



## AAC Publications

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### **Mt. Proteus, South Face**

Canada, British Columbia, Selkirk Mountains, Battle Range

**Standing proud as the tallest peak in the Battle Range, Mt. Proteus (3,198m) has a striking south face that just begs to be climbed. Yet no direct route had been completed up this rock face.** It's no easy task to get there. The surrounding glaciers, along with the deep and steep valleys choked with alder, devil's club, and impressive rock slabs, make any approach on foot rather daunting. We chose to use a helicopter (thanks in large part to a grant from the MEC Expedition Fund). [Editor's note: The south face of Mt. Proteus is a big rock wall on the left flank of the peak's very prominent eastern buttress, the right flank of which was climbed in 1988 (Tempus Fugit, D+ 5.8, Allen-Horvath). At least one snow couloir farther to the left has been climbed to reach the south ridge and thus the summit. The peak was first climbed in 1947 by glacier slopes on the southwest side.]

We flew to Houston Lake in smoky but sunny skies on July 18. After setting up our simple base camp, we decided to take a closer look at the south face. We underestimated the complexity of the broken Moby Dick Glacier and spent quite a bit of time quasi-ice-climbing with our non-technical crampons and one ice axe each. A little spicy, to say the least. Fortunately, on the way back to camp, we were able to find a simpler, albeit circuitous, approach route over the glacier.

The very next day, we woke to stable weather conditions and left at sunrise—this time making our way quickly over the glacier to the base of the face. Switching crampons for rock shoes on the edge of a steep snow slope, we were able to step fairly easily over a small bergschrund onto the rock. We then climbed six pitches of high-quality granite, with a mix of sustained 5.8–5.10a crack and face climbing, before reaching the blocky east buttress. From here, the angle eased off, and another six pitches of more moderate climbing (up to 5.8) and scrambling brought us to the top. At least three long pitches on this ridge followed the 1988 route.

We arrived at the summit of Mt. Proteus about 3 p.m. and enjoyed the incredible 360° panorama of the smoke-enshrouded Selkirk Mountains before starting our descent. We arrived back in camp by 6 p.m. and spent the next few hours staring at the aesthetic and impressive mountain we had just climbed.

We called our route the B-Team (500m, TD- 5.10a), since I was Alex's third choice as a partner, after accomplished climbers Fred Giroux and John Price, who were unable to accompany him on this trip.

– Madeleine Martin-Preney, Canada

#### **Route description (originally published on Grippd.com):**

Pitch 1: Start below a big right-facing corner on the upper face. Follow a crack/ramp straight up until the angle eases, continue a little, then belay. (5.9, 50m)

Pitch 2: Follow a ramp left until you reach a crack/corner/chimney system that leads straight up below the big corner. Follow it to a nice ledge and belay. (5.8, 50m)

Pitch 3: Continue up the chimney and run-out face climbing above to a belay in an alcove. (5.8, 45m)

Pitch 4: Continue up into the large right-facing corner and belay at a big ledge. (5.10a, 40m)

Pitch 5: Follow cracks up and left until possible to step back right into the right-hand corner and belay on a good ledge. (5.9, 30m)

Pitch 6: Climb the corner through a bulge to the E Ridge and continue up the ridge. (5.8, 55m)

Continue up the ridge for many more pitches up to 5.8.

## Images



Alex Geary on the fifth pitch of the new route on the south face of Mt. Proteus: The B-Team (500m, TD- 5.10a).



Madeleine Martin-Preney on the glacier approach to the south face of Mt. Proteus.



The route line for the B-Team (500m, TD- 5.10a) on the south face of Mt. Proteus. Tempus Fugit (1988, Allen-Horvath) ascends the lower-angle east face to the right, sharing ground with the upper part of the 2017 route on the prominent buttress.



Pretty Route on Proteus

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