



AAC Publications

Kotina, Operation KIK

Kyrgyzstan, Pamir Alai, Karavshin, Kara-su Valley

Kotina seen from the southwest. (1a) Russian Direct on Dreaming Spires (2018, to summit). (1b) Dreaming Spires (2012, not to summit). (2) An Inconvenient Truth (2012). (3) Awesome Fucking Dihedral (2012). (4) Krukonogi (2019). (5) Czarna Wolga (2006). (6/yellow) Operation KIK (2019). (7/blue) Krasnoyarsk Route (2019). Supplied by Anna Piunova

During the summer, a number of parties from different countries, and from different cities in Russia, met in the Karavshin. Among these were Nikolai Lebedev, Nikolai Stepanov, and Ivan Temerev.

Although these three had read about each other on the internet, they were not personally acquainted, but they had made contact and decided to climb together. In 2018, Temerev and two friends had climbed the central buttress of the northwest face of Kotina (a.k.a. Shaitan Khana, 4,521m), making a very significant direct variant to Dreaming Spires (7a, Codrington-Cooper-Faulkner, 2012, not to summit). During this ascent they had noticed several interesting possibilities to the right.

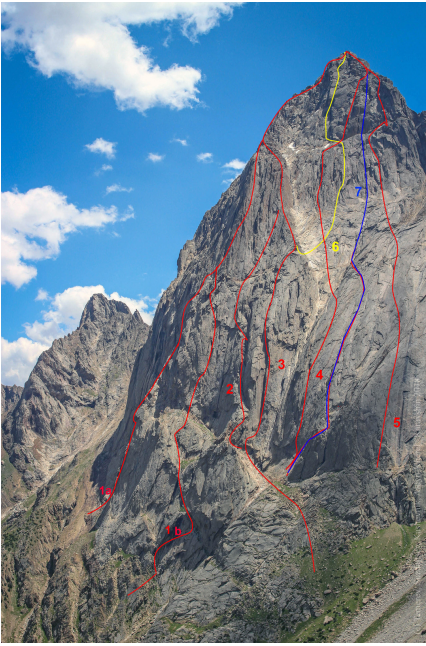
After waiting out several days of showers, the three left their base camp on August 4, and at 6 a.m. were at the base of the large corner system taken by Awesome Fucking Dihedral (6c, Habel-Wisssmeier, 2012). Despite rain and hail in the middle of the day, the three climbed 13 excellent pitches up to 6c to reach the ridge that AFD follows up left to reach the top of the northwest face. Here, the three Russians moved right instead to reach the headwall of the southwest face, descending at first, then climbing four pitches to reach a large terrace below the steep headwall leading to the summit. Here they bivouacked, traversing 200m to the right, off route, to find a semi-sheltered spot.

The next day, leaving all their overnight gear on the terrace, they climbed more or less directly toward the summit. Five pitches (to 6b, with one crux aid pitch of A1 that would probably go free in the 7s) took them to the final terrace. Here they traversed 40m left to a wet corner, but were unable to climb it, so they moved left again. After two pitches free of free climbing and a third (A2, skyhooks), which took one and a half hours with one pendulum, they regained the wet corner near its top. More taxing climbing (6b and A2) led to easier ground and the summit at 8:30 p.m.

The three made a difficult descent down an existing line of rappel anchors equipped with lengths of black rope. Trying to find black slings by the light of a headlamp was a real test, especially having got up at 4 a.m. (They have considered petitioning the UIAA to produce all black ropes with reflective fibers!) Finally, at exactly the time the alarm had gone off the previous day, they arrived back at their bivouac site. They slept until 11 a.m. and then descended to base camp by 6 p.m. the same day. The route has been named Operation KIK (1,174m, 1,450m of climbing, 30 pitches, 6c A2).

– Anna Piunova, www.mountain.ru, Russia

Images



Kotina seen from the southwest. (1a) Russian Direct on Dreaming Spires (2018, to summit). (1b) Dreaming Spires (2012, not to summit). (2) An Inconvenient Truth (2012). (3) Awesome Fucking Dihedral (2012). (4) Krukunogi (2019). (5) Czarna Wolga (2006). (6/yellow) Operation KIK (2019). (7/blue) Krasnoyarsk Route (2019). Supplied by Anna Piunova



Kotina and Kirkchilta (right) seen from the west, with only the 2019 ascents shown. (1) Operation KIK. (2) Krukunogi. (3) Krasnoyarsk Route.



On pitch two of Awesome Fucking Dihedral in August 2019. The AFD was linked to the southwest face headwall to create Operation KIK.

Article Details

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Author | Anna Piunova |
| Publication | AAJ |
| Volume | 62 |
| Issue | 94 |
| Page | |
| Copyright Date | 2020 |
| Article Type | Climbs and expeditions |