



## AAC Publications

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### **Wright Ice Piedmont, First Ascents**

Antarctica, Antarctic Peninsula

**Our mountaineering team of Ueli Gnädinger, Leif Langenskiöld, Conrad Weiss, and me (all Swiss) left Puerto Williams on the catamaran Libellule on December 29 and returned on January 29, 2015. Out of our 22 days on the Peninsula only four had good weather: a three-day fine spell and two half days. We found much sea ice south of Vernadsky, and despite spending three days searching the coastline between Adelaide Island and Vernadsky, we were unable to find a landing point. In the end we climbed 12 peaks, three of which were possibly first ascents.**

We climbed Mt. Irizar on Deception Island (350m, F-), Trinity Island South Peak (540m, F-), Mt. Banck (710m, PD-), Jabet Peak (530m, PD-), Mt. Matin (2,450m, PD, via the west ridge to reach the broad southwest summit shoulder; according to Phil Wickens this was the third ascent), Mt. Cloos South Summit (930m, F-), Cape Tuxen (440m, F), Mt. Tennant (730m, F-), and Nansen Island North Peak (410m, F). All these had seen previous ascents, some many.

We spent January 7–9 on the Wright Ice Piedmont, where we climbed three possible first ascents. On the first day we landed between growlers on a spot just south of Cape Andreas in Curtiss Bay, where we installed an emergency depot not far from some nesting birds. Then we used skis to ascend up glacier with pulks. After seven kilometers we established camp at 600m (64°03.8'S, 60°38.9'W). The snow was good enough to build a protective wall, so we were safe and comfortable. The weather wasn't particularly favorable during the first two days, practically a whiteout, so whenever there were temporary clearings, we immediately grasped the opportunity to try nearby peaks.

The first was unnamed Peak 824m (64°03.9'S, 60°40.5'W). After one failed attempt we reached the summit at around midnight on the 7th, following the southeast ridge and over the steep, crevassed southeast shoulder at PD-. At 2:30 a.m. on the 9th we summited Langley Peak (977m, F, 64°03.4'S, 60°36.4'W). We skied over the south saddle, up to the south-southeast ridge, and used crampons for the last 50m to the easy southwest ridge leading to the top. Our third ascent, made during the morning of the 9th in improving weather, was unnamed Peak 982m (PD+, 64°03.7'S, 60°37.9'W). We approached from the southeast and climbed the steep northeast ridge. Ueli had to use the shovel to break through the capping cornice. We then continued along the east ridge to the summit, where the view onto the Wright Ice Piedmont and the Detroit Plateau was incredible. There was nothing but glaciers and mountains as far as the eye could see, many of which are likely still unclimbed. We would like to name this summit Mt. Libellule. The ski down the glacier with pulks was fun, and we reached the boat safely.

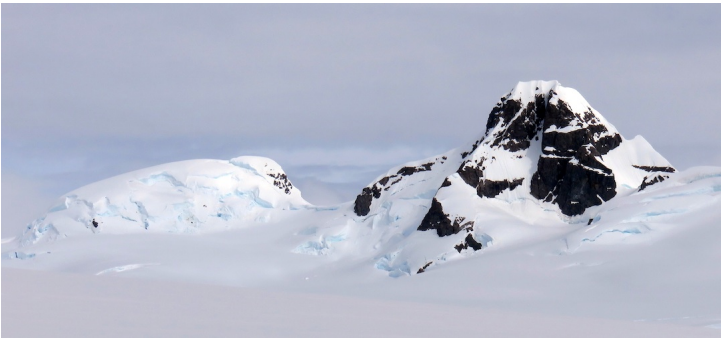
During our stay we never experienced any strong winds, and from a sailing perspective the ice conditions on the northern Peninsula were relatively easy compared to the Northwest Passage in Canada.

Philipp Cottier, Switzerland

## Images



Descending the northeast ridge of Mt. Libellule after the successful ascent.



Peak 824m (left) seen from the northwest. It was ascended from the far left via the southeast ridge, which is hidden in this picture. Libellule and Langley are off picture left. The peak on the right is thought to be unclimbed and 900–950m. It could be best ascended via the southeast ridge (left skyline) from the col between the two peaks. At the time this photo was taken the summit ridge was sharp and highly mushroomed.

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