar Goliath with seemingly endless resources. Marriott is relying on us to run out of steam. But we are determined to stick it out. There are three important potential court battles which we could fight with a reasonable chance of success:

- 1) We can challenge the D.E.C. decision, and ask a court of law to revoke it;
- 2) We should certainly take the P.I.P.C. to court if it amends the easement;
- 3) We could challenge Marriott in court on issues of zoning, since the number of condominiums exceeds current zoning ordinances.

### ALTERNATIVES STUDY BEGINS

On June 1 we began a major feasibility study on environmentally sound alternatives to Marriott. We are currently investigating different ways in which the site might be purchased and managed for the benefit of the public. We will give you a detailed account of our progress in our next mailing.

Whether we can fight any or all of these court battles is totally dependent on the financial contributions we receive from you. As an entirely voluntary group of local citizens, we have no other source of funds. And we have finally reached the point where we must go to court if we are to hold off Marriott any further. Your support has kept us going for two years and already prevented Marriott from doing irreparable damage to one of the most beautiful places in the northeast. Only your ongoing support will enable us to continue the effort to save and preserve Lake Minnewaska for future generations in as beautiful and unspoiled a state as we know it now.

Yours sincerely,  
Peter Ford, Citizens to Save Minnewaska

Please clip this coupon and return it to Citizens to Save Minnewaska, P.O. Box 871, New Paltz, N.Y. 12561. We are reaching out to new possible supporters. If this is the first mailing you have received from us, we can put you on our regular mailing list *only* if you check the first box and return this coupon. If you receive more than one copy of this leaflet, please pass it on to a friend.

- This is the first bulletin I have received from you. Please put me on your mailing list and keep me informed of developments at Lake Minnewaska.
- I have sent letters to the Park Commissioners.
- Enclosed are completed petition forms.
- I will be able to attend the P.I.P.C. meeting on July 20.

Enclosed is a donation to help you continue the struggle to save Minnewaska:

- \$15       \$25       \$50       \$100      Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks out to Citizens to Save Minnewaska. If you want to claim a tax deduction, you can also make out your check to the Open Space Institute and write "Shawangunk Legal Defense Fund" in the memo section of the check. The Open Space Institute is the tax exempt affiliate of the Natural Resources Defense Council and is administering our legal fund.

If you send a donation of \$25 or more, we shall send you a complimentary copy of the 'Save the Mountain' Album if you check this box:

- Please send me a copy of the 'Save the Mountain' Album. Enclosed is a check for \$10.

Please mail coupon to Citizens to Save Minnewaska, P.O. Box 871, New Paltz, N.Y. 12561.

### Climber's Calendar

July 8

MS Meeting-8pm  
PATC hd

Don Barnett's  
Australia slides

There is no August meeting.

September 9

MS Meeting-8pm

For information on trips call James Eakin (598-6047).

## Conservation Report (continued)

### BULL RUN UP DATE

Members of the Mountaineering Section and the PATC went before a meeting of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation board of directors on April 28th. Bill Hutchinson, Jed Tucker, Jeff Brown, and I described the Club's history, membership, resources, and feelings on why Bull Run Mountain should be open to climbing and hiking. Jeff, as spokesman, pled our cause well.

The board had many questions for us--some dealing with how we might implement our visits, others with trying to understand our purposes and structure as a club. We feel we successfully answered them and made some friends in the process.

A use study of the area has been conducted. PATC has just received its copy. We will comment on the study and suggest improvements. (For example, it does not mention climbing as a use of the area. We can document that Bull Run has been a climbing area for over 35 years.) VOF's goals for Bull Run and our climbing are compatible; it's just a matter of methods and timing. They want to control abuses--such as trespassing and stabbings--and preserve the natural features of the area: a biologist has reported ravens nesting on the cliffs.

We offered help in cleaning up the area (for example, our two previous visits this spring generated 20 bags of trash); trail maintenance, which would limit damage and help control access; and supervision, as when we extinguished a smoldering fire found on our first trip this year.

The board agrees to permit MS to continue to visit as we have in the past. We will write for permission with trips scheduled about six weeks apart. It's time for another trip!

