



## AAC Publications

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### **Mythics Cirque, various ascents**

Greenland, Kangertitivatsiaq Fjord

In August AAC members Steve Beckwith (U.K.), Matthew Bunn (Australia), Matthew Traver (U.K.), and I traveled to East Greenland, intent on exploring unclimbed peaks. After congregating in Tasiilaq, we spent several days trying to locate packages containing food and gear (they arrived two months late!), and salvage plans to head south along the coast. Ultimately, the journey to our planned location proved too perilous for any of the available captains, due to unusually rough seas brought on by a warm summer and lack of sea ice.

Eventually, Salomon Gadegaard took us ca 150km north to Kangertitivatsiaq (ca 66°18'15" N, 35°42'40" W), a prospective climbing area located via Google Earth and vetted by the venerable Tasiilaq resident Hans Christian Florian. We established base camp at an extraordinary site in a cwm below a prominent collection of towers. We dubbed this the Mythics Cirque. This cirque lies at the convergence of two forks in the fjord system, the Kangertitivatsiaq and Sangmilik, and had no known previous visits by climbers. Buffered from the larger inland glaciers, the Mythics peaks hold steep walls exceeding 1,000m, though rock quality is variable.

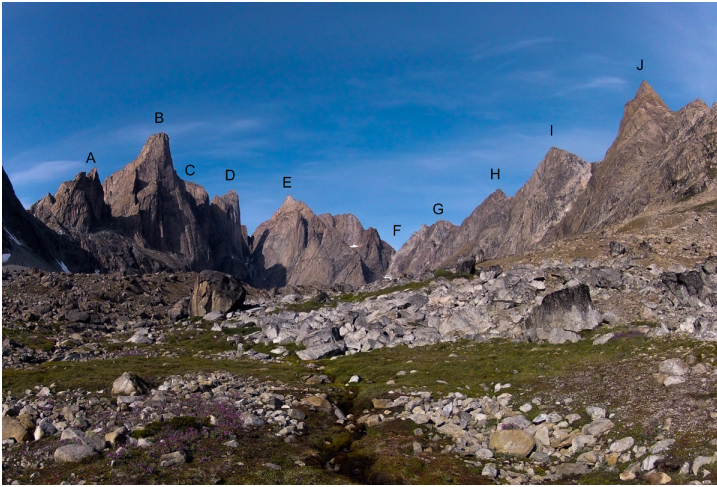
After a few days of unsettled weather, our team divided and spent the next three weeks attempting new routes, both in the cirque proper and the surrounding areas, which were reached by foot and/or inflatable canoe. First, Bunn and I set off for the valleys to the southwest of the cirque. After exploring two small glaciers on foot, we climbed Father Tower via a new route on the southeast face and east ridge, Coronis (5.9, ca 14 pitches). This was the second ascent of this ca 1,350m tower, the first ascent via the south ridge being made the day before by Mike Libecki. Descent was via the south ridge, where we bivouacked and enjoyed the northern lights. In the meantime, Beckwith and Traver attempted the steep and imposing north face of Siren Tower, but were thwarted by heavy rockfall in the approach couloir.

After regrouping at base camp, Bunn and I chose to attempt a fast and light ascent of the highest peak at the back of the cirque, approaching via a steeper than expected and treacherously loose couloir. After a bivouac at a col, we began to ascend the steep, technical ridge toward the summit. We retreated after a couple of moderate pitches, knowing there was no safe way to descend the couloir we'd climbed. Instead, we would have to traverse four peaks to get back to base camp. Over the next 30 hours, Bunn and I completed the Tortures Traverse (5.4), making the first ascents of all four peaks, with proposed names Prometheus (ca 1,100m), Tantalus (ca 1,250m), Sisyphus (ca 1,200m), and Damocles (ca 1,250m). The ridge was generally unstable, with third- and fourth-class terrain intermixed with brief sections of low fifth class, and is not recommended.

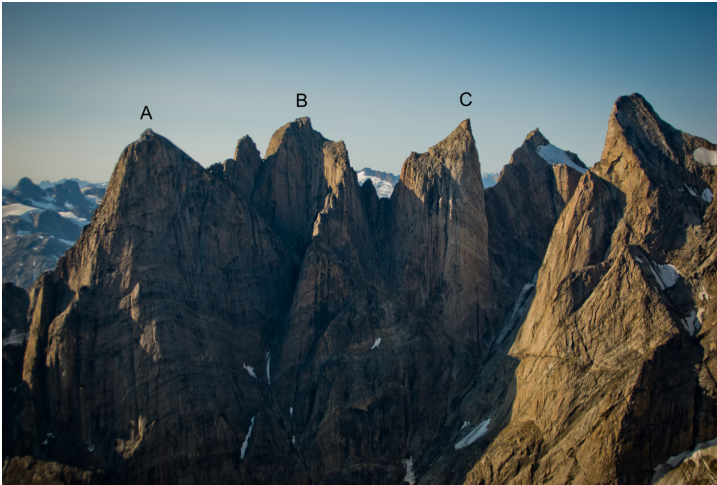
For final objectives, Beckwith and Traver focused on a small, steep feature on the east ridge of Father Tower (dubbed the Squid), but retreated due to poor rock quality. Simultaneously, Bunn and I found tremendous rock quality on the south face of Hidden Tower, which was approached via canoe and foot. Our nine-pitch route, Assembling the Tupilak (5.10), might be a classic in almost any climbing destination. Our trip was generously supported by the American Alpine Club (McNeill-Nott Grant), the Arctic Club and the Gino Watkins Memorial Fund, the Alpine Club, the Mount Everest Foundation, and the British Mountaineering Council. [Editor's note: Download the full expedition report (PDF, 11mb) below for more details, maps, and photos.]

Mike Royer, AAC

## Images



Looking west into the Mythics Cirque from base camp. (A) The Squid. (B) Father Tower (ca 1,350m). (C) Hidden Tower (ca 1,350m), summit not visible. (D) Siren Tower (ca 1,350m). (E) Unnamed tower (ca 1,450m). (F) Tartarus couloir. (G) Prometheus (ca 1,100m). (H) Tantalus (ca 1,250m). (I) Sisyphus (ca 1,200m). (J) Damocles (ca 1,250m).



North faces of the towers of the southern branch of the Mythics Cirque. (A) Father Tower, center of north face, first climbed by Libeck and Pringle, 2012. (B) Hidden Tower, climbed via the south face (not visible). (C) Siren Tower, unclimbed. The other two peaks are also unclimbed.



View along the Tortures Traverse toward Sisyphus and Damocles, seen from the summit of Tantalus.



Father Tower from the fjord, showing Coronis.



Assembling the Tupilak on the south face of Hidden Tower.



Mike Royer on the fine granite of the south face of Hidden Tower.

## Article Details

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