



AAC Publications

Wiencke Island, Monte Pizduch, Bloody Nose

Antarctica, Antarctic Peninsula

In 2014 I climbed the south face of an unnamed peak on the east coast of Anvers Island, which I named Monte Samila (64°38'56"S, 63°12'59"W). It gave a 1,500m ascent of difficult climbing on ice and unstable snow (WI5). Afterward, I sailed south to nearby Wiencke Island, where I spotted interesting projects. On that occasion the weather was not on my side, but some of the island's virgin summits registered indelibly in my mind.

A new story unfolded on December 27, when Mira Dub and I set sail from Tierra del Fuego on a 17m yacht. After a stormy passage, we anchored on January 5, 2018, at Port Lockroy, Wiencke Island. Next day a small dingy took us to shore, and we skied east to the foot of the southernmost peak in the Wall Range, at the end of the ridge that extends southwest from Mt. Wheat. At 2:30 p.m. we were starting up steep névé at the base of a narrow couloir on the south-southwest face leading directly to the unnamed summit (64°50'0.18"S, 63°23'53.56"W).

As this couloir squeezed between granite walls, it steadily got steeper until near the top a vertical section led to a huge summit cornice. How we would overcome this was an unanswered question from the very beginning.

In late afternoon the sun reached the face and small amounts of rock and ice began to fall. One stone found Mira's nose, but fortunately there was only a little blood. At around 11 p.m. we reached the vertical section. The ice was aerated, and I had to climb the entire 30m pitch without being able to place any screws. The following pitch involved mixed climbing on broken granite with collapsing powder snow.

Finally I stood below the cornice. I went for the least overhanging part of this formation of inflated cotton wool. It was a terrible experience—the whole face hung below my feet, and I had the feeling that neither axes or crampons would hold.

At 2 a.m. we were both standing on the nameless summit, watching the mist roll in. Next minute the view disappeared. We made tea and pitched a small tent, though we had no mats or sleeping bags. Four hours later the mist broke apart and we quickly packed and walked east-northeast along the ridge, in the direction of Mt. Wheat. The ridge was corniced, which prevented any downward view. We couldn't see any suitable descent and in the end were forced to traverse four tops before we could head in a more easterly direction down a wild glacier and back round below the foot of our route. Thirty-three hours after setting out, we regained the coast and were picked up. We named our summit Monte Pizduch (1,000m) and the climb Bloody Nose (850m, ED+ M4 WI5+ 95°)

Marek Holecek, Czech Republic

Images



Monte Pizduch, the most southerly peak of the Wall Range, and the line of Bloody Nose on the south-southwest face.



Marek Holecek heading up the couloir of Bloody Nose on Monte Pizduch. The summit cornice looms above.



Marek Holecek approaching the huge overhanging summit cornice on Monte Pizduch.



Marek Holecek on belay near the exit of Bloody Nose, Monte Pizduch.



Mira Dub (left) and Marek Holecek after the ascent of Bloody Nose, Monte Pizduch.

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