



AAC Publications

Mt. Waddington, Northwest Summit, Southwest Buttress

Canada, Coast Range, Waddington Range

On August 17, I joined Ines Papert (Germany) and Mayan Smith-Gobat (New Zealand) for a lightning-fast, four-day trip to Mt. Waddington (4,018m). I'd been to the Wadd before to scout locations for a feature film with some Hollywood types, but climbing in this world-class mountain range had thus far eluded me.

We flew by helicopter to the Dais Glacier on the southwest side of the Waddington massif. Above our camp, the rocky southwest buttress jacked out of the glacier like an 800m petrified shield, leading directly to the northwest summit (4,000m).

At 5:30 a.m. on the morning of the 18th, we crossed the bergschrund and quickly made progress up loose but moderate ground. Soon we joined the crest of the buttress, where the rock quality became superb and the sun revitalized our bone-chilled bodies. Taking stock of our rugged surroundings, it was hard to believe we were in such a savage wilderness just over 24 hours after leaving Squamish.

The line unfolded above, yielding stiff, technical rock challenges and spicy ridge and mixed climbing. By 6 p.m. we had gained the summit slopes, worked but psyched. The final few hundred meters to Waddington's northwest summit played out like a power ballad, and the tippy-top was one of the wildest places any of us had ever been. In all we climbed 20 pitches (5.11+ M5 AI3). We bivied on the descent and reached camp again the morning of August 19.

Sean Easton, Craig McGee, and Eammon Walsh were the first to attempt the southwest buttress, climbing about 80 percent of the wall (AAJ 2006). In September 2011, Jason Kruk and Tony Richardson attempted this same route via a truly sporting approach. From Twist Lake they took a motorboat to Mosley Creek. From there they rafted to the outflow of the Scimitar Glacier and then bushwhacked up to the ice and over Fury Gap to the Dais Glacier. It took them a week of hard slogging just to get to the base of the wall. Once on the southwest buttress, rime ice high on the mountain forced them to retreat just a few pitches shy of the summit ridge (we found their bail anchor just two pitches below the ridge, with only two harder pitches separating them from easier ground). In spite of the elusive summit, their effort stand as an all-time Coast Range adventure.

– Paul McSorley, Canada

Images



The McSorley-Papert-Smith-Gobat route on the southwest buttress of Mt. Waddington's northwest summit.



Paul McSorley writes, "Above our camp, the rocky southwest buttress jacked out of the glacier like an 800m petrified shield, leading directly to the northwest summit (4,000m)."



Leading fractured metamorphic rock on the southwest buttress.



The southwest buttress of Mt. Waddington's northwest summit.

Article Details

Author	Paul McSorley
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	80
Page	0
Copyright Date	2016
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions