



AAC Publications

Qaqqaq Aoife, Northwest Ridge

Greenland, East Greenland

With our two Icelandic mountain guides, Bjorgvin Hilmarsson and Leifur Orn Svavarsson, Mike Brinkworth, James Masters, Dave Minghay, and I established base camp about 33km due north of Tasiilaq on July 21, on the northeast side of the Ikaasatsivaq Fjord, near the snout of the glacier between Paarnartivartik (497m) and Niialigaq (1,171m). On the 22nd we made possibly the fourth ascent of Paarnartivartik, and the following day moved up to a high camp at 65.918588°N, 37.515511°W, on a rock triangle in the middle of the glacier.

On the 24th we unsuccessfully attempted the unnamed, unclimbed peak of map height 1,194m to the southeast of Niialigaq. The next day we made a second try. Instead of heading for the col high on the ridge, as we had done before, we followed a steep section of glacier onto a much lower point of the crest to the northwest. For a couple of hundred meters the ridge was easy, but then it narrowed to a steep snow arête. Above lay the 40–50m rock barrier that we knew would be the crux. After a vertical wall of around 15m, a steep scree slope led to the top. Bjorgvin changed route twice before penetrating its defenses. The grade was about British Severe.

We followed a final snow arête to what appeared to be the highest point, only to discover a double summit separated by an exposed connecting ridge. Unsure of which was the higher, we climbed both and decided the first top, at 65.902685°N, 37.497434°W, was taller by one meter. We named the summit Qaqqaq Aoife, which means Mt. Aoife, after my newly born granddaughter.

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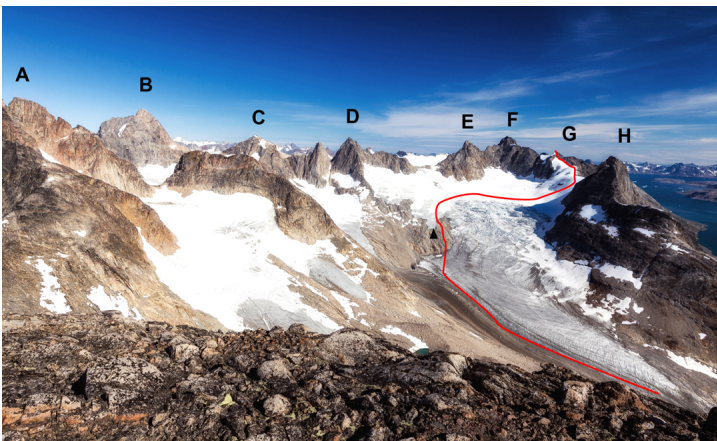
Images



Panorama to the northwest from Qaqqaq Aoife's southeast summit. (A) Peak 1,116m. (B) Mountains immediately north of Tasiilaq. (C) Ikaasatsivaq Fjord. (D) Niialigaq. (E) Paarnartivartik. (F) Qaqqaq Aoife northwest summit. (G) Peak 1,180m. (H) Niiniartivaraq (1,270m).



Qaqqaq Aoife (1,194m) and route of ascent, as seen from the north. The large, rocky peak at left is 1,367m.



Seen from Paarnartivartik to the west: (A) The Niiniartivaraq group (1,270m). (B) Peak 1,438m. (C) Peak 1,247m. (D) Peak 1,236m. (E) Peak 1,285m. (F) Peak 1,367m. (G) Qaqqaq Aoife. (H) Niialigaq. The 2016 route to Qaqqaq Aoife is marked, with high camp.



On the summit snow ridge of Qaggaq Aoife, with Peak 1,180m in the background.



Rappelling the rock barrier on Qaggaq Aoife during the descent.

Article Details

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