



AAC Publications

Tiquimani, Northeast Ridge Attempt

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

Tiquimani is the last great mountain in the central cordillera before the Altiplano slips east toward the Bolivian jungle. Situated to the northeast of Huayna Potosi, it appears as the guardian of the Zongo Valley and, indeed, in Aymara its name means “eternal guardian.” The main summit barely rises above 5,500m, but the peak has a large, steep south face of great technical difficulty that has not been feasible in recent years, due to dry conditions.

In June, Anna Pfaff and I set up base camp by the lake below the south face and the next day inspected possible lines. The season had been especially dry, so we quickly changed objectives and decided to look at the unclimbed northeast ridge.

After heading up toward the right-hand end of the south face, we skirted the mountain to the east and ascended to a small lagoon below the east face, where we bivouacked for the night at 4,800m. Next day we left at around 6 a.m. and soon reached the crest of the northeast ridge. We began climbing around 7 a.m., at first light on June 21, the day of the winter solstice. The rock was loose, blocky, sharp alpine granite, though it improved a little the higher we climbed. Protection and belays were not great, and sometimes we had to run it out 15–20m. After nine or 10 pitches, when we reached an altitude of around 5,260m, one pitch below the east summit, we decided the way ahead was just too loose and dangerous to continue. We began rappelling, mostly from dubious anchors, and left almost all our rack. By 11p.m. we were back at the bivouac. The climb to our high point had been 5.10b R.

Juliana Garcia, Ecuador

Editor's note: Tiquimani's highest (west) summit was first climbed in 1940, and the east summit in 1963. The steep south face traditionally offered a number of mixed lines. The first ascent was by a Austro-German expedition in June 1973. This team likened the 1,000m ascent to the north face of the Matterhorn. Ten years later, Slovenians made an important variation to this line in the upper part of the wall, and in 1997 a route up the left side of the face was soloed by Pere Vilarasau (Spain). These routes end on the west summit. Lines farther to the right on the face were claimed by Alain Mesili. The normal route climbs the rocky north face, while the long west ridge was climbed in 1976 by David Cheesmond and Phil Dawson, with reportedly good rock climbing to an icy, gendarmed summit ridge.

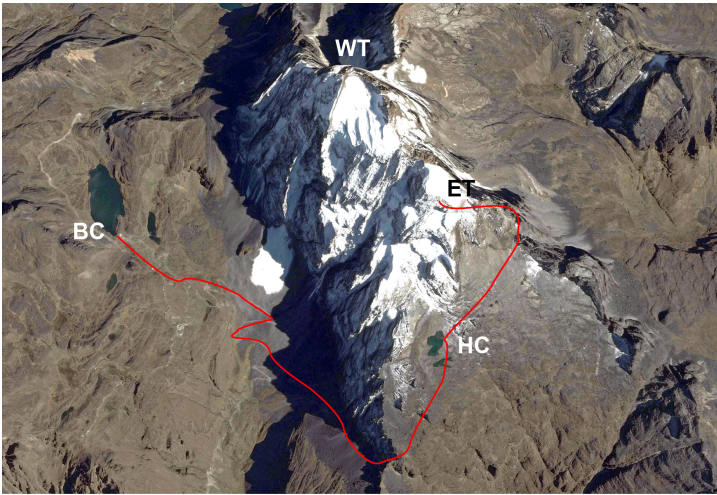
Images



Anna Pfaff during the attempt on the northeast ridge of Tiquimani.



Anna Pfaff during an attempt on the northeast ridge of Tiquimani.



A Google Earth image of Tiquimani from the east, showing the approach to the northeast ridge, base camp (BC), the bivouac (HC), the west summit (WT), and east summit (ET). Although this photo shows the east top to be snowy, at the time of the 2016 climb it was completely dry.



Anna Pfaff arranging the rappel ropes during the descent from Tiquimani.

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