



AAC Publications

Tombstone Ridge, New Routes

California, High Sierra

Between October 30 and November 1, Daniel Jeffcoach, Brian Prince, and I completed three new routes on the Tombstone Ridge, along the western boundary of Kings Canyon National Park. These formations are ca 9,000', with the best known being the Obelisk.

On our first day, Daniel and I climbed the southeast face of a formation 1.5 miles east of Obelisk. We dubbed this complex two-tier wall Tombstone Towers. Our route started under a small overhang and followed a hand and finger crack to a crux with a finger-sized pocket at 80', where the leader French-freed a 5.11 move. [Editor's Note (added in 2022): The leader later reported that he fell once on this crux and then led it free, and only the second pulled on gear for this section.] Five pitches of 5.7 and 5.8 climbing continued above. From the large terrace separating the upper and lower walls, we took a route just to the right of an obvious gully feature, climbing two pitches (5.7 and 5.9) to reach the summit at sunset. We called this route Tephra (1,000', 5.9 C1, will go free at 5.11).

Brian Prince joined us on our second day and we headed to climb the "Knobelisks," two walls located one-third mile southeast of the Obelisk. Brian started up the lower southeast face at super-speed, climbing a slabby dihedral with three improbable-looking overhangs. This pitch went at 5.10c and had good holds on the steep parts. Daniel took over from there and led us a bit left before heading up a wall of featured 5.7 patina to a nice stance. The third pitch was mine, and the featured rock, again, was amazing, offering plenty of protection. We called this route Improbable Overhangs (500', 5.10c).

After lunch on the terrace separating the upper and lower walls, we established Trust Issues (500', 5.9) on the upper east face. Daniel led up through a roof (5.8), and then Brian made a 100' traverse (5.7) up and right to escape what appeared to be poor rock. Brian took the lead again, deftly picking a great line straight up the face above a huge ledge, avoiding some loose patina and climbing a featured overhang (5.9). On the final pitch I took the lead and traversed far left to a large, left-leaning crack with plenty of holds and knob climbing to the top. We called this route Trust Issues (500', 5.9).

For all three climbs, the crux is definitely the approaches!

– Daniel Moor

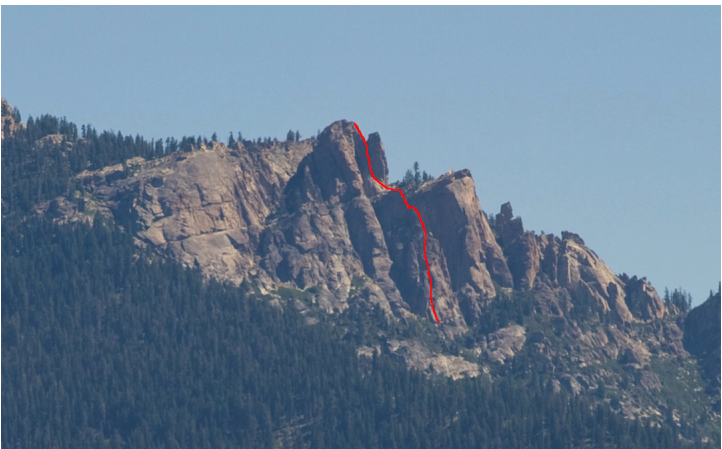
Images



The highly featured pitch three of Trust Issues (500', 5.9).



The southeast face of what the climbers called the Tombstone Towers, showing the route Tephra (1,000', 5.9 C1, likely free at 5.11).



The Tombstone Towers from a distance, showing the route Tephra (1,000', 5.9 C1, likely free at 5.11).



The lower and upper southeast and east walls of the Knobelisks, showing Improbable Overhangs (500', 5.10c) on the lower left and Trust Issues (500', 5.9) on the upper right. Both routes were climbed in the same day.

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