



AAC Publications

Trident Glacier area, SnickleFritz; Augustin Peak, northeast face

Alaska, Kichatna Spires

On April 8 Jess Roskelley and I flew into the Trident Glacier, a triple-forked glacier in the northern Kichatna Mountains. Augustin Peak (ca 8,600') is the tallest summit in the area and forms the head of the glacier.

When we landed, we found the region drowning in winter weather cycles, with daily storms and unconsolidated snow on the faces. At this time the year before we had found solid blue ice in the Kichatnas; however, the wide-swing freeze-thaw cycle had not yet set in.

On April 9 we launched up a route on the southeast side of the ridge that divides the middle and north forks of the Trident Glacier. We found the mostly mixed climb in rotten condition and climbed the route with one bivy just below the summit ridge. After gaining the ridge crest, we descended from a col atop the ridge. We called the route SnickleFritz (1,500', 5.9 A2 M5 80°).

Back in camp, the weather stayed socked in for 10 days. During this time we explored on skis each fork of the glacier and the adjoining passes. Jess joked that we were a bit like Shackleton, "except with lots of good food, global communication, and minimal hardship."

On April 20 we left in the middle of the night for the cold shadow of Augustin Peak's northeast face, hoping to avoid danger from a serac band in the middle of the face. Once gaining the entry ramp on the left side of the face, we bivied for a few hours with one sleeping bag between us. When the sun emerged we began simul-climbing and continued in this style for the entire route, reaching the summit at 2:30 p.m. We descended our line of ascent by downclimbing and several rappels, and we arrived back at base camp in the last hour of daylight.

We named our route the Erdmann-Roskelley Northeast Face (4,000', IV M3 70°). The climbing was classic and enjoyable. It's possible this marks only the second ascent of Augustin Peak, following the first ascent by the west face (Graber-Long-Schunk, AAJ 1978).

Ben Erdmann

Images



The Erdmann-Roskelley Northeast Face (4,000', IV M3 70°) on Augustin Peak. The first ascent by the west face climbed the opposite side of the mountain.



Ben Erdmann switches to rock shoes on the first ascent of SnickleFritz.



Looking up a thin runnel of ice and snow on SnickleFritz.



Ben Erdmann following the final snow slopes up Augustin Peak.



Erdmann on the summit of Augustin.



Following a thin runnel of ice and snow on SnickleFritz.



Roskelley on summit of Augustin.



Panoramic view of the Kichatna Spires from the summit of Augustin Peak.



The route SnickleFritz, located on a ridge above the Trident Glacier, in relation to Augustin Peak.

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