



AAC Publications

Mt. Stewart, Northwest Face, Stewart Little

California, Sierra Nevada, Sequoia National Park

Away from the crowds, beyond the big trees, and 1.5 miles above the famed Valhalla sits Tamarack Lake, from whose shores myriad rock climbing objectives rise. These include Mt. Stewart (12,205'), whose almost mile-long north-facing behemoth of a wall is festooned with features.

On an August morning, Reuben Shelton and I departed the comforts of our base camp beside Tamarack Lake to explore the secrets of Mt. Stewart. Dave Nettle was there, too, captain and spiritual guide of our party, though he elected to stay back in base camp for he had already climbed Stewart at least twice (and scored the best lines on the massive face).

We spied a clean wall on the northwest flank of Stewart and decided to give it a gander. After an extended gentlemen's meeting huddled in the shade of a large boulder, waiting for the sun to pass, we moseyed up the remainder of the approach to the face and began to climb. One pitch at a time, the wall revealed herself to be clean, intricate, and quite climbable. The route we took is by no means a straight line up the precipice, but rather a slithering course linking fun climbing on mostly good stone. As with so many other Sierra rock routes, the climbing on Stewart Little (750', 6 pitches, 5.10) varied within the boundaries of granitic climbability: There were cracks (of course), and flakes (none too scary), roofs and rooflets, lichen-y laybacks, slippery slab, and the stunning summit of a prominent gendarme along Stewart's long ridge.

We descended via a prominent gully that cuts down to the basin a bit west of the top, full of scree skiing and some mandatory downclimbing on Sierra barf rock.

— Pete Fasoldt

Images



Stewart Little (750', 6 pitches, 5.10) on the northwest face of Mt. Stewart (12,205'), Sequoia National Park, California.



Stewart Little (750', 6 pitches, 5.10) on the northwest face of Mt. Stewart (12,205'), Sequoia National Park. Stewart's true summit is the sharp peak left of center.



Pete Fasoldt following a pitch near the top of Stewart Little (750', 6 pitches, 5.10) on the northwest face of Mt. Stewart (12,205').

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