



AAC Publications

Apocalypse, west face, A Cold Day in Hell

Alaska, Revelation Mountains

In early April, I spent ten frustrating days waiting in town, hoping to fly into the Revelation Mountains. Nothing was going our way. First the weather was bad and pilots were available; then the weather was good, but our pilots couldn't fly in. One partner had to drop out, and another ran out of time. In a last-ditch effort of desperation, I started calling friends of friends, looking for an available partner: Jason Stuckey answered the call and flew into the range.

After first retreating from another unclimbed mountain, Pyramid Peak, Jason and I set our sights on the Revelations' tallest unclimbed peak, Apocalypse (9,345'). Named by David Roberts in 1967, the peak had been tried several times in the early 1980s, but had thwarted every attempt. Apocalypse's 4,400' west face is one of the most continuously steep, Kichatna-like walls in all of the Revelations. Numerous walls comprise the expansive west aspect and tower over the narrow Revelation Glacier. In between the two largest walls is a narrow cut in the face. From the ground we could easily see huge amounts of ice choking the serpentine gully. [Clint Helander's AAJ 2013 article "Recon: Revelations" briefly covers prior attempts on Apocalypse.]

Jason and I spent two days and two nights climbing the wall, encountering over 2,000' of ice climbing up to AI5. The summit ridge felt wildly exposed and committing, and with only two pickets we were forced to use seated belays and simul-climb with no protection between us. On the summit, we could see all the way to Denali. We carefully downclimbed and rappelled the route, A Cold Day in Hell (4,400', AI5), leaving only a few pieces of gear and V-threads. When we hit the glacier, we realized we had been climbing in a massive inversion. Our base camp thermometer bottomed out at -25°F.

Clint Helander

Images



A Cold Day in Hell climbs the obvious gully.



The ca 4,500 foot west face of Apocalypse, showing unclimbed rock walls and A Cold Day in Hell (center-right gully).



Jason Stuckey following moderate ice on the lower part of the climb.



Traversing step snow slopes on the upper mountain.



Caption: A. Hesperus B. Apocalypse C. Dike Peak (unclimbed) D. Pyramid Peak (unclimbed) E. Four Horsemen F. Century G. Sentry H. Golgotha I. Hydra J. Angel K. Seraph (unclimbed) L. Vanishing Pinnacle M. Sylph N. Cherub O. South Buttress P. Patmos Q. Babel Tower (8,365', unclimbed). R. Exodus S. Medusa T. Ice Pyramid U. Mausolus V. Pirate Peak W. Peak 9,304' (unclimbed) X. Jezebel Y. Titanic Z. Peak 9,076' SLO: Hartman Glacier, area of 2012 Slovenian expedition (see Climbs and Expeditions).

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