



AAC Publications

Rowell Tower, Full Nelson

California, Sierra Nevada, Sequoia National Park

During an earlier outing in the Eagle Scout Creek area [see report here], Brian Prince and I found heinous bushwhacking while approaching the Hamilton Towers via Granite Creek. On a weeklong trip later in the summer, we decided on a different approach. We set up a base camp at Hamilton Lake, which would allow us to attempt several peaks in the surrounding area, and on the third day of our trip, after climbing a new route up Cherubim Dome [see report], we hiked over to the south side of the long ridge extending from Eagle Scout Peak to Hamilton Dome, between the Hamilton Creek and Eagle Scout Creek drainages. We gained about 2,000' and crossed the ridge at the notch east of the spire dubbed the Serpent's Tooth [see next report]. We brought four days of food and set up camp next to a stream, 15 minutes west of a beautiful lake.

Our goal was the largest of the Hamilton Towers. I suspect its north face was climbed by Greg Henzie, Chris Jones, and Galen Rowell in 1970. We chose the left-leaning weakness on the west (left) end of the south face. After soloing a 5.8 approach pitch, three more long pitches took us to a large ledge on the western flanks of the tower. By this point we were fairly worked by the approach from Hamilton Lake and the burly, run-out climbing. The continuous, steep crack systems above had a blank, vertical section that would likely involve a bolt ladder. Thus, we made a 30m rappel, traversing further left, until we found a system that allowed us to continue bailing upward. We climbed another five pitches (simul-climbing about 400' on one pitch). The final pitch negotiated stacked flakes that could have killed Brian if I looked at them too hard—Full Nelson (1,200', IV 5.10+ R)

The top of the formation was spectacular, with exposed twin summits and a sharp knife-edge that led to the high point. From the summit, we rappelled east with a 60m rope. On one of the rappels we slung a chicken head and easily recovered the sling with a flick of a rope. The next rappel we came up short. Fortunately, we were able to downclimb 5th-class vegetation to reach a ledge. From there we scrambled toward the notch and the base of the tower.

To honor one of the first ascensionists, we suggest the name Rowell Tower. His spirit is well alive here in the Sierra, where unclimbed faces and untraveled canyons still allow a lifetime of exploration.

– Vitaliy Musiyenko

Images



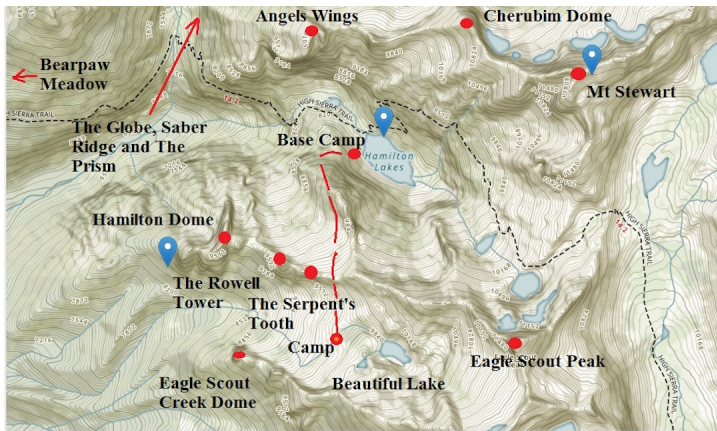
Brian Prince on the initial pitches of the south face of Rowell Tower.



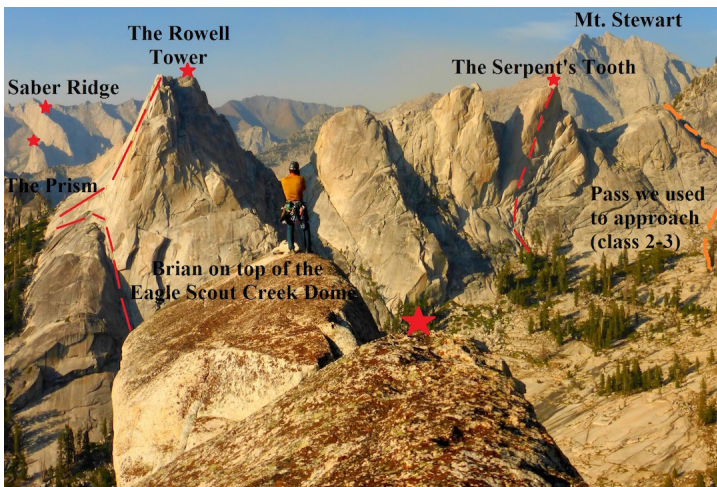
Brian Prince on the summit of Rowell Tower with Eagle Scout Creek Dome in the background.



Brian Prince on the summit of Rowell Tower with Angel Wings and Cherubim Dome in the background.



An overview of the Hamilton Lakes area, where Vitaliy Musiyenko and Brian Prince climbed many new routes in 2015.



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