



The ridge leading to the summit

to the lower camp, moving back to the higher camp the next day. This process also helps acclimatize climbers to the terrain. Hence, after several days of 'carries' and 'moves' we found ourselves at Camp 3 at an altitude of 14,300 ft after negotiating increasing slopes at Ski Hill, Motorcycle Hill and the famous Windy Corner. Temperatures had dropped to -10° Celsius, but the weather had been kind to us. Barring a couple of days of poor visibility and light snow, we didn't face any major obstacles. Some days involved 7-10 hours of hard climbing with snow shoes, but we fared well.

At Camp 3 we were rewarded

Mt Hunter, and the daunting prospect of climbing the head wall - a 50° slope, assisted by fixed ropes to 16,500 ft.

Near Miss

After a day's well deserved rest we were treated to fine weather, and after an arduous day on the icy slopes of the headwall we finally reached the cache point. There we basked in phenomenal views of steep drops of 3-8,000 ft on either side of us with the Peters glacier on one side and a bird's-eye view of Camp 3 on the other. At this point, whilst taking off my backpack I wasn't facing the steeper side (as per good practice). This led to the backpack sliding toward the

negotiate the glacier. We were roped up in teams of four to protect ourselves in case of a crevasse fall whilst proceeding along the classic West Buttress route. This route is followed by the majority of Denali climbers and takes anywhere between 17 to 21 days, depending on the weather and summit attempts.

Cache and Carry

Unlike Himalayan climbs, there is no Sherpa or porter support and all the gear and supplies have to be carried by the climbers themselves. In order to make it easier to move 60-70kg from one camp to the other, climbers have to carry part of the load up the mountain to a higher camp, cache it there and return



with a panoramic view of the great Alaskan mountains, including Mt Foraker and

steep abyss of the glacier below. Fortunately, I had secured the backpack to my harness, and