



AAC Publications

Djangart Range: Many First Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Central Kokshaal-too

AT THE END of August, Jorian Bakker (27), Noël Diepens (31), Wout Martens (27), Line van den Berg (26), Rik van Odenhoven (27), and Mats Wentholt (27), with team coaches Court Haegens (47) and Boris Textor (32), traveled to the Djangart Range. This was the last stage of the Royal Dutch Climbing and Mountaineering Federation's two-year training program for young alpinists (NKBV Expeditie Academie). The program helps a new generation of talented Dutch alpinists to fulfill their alpine dreams and ambitions. Our team of six had been trained for the last two years by experienced Dutch alpinists and guides.

During the four-week trip, team members climbed nine previously virgin peaks and made 13 first ascents. All-terrain vehicles and horses were used to access a base camp at 41°44'57.4"N, 78°57'3.7"E, and from here various groups climbed in four different valleys. They found generally very solid rock (mostly granite), good snow and ice conditions, and stable weather. Combined with a good team spirit, these ingredients made for a very enjoyable and successful expedition.

On September 3, Haegens, Martens, and van den Berg linked two unclimbed peaks, Pik Vsadnik (4,803m) and Pik Pionerov (4,874m), via a 3km ridge that forms the border with China. They named the route No Guts No Glory Ridge (D), encountering sustained difficulties, reaching a maximum of IV+ M4 50°. The outing took 20 hours camp to camp.

On the 9th and 10th, Martens and van den Berg made the first ascent of the north face of Pik Alexandra (5,290m), a summit reached only once before, in 2011, by an Anglo-Danish party (AAJ 2012). The striking line leading to the summit was named Dutch Direct (800m, TD+). Martens and van den Berg encountered one pitch of sustained 85°+ ice and about 150m of 80° ice. The angle of the face was never less than 50°, and the ice was of dream quality; only the crux pitch, which had several vertical sections, was thin. At 4,950m the pair sat out a windy night on a small ledge, with no water or cooked food due to a failing gas cylinder. From the summit they descended via a previously unclimbed line on the aesthetically pleasing south side of the mountain.

Also on the 9th, Bakker, Textor, van Odenhoven, and Wentholt climbed Navat Spur (1,000m, D 60°), the aesthetic northeast spur of Pik Buddyness (5,172m). They decided to name the long snow and ice route after the sugary snow they encountered—Navat means "sugar" in Kyrgyz.

On the 17th, Diepens, Haegens, Martens, Textor, van Odenhoven, and Wentholt ascended the provisionally named Pik Ronald Naar (5,014m) by its northeast face (AD+ 50°). This was probably the last unclimbed 5,000m peak in the Djangart, and the team would like to honor Naar for his great inspiration and huge contribution to Dutch mountaineering.

On the north face of Pik Currahee (5,025m), Bakker and van den Berg climbed Line of Decline (450m, TD- 85°) on September 18. Scottish conditions were encountered for most of the day in this mixed/ice gully, and the three crux pitches were steep and thin. They descended to the west via the route of the first ascensionists (D-, Conlon-Davidson, 2013). The route name reflects the quality of ice, which deteriorated as the climbers approached the summit. It also indicates the fatigue the pair felt before even starting the route.

On the 20th, Haegens and Wentholt climbed a direct line on snow and ice up the virgin north face of Pik Emma (4,783m). They name the route Bas van der Smeede Tribute (500m, D+ 80°) in honor of the enthusiastic alpinist and experienced expedition climber, very active within the Dutch climbing community, who died of leukemia in 2017. Pik Emma was first climbed via the north ridge in 2011 (AAJ 2012).

In addition, Pik Andrea (4,566m) and Pik Surok (4,606m) were climbed on September 2 via the west face (PD+); Pik Sutherland (5,080m) on the 3rd by the new route Lost Voice (AD 60°); Eagles View (3,669m, first ascent) on the 8th via the rock route Ragga (150m, 4 pitches, VI+); a new route on Pik 3,920m (Bird Ridge, 420m, 7 pitches, D V+) on the 13th; the first ascents of Piks Lucky (5,172m), Naomi (4,858m), and Catharina (4,840m) via the north ridges (AD- 60° II), also on the 13th; and the first ascent of Pik Ilbirs (4,852m) on the 18th via the west face and north ridge (AD-). A full expedition report should be available in the future at <http://expeditieacademie.nl>.

– Lindsay Griffin, with information from Wout Martens, Netherlands

Images



Line of Decline on the north face of Pik Currahee.



Jorian Bakker approaching the first crux of Line of Decline on the north face of Pik Currahee.



Wout Martens on the last difficult mixed climbing before the summit of Pik Vsadnik during the traverse of the No Guts No Glory Ridge.



