



AAC Publications

Cumberland Peninsula Ascents

Canada, Nunavut, Baffin Island

Twelve years after traversing a major unnamed icefield east of Kingnait Fiord on Cumberland Peninsula (AAJ 2004), Louise Jarry and I returned to continue exploration of the region. Using local outfitter Joavie Alivaktuk, we left the village of Pangnirtung by snowmobile on April 6 for Kingnait Fiord. The 114km ride was cut short 15km of Kingnait Pass (ca 180m) due to a lack of snow and ice for the snowmobiles.

Towing pulks with telemark ski gear, we headed northeast toward the pass, following an unnamed river, which I call Kingnait. [Editor's note: Many of the place names used throughout this report are the author's unofficial names for unnamed features. Refer to the map for their locations.] We followed this river upstream—the river arcs from north to east to south—for four days to near the toe of Alice Glacier (see report by Mike O'Reilly in the Canadian Alpine Journal 1975). This is glacier C 270 of area 46204 on the Glacier Atlas of Canada. We made camp here. As a day trip, we ascended a 1,582m glaciated peak west of camp on skis, via the northeast glacier (glacier C 281 of area 46204), in five hours, with 1,000m of elevation gain.

Continuing south, we crossed a watershed divide known as Salamander Pass (ca 660m) into the headwaters of the Kuugajuaq River; this river eventually drains to Iqalujjuaq Fiord. We made a new camp at the toe of glacier B64 of area 46204. From camp we climbed a glaciated dome that we called Sundog (1,460m), using skis and crampons up its northeast slope. Next, we made a 6km ski up the B64 glacier to a 1,420m summit near the crest of the 100km-long Seldom Visited Icefield, nearly crossing the path of our 2003 route.

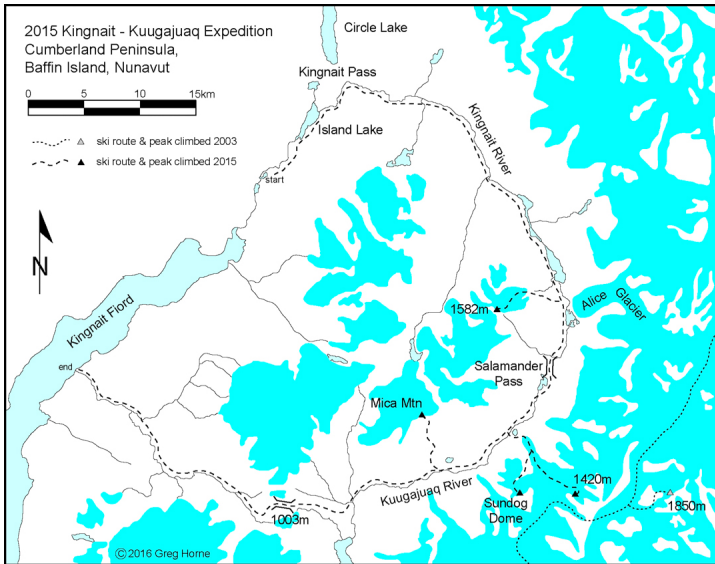
Further south and west along the Kuugajuaq River, we made one more ascent, with crampons, up the south slopes of Mica Mountain, the 1,653m high point of a 25km-long glaciated range on the west side of the valley. Many rock outcrops shined with large mica crystals. From the summit we could see west toward Mt. Asgard, 70km away.

Two days later we made the highest camp of our trip, at ca 1,003m, on a pass taking us west out of the Kuugajuaq River valley. Skiing west down a glacier-fed drainage, we encountered several difficult canyons requiring bypasses and the lowering of our pulks down frozen waterfalls. After one storm day and three days crashing and banging our pulks down a bouldery, fifth-class, frozen-whitewater gorge, we reached Kingnait Fiord again, 2km southwest of Qaiqsuk Point. Joavie returned by snowmobile to pick us up here.

In all, we traveled 120km, including side trips for these climbs. We believe all four routes were first ascents. For a map, we used the NAD 83 with grid zone 20W.

– Greg Horne, Canada

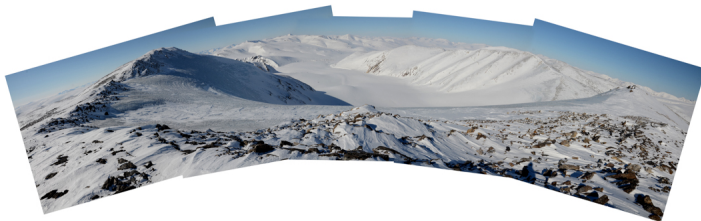
Images



A map of Greg Horne and Louise Jarry's route on the



An ice boil, or "pingo," on the unnamed river the team followed westward to return to Kingnait Fjord at the end the trip.



Panorama of the north glacier cirque of Mica Mountain, the 1,653m summit on the left.



Peak 1,850m of the Seldom Visited Icefield, which Greg Horne climbed in 2003, as seen from near the summit of Peak 1,420m, which was climbed on the 2015 trip.



On the summit plateau of Peak 1,420m looking north into the head of the Kuugajuaq River valley. Peak 1582m is visible left of center.

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