



## AAC Publications

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### **Himmelhorn, South Face, Stonehenge**

Washington, North Cascades

**“We were born too late. Roper’s already been here. We’re just picking up his scraps,” Tim Halder mused as we gazed up at the unclimbed south face of the Himmelhorn (7,880’). Maybe so, but neither he nor anyone else had ventured onto the big face in front of us.**

Our adventure had started on July 3, as we lugged monster packs up the Goodell Creek jungle and then camped below the Chopping Block above Crescent Creek. On July 4 we set our sights on the easternmost tower of the Rake (7,840’), believing it to be unclimbed. The short climb went quickly and we found no evidence of an ascent. However, John Roper has since informed us that he climbed this tower in 1984, calling it the Turret. We were indeed picking up his scraps.

We spent the next day resting at our camp and scoping lines on the Himmelhorn, whose south face towers above the wildflower meadows of Crescent Creek basin. [Himmelhorn is part of the Crescent Creek Spires, the westernmost extension of the Southern Picket Range. The peak is also referred to as the Himmelgeisterhorn.] It probably sees an ascent every other year or so—by either its standard route (Cooper-Denny-Firey-Firey-Whitmore, AAJ 1962) or the highly regarded Wild Hair Crack (Kroeker-Roper-Wild, 1981), both on the northwest aspect. The south face looked complex but presented several options. We considered a line far left, but a direct line looked most interesting.

We left camp on July 6 at 4 a.m. By 5 a.m. we’d reached the snow slope below the wall and then climbed up easy rock ramps and ledges for approximately 600’. This took us to a grassy col where we pulled out the rope and rack. Above us lay a feature we dubbed the Shield. Tim led the first pitch up blocky terrain (5.8). I took the second up a dead-end dihedral, eventually traversing left onto the face and up another hand crack (5.10-). The third pitch was quite easy. And on the fourth pitch, Tim led up a steep, quality flake (5.8). The rock went from solid to excellent as we moved higher.

On the fifth pitch we traversed right to the base of the summit tower and I lobbied for going straight up, thinking it would be two pitches or less. On the sixth pitch I led up a steep and run-out face, which took us two-thirds way up the tower (5.10-). From here, Tim opted for a moderate but wild rightward traverse on solid but unprotected climbing. This gained a notch between the summit tower and a pinnacle, marking the end of the difficulties.

From the notch we climbed one easy, loose pitch to the summit. On top we were amazed to find the original summit log from 1961 in a film canister. The rest of the trip was all downhill, more or less. Back at camp we watched Spinal Tap’s *Stonehenge*, inciting our route name: Stonehenge (8 pitches, 5.10-).

– Jason Schilling

## Images



The south face of the Himmelhorn showing the route Stonehenge (8 pitches, 5.10-).



: The Crescent Creek Spires from the south, with Himmelhorn in center.



The south side of Himmelhorn from the meadow below.



Route-finding low on the route.





Tim Halder starting the first belayed pitch of Stonehenge.



Tim Halder leading a steep flake on the fourth pitch.



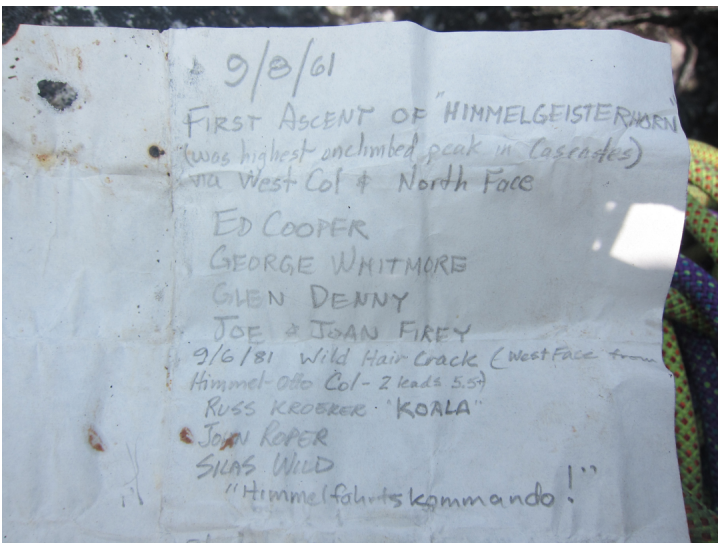
Jason Schilling starting up the sixth pitch.



The notch below the final pitch to the summit of Himmelhorn.



On the summit with Mt. Fury (left) and Luna Peak (center) behind.



The original entry in Himmelhorn's summit register.

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