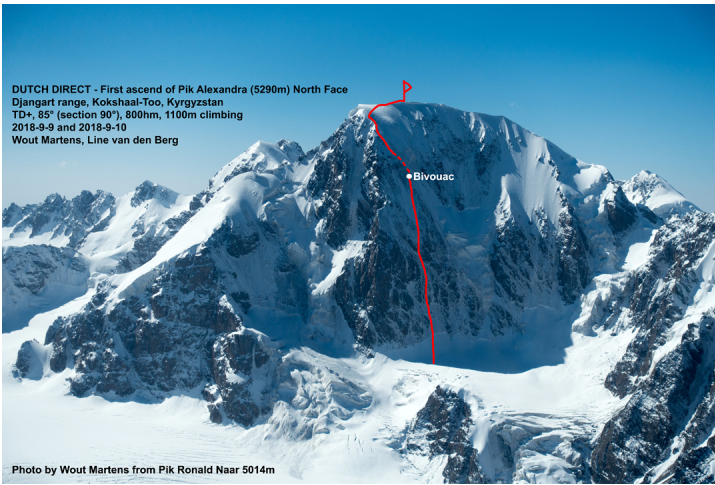
The three-kilometer No Guts No Glory Ridge, linking the summits of Piks Vsadnik and Pionerov.



Wout Martens follows one of the steep ice pitches on the Dutch Direct, north face of Pik Alexandra.



The Bas van der Smeede Tribute on the north face of Pik Emma.



The Dutch Direct on the north face of Pik Alexandra.



Line van den Berg on one of the 80° sections of the Dutch Direct on the north face of Pik Alexandra.



Unclimbed summit at the head of the N2 Glacier.



The Navat (northeast) Spur on Pik Buddyness.



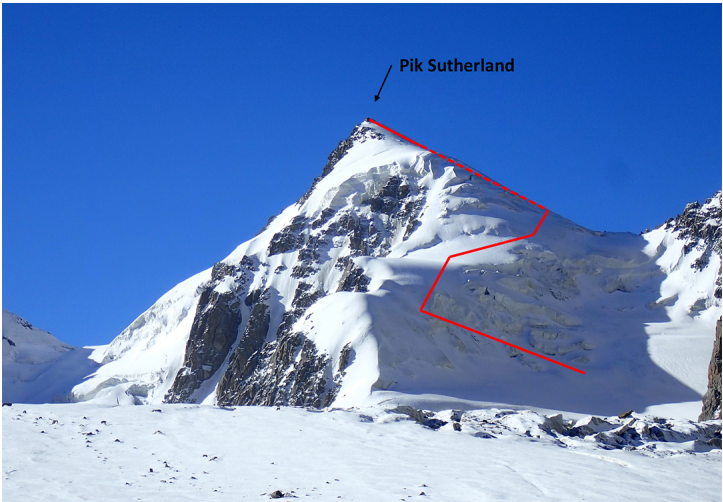
Rik van Odenhoven on the Navat (northeast) Spur of Pik Buddyness.



During the first ascent of Bird Ridge on the rocky Pik 3,920m.



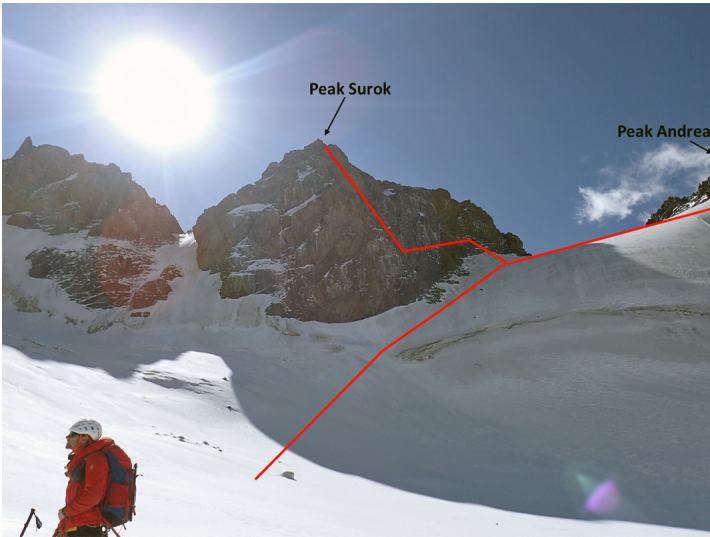
The 2018 route up the northeast face of Pik Ronald Naar. The team traversed the mountain, descending by the right-hand skyline.



Pik Sutherland and the new route Lost Voice.



Pik Andrea and the route of the first ascent via the west face.



Pik Surok and the route of the first ascent via the west face.

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