



## AAC Publications

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### **Uløytinden, East Face, Starless Spur**

Norway, Lyngen / Uløya Island

**Up to now there was not a single established alpine route on Uløya Island, only three icefalls that friends had climbed a year before. The faces rise to a maximum of 550m, and we decided to go for the biggest prize, the central pillar of the east face of Uløytinden (1,115m), which rises above Isvannet Lake (69°49'53.55"N, 20°37'30.92"E) and just south of the highest peak on the island, Blatinden (1,142m). It looked to be the most striking feature, yet not particularly difficult.**

Two days before, I was ski touring and saw the pillar in profile for the first time. "Bloody hell," I said to my wife, who is also a (much better) climber, "can you see what I see?" "That is steep", she replied. "In fact it is actually vertical."

I discovered Uløya by accident. My longtime friend Peter encouraged me to invest in a fishing business with him, and after many months of persistent nagging, he finally achieved his goal. When I eventually went to see what I had bought, I saw mountain ranges all over the island. Mountains! Lots of bloody mountains. Everywhere!

I called a friend who was working as a guide in Norway. "Are you bloody joking?" Pavel laughed. "Lyngen is a ski-touring paradise. Those are the Lyngen Alps, man. Where is this place you've bought, exactly? I have to come."

I went back to Peter and said, "Change of plans. This is not going to be just a sea fishing business. There is something for me here too." And so our Lyngen Outdoor Center was created. A year later, in April 2016, I was walking up to climb the first wall with two of my most trusted friends: Marcin Chmielinski, a climbing veteran like myself, and Tomek Klimczak, a young lion. After a couple of hours we arrived at the foot of the pillar. It looked much harder than it did from a distance. "Well folks, this is not going to be an afternoon stroll," I said, putting on my gear. After two hard and very ungraceful pitches I arrived at the foot of a diagonal ramp that we originally decided to avoid for being too easy!

Time was quickly getting the better of us, so we decided to follow the ramp. I took the more challenging branch, which had a tough step with no footholds and rotten ice at the exit.

"Not nice," commented Tomek, taking the gear. Now it was his turn to play. Tomek's pitches, though not easy, turned out to be the best on the route. One fantastic pitch along the ramp ended in a series of steep bulges requiring dry tooling, at which Tomek is a real master. The next pitch was the technical crux (M6+), with a series of dry tooling moves on small holds, but Tomek also flew over it. "Hmm, nice tricky move," was his only comment.

Long and tiring sections of snow with some more difficult rock led us finally to the headwall. It did not look in any way easy, but using all my instincts I managed to edge up the steep rock (no harder than UIAA IV+) and eventually arrived at a final overhanging tower. The tower looked scary, so I veered right and finally arrived at the cornice. I set up a solid belay and brought my partners up to join me. The huge, imposing cornice, comprising solid, compressed snow, loomed large over our heads. "Any ideas anyone?" I asked. "Scaffold?" Marcin replied.

It was getting dark, and gray clouds filled the sky. With headlamps on, we prepared for the rappels.

Four rappels took us to a snow ramp, where we unroped and slanted down right to a large snow cirque. I have a strong faith in the safety of Arctic snow, though plowing down the slope with snow up to my thighs, I had to keep repeating, "It's safe, no avalanche danger, it's safe." Two more rappels, the last from a very shaky anchor, took us to the ground.

And so we stepped into our skis and descended. We were tired, and skiing was a bit of a struggle in the dark, starless night. On the last section I hit my head on a branch and the night was starless no more. A few minutes later we arrived at the welcoming door of our home. The short Arctic night was coming to an end, and so was our adventure. But was it really? Only time will tell.

Artur Paszczak, Poland

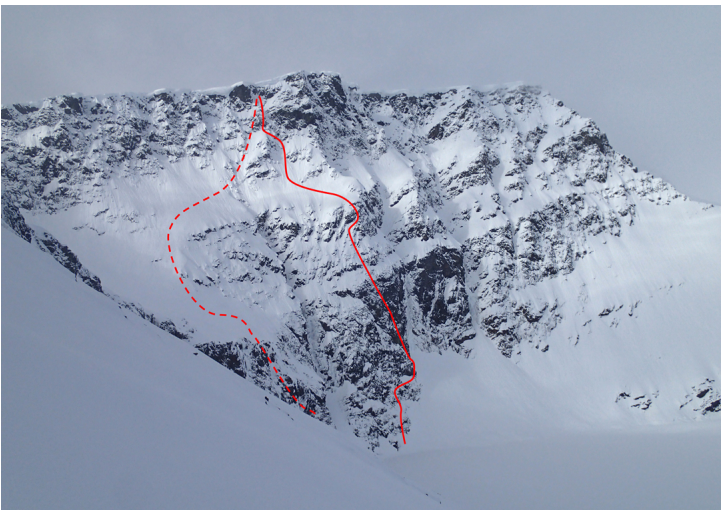
## Images



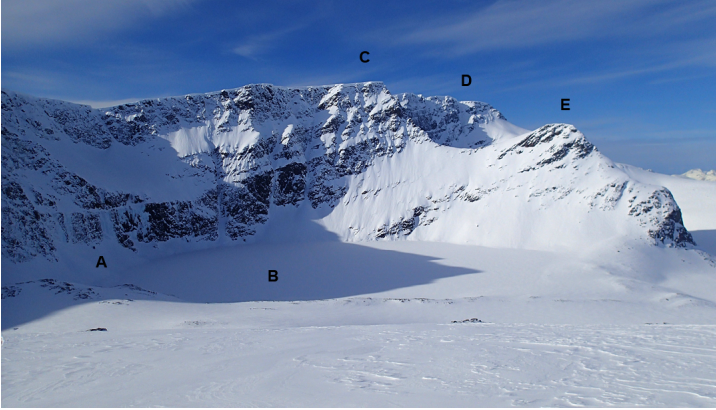
Tomek Klimczak embarking on the crux pitch (M6+) of Starless Spur, east face of Uløytinden.



Tomek Klimczak battling the best pitch on the new route Starless Spur, east face of Uløytinden.



The east face of Uløytinden with the line of Starless Spur (right) and the descent route through the snow bowl to the left. x



The Isvannet Cirque and east face of Uløytinden. (A) Icefalls. (B) Isvannet Lake (595m). (C) Uløytinden (1,115m). (D) Blatinden (1,142m). (E) Skellettinden (930m).



The icefalls of the Isvannet Cirque, seen from Starless Spur.

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