



AAC Publications

Mt. Waddington, McNerthney Pillar, second ascent; Bicuspid Tower, west face, On a Recky

Canada, Waddington Range

In July, Ben Kunz, Tim Halder, and I enjoyed nine days of impeccable weather in the Waddington Range. Our primary objective was the McNerthney Pillar (McNerthney-McNerthney, 1986) on the northern flanks of Mt. Waddington.

Our pilot, Mike King, allowed us to drop all our base camp gear at Sunny Knob first, then fly up to the Waddington-Combatant Col with our climbing gear. This highly recommended maneuver saved us a full day of approaching via the Tiedemann Icefall, where seracs pose an objective hazard.

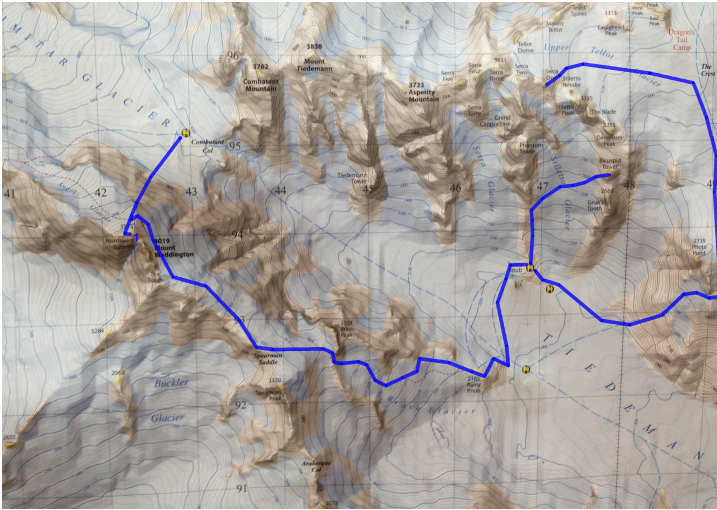
At the base of the McNerthney Pillar we were excited and humbled by the 700m climb: The pillar would offer climbing similar to the Alaska Range, with complexities involving rock, snow, and ice. We were lucky to find ledges for bivouacs and reached the northwest summit of Waddington in two and half days. After a flat bivy up high, we descended the northeast face to the Bravo Glacier to our base camp on the fourth day.

Following our climb, Ben and I went up the Stiletto Glacier to get a closer look at potential new lines on Dentiform. This exploratory mission took a big shift as I started mapping out a series of cracks and corners on the bone-white west face of Bicuspid Tower. We soon ditched our tools and boots at the base of the tower and climbed six pitches of flawless cracks, establishing a new line to the right of existing routes: On a Recky (240m, IV 5.11). The second and sixth pitches proved to be the cruxes, requiring tricky sequences up thin cracks and seams, while the third pitch offered exhilarating splitter jamming. After reaching the south summit of this twin-topped tower, we rappelled down and reached camp just after dark. Other potential lines exist on the face, which makes a stellar single-day outing from Sunny Knob.

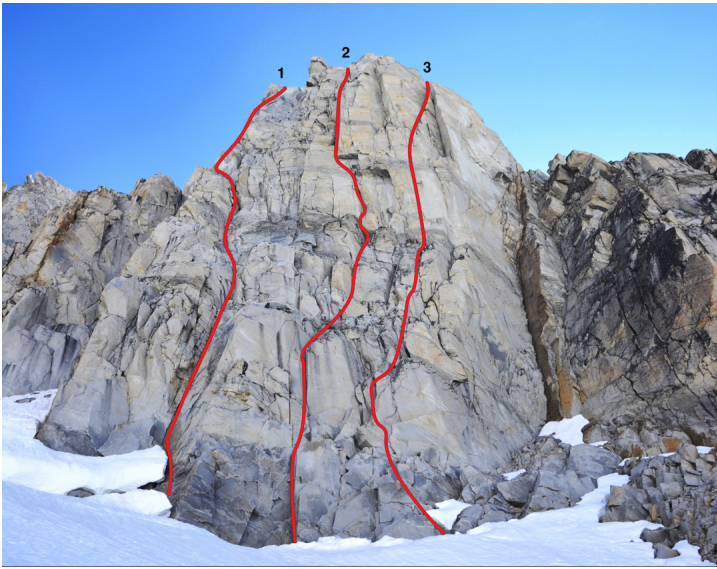
After sleeping in the next day, we scrambled up to the Plummer Hut for a look at the climbing above the Upper Tellot Glacier. We enjoyed simul-climbing moderate terrain to the top of Serra One. Satiated, we returned to Sunny Knob later that day and packed up to fly out on the ninth day of perfect weather, just before a storm came in the following week.

Joe Sambataro, USA

Images



A map showing the team's adventures.



A foreshortened view of the 800' west face of Bicuspid Tower, showing: (1) Routine Brain Surgery [Cassels-Menitove, 2004]. (2) Life in the Fast Lane [Nicholson-O'Connell, 2007]. (3) On a Recky [Kunz-Sambataro, 2013].



The line taken by the team on the McNerthney Pillar.



Settled in at a bivy on the McNerthney Pillar.





Alpine disco.



Leading on Biscupid Tower.



Leading on Biscupid Tower.

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