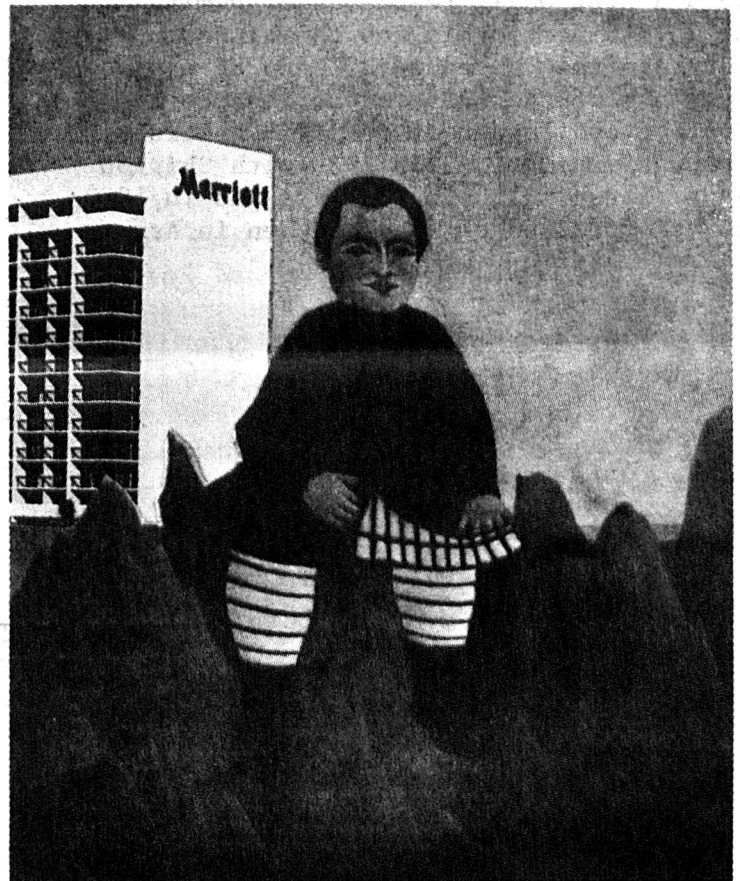
Charlie Dorian

### CARDEROCK DELIVERED

Our own Carderock has become a modest beneficiary of Secretary of the Interior Watt's new people-oriented Park Service policy. The new morality, which directs resources from wilderness pre-

servation into improved plumbing and other tidiness measures, has caused a brown trash can to be chained to the Carderock notice board. The can is a real moral magnet: unprecedented quantities of garbage are now weekly heaped or strewn in its vicinity.

Carderock has become an arena for the display of physical as well as moral prowess. Large rocks have been unearthed and rolled over the top, creating muddy craters in the eroding shore below. Meanwhile, the Parking Police vigorously scrutinize the parking lot. When asked about stopping the litterers and the vandals, one moral guardian winked, "We have to see them first." The parking lot will soon be safe for Winnebagos.



UP ROPE Art History Lesson #1: Henri Rousseau's "Boy on the Rocks" 1895-1897 (modified for a real lesson)

## Publications

High Mountains and Cold Seas, by J.R.L. Anderson. The Mountaineers. 366 pages. \$20.

High Mountains and Cold Seas is a biography of a remarkable Englishman, Harold William Tilman. During his lifetime he was a soldier serving in World Wars I and II, a farmer in Kenya, a traveler, an explorer, a mountaineer, a sailor, and an author. He wrote 15 books describing his travels, mountaineering expeditions, and sailing trips.

In 1919 he settled in Kenya to grow flax and coffee. Here he met neighbor Eric Shipton. Together they climbed Kenya, Kilimanjaro, and Ruwenzori. Later, he made a solo ascent of Kilimanjaro. In 1933, after giving up his farm, he bicycled across Africa along the equator from Uganda to the West Coast, covering 3,000 miles in 56 days.

Joining Eric Shipton in 1934, he took off for the Himalayas to reconnoiter and find a route through the Rishi Gorge, into the Sanctuary of Nanda Devi. He returned in 1936 as a member of a joint British-American expedition during which he and N.E. Odell reached the summit. At 25,645 feet, this was the highest mountain then ascended by man. He was a member of the 1935 reconnaissance to Everest and leader of the 1938 British Everest expedition. In 1937 with Shipton he explored in the Karakorams and in 1939 he attempted to climb Gori Chen in Assam.

At Shipton's invitation, Tilman once again traveled to Sinjiang where Shipton was completing a tour of duty as British Consul in Kashgar, crossing China from Shanghai to Urumchi. The two went off climbing in the little-known Bogdo Ola Mountains, a range east of the Tien Shan Mountains. The return trip took him over the Hindu Kush to Chitral. Wanderings such as these through Central Asia soon became impossible after the Communist Revolution in China.

He made three major journeys in Nepal during 1949-50. The first was his exploration of the Langtang Himal; the second was a mountaineering expedition to the Annapurna Himal, during which he trekked up the Marsyandi Kola; and the last was as a member of an American expedition to the base of Everest by way of Namche Bazaar and the Khumbu Glacier, the route subsequently used by the British in their first ascent.

In 1950, at the age of 53, Tilman concluded he was now too old for high altitude mountaineering. After a brief interlude as a foreign service officer Burma, he spent the rest of his life sailing a succession of three boats on long arduous voyages to remote regions of the world: Greenland, Patagonia, South Shetland Islands, around Africa, Spitzbergen, and Baffin Bay.

In 1977 at the age of 80 he left on a voyage to Smith Island in the South Shetlands. The ship was never seen again.

-reviewed by Arnold Wexler

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