



AAC Publications

Mt. Hunter, Mini-Moonflower Buttress, Shadow People

Alaska, Central Alaska Range

After climbing a new route on Mt. Huntington (see story [here](#)) with Zac Colbran, Dane Steadman and I bumped over to the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier at the end of April. In ten days, we caught just one frigid day to climb between weather systems.

We left our tent at 4:30 a.m. on April 30. After crossing the 'schrund below the Mini-Moonflower Buttress on Mt. Hunter (Begguya), we climbed the ice apron at the start of the North Couloir (2,000', 85° ice, Cordes-DeCapio, 1998). Where the apron pinches down into the couloir proper, we traversed hard right on mixed ground to gain an ice runnel that leads into the large icefield that cuts from left to right up the center of the buttress. After 100m of spine surfing, we reached the top of the icefield and found a perfect strip of blue ice that took us into a small basin below the upper headwall. From there, we climbed straight up on pitch after pitch of amazing ice, interspersed with high-quality mixed steps up to M5. We climbed directly up the final icefield and chopped through the cornice into sunshine around 3:30 p.m.

Despite wind-driven snow sluffs—a sign the bad weather was returning—the descent down the North Couloir went smoothly, and we reached the glacier around 6 p.m.

Over the last few years, the crux ice pitch of the North Couloir has been pretty anemic—when it forms at all—which makes for engaging dry-tooling but also a much harder route. Our new line, Shadow People (700m, IV AI4+ M5), offers an alternative for folks seeking excellent climbing at a surprisingly moderate grade.

— Grant Stewart, Canada

Images



Dane Steadman skinning up the Kahiltna Glacier early in the morning.



Grant Stewart traversing out of the North Couloir onto new ground at the start of Shadow People.



Grant Stewart on a large icefield in the middle of Shadow People (700m, IV AI4+ M5), Mini-Moonflower Buttress, Mt. Hunter.



Grant Stewart nearing the top of the main icefield on Shadow People, a new route up the Mini-Moonflower Buttress on Mt. Hunter.



Grant Stewart at the start of the headwall pitches near the top of Shadow People, a new route up the Mini-Moonflower Butte on Mt. Hunter.



The Mini-Moonflower is a prominent butte just to the northeast of the North Butte of Mt. Hunter (Begguya). (1) North Couloir (Cordes- DeCapio, 1998). (2, yellow) Shadow People (Steadman-Stewart, 2023). (3) Kiss Me Where the Sun Don't Shine (Cool-Parnell, 2001; the first ascensionists stopped two pitches shy of the butte's summit). (4) Dempster-Wilson, 2008. (5) Luna (Koch- Prezelj, 2001).

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