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El Comandante Turret, The Honey Badger Experience

California, Kings Canyon National Park

In July, Daniel Jeffcoach and I hiked over to the Gorge of Despair from Kings Canyon to check out a wall we had seen a few years prior while descending from the Watsi Wall near Tehipite Dome (see AAJ 2017).

We approached from the Lewis Creek trailhead in Kings Canyon and hiked over Harrington Pass, then descended to approximately 8,200', where we slept near a creek with great views of the striking peaks of the lower gorge. Getting an alpine start the next day, we hiked over a col from the south and into a gully between Cobra and El Comandante turrets.

We dropped to Crystal Creek and started up the huge east face of Comandante Turret, which transitions into a knife-edge northeast ridge as it gains elevation toward the summit. The climb was sustained, demanding, quite long, and of very good quality. As far as we know it was the first route up any of the spires in the Gorge of Despair from the Crystal Creek drainage. Paired with a long approach after a difficult work week, finishing the route at 2 a.m., and a big hike out with the need to be at work at 6 a.m. the following day, it seemed like the ultimate Honey Badger Experience (2,000', 14 pitches, 5.11c A0).

– Vitaliy Musiyenko

Images



Climbing on Honey Badger Experience on El Comandante Turret.



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