



Kyzyl Asker, East-Southeast Face, The Spear

China, Xinjiang / Western Kokshaal-too

From July 19–24, the Siberian team of Oleg Khvostenko, Alexander Parfenov, and Vasiliy Terekhin climbed a new route up the center of the east-southeast wall of Kyzyl Asker (5,842m). In 2010, Khvostenko had planned a visit to Kyzyl Asker with Denis Prokofyev, but it didn't work out, so when Prokofyev decided to take a young team to the region in 2016 (see linked report), Khvostenko opted to come along with his own team of Krasnoyarsk-based and Stolby-trained climbers. Despite very unstable weather, the team was motivated to add a Krasnoyarsk route along the iced-up cracks in the wall between the St. Petersburg route on the southeast pillar (Mikhailov-Odintsov-Ruchkin, 2007) and the Moscow route War and Peace (Golovchenko-Grigoryev-Nilov, 2014) on the right side of the east-southeast face.

During the seven days the three climbers spent on the face they faced all four seasons: two days of fine summer weather, one day of autumnal rain and snow, one day of winter, and the other three a mixture, representing spring. However, the temperature never dropped below -5°C. The ice generally proved unstable for climbing, yet the conditions never allowed the team to don rock shoes.

The crux occurred at around 5,500m, on the fourth day, when Terekhin had to surmount a large roof festooned with two huge icicles. This section was A3; the remaining aid climbing on the route was around A2. That day it rained and both team and equipment got soaked, so on the following day, while the other two progressed the route, Terekhin took a rest at the portaledge and dried all the gear, chipping ice from the ropes and melting it from cams over the stove.

On the sixth day, Terekhin climbed a mixed pitch of rotten ice at M8 and the team finally emerged onto the summit ridge. They reached the high point atop the southeast pillar at 1:30 p.m., where they were rewarded with bright sunshine and a fine panoramic view. (The true summit of Kyzyl Asker is some 200m farther to the west.) By 2 p.m. on the 25th, after sitting through an electric storm early that morning, they were back at camp on the glacier, having rappelled the route.

As the line followed a dihedral to a pointed snow cornice high on the wall, they named their new route the Spear (1,000m, 1,300m of climbing, 6B, UIAA V A3 M8). The team has compared it to routes on Ak-su or Great Trango Tower, but also think it is reminiscent of the Compressor Route on Cerro Torre, if the bolts on the latter were removed.

Lindsay Griffin, from information supplied by Elena Dmitrenko, Risk.ru, and additional material from Anna Piunova, mountain.ru

Images



Vasily Terekhin on a small roof at the start of the fourth pitch of the Spear, the new Russian route on the east-southeast face of Kyzyl Asker.



Alexander Parfenov at the beginning of the ninth pitch of the Spear, the new Russian route on the east-southeast face of Kyzyl Asker.



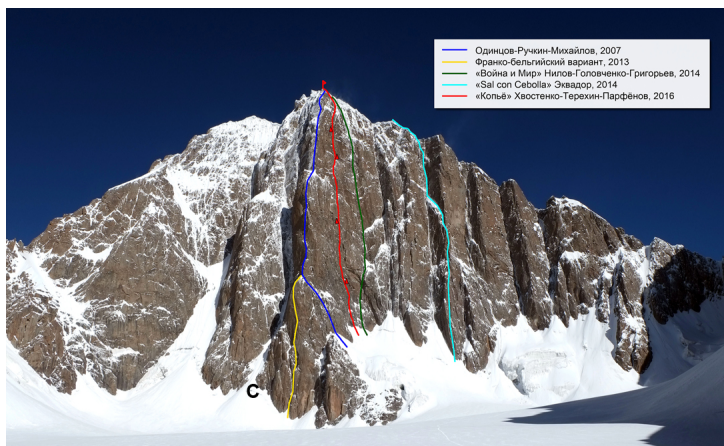
Leaving a portaledge camp on first ascent of the Spear, the new Russian route on the east-southeast face of Kyzyl Asker.



Alexander Parfenov in the middle section of pitch four on the Spear, the new Russian route on the east-southeast face of Kyzyl Asker.



The southeast face of Kyzyl Asker. (1) The 2007 Russian line on the southeast pillar. (2) The Spear (2016). (3) War and Peace (Russian, 2015). For a broader view of the face and the various routes see AAJ 2015.



The southern aspect of Kyzyl Asker and routes on the southeast face. (C) is the entrance to the ice couloir climbed by Luca Lindič and Ines Papert in 2016, and reported in a feature article in AAJ 2017.

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