



## AAC Publications

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### **Bilibino Towers**

Russia, Chukotka Region

**In August, Chris Fitzgerald and I traveled to the Chukotka region in far northeastern Russia to climb granite towers near the small town of Bilibino.** To our knowledge, no routes had ever been climbed on these walls, which are north of the Arctic Circle (68°18'23.32"N, 165°50'5.75"E). We traveled about 60 km northwest from Bilibino by quad bikes and were dropped off 4.5km walk from our base camp (980m). We shuttled four loads and then camped at the base of a peak named Komandnaya (Commander) for 23 days.

We climbed or attempted six new routes on four different walls, generally north-facing with gentle slopes on the south side. The first two were on the General. The Turilov Route (375m, 20/6a+) was climbed in a single push following the same crack system the whole way and all on natural protection. The second route, Basil Brush (465m, 23/7a), followed the central nose and was climbed over several days. It is a stunning, proud line with excellent crack and corner climbing, along with some bolted face sections; most belays are bolted.

We then did a route on the shoulder of Peak Komandnaya named Epaulette (280m, 17/5c), with pleasant climbing all on natural protection. In the next valley over to the east we climbed a route named Gardening Australia (305m, 18/5c) on Launch Peak, again all on natural protection.

Next we started a direct line on Komandnaya. We climbed up the center of the wall, establishing five pitches up to 20/6b. We got rained off about halfway, and after sitting through four days of rain in base camp we were unable to complete the route by the time our pickup party was to arrive. The headwall we were about to start looked amazing. We walked back out in more rain and were driven to Bilibino. Then the sun came out and we managed a quick trip back to the mountains with our local friend Evgeny Turilov, a nuclear engineer who had helped us make local arrangements. Together we climbed a granite dome to the northwest of Komandnaya with a single pitch of 12/4a.

During our time in the area we also did some paragliding and walked through many of the surrounding valleys, where we saw many other towers and walls that looked great to climb. The quality of rock in general is excellent, though often wet or mossy. The Bilibino region is extremely isolated and was closed to foreigners and even non-local Russians 20 years ago. But once in Bilibino (the town serves mines and the northernmost nuclear power plant in the world), getting to the climbs is fairly simple, with a road that gets you close and relatively short walk-ins, with no glaciers or massive scree slopes. The people of Bilibino were very helpful and truly made this trip possible though their kindness and hospitality.

Chris Warner, Australia

## Images



Peak Komandnaya (left) with (1) the attempted direct line. In center is the General, showing (2) Basil Brush (465m, 23/7a) and (3) the Turilov Route (375m, 20/6a+).



Photo topo for Gardening Australia on Launch Peak.



Chris Fitzgerald in the valley to the east of Komandnaya, where the pair did one new route up the center of the peak at far right, dubbed Launch Peak. All the other walls are unclimbed.



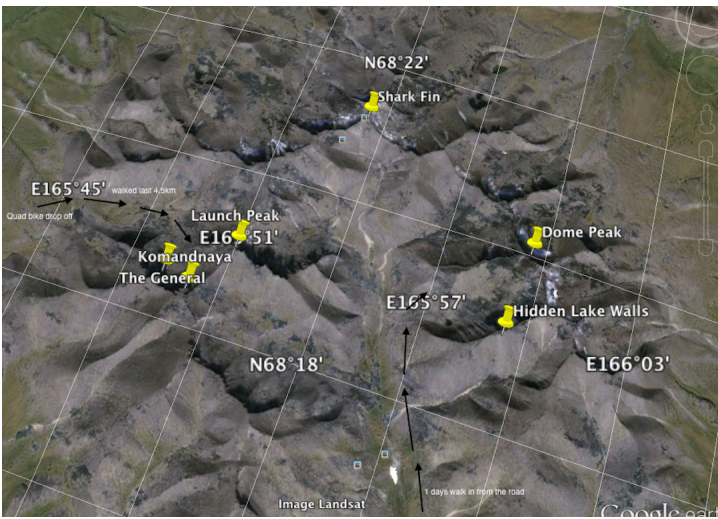
Photo topo for Epaulette and uncompleted Komadnaya Direct on Komadnaya tower.



Nearing the top of the Split Pillar, pitch four of Basil Brush on the General.



Peaks of the Bilibino.



Schematic map of Bilibino Towers area.

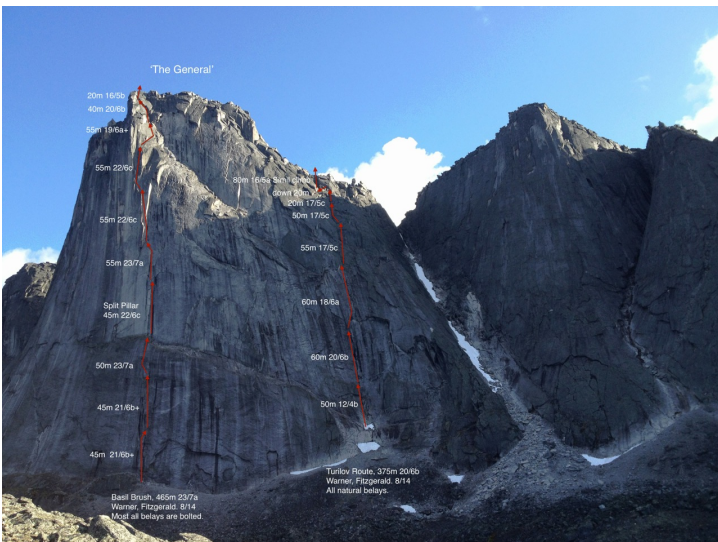
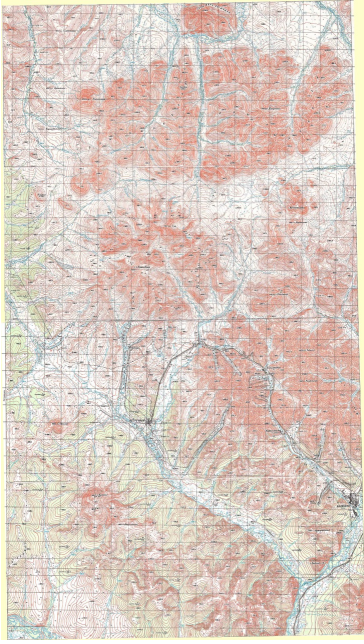


Photo topo of Basil Brush and Turilov Route on the General.



Map of Bilibino Towers area.

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