



## AAC Publications

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### **Bloody Butte, The Coke Bottle, Tower of Kor, Bighorn Tower**

Arizona, Black Mountains, Mt. Nutt Wilderness Area

I was fortunate to spend some time visiting with Layton Kor at his home in Kingman, Arizona, in the last few years before he died on April 21, 2013. While Layton was still healthy enough, we were able to get out climbing. On a trip to western Arizona in April 2009, with Ed Webster and Dennis Jump, we teamed up to make the first ascent of a small tower in the volcanic Black Mountains, which we called Bloody Butte, a.k.a. Kor's Kastle. This was the last first ascent of a desert tower that Layton was able to make. He led the first pitch (5.7 A1), pounding pitons for pro and three blades for an anchor.

Layton told me about another tower that he had discovered farther south in the Mt. Nutt Wilderness Area, which he dubbed the Coke Bottle for its appearance from the highway above Bullhead City. In April 2011 he joined Dennis and me for an attempt on the 350-foot tower. After a day of driving and hiking around the desert to find the best approach, we climbed three pitches in 90°F temperatures before bailing. Layton was excited to see a big Mojave rattlesnake during our hike out.

I returned the following winter with Dennis Jump and Brian Shelton, and on February 8, 2012, made the first ascent via a circuitous six-pitch route we called Hard Kor (III 5.8 C1 or 5.10-). As we stood on the summit under azure skies, we decided to call it Tower of Kor to honor a great climber and friend. That evening, over a celebratory steak dinner in Kingman, Layton wistfully told me, "That's the first tower that I've discovered and didn't make its first ascent."

Next to the Tower of Kor, and separated by a deep gash, is an even taller tower. Although several climbers had asked for beta on climbing Tower of Kor, we resisted giving out information before we had a chance to return. On February 7, 2013, Brian Shelton, Dr. Bill Springer, and I climbed the nearly 500-foot tower via a seven-pitch route (III 5.8 C1 or 5.10-) that shared Hard Kor's first three pitches. Brian suggested we call it Bighorn Tower for the herd of sheep we saw earlier in the day, effortlessly scampering up an almost vertical gully opposite our route.

Stewart Green, USA

## Images



Bighorn Tower (left) and Tower of Kor in the Mt. Nutt Wilderness Area. Layton Kor climbed three pitches on the ca 350' Tower of Kor (a.k.a. Coke Bottle) in 2011, his last attempt on a major desert first ascent before he died in April 2013.



An overview of the Mt. Nutt Wilderness Area towers.

## Article Details

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