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Great Rapids Ridge, Many Ascents

Russia, Siberia, Magadan, Kolyma Mountains

In late summer, the first known climbs were completed on the Great Rapids Ridge, a 70km-long system of granite domes and walls in the Kolyma Mountains of far eastern Siberia, an area better known for former Soviet gulags than for rock climbing. A team of 19 climbers from various parts of Russia traveled to Magadan Oblast in late August, led by Ivan Kergin and Alexander Yakovenko. From the village of Ust-Omchug, the team traveled 127km by truck and then hiked 15km of trailless terrain over two days to a base camp by the Tok River.

Over the next week, the climbers established an assault camp and climbed seven moderate routes (Russian 1B to 3A) up nearby peaks. Meanwhile, the trio of Ivan Kergin, Konstantin Bobrinsky, and Artyom Chikin selected a more difficult climb: the steep southern face of a mountain they called Peak 100th Anniversary of Russian Alpinism (2,112m GPS, 61°47.599'N, 150°24.362'E). After fixing ropes on about 100m of the route, they returned on August 31 and completed the ascent in one long day, with a total of 800m of climbing (16 pitches), graded Russian 6A.

The climbers observed many unclimbed walls in the area, including north and northeast faces estimated to rise 600m to 700m.

— **Dougald MacDonald, AAJ, with information from Mountain.ru and the Russian Mountaineering Federation**

Images



Climbers partway up the main wall of the 16-pitch route climbed on Peak 100th Anniversary of Russian Alpinism on the Great Rapids Ridge.

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