FURTHER NOTES ON THE RUWENZORI

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A Postscript

[The last number of the ALPINE JOURNAL contained an article with the above title. Some further information has now come to hand which should be added for the sake of completeness.

As far as I can ascertain this will complete the record of new expeditions between 1938 and 1954 and I shall cease to maintain the list. I hope this will be done in future by the Mountain Club of Uganda. Perhaps the *A.J.* will also consider appointing a correspondent in Uganda to keep us posted.]

VII. MILLS, 1954

Captain Mills, Major Loach and 2nd-Lt. Collins, all of the 16th Independent Parachute Brigade, then stationed in the Canal Zone, experienced vile weather in May. After various fruitless attempts they made yet another ascent of the north-east ridge of Margherita. At the time they were under the impression in the bad visibility prevailing that they were making an ascent of a new east ridge of Margherita distinct from the north-east ridge, which rises from the Stuhlmann Pass. It was clear to me from their account that they were not on the 1943 Polish east-face route to Alexandra (*A.J.* 54. 275, with map) and that their account agreed remarkably with the South African ascents of 1953 and 1954 (*A.J.* 59. 414). After prolonged correspondence and study of my photographs Mills has now confirmed that his party followed the South African route.

This was, I think, the fourth ascent of the ridge, not counting the German route of 1938, which only struck the ridge at the extreme top (*A.J.* 59. 410). Only the Polish 1939 route (*A.J.* 59. 413) covered the whole ridge from the Stuhlmann Pass, but this as I have already stated (*loc. cit.*) seems to me a mistake.

The Mills party bivouacked at the Polish lakes and seem to have followed the South African line exactly. The big rock-step looked worse than it proved. Snow conditions were very trying and six hours were required for the climb. At no time was visibility more than 50 yards. The descent to the lakes took five hours, as one member suffered a fall and could hardly walk. A wretched night had therefore to be spent at the lakes. The Bujuku hut was reached next day.

On the return trip to road-head the rivers were in full spate and Mills was nearly lost crossing the Mobuku. The party had not realised that

a bridge has now been constructed below the confluence of the Bujuku and Mobuku rivers to prevent such risks. The trouble was that the path to the new bridge on both sides had not then been fully cut and porters did not disclose its existence, because they hate creepers and do not mind flooded rivers.

Conditions of visibility are often so bad in the Ruwenzori that I attach a vertical air photograph to illustrate the ridges of Alexandra, Margherita and Albert. (N.B.—The top of the photograph is roughly but *not* exactly north.) All route markings are approximate.

Solid line ——. Polish 1943 route to Alexandra (*A.J.* 54. 275).

Dashed line – – –. South African and Mills route by north-east ridge from Polish lakes[1] (see above).

Dash dot line –·–·–·. Polish 1939 route (*A.J.* 59. 413) by north-east ridge reached from just north of Stuhlmann Pass.

Dotted line ..... German 1938 route (*A.J.* 59. 410) from north side reaching north-east ridge very high up.

Dash double dot line –··–··–···. Unclimbed north-east ridge of Albert attempted by Humphreys (*A.J.* 39. 101), but never since then, as far as I can ascertain. Mills, in the rare glimpses he had of it, felt that it should prove no more difficult than the north-east ridge of Margherita, but the approach to the foot will certainly be tiresome. A foreshortened view of this ridge will be found (Plate I) facing *A.J.* 59. 408. It is not the right-hand skyline, but the rock ridge with distinct towers running down below it diagonally to the right (see below).

