

FROM DESK TO SUMMIT

MOUNTAINS 4U

KNOW-HOW

PREPERATION FOR THE CARSTENSZ-PYRAMID OR THE ISSUE OF LUCK

Text: Petra Thaller, Hermann Huber

Photos: Petra Thaller, Hermann Huber

"To put it in a nutshell, one can say that the CARSTENSZ-Mountains of New Guinea represent exceptional alpine sights, that parts of it offer extraordinarily characteristic and beautiful climbing as well as glacier tours that one would barely expect there. ... Advance and decampment are the seasoning of the expedition, an expedition of its own, and – above all – living among the people of the DANIS upland-tribe."

Hermann Huber, 1974

CARSTENSZ-PYRAMIDE



EVERY ISSUE POSES ONE QUESTION ANEW

What should I write about my future expedition onto the Castensz-Pyramid in October this year, the highest mountain on an island, the highest mountain of Oceania?

Physical training is something that entices every mountaineer away from his desk, even if there is still a lot of work to be done. Since my kick-off in issue three of Mountains4U two things have changed fundamentally: nutrition and my training behaviour – factors that provide a good foundation on an expedition.

Through this - quite incidentally - I have gained considerably more mental strength. Mental strain as chief executive of THALLER MEDIA doesn't affect me so much anymore. In short: I have become considerably more powerful in life, generally.



NABIRE



ILAGA



TIME TO APPROACH THE MOUNTAIN

A talk on the phone with Stephanie Bartl from Salewa resulted in a lucky coincidence. Hermann Huber, former managing director of the Salewa Group when it still was located in Munich, before the family-owned enterprise Oberalp of Heiner Oberrauch took it over, had been on top of the Carstensz-Pyramid in 1974, exactly 40 years ago.

On the website of **Hermann Huber** I finally found them, photos of my destination from the past. Pure Chance. These photos – a present. So I talked with Hermann at great length and – in addition to the visual delight – in 1974, Hermann had typed a 32 pages comprising report about the expedition on his typewriter which he has entrusted to me. So, during the past days I engulfed in his expedition report in every spare minute.

FIRST GERMAN NEW GUINEA EXPEDITION IN 1974

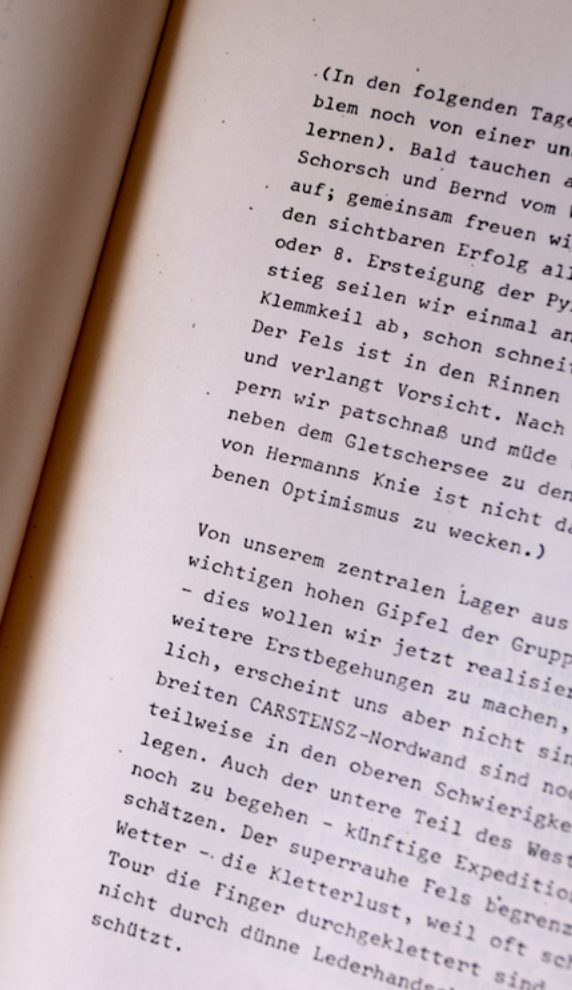
Participants of the expedition at that time were Hermann Huber, Herbert Karasek, Georg Kirner and Bernd Schreckenbach. Dr. Franz Heubl, the former Bavarian Minister for Federal Affairs, was patron of the expedition.

IN HIS INTRODUCTION, HERMANN HUBER WRITES:

“High mountains with glaciers in the South Seas actually do exist:

The CARSTENSZ-Mountains in New Guinea along the parallel of 4° latitude represent one of the highest elevations between Himalaya and the Andes and carries an icecap. The altitude of the culminating point of the group, the CARSTENSZ-Pyramid is indicated with 5,030 m in most of the maps. More recent measurements of an Australian expedition have yielded an altitude of 4,884 m.”

At that time arrival was more than adventurous, the advance was the real expedition. Imagine: In Biak, the participants of the expedition still buy 100 kg of rice, canned fish, sugar, salt and other supply goods and finally fly via Nabire to Ilaga with a TWIN Otter on January 8th, 1974.



“With the aid of the governmental post of Ilaga (and an Indonesian-English dictionary) the team of carriers for the mountains is hired, 27 persons and a few potato carriers for the carriers. Everybody carries a load of 20 kilos plus potatoes in addition. On January 10th, 1977, the crew of the naked, strong men of Ilaga sets out, hurrying up the mountain trail, with cheerful shouting and filled with joy ... “

I sink into Hermann's depiction of the expedition, read of striking carriers, river crossings, an immense humidity, difficulties to find a suitable campsite, permeable rucksack seams and physical problems of the expedition participants. A time travel starts. Knee-deep swamp impedes progressing, the crossing of the New Zealand Pass isn't easy.

“Through the wet falling fresh snow and the mist deep down you see a rocky ridge every now and then which we try to reach. The idea of a wet and cold ice bivouac already suggests itself ...”



My time travel picks up speed. Thanks to Hermann Huber's expedition report I now know for sure why I have embarked on this adventure. I already feel prepared for this challenge, as it is unlike lower than the expedition that Huber, Karasek, Kirner and Schreckenbach had organised on their own back then.

I will probably pass some days in the mountains during the next few months and complete some sober training units. Even if the journey to the other end of the world has been organized perfectly, I conclude from many years of experience and from what I have just read, that mental and physical strength are an absolute premise for enjoying the undertaking. Only a strong expedition member is a full-value expedition member, that much is for sure.

Of course I would like to thank Hermann Huber, who provided me with the last copy of his expedition report, my trainer and former classmate **Nicole Dreeßen**, the **DAV Summit Club**, which enables me to carry out the expedition, Christoph Schnurr, “my mountain guide” during the preparation time as well as the company Salewa, which perfectly supports me with equipment.

Booking Carstensz-Pyramide