



Pyramid Peak, west face, The Odyssey; Mt. Boucansaud, east face, The Illiad

Alaska, Revelation Mountains

After Clint Helander, a very active climber responsible for many first ascents in the Revelations, showed me some amazing photos of unclimbed summits and projects in the range, Lise Billon, Jeremy Stagnetto (both France), Pedro Angel Galan Diaz (Spain), and I flew into the area on March 17. Pyramid Peak (8,572') immediately fascinated us; it was unclimbed and had a very steep and imposing west face.

The winter in Alaska had been unusually warm and dry, and we were quite worried about the conditions we would find. Fortunately, the unusual weather seemed to play in our favor as we encountered more ice than reported by previous expeditions.

Our first aim was to climb a fairly direct line to the summit of Pyramid Peak, but after two days of effort, having climbed past thin and unprotectable ice smears, we finally dead-ended only 200m off the ground. More often than not the cracks were closed off, and finding a logical line proved complicated. Clint had tried an obvious line to the left in the large gully, but it is protected by large, overhanging snow mushrooms and a huge roof at the top. [See report by Ian Welsted about an attempt in 2014 on the same gully line.]

To help boost our spirits we decided to go climb an evident line on an unclimbed peak, which we later called Mt. Boucansaud (named in honor of Jean-Marc Boucansaud, our friend and Chamonix-based mountain guide who passed away last winter). Leaving on March 23, we climbed a striking ice smear on the east face of the peak in 20 hours camp to camp. The climb was mostly straightforward alpine ice climbing with two amazing crux pitches of thin water ice: the Illiad (900m, TD+).

After this, we spotted another thin ice line on the right side of Pyramid's west face and decided to try it. We started climbing on March 27 and bivied three times on the wall. We were unable to start climbing until late morning every day due to very cold temperatures. The route had various hard pitches of mixed climbing, vertical snow, and only a few pitches of easy snow climbing. The crux pitches included an overhanging chimney with bulging snow mushrooms and a sketchy traverse to reach a very steep corner. The climbing was often in the M5-6 range, including much thin ice. In all, we climbed 18 pitches and 300m of ridgeline to reach the summit on March 30.

From the summit, we descended the northwest face via nine rappels to reach a big couloir, which led us back to the glacier. We called the route the Odyssey (1,100m, 6b A1 M7 90°). Protection along the route was quite scarce, and many of the pitches were run-out. We flew out of the range on April 2.

Jerome Sullivan, France

Images



Mt. Boucansaud's east face. The line of the Iliad climbs the prominent ice and snow gully in the center-left of the face.



The line of the Odyssey on the right side of Pyramid Peak's west face. The difficult and sustained route allowed for the first ascent of the peak. The prominent gully center-left was attempted in 2013 by Clint Helander and Jason Stuckey, climbing six pitches. Canadian climbers Kris Irwin, Ian Welsted, and Darren Vonk attempted the gully in 2014, climbing 10 pitches to the prominent horizontal band of snow two-thirds of the way up the wall.



Jerome Sullivan leading an icy corner on the Odyssey.



Lise Billon and Jeremy Stagnetto climbing on the Illiad, pitch 4.



The team unpacks just after landing beneath Pyramid Peak.



The first pitch of Illiad (900m, TD+), a nicely frozen corner.



Jerome Sullivan on pitch 4 of the Illiad (900m, TD+). Lise Billon



Jerome Sullivan on the beautiful ice smears low on the Illiad (900m, TD+).



The snow couloir leading to the summit of Mt. Boucansaud.



Jerome Sullivan climbing up the first of many steep pitches of unconsolidated snow on the Odyssey (1,100m, 6b A1 M7 90°).

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