



## AAC Publications

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### Ghidims Valley, New Routes and Ski Descents

Pakistan, Karakoram, Ghujerab Mountains

**From June 4–29, Bill Copeland and Chris Kussmaul joined me to explore the Ghidims Valley, north of Shimshal.** We trekked over Boesum Pass and on the 12th arrived at Laili Camp (4,450m) at the junction of the north and south Ghidims rivers.

On the 14th we set up a high camp further north at around 5,100m and made a quick reconnaissance up the North Ghidims Glacier. This gave us our first sight of Yawash Sar Middle (5,785m, 36°44'21.44"N, 75°29'59.10"E), and the south face appeared to be in great condition for skiing. [This peak was climbed in September 2012 by Frank Gasser and Birgit Walk via the south face and southeast ridge.] Spirits were high as we skied back down to our high camp.

An early start the next morning had us skinning on refrozen snow to the base. We decided on a mellow slope to access the southeast ridge, well to the right of the original route, and enjoyed firm snow up to the ridge, where we started to post-hole. On top, on the border between China and Pakistan, we had breathtaking views in all directions. Conditions were very firm but edge-able: This was perfect for Chris and me, as with skis we have two sets of edges to work with. Bill, on his splitboard, was not as happy, but was able to make safe, controlled turns. We skied directly down the south face, which averages 35–45°, far to skier's right of our ascent route. We weaved between rock bands and at the bottom of the face kept our momentum, skiing all the way back to our high camp.

A storm then kept us at base camp for about a week, dropping around 30cm of snow on the peaks. We headed back up to high camp on the 22nd and sat out another day of so-so weather. The next day we left early, in bitter cold and wind, to attempt to link two peaks. The first would be Ghidims Sar/Igis Peak (5,932m map height, 6,014m GPS, 36°41'28.71"N, 75°32'0.38"E); the mountain was called Igls after the hometown of the two Austrians who climbed it in 2014, but locals call it Ghidims Sar (see AAJ 2015). Ghidims Sar is tucked in the back of the Left Ice Flow of the North Ghidims Glacier. The second peak, which we had come to call Cache Peak due to having a good view of it from our ski cache at the toe of the North Ghidims Glacier, was a peak of 5,883m (36°41'56.76"N, 75°31'31.92"E), northwest of Ghidims Sar and separated by a corniced ridge/saddle.

We climbed the slope below the saddle. On the last section, part of a cornice had broken off and left a near-vertical section of snow. I climbed this and hip-belayed both Chris and Bill to the saddle (ca 5,680m), after which we headed up the northwest ridge of Ghidims Sar. We gained the summit quickly and sat in the sun, defrosting toes and hands. We skied breakable crust back down to the saddle and switched to skins to head up the southeast ridge of Cache Peak. From the top, we skied and splitboarded the west face, avoiding signs of crevasses, down to the North Ghidims Glacier. We took a rest here before continuing onto the glacier and then skinned a short distance back up to our high camp.

On the 24th and 25th, we shifted our focus to the main attraction of the North Ghidims Glacier: Yawash Sar II (6,125m, 36°43'14.98"N, 75°31'53.74"E). I had discovered this peak during the winter of 2020–'21 in the AAJ and was surprised that it was unclimbed/unskied at the time, as it is absolutely beautiful. The following spring, Andrzej Bargiel climbed and skied the west face. Even though we had hoped to make the first ascent/descent, following in the footsteps of Andrzej would be quite an honor.

Chris and I climbed the west face to a point around 100m below the summit, only to be thwarted by unstable slab. We were both unhappy with the conditions, and I didn't want to summit and feel like we had just got away with it. We bailed, downclimbing to the top of the lower face, then skiing back to camp. On the 25th we started the trek to Shimshal. Chris and I would later make an unsuccessful attempt to climb and ski Gasherbrum II.

— **Matt Randall, USA**

## Images



Matt Randall and Bill Copeland on the summit ridge of Yawash Sar Middle. Directly behind them, across the Right Ice Flow, is the Two-headed Massif (north summit climbed in 2018). To the right of this summit, in the far distance, is broad-topped Distaghil Sar (7,885m). The two big distant peaks on the left are Kanjut Sar (left, 7,760m) and Yukshin Gardan Sar (7,641m).



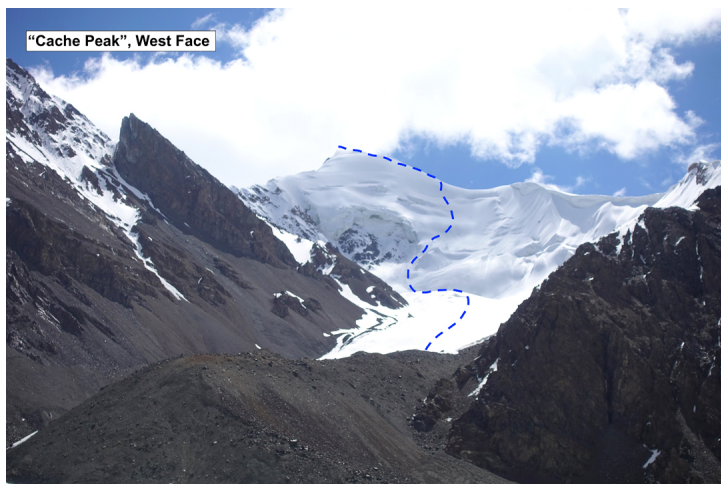
The south face of Yawash Sar Middle. (1) 2022 ski descent. (2) 2012 first-ascent route. (3) 2022 ascent route.



Matt Randall climbing the steep snow wall to the saddle between Ghidims Sar and Peak 5,883m (referred to as Cache Peak).



The northwest ridge of Ghidims Sar, which was climbed and skied from the saddle, seen from the ascent of Cache Peak (Peak 5,883m).



The west face of Peak 5,883m (referred to as Cache Peak), untouched before the ski descent of 2022.





Bill Copeland splitboarding the lower west face of Yawash Sar II. Below and curving to the left is the North Ghidims Glacier. Branching to the right is the Right Ice Flow. The big peak above this ice flow is Two-headed Massif (5,929m; north summit climbed in 2018).

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