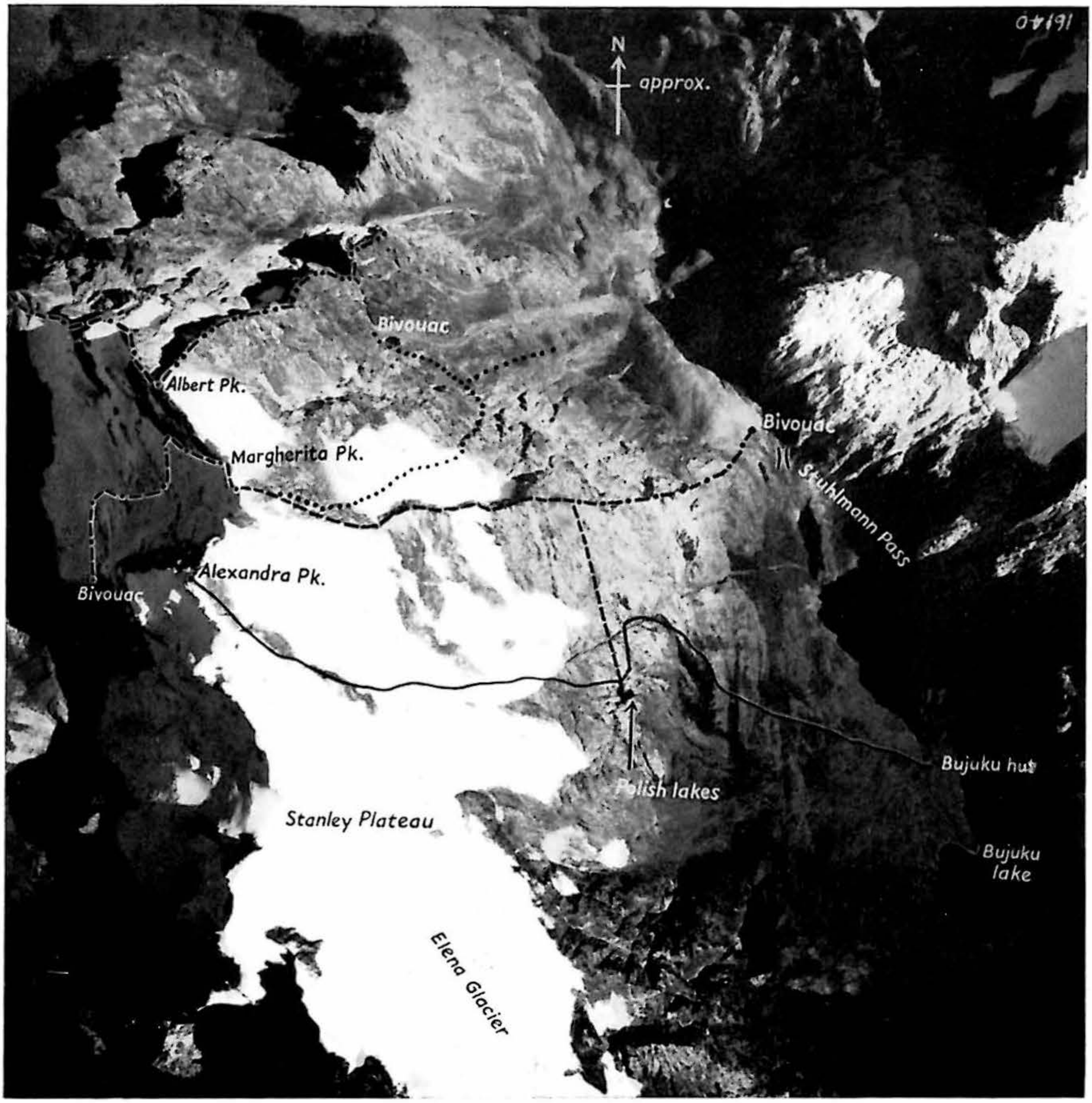
Double dash dot line ––·––·. North-west ridge of Albert, the right-hand skyline in Plate I facing *A.J.* 59. 408. First climbed by the Belgian expedition[2] of 1932 (*A.J.* 45. 288; and note photograph on p. 285 where the ridge is the left-hand skyline) and later descended in part by the Polish 1939 expedition (*A.J.* 59. 413).

Second double dash dot line ––·––·. West face of Margherita–Albert climbed by the Belgians in 1932 (see illustration with marked route in *A.J.* 45. 285). This route may have been often repeated. Certainly once by M. René Mallieux, Vice-President of the *Club Alpin Belge*, but not by a triumphant reporter of *Life*, who however reached the snowline and took some magnificent photographs. His sufferings were, I grieve to think, intense; partly no doubt, because he described the horrors of camping when he was each night within a few feet of a comfortable hut. Something must really be done to protect the Fourth Estate from such unnecessary privations—or at any rate their infliction on a credulous and inexperienced public.

Mountaineering, as opposed to scientific, expeditions are not encouraged by the authorities of the National Parks of the Congo and though records of ascents no doubt exist, I have not traced them.

[1] Mills estimates the height of the Polish lakes at about 1,500 ft. above Bujuku Lake, i.e. about 19,500 ft.

[2] The account of the Belgian expedition in *A.J.* 45. 275 *et seq.* is skimpy. It is best to read the expedition's book, *Le Ruwenzori* (R. Dupriez, Bruxelles), not published until 1937.



Vertical air photo by H. Maclachlan.]

NORTHERN PORTION OF STANLEY GROUP, THE RUWENZORI (FOR EXPLANATIONS OF ROUTE LINES—SEE TEXT).

[*To face p.* 106.

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It has now been definitely ascertained by Mr. Thompson, a surveyor of the Department of Lands, Uganda, that the northern peak of Speke is higher than Vittorio Emanuele, hitherto regarded as the summit. Mr. Thompson took a theodolite to the summit of Vittorio Emanuele.

Dr. Humphreys gave the name ' Ensonga ' to the northern summit. The word apparently means ' dot ' or ' spot ' and was employed by Dr. Humphreys, because he first saw the peak as a dot through an opening in the clouds (source R. M. Bere). This seems to me rather an inadequate reason for the name.

There is a tendency among recent parties to give the name ' Grant ' to this summit. It would not be inappropriate as Grant was Speke's companion.

In *A.J.* 59. 415 I said that the ' same party ' (i.e. Messrs. Forsyth and Davies) repeated the ascent of Margherita by the north-east ridge. This is incorrect ; the party consisted of Messrs. Davies and I. Keith and Miss June Slinger (now Mrs. Davies), who deserves hearty congratulations on being the first lady to reach the highest summit in the Ruwenzori (see *A.J.* 59. 410).