



AAC Publications

Denali, Fathers and Sons Wall, Mother's Day Variation

Alaska, Alaska Range

Between May 10 and 12, Mike Gardner and I climbed a variation to First Born (Helmuth-House, AAJ 1996) on Denali's Fathers and Sons Wall. To our knowledge, ours was the fourth ascent of the wall.

[Editor's note: The Fathers and Sons Wall, which rises above the Peters Glacier to Denali's northwest buttress, was named by the late Mugs Stump, who dreamed of climbing it. The ca. 6,000' face has two full-length routes in addition to First Born: Extraterrestrial Brothers (Cool-Parnell, 2001), to the left, and Great White Fright (Ramsden-Willett, 2003), mostly to the right.] **Our climb took 73 hours, 30 of which were spent waiting for weather to improve: four hours below the second rock band, 16 hours on an ice ledge above the second rock band, and 10 hours in a snow cave at the top of the wall. Like all previous parties, we were too gassed to continue to the north summit of Denali.**

Our line deviated to climber's right above the second rock band in order to climb an attractive steep ice section that appeared to be in much better condition than the original line. From our ice ledge bivy, we climbed 200' up a snow arête to the base of the third rock band, 150' up an overhanging pitch of waterfall ice, and then 200' up a 60° ice slope to a break. From there we did one short rappel and traversed approximately 500' left to rejoin the original line. Since we weren't there to hug our moms on Mother's Day, we named it the Mother's Day Variation. As for a grade? In the spirit of the past ascents of the wall: Alaska Grade 5, Scottish Grade VI. Our trip was supported by the American Alpine Club and Mountain Hardwear's McNeill-Nott Award.

– Jimmy Voorhis

Images



Denali's Fathers and Sons Wall, showing the original line of First Born (Helmuth-House, 1995) in red and the Mother's Day Variation, completed by Jimmy Voorhis and Mike Gardner in May 2016, in blue.

Article Details

Author	Jimmy Voorhis
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions