



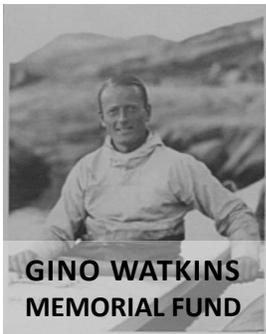
## Kangerittivatsiaq, Greenland | A 2012 Expedition

Final Report | 10 November 2012

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**British  
Mountaineering  
Council**



Scott Polar Research Institute  
University of Cambridge



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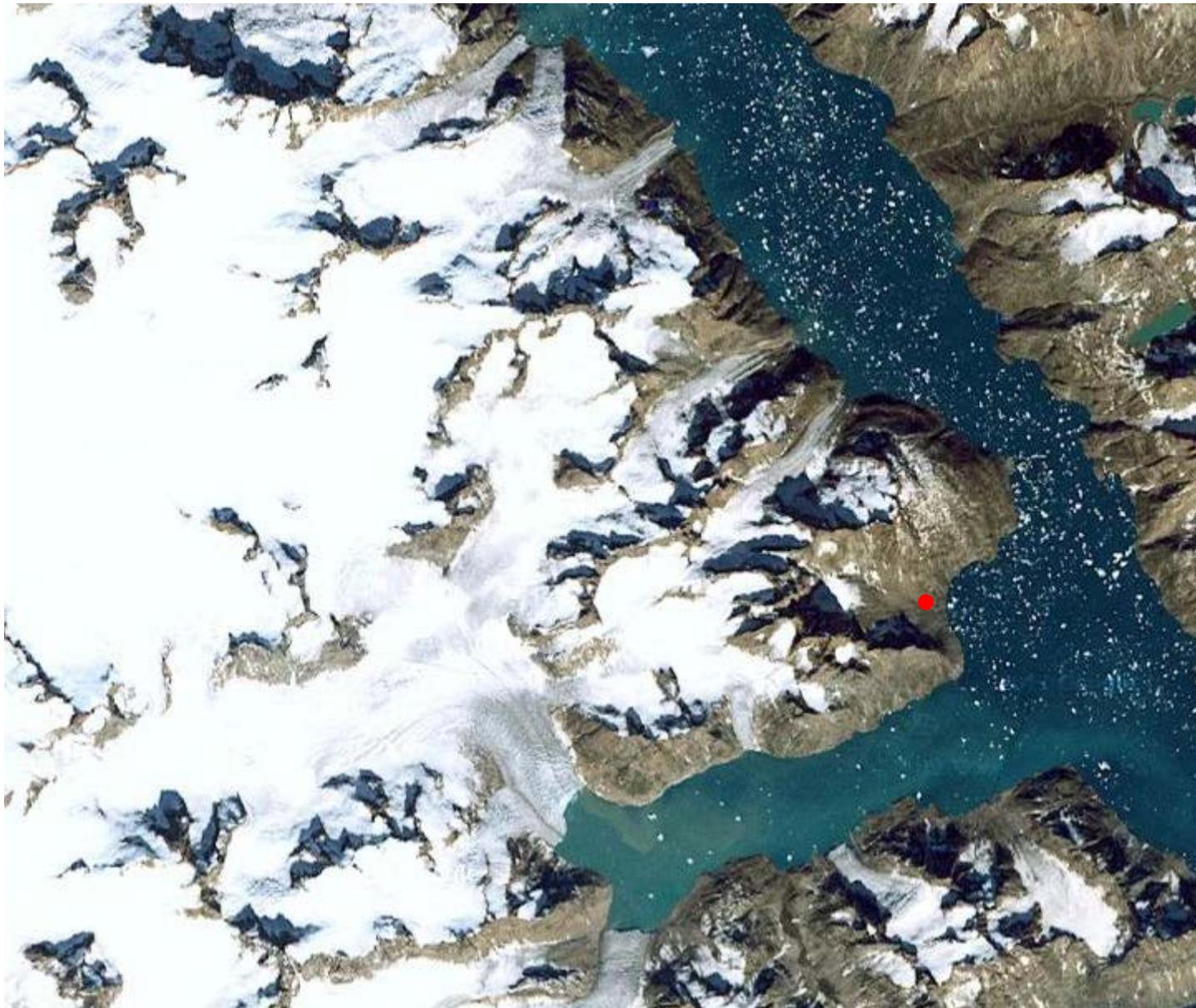
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## 1 EXPEDITION OBJECTIVE

Despite a last-minute change of venue, our objective remained the same: to attempt new alpine rock routes and explore an area previously unvisited by climbers.

## 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

Located approximately 120 km northeast of Tasilaq, Kangertittivatsiaq (also referred to as Kangerdlugssuatsiaq) is an open fjord region that is peppered with peaks and glaciers tumbling into the frigid seas. The main branch of the fjord begins at the terminus of the Glacier de France, with the Habets and Knud Rasmussen Glaciers to the west. Our basecamp was situated at approximately 66°18'15" N, 35°42'40" W (red dot in satellite image), which is in the center of an impressive cirque that opens to the fjord on the east side. We propose the name *Mythics Cirque* for this area. Of all the peaks we passed during the journey north from Tasilaq, this area was the most striking. A topographic map is provided in Appendix A.



The Kangertittivatsiaq area has been visited before, but there are no documented visits by climbers to the Mythics Cirque. Most of the attention has been focused on Ingolfs Fjeld (2232 m), which lies just to the north of the fjord. The peaks of the Mythics Cirque rise to between 1250 and 1500 m, with outstanding relief—the glacier at the center of the cirque sits at approximately 200 m. The peaks in the back and south branch of the cirque are steep granite (geology is discussed later), whereas the northern branch is less steep and mostly decomposing granite or other rock types.



The team also had a chance to explore the glacier systems on either side of the Mythics Cirque. To the north, several small glaciers terminate in the fjord. Traver and Beckwith made two excursions in this direction, travelling via inflatable canoe and then on foot. Large walls are present, but the rock quality is questionable. Access further up the glaciers may be difficult.

Immediately to the east, a small hanging glacier (ca 600 m) is enveloped by Father Tower. This glacier is accessible on foot from the Mythics Cirque, although routefinding through the steep, sometimes slabby hillside can be difficult. Gaining the glacial plateau was possible on the north end, although this was not without substantial hazard. The next valley over was also explored by Bunn and Royer, first accessed on foot from basecamp and then via inflatable canoe and a hike up the steep hillside. The glacier sitting high in the valley is mellow, and allows easy access to a broad, icy col. Another glacier, heavily crevassed, extends down the backside of the col, eventually flowing back to the fjord. Skirting the edge of the glacier to northeast allows access to the south face of Hidden Tower, and potential access to Siren Tower and another unnamed, unclimbed wall. The rock quality of these south faces was very good.

As a whole, the Kangertittivatsiaq area offers significant potential for future ascents, although the rock quality is variable and reportedly not as enticing as other regions in Greenland (e.g., Fox Jaw Cirque). Regardless, there is plenty of adventure to be had, both with steep, technical lines and general mountaineering.

### 3 TEAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION



**Matthew Traver, BMC, AAC, Alpine Club | Expedition Leader**  
matthewtraver@gmail.com

Matt, 26, is an American and British national, currently based in London. He is founder of Beast Products, a manufacturer of caving and outdoor equipment. In his spare time, he enjoys planning future expeditions and dreaming up new projects. Originally raised in Hong Kong, he found the multicultural city to spark a life-long interest in global culture and travel. Consequently, he has climbed in a number of areas, including the Djangart region of Kyrgyzstan (with Mike) and completed the first ascent of the Dragon's Horns West Face on Tioman Island, Malaysia.



**Michael Royer, AAC, Alpine Club | Assistant Expedition Leader**  
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Mike, 27, recently finished his PhD and moved to Oregon to work for the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and be closer to mountains. He enjoys all types of climbing, but is particularly drawn to remote, exploratory expeditions that combine cultural and vertical endeavors. Growing up hiking in the Northeast United States, Mike began to pursue more difficult and remote objectives in college. He has since climbed in Europe (Alps, Apennines), South America (Cordillera Blanca), and Asia (Tien Shan), besides numerous areas in the United States and Canada.



**Matthew Bunn, AAC, Alpine Club**  
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Matt, 27, is a PhD student in sociology at the University of Newcastle, Australia. In 2010 he began work on his honours thesis in sociology entitled *Epic Hunters: Adventure Climbing in Reflexive Modernity*. He is currently working on his PhD under the working title *Of Rock and Ice: Climbing in Reflexive Modernity*. Sociology and climbing are his major passions, and has freed him for the previous few years to do nothing but research and climb. This has allowed him to climb extensively on rock and ice in Australia and North America. You can expect to find him drifting around North America during 2012 on rock, ice, walls or mountains – with a notebook in his hand!



**Steve Beckwith, BMC, AAC, Alpine Club**  
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Steve, 26, is a British geologist currently based in Australia. During his early years, he completed several significant climbs in the Alps. He has also travelled to the Atlas range of Morocco where he climbed Toubkal via the little frequented Ounaoums Ridge, as well as climbing several unrecorded ice couloirs on the Eastern flanks of the Toubkal Valley. Soon after he travelled to the Cordillera Blanca in the Peruvian Andes, ascending several major peaks. In the same year, Steve travelled to the Malaysian Island of Tioman to undertake first ascent of the Dragon's Horns via the West Face.

## 4 EXPEDITION SUMMARY

After a last second change of plans—our original plan was to head south from Tasiilaq—and some logistical challenges arising from delayed shipments, we made our way to Kangertittivatsiaq on August 9, 2012 with boat captain Salomon Gadegaard. We established a fixed basecamp at a fantastic site at the center of a prominent series of towers, dubbed the Mythics Cirque. This camp was home for the three-week long expedition, although many nights were spent at other sites while on route or just exploring nearby areas. For the first two weeks of our stay, we were joined in the cirque by another team of climbers on a Mountain Hardwear-sponsored expedition, who were also diverted from a destination south of Tasiilaq due to impassable ocean conditions.

Several days of cloudy, rainy, and foggy weather made for an ominous start to the expedition. We used period lulls to reconnoiter the glacier at the center of the cirque, a col on the south side of the cirque, and the ridge to the north of the cirque. A journey up the main branch of Kangertittivatsiaq was also made using the inflatable canoe that we rented from the Destination East Greenland tourist office in Tasiilaq.

When the weather finally broke, we divided into two teams to double our potential. Royer and Bunn set off for the valleys to the south and west of the Mythics Cirque. After exploring both hanging glaciers on foot, they climbed Father Tower via a new route on the southeast face and east ridge, *Coronis* (5.9, 14+ pitches, 1000 m). This was the second ascent of the circa 1350 m tower, with the first ascent via the south ridge being made the day before by Mike Libecki. After a semi-planned bivy on the descent of the south ridge, the team returned to basecamp. Traver and Beckwith's first effort was an attempt on the steep and imposing north face of the Siren Tower, which was thwarted by heavy rockfall in the approach couloir. After shuttling numerous loads to the base of the couloir and passing the bergschrund, the pair made a prudent decision to retreat and live to climb another day.

After regrouping as a team in basecamp, Traver and Beckwith departed via canoe for the valleys leading up from the main branch of Kangertittivatsiaq. After making landfall, they approached an alpine ridge that looked manageable. Climbing through the night, they were turned back by unstable rock a short distance from the summit and returned to basecamp once again frustrated by the conditions. At the same time, Royer and Bunn chose to attempt the highest peak at the back of the cirque, approaching via a steeper-than-expected and treacherously loose couloir. After a bivy at the col, the pair began to traverse the steep and technical ridge towards the summit. After a couple of moderate pitches, the team retreated because there was no safe way to descend the couloir, instead requiring a traverse of four peaks to get back to basecamp. With more provisions, the route would have been a beautiful, long ridge to the summit, but future ascents of the couloir are strongly discouraged. Over the next 30 hours, Royer and Bunn completed the *Tortures Traverse* (5.4), in turn making the first ascents of four peaks dubbed Prometheus (ca 1100 m), Tantalus (ca 1250 m), Sisyphus (ca 1200 m), and Damocles (ca 1250 m) after the tortured characters in Greek mythology. The terrain was generally unstable, with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class terrain intermixed with brief sections of low 5<sup>th</sup> class terrain. The route is not recommended.

After reuniting in basecamp and spending a day assisting the Mountain Hardwear team by retrieving gear, the two pairs departed for their final objectives. Beckwith and Traver focused on a small, steep feature on the east ridge of Father Tower (dubbed The Squid). After days of hauling loads of aid gear to the base, the pair once again retreated due to poor rock quality after starting up the route. Simultaneously, Bunn and Royer found tremendous rock quality on the south face of Hidden Tower, which they approached via the fjord (inflatable

canoe) and a hike up and over a col. After a day reconnoitering a path through a series of crevasses, Bunn led the 16-hour charge up and down the fantastic nine-pitch route, *Assembling the Tupilak* (5.10).

Bunn and Royer returned to basecamp the night before the team departed for the return trip to Tasiilaq. The departure occurred a couple days early owing to a strong storm system that moved into the area. Unable to get flights out earlier, the team spent four days recuperating in Tasiilaq at the Red House. The highlight of this period was giving a presentation to an English class at the school, which covered the various expeditions and adventures that team members have completed. Needless to say, there is a group of students that are eager to get out and explore the mountains!



**Menacing walls tower above basecamp, obscured by mist and clouds.**

## 5 SYNOPTIC TABLE OF ACTIVITIES

Date	Weather	Activity
2-Aug	Sunny	Traver and Beckwith travel to Kulusuk from London
3-Aug	Sunny	Traver and Beckwith arrive in Tasiilaq
4-Aug	Sunny	Bunn and Royer arrive in Tasiilaq
5-Aug	Sunny	Sort logistics and make alternative food plans (supermarket closed)
6-Aug	Sunny	Sort logistics and make alternative food plans
7-Aug	Sunny	Sort logistics and make alternative food plans
8-Aug	Rain	Purchase expedition supplies and pack gear for boat trip (Rain)
9-Aug	Cloudy	Travel to Kangertittivatsiaq
10-Aug	Rain	Short exploratory hike up glacier (Rain)
11-Aug	Rain	Basecamp (Rain)
		<b>Bunn-Royer</b>
		<b>Traver-Beckwith</b>
12-Aug	Sun/Clouds	Exploratory hike and climb to col
13-Aug	Rain	Basecamp (Rain)
14-Aug	Sunny	Traverse to next two valleys south
15-Aug	Sunny	Scramble to ridge, return to first valley
16-Aug	Sunny	Climb east ridge of <i>Father Tower</i>
17-Aug	Sun/Rain	Finish descent and return to basecamp
18-Aug	Sunny	Rest
19-Aug	Sunny	Rest; reconnaissance hike up north ridge
20-Aug	Sunny	Ascend col at rear of cirque
21-Aug	Sunny	<i>Tortures Traverse</i>
22-Aug	Sunny	<i>Tortures Traverse</i>
23-Aug	Sunny	Assist with gear retrieval
24-Aug	Sunny	Rest
25-Aug	Sunny	Rest
26-Aug	Sun/Mist	Travel via boat to second valley
27-Aug	Sun/Mist	Reconnaissance of bergschrund
28-Aug	Sun/Mist	Ascend <i>Hidden Tower</i>
29-Aug	Sun/Mist	Return to basecamp
30-Aug	Rain/Wind	Return to Tasiilaq (Rain/Wind)
31-Aug	Rain/Wind	Tasiilaq (Rain/Wind)
1-Sep	Cloudy	Tasiilaq
2-Sep	Cloudy	Tasiilaq
3-Sep	Sunny	Presentation at school
4-Sep	Sunny	Depart from Kulusuk

## 6 DESCRIPTION OF CLIMBS

### ATAATAP QAQQAQ (FATHER TOWER)

**Location:** Valley south of Mythics Cirque

**Approximate Elevation:** 1350 m

**Route Aspect:** Southeast Face & East Ridge

**Route Name:** Coronis

**Route Grade:** 5.9

**Route Length:** 14 pitches, 800 m+

**Team Members:** M. Bunn, M. Royer

**Date of Ascent:** August 16-17, 2012

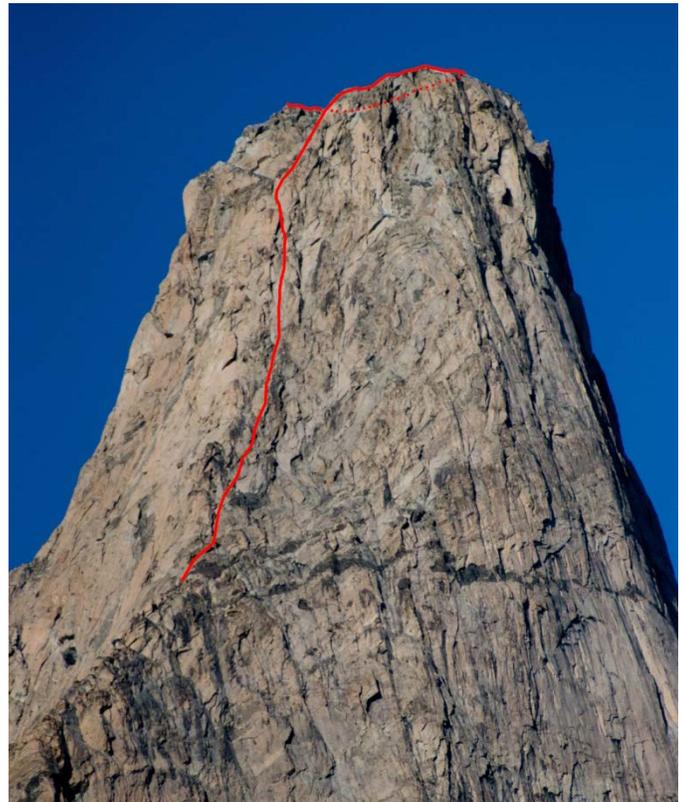


**Approach:** From basecamp in the Mythics Cirque, traverse south at approximately 50-100 m above the fjord to reach the next small valley. The traverse does not include more than 3<sup>rd</sup> class terrain, although it is easy to get off course onto more committing terrain. Once into the valley, continue traversing and ascending on the north side of the outflow from the glacier. A small, grassy ledge can be found at approximately 550 m above sea level, which makes a good place for an overnight stay.

**Route Description:** The route begins from the small glacier (700 m) that lies to the southeast of the summit. The glacier can be gained via its northern edge, although the path is notably dangerous--numerous large blocks shifted over just a few days. The bottom of the southeast face can be reached by navigating several crevasses along the steepening glacier. Begin climbing at a gray band, although there are numerous possibilities. A couple hundred meters of 4<sup>th</sup> class or low 5<sup>th</sup> class rock follow the heavily featured bottom of the face, which is more of a ramp-like feature that extends to the east ridge. The appearance of this area is dramatically different depending on the vantage.

As the face steepens, the climbing is consistently in the 5.5 to 5.8 range, again with numerous options available. The climbing is mostly discontinuous, and belay ledges are plentiful. The route gains the east ridge at the elbow where it begins to steepen, above the large flake-like feature that creates a sharp divide in the ridge. A short pitch of easy climbing leads to better, more sustained climbing on cleaner rock. Four pitches of 5.8-5.9 climbing lead to the summit ridge. Traverse the ridge to the true summit.

**Descent:** Follow the south ridge (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> class), which then turns slightly to the east as it goes over a bulge. Approximately 30 minutes from the summit, a steeper section requires rappelling. Two anchors were installed by Mike Libeck, who made the first ascent of the ridge (2 rappels can be made with a single 60 m rope, or the entire length can be descended with 2 60 m ropes). The anchors sit at the end of a broad ledge. The rappel leads to a small notch. From the notch, continue traversing the true ridge until it is possible to follow a gully to the left to return to the glacier.



**Notes:**

- From the glacier, the first ascent took approximately 12 hours.
- The descent required another 7 hours due to the unfamiliar terrain, and required an unplanned bivy at the small notch following the rappels.
- Faster times are likely possible.
- The first ascent of the peak, via the south ridge, was made two days prior to our ascent by Mike Libeck.

## PROMETHEUS, TANTALUS, SISYPHUS, DAMOCLES

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**Location:** Mythics Cirque

**Approximate Elevation:** Name (1150 m) Tantalus (1250 m), Sisyphus (1200 m), Damocles (1250 m)

**Route Name:** The Tortures Traverse

**Route Grade:** 5.4 (mostly 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Class)

**Route Length:** NA

**Team Members:** M. Bunn, M. Royer

**Date of Ascent:** August 20-22, 2012



**Route Description:** Ascend the couloir at the back of the cirque (proposed as the *Tartarus Couloir*), following the hanging glacier then the narrow, loose gully to reach a col at approximately 1000 m. From the col traverse east across the four peaks. Descend from Damocles back to the basecamp location.

**Notes:**

- The couloir used to gain the ridge was extremely unstable and is not recommended. The shattered rock prevents retreat via rappel. Rock fall and rockslides are serious threats.
- Water and/or snow can be found at several of the cols or notches in the ridge.
- The ridge was a tortuous combination of loose rock and short steps with substantial exposure, resulting in notably high risk. There is also a high degree of commitment resulting from the lack of intermediate descent options.
- The duration of the route was much longer than expected due to the poor quality of the rock.
- The descents of each peak required a combination of downclimbing and/or rappelling.
- This route is not recommended to future parties.

## ISERTUGAQ QAQQAQ (HIDDEN TOWER)

**Location:** South of Mythics Cirque  
**Approximate Elevation:** 1400 m  
**Route Aspect:** Southeast Buttress  
**Route Name:** Assembling the Tupilak

**Route Grade:** 5.10  
**Route Length:** 9 pitches, 450 m  
**Team Members:** M. Bunn, M. Royer  
**Date of Ascent:** August 28, 2012



**Approach:** From basecamp, traverse south across two ridges and one valley, staying high when passing the second ridge. Gain the moraine at the north side of the glacial outflow. Several small sandy patches are available here if an overnight stay is necessary. [Alternatively, this point can be reached from the fjord below, where a small sandy beach makes making landfall in small craft simple. From the shore, ascend through a labyrinth of gullies, eventually crossing the outflow of the glacier and ascending loose talus and bushes on the south side to reach the terminus of the glacier.] Ascend directly up the center of the glacier to reach a broad col partially emerging through the glacier. Once at the col, traverse the northern edge of the glacier (avoiding heavily crevassed terrain) to reach some exposed slabs. Many small, flat areas large enough for a one-man bivouac are available here.

**Route Description:** From the slabs, gain the relatively clean glacier, aiming for the couloir that extends toward the Hidden Tower. At the time of the ascent, the entrance to this couloir was heavily crevassed, requiring several snow-bridge crossings and descent into one of the larger crevasses. From inside the crevasse, it is possible to climb the slabs to gain a slope to the climbers' right of the couloir. Avoiding another large crevasse, regain the snowy couloir, following it to the base of the southeast buttress. The snow steepens to approximately 70 degrees as it nears the face (approximate elevation 1050 m).

After establishing a belay about 5 m above the snow, the route ascends directly up the face for several pitches, before gradually rounding to the southeast aspect of the buttress. The route primarily follows corners and cracks, with several small roofs and two squeeze chimneys. The climbing is remarkably sustained, continuously in the 5.8 to 5.10 range, and the rock quality was fantastic. The summit ridge is gained at the eastern edge

**Descent:** Rappel the southeast buttress, eventually joining the ascent route.

**Notes:**

- It took approximately 2 hours to reach the base of the face from the bivy slabs.
- From the base of the rock to the summit took approximately 9 hours
- The descent took another 6 hours.
- Rock fall in the couloir was frequent, especially when exposed to the sun.



## SIREN TOWER (ATTEMPT)

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**Location:** Mythics Cirque  
**Approximate Elevation:** 1400 m  
**Route Aspect:** North Face  
**Route Name:** -NA-

**Route Grade:** -NA-  
**Route Length:** -NA-  
**Team Members:** M. Traver, S. Beckwith  
**Date of Ascent:** August 15, 2012

**Approach:** From basecamp head directly up the main glacier for approximately 2 km in to the main basin and gully that separates Siren Tower from the distinct pyramid peak (unnamed).

**Route Description:** Approximately 4 days spent setting up the route for a big wall attempt. A retreat was made on the second initial day of climbing due to excessive threat from rock fall down the main gully and rockslides over a buttress. Ideal conditions for a second attempt would be early spring or even winter.

**Descent:** N/A, but likely a direct rappel of the route.

**Notes:** Rock fall was originally thought to be coming from only on the right side of the 600+ m gully and it was deemed objectively safe for an attempt. It was later found that rock fall was present in numerous other directions in the gully and therefore deemed excessively risky. Given the steep nature of the line and the style in which we were climbing, a considerable period of time would have been required of us to stay in the gully whilst hauling loads and would therefore have meant staying in the danger zone 2-4 days until we could reach the main base of the tower.

## PROMETHEUS (ATTEMPT)

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**Location:** Valley north of Mythics Cirque  
**Approximate Elevation:** 1400 m  
**Route Aspect:** North Ridge  
**Route Name:** -NA-

**Route Grade:** D  
**Route Length:** 1 km  
**Team Members:** M. Traver, S. Beckwith  
**Date of Ascent:** August 21, 2012

**Approach:** From base camp, paddle approximately 7 km north following the headland and moor at the first beach/glacial valley encountered. From there, head 2 km up the glacial valley to reach the foot of the prominent ridge.

**Route Description:** The majority of the route was a mixture of choss scrambling, soloing, and simulclimbing up to HS 4a. After approximately 1 km of climbing, we turned around one pitch from a minor summit due to vertical blocks of choss.

**Descent:** Down climb the ridge (solo and simul).

**Notes:** This route was attempted in a 24 hour round trip from base camp including paddling. This route is not recommended for future ascents given the loose rock.



The unfinished route ascents the skyline to the left.

## THE SQUID (ATTEMPT)

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**Location:** Mythics Cirque  
**Approximate Elevation:** 700 m  
**Route Aspect:** North Face  
**Route Name:** -NA-

**Route Grade:** -NA-  
**Route Length:** -NA-  
**Team Members:** M. Traver, S. Beckwith  
**Date of Ascent:** August 26, 2012

**Approach:** Walk approximately 1.5 km up the glacier from basecamp. Aim for loose looking buttress to the left of Father Tower which will take you up towards the base of the Squid.

**Route Description:** In order to get to the base of The Squid you need to first ascend approximately 250 m in elevation through a combination of short pitches, scrambling, scree and choss. The line up The Squid should follow a very distinct, overhanging and diagonal offwidth/crack system for 250 m to the summit of the feature.

**Descent:** Down climb and rappel.

**Notes:** We retreated 20 m Once into the climbing on The Squid due to loose rock and dinner plate choss suspended above and within the only crack system available on the feature. It could be a worthwhile climb if one can find an alternative route up and around the loose rock hanging from the roof.

## 7 HISTORY OF THE AREA

To our knowledge, there had been no previous climbing in the Mythics Cirque prior to 2012. During our stay, another team was in the area, also diverted from a destination south of Tasiilaq. Mike Libecki made the first ascent of Father Tower via the south ridge (*Dragon's Back*, 5.8). Additionally, Mike Libecki and Ethan Pringle established *Built Fjord Tough* (5.12 A2 V) on the proud north face of Father Tower.

In contrast to the Mythics Cirque, several expeditions have visited the glaciated areas to the north of the main branch of Kangertittivatsiaq, near the outflow of the Glacier de France. The primary objective in this area is *Ingolfs Fjeld*, a 2232 m peak that was first climbed in 1971 via its east ridge. We could only identify one other successful ascent since, with many more attempts. Other expeditions have visited the areas further inland to the south and west of Kangertittivatsiaq, a region known as *Sveizterland*. One of the prime peaks in this area is Tupilak, which has seen numerous ascents. A 2006 British expedition (the Cambridge University East Greenland Expedition) made several alpine ascents up to grade AD that are the closest established climbing to the Mythics Cirque (see AAJ 2007). Additionally, a 2010 German expedition made several ascents in the coast region to the south of Kangertittivatsiaq (see AAJ 2011).

We read of at least one expedition that intended to approach Kangertittivatsiaq from the sea, but was diverted when the fjord was choked with ice. Many other expeditions to visit *Sveizterland* landed on glaciers using float planes chartered from Iceland, or skied over land from the Tasiilaq region. Notably, Kangertittivatsiaq is located about 30 km from Tugtilik, the fjord where Gino Watkins was last seen. Beyond climbing, the Kangertittivatsiaq area has undoubtedly seen use by native Greenlandic hunters.

## 8 LOGISTICS AND DETAILS

### PERMITS AND REGULATIONS

Because it is less than 150 km from Tasiilaq, an expedition permit is not required for climbing in Kangertittivatsiaq.<sup>1</sup> However, a radio permit may be necessary, depending on the equipment used. Further, depending who you speak with in Tasiilaq, a rifle (polar bear deterrent) is a necessity or not needed at all. Strictly speaking, a firearm permit is necessary if a rifle is carried, although there does not appear to be any enforcement mechanism for any of the permit systems. There are no peak fees.

Because we had originally planned to travel to a “remote area,” which requires an expedition permit, we had also arranged for a radio permit, although we had originally decided to forego carrying a firearm. In order to receive an expedition permit, it is necessary to have a marine VHF radio, PLB, and satellite phone (one set for any subgroup, if the team will be separated at any time). It is also necessary to have rescue insurance.

#### Insurance

The Ministry of Domestic Affairs, Nature and Environment of Greenlandic government—specifically the Expeditions Office—enforces the regulations for obtaining an expedition permit, which were established via legislative action following several high profile rescues of uninsured teams crossing the ice cap. One of the stipulations for obtaining a permit is that the team must have rescue insurance, with very specific coverage details. Despite exhaustive efforts, the only company we found that could provide the insurance was Kalaallit Forsikring, based in Nuuk. Unfortunately, this insurance was extremely expensive and may be a deterrent to

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<sup>1</sup> As of February 2010, expeditions travelling to remote areas of Greenland require a permit. More information can be found at: [bit.ly/Ry1LkP](http://bit.ly/Ry1LkP). Obtaining a permit requires substantial lead time.

future expeditions that wish to visit Greenland and abide by the established laws. It is our recommendation that climbing organizations (e.g., AAC, Alpine Club, MEF, BMC) use their collective influence to help enact legislation that is more reasonable.

When we changed our destination to Kangertittivatsiaq, we no longer needed a permit and elected to purchase memberships with Global Rescue, a much more affordable option with a proven record of service. We received an 80% refund on the original insurance from Kalaallit Forsikring. We are glad to report that nobody needed to be rescued!

## TRAVEL

The small town of Kulusuk is the gateway to East Greenland and the Ammassalik District. [Note: to reach other areas in Northeast Greenland, arriving via Constable Point/Nerlerit Inaat Airport/Itoqqortoormiit may be a better option]. Although Kulusuk is a smaller settlement, open land led the American military to establish the runway in the late 1960s, simultaneously making climbing access much easier. Kulusuk can be reached via Reykjavik on Air Iceland.

From Kulusuk, most expeditions head to Tasiilaq to purchase supplies, although it may be possible to leave directly from Kulusuk. There are two options for getting from Kulusuk to Tasiilaq: via Air Greenland's helicopter service, or arranging a boat ride with a local. Although the helicopter may be logistically easier, excess baggage fees may be prohibitive for large expeditions. Also note that it is necessary to pre-purchase tickets for the helicopter; the service desk at the small Kulusuk airport cannot issue them. It may be possible to call the Air Greenland offices upon arrival, but in our case they were closed. Finally, be warned that the helicopter does not operate in bad weather; even heavy fog may shut down service for a day.

Arranging a boat can be a somewhat difficult task if arriving without a plan (as we found out!). To find a boat, it is necessary to walk to the small dock at the center of town, which is several kilometers away. There, you can ask around and, if you're lucky, someone will be heading to Tasiilaq. There is another dock closer to the airport, but it doesn't seem to get as much activity. Another challenge to taking a boat is getting equipment from the airport to the shore. There was no obvious vehicular transportation when we arrived, so both teams ended up walking and/or ferrying loads. Traver and Beckwith actually had to spend a night in the storage shed of Pirhuk Expeditions before they arrange a boat the next day. Royer and Bunn were lucky enough to bump into the right people while walking to town; they got a car to help them move luggage and a same-day boat ride to Tasiilaq. Traver and Steve paid 500 dkk for the trip, whereas Royer and Bunn paid 1000 dkk because they driver had to go back to Kulusuk alone. Some boats are small and could only handle two passengers plus equipment, whereas others are larger and could fit at least four passengers plus equipment. To keep things simple after many hours of travel, it is probably best to pre-arrange



**Matt Bunn arrives at Kulusuk International Airport**



**Making some new friends taking a boat from Kulusuk to Tasiilaq.**

the boat through one of several Tasiilaq locals. The team's return trip was arranged through Robert Peroni and included luggage transport from the dock to the airport on the back of an ATV (2400 dkk total).

Once in Tasiilaq, there is a taxi service, but without equipment the easiest option is to walk. Although the town is spread out and hilly, it doesn't take more than about 20 minutes to get from one end to the other.

The mode of travel for accessing climbing areas is dependent on the distance from Tasiilaq. Nearby areas may be accessible by helicopter (or via ski tour if the season is right), but regardless of location boat seems to be the preferred method of travel. It may be possible to arrange a boat on the spot, but it is best to have something prearranged. There are a few captains in town with boats large enough for a daylong journey with four passengers and equipment. It may also be possible to arrange a larger boat (e.g., *Siggi Tours*). Accessing many areas will depend on the state of the sea ice. Too much ice can block access, but (as we learned) too little ice can make open ocean travel too treacherous for the small boats available in Tasiilaq. It is best to monitor the conditions and be prepared with an alternate plan should conditions dictate a change. The local boat captains are all very knowledgeable on the area and conditions—although their advice may be difficult to hear, it is probably the safe choice.



Unloading gear from the small boat—typical of what is available in Tasiilaq—that took us to Kangertittivatsiaq.

## TASIILAQ

Although a popular stop-off for cruise ships, the tourist infrastructure in Tasiilaq is somewhat limited. For lodging, the options include The Red House (offers camping, bunk or private rooms), the Angmagssalik Hotel (which caters to affluent tourists), or arranging a home stay. Options for prepared food are also limited. A small pizza shop (great food!) near the marina is opening most evenings, and The Red House also serves meals if an inquiry is made in advance. A small fast food restaurant is located inside the recreation center, which is on the hill above the main supermarket, but the food was not recommended. For entertainment, there are two bars—one near the marina and another near the public wash house (which offers showers as well as nice laundry facilities). The bars will be busy every night they are open, and the local residents are quite friendly. Note that no



The picturesque town of Tasiilaq is home to about 2000 people.

hard liquor is available in town, only beer and premixed drinks. There is a small internet café in town, although the service is very slow.

There are several nice dayhikes that start from town, as well as several hills very close by that offer beautiful panoramic views. It is also possible to rent kayaks to paddle the fjord. More tourist info is available from [www.eastgreenland.com](http://www.eastgreenland.com).

## FOOD

For expedition food, we shipped a several packages from London approximately three weeks before our planned departure date, with the guarantee that they would be delivered in just three days. They didn't arrive until several weeks after we had returned home from Greenland. It may be possible to get shipments to Tasiilaq in under five days, but our shipment was diverted to Alluitsup Paa (60°27'45"N 45°34'10"W). According to [Parcel2Go.com/TNT](http://Parcel2Go.com/TNT), the packages were sent to Alluitsup Paa because the "receiver requested to use their own broker" (Royal Arctic Line) to deliver the goods once in Greenland. Our suggestion would be to ensure no brokers are used by package recipients in Greenland and maybe even to get a written agreement from the courier that they will not broker out the shipment(s) unless you have specifically requested them to do so.



Hauling food back from the supermarket.

When we arrived in Greenland, we were unsure of the exact location of our packages and received little information from the courier. After a couple days of waiting, we decided we would have to purchase new rations from the supermarket (which is closed on Sundays). Thankfully, the Monday after we arrived a supply ship arrive, which was the first one in over a month. Supply ships stop in Tasiilaq a handful of times per year, between June and September. Store shelves become fairly sparse prior to the arrival of a new shipment. It takes a couple days for goods to make it from the ship to the store shelves, so we waited until Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday to shop.

The supermarket is modern, but the range of goods is somewhat limited. Items that we purchased included:

- Cereal, muesli, and oats
- White pasta, white rice
- Instant mashed potatoes
- Potatoes, onions, garlic
- Limited amounts of fresh fruit (oranges, pineapple, etc.)
- Staples such as flour, sugar, olive oil
- Spices
- Powdered milk
- Canned vegetables and fruit
- Canned meat
- Canned pasta, canned chicken curry
- Ramen noodles
- Condiments such as ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and remoulade.
- A wide variety of candy, chocolate bars, cookies, and other baked goods
- Cheese and yogurt
- Nuts
- Beans and legumes
- Frozen meats and vegetables
- Fresh bread

Once the supply ship came, there was plenty of food to purchase, although we felt the variety was a bit limited. Specialty items, such as quinoa or couscous, were not available. There was a very limited selection of gluten-free food, which made eating difficult for Bunn, who has gluten allergy). There was no way to purchase nuts, beans, or grains in bulk, and we did not find any dried fruit or vegetables. In general, food was several times more expensive than in the US or UK. Besides the supermarket, there are several smaller convenience stores throughout town; interestingly, these stores sometimes had items that the larger supermarket did not (e.g., sausages).

We were fortunate to have brought with us some food from home, including dehydrated vegetables, packaged tuna, and homemade beef jerky, among other items. Royer brought energy bars from home as well, something he was very happy about.

## EQUIPMENT

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As with any extended trip to a remote area, our personal and communal equipment had to be carefully selected and coordinated between the team members. One challenge we faced was travelling to Greenland without a set destination. As a result, we had to plan for many different scenarios, ranging from big wall aid climbing to alpine ice climbing. In general, typical summer alpine equipment would suffice. A brief description of our equipment is as follows:

### Communication

- Motorola 9555 Iridium Satellite Phone: This was rented from [www.satellitephonesolutions.com](http://www.satellitephonesolutions.com) (excellent rate and great customer service) and was invaluable to our efficiency and safety whilst away. Reception was reasonable, although it would drop out occasionally. We were told that this is due to some downed satellites—the issue is specific to the area. (Note: A satellite phone required in permit-restricted areas.)
- Handheld VHF Radios: The two radios were intended for communication between the two climbing teams, but the range became too limited in the terrain and the battery life was poor. (Note: VHF radios are required in permit-restricted areas.)
- PLB: The team had along a Kannad Marine SafeLink Solo personal locator beacon. Thankfully, it was never used! (Note: A PLB is required in permit-restricted areas.)
- Solar Panels: We had two small solar panels, one 7 W (Goal Zero Guide 10) and one 10 W (Instapark) that were sufficient for keeping camera batteries and communications equipment charged.

### Shelter

- Basecamp Tent: We used a Nemo Pentalite four-man tent to share during rainy days. Cooking was primarily done outside or under a tarp, if the weather dictated it.
- Personal Tents: In addition to the base camp tent, we had three two-man, four-season tents (Black Diamond/Bibler I-tent, Rab Summit Superlite, Marmot Thor) that were taken out as necessary. Three-season tents may have been sufficient, although strong storms known as a Piteraqa were a possibility.

### Climbing Gear

- We brought a rather extensive collection of gear to basecamp, selecting a subset as appropriate for each climb. Cams, wires, slings, pitons, bolts, hand drills, hammers, hooks, ice screws, ice tools, crampons, static rope, dynamic ropes, and more all made the trip. The last minute change of destination meant we had to come prepared for anything.

## Cooking

- Gas Stoves: We used an MSR XGK and an MSR Whisperlite Universal in basecamp. These two stoves worked effectively with the heptane purchased in Tasiilaq (only available in a large 60 L drum). We used approximately 10 L during our stay.
- Canister Stoves: On route, we carried an MSR Pocket Rocket or a Jetboil Personal Cooking System. Canister fuel is available in the supermarket, although it is not cheap. We had some difficulty fully utilizing the fuel in the canisters (even when kept warm and inverted).

## Footwear

- Approach Shoes/Boots: The team members had an array of options between them, choosing the best option for the expected terrain. A good solution for most routes in the area would be lightweight boots and strap-on aluminum crampons. We did not find any steep ice in the area, but did travel through steep, heavily crevassed glaciers and up a couloir which reached approximately 70°.
- Climbing Shoes: Each team member carried climbing shoes as necessary.

## Clothing

- General clothing: A summer alpine setup is generally sufficient. We generally wore baselayers and a shell when climbing, and carried belay jackets. Early in the trip, nights were warm enough that open bivvies were cold but not dangerous.
- Semi-dry suits: The team had two semi-dry suits supplied by Yak Equipment for use while paddling in the fjord. These were particularly useful when Steve went in while trying to make landfall on the rocky coast.

## Miscellaneous

- Duffel Bags: Duffel bags and haul bags were particularly important for transporting gear on the boat and to/from basecamp. Waterproof bags would be beneficial, although a large tarp helped to keep the spray off the bags.
- Barrels: We purchased three large blue storage barrels from the supermarket (approximately \$80 each), and borrowed one from Hans Christian Florian. These were critical for keeping food dry and in-tact during transportation.
- Inflatable Canoe: We rented a large 3-person inflatable canoe from the East Greenland tourism office in Tasiilaq. We had originally planned to use our own Advanced Elements Convertible kayak, but it was delayed during shipping from London. The boat was invaluable for exploring the nearby area and made approaches to areas outside the cirque much easier.
- Mini-scope: Although not essential, it proved useful in basecamp to survey peaks in the distance or at least to muse over potential lines.
- Rifle: We rented a small caliber rifle from our boat captain, Salo, in the hope it might scare off a curious polar bear.

## WEATHER AND GROUND CONDITIONS

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During the summer months, East Greenland is known for its stable weather. Prior to our arrival in Tasiilaq, it hadn't rained for nearly two months. Of course, after a few days of sun, a weeklong period of unstable weather moved in. We were able to take advantage of a daylong break in the rain to travel to Kangertittivatsiaq, where we endured a few more days of overcast, rainy conditions. After that, the weather improved and was precipitation free except for one day. Most days presented a mix of sun and clouds, with occasional wind at higher elevations.

Initially, temperatures were relatively mild, with highs at basecamp around 50–60°F (10–15°C) and lows around 40°F (4°C). As our stay went on, daylight hours dwindled dramatically, and temperatures dropped. For the last week, low temperatures at basecamp were below freezing and sea mist would often envelop lower elevations, making dampness pervasive. We departed for Tasiilaq a couple days early to avoid a substantial storm that brought gusty winds and rain. We would not recommend planning to visit the area any later in the season, and earlier may be a possibility

As with many locations in Greenland, access can be complicated. Sea ice can dampen waves and allow travel through open ocean, but it can also block access to fjords. In 2012, Greenland experienced a record heatwave, leaving the glaciers predominantly dry. The sea ice was also at a minimum, although there is not always a direct correlation between air temperature and sea ice. It is best to be flexible in planning expeditions.

Likely in part due to the heatwave, the glaciers were mostly dry with some smaller patches of snow. Most glaciers seemed to be navigable, although as always great caution is warranted. We also observed substantial rockfall on all aspects of the peaks.

## 9 FINANCES

EXPENSES	USD	GBP
<b>Transportation to Greenland</b>		
UK/US to Reykjavik (& Return)	\$ 1,305.02	£ 822.16
Airpot Transfer in Iceland	\$ 125.38	£ 78.99
Reykjavik to Kulusk (& Return)	\$ 2,254.04	£ 1,420.05
Excess Baggage Fees	\$ 1,369.96	£ 863.08
<b>Transportation Within Greenland</b>		
Kulusuk to Tasiilaq (& Return), boat	\$ 625.00	£ 405.70
Tasiilaq to Kangertittivatsiaq	\$ 3,462.84	£ 2,247.81
<b>Visas and Permits</b>		
Expedition Permit	\$ 752.76	£ 474.24
Radio Permit	\$ 135.35	£ 85.27
<b>Food and Fuel</b>		
Expedition Food, Canister Fuel, Barrels	\$ 2,395.26	£ 1,512.57
Shipping	\$ 389.76	£ 245.55
Heptane	\$ 67.57	£ 43.86
Food in Tasiilaq	\$ 408.07	£ 264.89
<b>Lodging</b>		
Red House Camping	\$ 20.27	£ 13.16
Red House Lodging	\$ 971.28	£ 611.91
<b>Equipment</b>		
Satellite Phone Rental and Airtime	\$ 287.00	£ 180.81
Solar Panels	\$ 185.98	£ 117.17
Left Gear	\$ 125.00	£ 78.75
Kayak Rental	\$ 168.92	£ 109.65
<b>Insurance</b>		
Rescue Insurance from AAC	\$ 916.00	£ 577.08
Kallalit Folksering	\$ 984.55	£ 620.26
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
Taxi, Laundry, ATM Fees, Exchange Rates	\$ 342.84	£ 217.59
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 17,292.86</b>	<b>£ 10,990.54</b>

Note: Purchases were made in a combination of USD, GBP, DKK, and ISK. Some amounts listed here are approximations since exchange rates fluctuated throughout the trip.

INCOME	USD	GBP
<b>Grants and Awards</b>		
AAC McNeil-Nott	\$ 2,500.00	£ 1,575.00
Alpine Club Climbing Fund	\$ 1,269.84	£ 800.00
Mount Everest Foundation	\$ 2,619.05	£ 1,650.00
Gino Watkins Memorial Fund, Arctic Club	\$ 3,174.60	£ 2,000.00
BMC	\$ 1,190.48	£ 750.00
<b>Total Grants &amp; Awards</b>	<b>\$ 10,753.97</b>	<b>£ 6,775.00</b>
<b>Personal Contributions</b>	<b>\$ 6,538.89</b>	<b>£ 4,215.54</b>

## 10 PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE EXPEDITIONS

Greenland is full of potential for climbing. The cirque proper has several more obvious lines, as do the surrounding peaks. The lower portions of the walls in the cirque are notably poor in quality, with loose rock and running water likely. The peaks on the north side of the cirque offer little, if any, worthwhile climbing. In general, the rock quality in this area may be worse than in other areas of East Greenland, although pockets of fantastically clean, solid granite can be found. The following photos all show unclimbed (to our knowledge) features.

### TIPS FOR FUTURE EXPEDITIONS

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Whether or not you've been to East Greenland before provided below is a list of tips/pointers based on our own, albeit limited, experience:

- Although shipping can be expensive, it is probably more cost-effective to ship at least some food items from home. Also, bring or ship any critical or specialty items.
- If you are planning to ship any food or gear, send it 2–3 months in advance.
- International flights arrive in Kulusuk, rather than Tasiilaq. Although it may be possible to launch your expedition directly from Kulusuk (note that supplies are limited), Tasiilaq is the logistical center of East Greenland. Air Greenland offers helicopter service from Kulusuk to Tasiilaq (tickets must be purchased in advance), but the baggage allowances and excess baggage fees may present a complicated situation for climbing expeditions. An alternative is to arrange a boat, which should cost approximately 500–1000 dkk. Note that the airport is situated some distance from the shore, and several kilometers from the town itself. It is possible to arrange a boat on the spot, but it may be less hassle to pre-arrange pickup through a local contact.
- The Red House offers camping (for a small fee) adjacent to the heliport. This was the least expensive option we found for accommodation in Tasiilaq. Bunk rooms are also available, and some gear can be rented. Other, more luxurious accommodations can also be found, or it may be possible to arrange a home stay.
- Although Tasiilaq is a beautiful town, if you've come to Greenland for the wilderness you will probably find you have exhausted your time there within a couple days. There are a few worthwhile daytrips, but there are limited options for food and entertainment in town.
- If you have some free time, consider giving a talk to local students in Tasiilaq's school. To arrange an appointment simply visit the school directly and ask to speak with the principal/vice-principal. If you want to take it step further, you could run a simple climbing session in the town's gym, which has its own climbing wall. One of the girls in our class was slightly upset we hadn't organised a practical session for her class, so don't disappoint!

## 11 EXPEDITION NARRATIVE

### IT STARTS...

For nine months, our plan was to head to Timmiarmiut, a coastal area approximately 350 km south of Tasiilaq, the largest settlement on Greenland's east coast. There had been no documented climbing in the area, but exhaustive research uncovered tantalizing photographs of beautiful peaks. Our hearts were set.

Then it all changed. On July 28, less than a week before our scheduled departure for Greenland, we learned that ocean conditions were unfavorable and our previously arranged boat and captain could not go to Timmiarmiut. Seeking alternatives, we found a photo of the Kangerttivatsiaq region on Panaramio, although we weren't sure if it was even tagged in the right place. We examined every wrinkle on the map within 500 km of Tasiilaq and read as many articles in the *American Alpine Journal* and *Alpine Journal* as we could get our hands on. Trying to compress nine months of planning and research into two weeks wasn't easy, and as our departure date approached we were still scrambling to settle logistics. We left our respective homes in Australia, the United States, and England with miscellaneous maps, trip reports, spreadsheets, and photographs, but little in the way of a defined plan of action.

After typical travel misadventures, the team was united in Tasiilaq on August 4. After months of communicating via email and Skype, it was good to be together—albeit with that surreal feeling of finally starting a long-planned expedition. The next several days were spent trying to arrange a different boat to take us south to Timmiarmiut and track down lost packages—the expedition food and an inflatable kayak. Unsuccessful on both counts, the long days spent canvassing Tasiilaq began to wear on us. Nonetheless, surrounded by peaks that hinted at vast grandeur and influenced by a few beers downed at the local pub, we remained filled with anticipation and bravado.

By the afternoon of August 7 we made the call that our shipments would not be arriving and made the final



The original plan: Timmiarmiut.



Our first view of the Mythics Cirque, from Panaramio user Herbert Aichhorn.



Sorting food in Hans Christian's shed.

decision to head north to Kangertittivatsiaq, no doubt influenced by the photos taken by the helpful and hospitable Hans Christian a week before. It was a hard reality to abandon a destination we had pined over for so many hours, but there was no escape route. Instead of a meticulously planned expedition, we were now going to fly by the seat of our pants.

Doing our best to stick to a list conjured up on Hans Christians' deck, we headed to the supermarket and overfilled several shopping carts, always under the curious eye of the local residents. At this point the weather began to change, and it rained in Tasiilaq for the first time in months; the townspeople rejoiced while we hoped for a return to the clear, sunny days that greeted us on arrival. Was this a sign of things to come? With our gear stacked under a tarp outside Hans Christian's shed—our serendipitous home in Tasiilaq—we gathered for one last pizza and a round of beers. Ready or not, it was time to roll the dice and head into the endless mountains.

With a poor forecast for all but August 9, we departed Tasiilaq early that morning, with the fjords still shrouded in a dense fog. It wasn't until halfway through the journey that the mist began to part, giving us our first glimpse of the rugged terrain that embodies Greenland's east coast. Aside from a few brief interactions, we mostly sat quietly contemplating our fates as the buzz of the boat's motor and rush of the wind kept conversation at bay. By late afternoon, we approached our destination—dubbed the Mythics Cirque—chilled from the windy and damp voyage but keenly snapping photos and video. In what seems like an instant, our gear was transferred to a rocky slab leaning into the frigid water, farewells were exchanged in that strange manner that occurs between two parties who can't speak the same language yet understand each other perfectly well, and Salomon and his companion slowly disappeared toward the hazy horizon.

Alone at last, only the gentle crashing of water on rock kept us grounded in reality. With rain forecast for the next day—and hunger from a day without a full meal setting in—we couldn't rest for long. A steep hillside separated us from the area we spotted from the boat that might serve as a basecamp. Practically running up the loose slope, the



**A supply ship arrives in Tasiilaq.**



**Icebergs appear through the mist during our trip north.**



**Salo and his companion lead us to Kangertittivatsiaq.**



**Our first view of the Mythics Cirque**

excitement built to a crescendo until we arrived at a blissful oasis amidst the ominous cirque. A gentle spring of crystal clear water seeping from a mossy meadow, a large flat plateau bounded by large boulders, iconic views of the fjord with the towers behind; it was more than we could have ever hoped for in a basecamp.

After shuttling several loads up the hill, erecting tents, and stashing gear, we settled in for the night, which was more like a prolonged twilight. We awoke the next morning to a gentle rain and the shouts of new companions. At first, in the grogginess of morning, it didn't make sense, but then it all came together. The Mountain Hardwear team, led by Greenland expedition veteran and all-star adventurer Mike Libeck, had arrived in Tasiilaq shortly before our departure and was also diverted north to Kangertittivatsiaq. Although an odd experience for an expedition to such a remote area, it was a great to have fantastic neighbors and share stoke with another team—even if theirs made our camp look like a makeshift shantytown.

For the next four days we only got fleeting glimpses of the cirque, as mist kept the towers shrouded in mystery. We did our best to settle in to our new home, taking reconnaissance excursions when temporary lulls in the gloom prodded us to abandon the tents that left us stir crazy. As the sun finally overtook the clouds for good on August 14, we split into two teams to tackle separate objectives. From this point on, it would be a tale of two vastly different experiences.

### MAKING THE MOST OF IT: ROYER AND BUNN TAKE ON THE TOWERS

The sun was finally shining and we had more than a week's worth of pent up energy. Nonetheless, Matt and I were a bit slow in packing gear and getting ready for the task at hand. We'd both been climbing for several years and had other first ascents under our belts, but we'd never attempted something like this. The walls above basecamp were over 1000 m tall, bigger than El Cap. Often they took on a menacing tone with black streaks of water cascading down, forming a torrent when it rained hard. There was no getting around the anxiety; this is what we came for.

For our first foray, we decided it would be best to explore the valleys to the south of basecamp. We hadn't seen them and didn't know what to expect, but figured we would find something to climb. Matt and Steve were planning an ambitious aid line, which left us with only enough gear for a fast and light alpine-style ascent. In the end, it was probably a fortuitous circumstance.

We ate some lunch and shouldered our packs, which were filled with provisions for five days and enough protection for anything the rock would throw at us. With no aid gear and no bolt kit, everything seem a bit more serious; bailing would mean leaving gear, and with such a large canvass, we needed to ensure we had enough—and enough to climb during the next two weeks.



Our amazing basecamp overlooking the fjord.



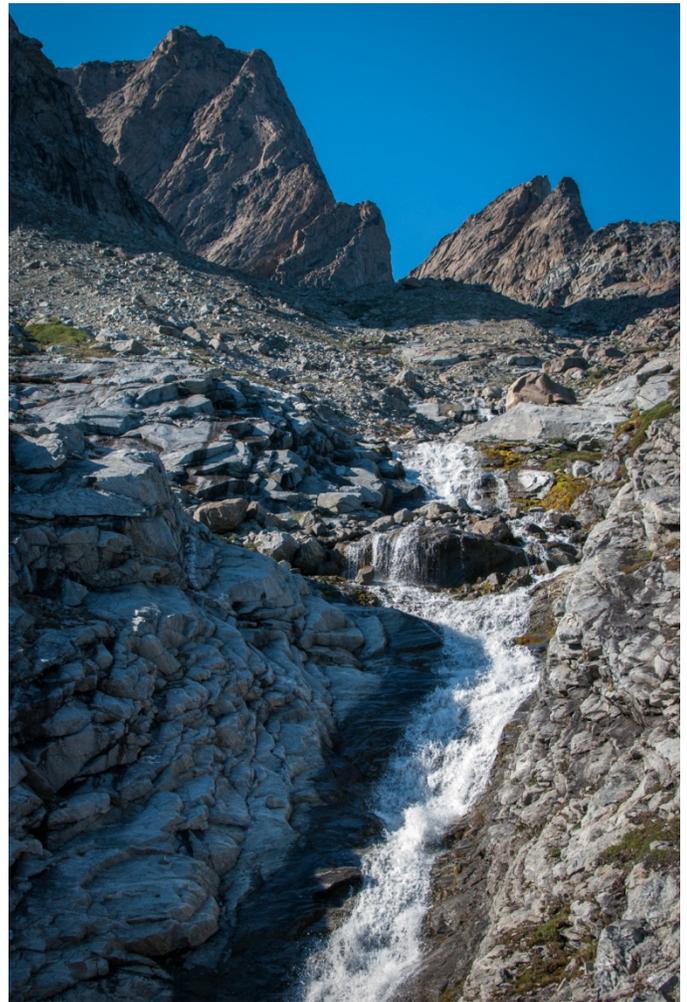
Traversing the hillside to the south of camp.

Our neighbor Libecky had left his teammates to boulder sped away while we were faffing with our equipment, heading in the same direction as us. We took off a couple hours later, just after lunch, meandering around the ridge that sloped into the sea just south of camp. We knew from the other team's foray the day before that there was a path through, but it immediately turned into a labyrinth of slabs, moss, and choss. We soon found ourselves scrambling wet, loose fourth-class terrain. Is this what people come to Greenland for? From the rocks we knocked loose, we could tell the tumble to the fjord below would be painful and the whole thing seemed foolish, but neither of us stopped. [Little did we know there was a much easier way; we had just been funneled in the wrong direction.]

We arrived at the first hanging valley in the early afternoon, just as it was beginning to move into shadow. We dropped our packs below the glacier, and then scrambled up the right side. We had to keep tight against the rock buttress, skirting the plateau, and we spent a few minutes in wonder before heading back down. After a few minutes of contemplation, we elected to carry on to the next valley over, which had yet to see a visitor.

After another hour of ankle breaking traversing and wayfinding, we reached a small sandy area below another glacier. There wasn't much beside choss in all directions, but it was now late in the afternoon, so we made camp. As the sun set the terminus of the glacier blew cold air across us, like some giant beast unhappy with our presence after millennia of solitude. The next morning, we scrambled up the small ridge forming the south side of the valley. Without crampons, we had no way to ascend the glacier, even though it was relatively crevasse free. For all the chossy scrambling, we were rewarded with a pretty nice view. In the end though, we decided our best option was to return to the hanging valley below Father Tower and attempt a climb up the southeast face and east ridge. The terrain looked friendly enough, and it would be a good introduction to climbing in Greenland.

We made our way back to our tent, and were surprised went shouts came from above. It was Libecky descending the south ridge of Father Tower, we reasoned, and we packed up quickly to reverse the traverse and meet him in the other valley. It was only early afternoon we when reached the one flat spot reasonable enough for camping, but we elected to spend the day resting and contemplating, knowing the climb was at least 700 vertical meters to go with a long descent.



The hanging valley below the east ridge of Father Tower.



A campsite in the second valley south of the Mythics Cirque.

A couple hours later, Libeck came scampering down the moraine to our camp. Save for a few hours shivering on a ledge during the night, he had been on the go for more than 24 hours, having made the solo first ascent of Father Tower via the south ridge (Dragon's Back, 5.8). We talked for probably an hour, and it was good to get reassurance that we wouldn't need to leave all our gear on the descent. We were somewhat disappointed we wouldn't be making the first ascent, but still anxious to complete a new route. As the afternoon wore on, bits of conversation were interspersed with periods of silence. There was plenty to mull over.

After a fitful night of sleep, neither of us heard our alarms go off at 0300. Instead, we startled awake sometime after 0400, grabbed our pre-packed gear, and took off. We motored up the moraine and sped past the side of the glacier. It was unnerving that the passage had shifted substantially in the past 36 hours, with large boulders now in different locations. We pressed on.

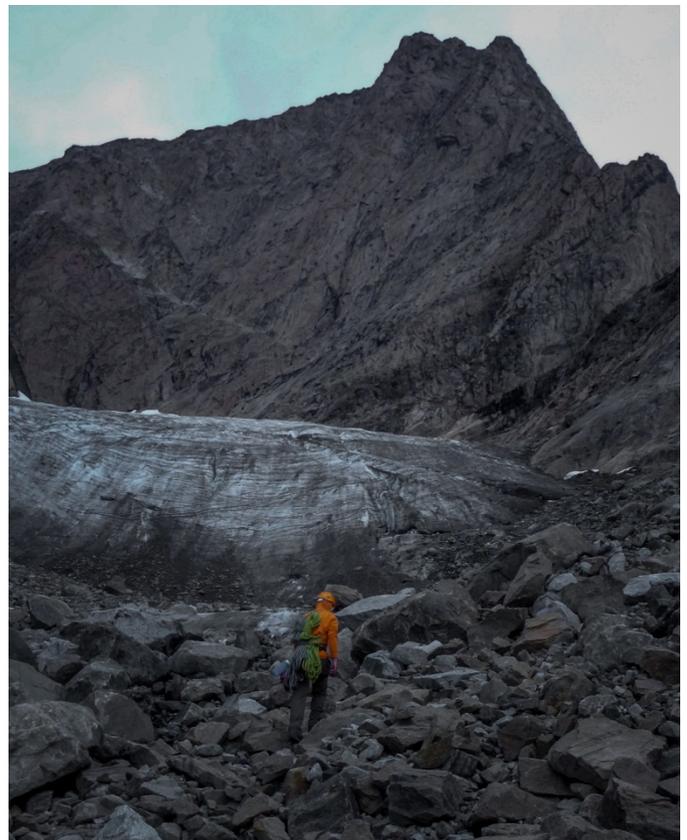
We hadn't done too much scouting of the route during our previous visit, and were now faced with an unexpected challenge. The best starting place was fortified by a relatively steep slope of glacial ice, armed with deep, partially snow-filled crevasses. Matt tentatively made his way up, kicking steps in the night-hardened glacier and scraping at the ice with his bare hands. After several starts and stops, he reached the rock, climbed up a few meters, and built a belay.

Six or seven hours later we had reached the east ridge and could look back down into the Mythics Cirque. The climbing had been straightforward. A couple hundred meters of simulclimbing easy terrain led to about eight pitches of climbing in the 5.6 to 5.8 range. The rock was generally solid, although the line lacked any sense of obvious direction with features everywhere. It was nice to finally be moving through steep terrain after so many days of preparation and waiting; chugging along in 55 m chunks felt good, even if the gritty rock left our fingertips burning. We took a few minutes to grab a snack, and then set off up the east ridge proper. The climbing here was beautiful, somewhat exposed, and pretty continuous. A short scrambly pitched led to four beautiful pitches of 5.8 to 5.9 climbing, with a variety of moves. There were corners, cracks, and even a steep pocketed section that would have been more at home at a sport crag.

At the last belay, we watched a raven ("Coronis") glide off the summit, soaring into the vast openness that surrounded us. After a scramble to the summit, we saw what he had been after: a pack of Shot-Bloks that



**Our bivy site below the east ridge of Father Tower.**



**Approaching the east ridge of Father Tower.**

Libecky had left for us. They were chewed and mangled, but Matt ate one anyway. It was a small moment of disappointment in an otherwise joyous occasion.

We spent an hour or so on the summit, basking in the glorious sunshine that blanketed the peaks stretching as far as we could see. It is a true privilege to have had such an experience. It was getting late in the afternoon though, and we still had a long ways to go. Having taken only our rock shoes, the descent was going to be painful, only made bearable by the sweet feeling of success. We marched tentatively down the south ridge, electing to follow the path Libecky had taken even though it was unfamiliar to us. We moved slowly over the unfamiliar terrain, but after an hour or two we somehow managed to find a ledge with a rap station previously drilled by Libecky. It was an odd thing to find in such a remote place, but at that point we'd take it.

After a long rappel, we reached a large ledge in a small notch. Daylight was fading fast, and not sure where the ridge would take us we elected to sit tight through the darkest hours. We only had one emergency heat sheet bivy sack and one midweight down jacket between us, so needless to say there was plenty of shivering. There were plenty of moments where one of us would briefly fall asleep and stop convulsing, leaving the other to wonder if the worst had come to bear. The saving grace of the five hours in the cold was our first glimpse of the northern lights. Beautiful green wisps danced above us, floating effortlessly in the sky.

As the sun started to peak over the horizon around 0330, we rustled awake and did our best to start moving while trying to stop shaking. A short distance later, we veered off the ridge and down a mellow gully, which led all the way back to the glacier. A perfectly arranged series of ramps forming a set of switchbacks made for a perfect path in the gully, and let us avoid a steep talus slope at the end of the ridge. Getting back onto the glacier was a challenge, with a deep bergschrund necessitating a quick belay. With our boots back across the glacier, I donned my wool socks—brought along for warmth during the night—to get back across the glacier to the starting point. Matt might have thought I looked crazy, but I didn't have an epic slip and fall on a cam like he did! The abundant morning sunshine was a blessing for our cold bodies, but also spelled danger for the snowbridges that had to be crossed to get back to our boots. In the end, it all worked out, and we were sprawled out on the grassy ledge at camp around 0830.

Reluctant to move, and content to nibble on the remaining food, we sat in camp until sometime after noon. Of course, just as we packed up rain moved in. Not in the mood to be drenched, we pitched the tent and settled in



Beautiful climbing on the upper ridge.



Summit shot!

for an afternoon of waiting. Finally, after more than one false start, the rain stopped for good in the early evening, giving us just enough of a window to get back to basecamp—that is until we couldn't find the way through the labyrinth. We went up and down the hillside looking for a manageable path, becoming increasingly frustrated and desperate. Once again daylight was fading, and we were faced with the prospect of having to return to our camp site, the only flat spot around.

We declared that we would make one final attempt, and somehow we managed to find the one small set of ledges that could lead us back. We strolled into camp as the arctic twilight began to set in, cracked a beer, and shared our story. It felt good.

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Sometimes life gives you splitters, sometimes it gives you choss. Well, for our second adventure we got pure and unadulterated CHOSS. The plan was simple: scramble up the glacier and couloir at the back of the cirque, traverse the ridge to the highest point in the cirque, and then head back down the couloir. In the end, we got more than either of us bargained for and an experience we'd love to forget.

After a couple days of rest following our first foray, resorting gear, helping sendoff Steve and Matt Traver to the areas to the northwest of the cirque, and a reconnaissance hike up the ridge to the north of basecamp, it was time to set off. We once again set off just after eating a hearty lunch, but this time only carried a day and a half worth of food. Our goal was a quick strike, which would let us go light and fast. Unfortunately, the terrain had different ideas.

The approach up the glacier was straightforward, and we were travelling over known terrain. We roped up where the glacier began fissured with open crevasses, crossed a lingering snowfield, and made our way up a steep bit of hanging glacier. We paused momentarily to take in the spectacle in the next couloir to the south, which was streaming with refrigerator size blocks. It sounded like a war zone, with the boulders slamming into the lip of the bergschrund and showering snow all around. Such a sight doesn't exactly leave a warm and fuzzy feeling.



The messy hanging glacier.

We stayed roped up as we jumped large crevasses in the steepening ice field and used our crampons and one ice tool each. We stayed in the middle of the wide glacier, away from the danger of falling rocks from the slopes above. We huddled under a rock buttress, out of the way of the outflow of the chute we were about to head up. It looked absolutely terrible, with piles of loose rock and mud that looked ready to go at any minute. We had come this far though, and we decided we should at least take a closer look.



Ascending a horrendously loose gully, which was steeper than it looks.

Matt bravely headed off and turned the corner, while rocks came showering down as I slowly let out rope. As he reached the end, I began moving and dodging the falling debris. When I reached the corner and got my first glimpse of the remaining path, I could tell it wasn't going

to be fun. Matt had scrambled far up the right side, avoiding huge blocks that teetered on the brink of destruction. I reached his meager anchor, and for some unknown reason we kept going, zigzagging in and out of the couloir proper, most of the way sans rope for expediency.

The right side provided marginally better rock, but it was steep and still every other hold would break. Trying to ascent the couloir proper was like swimming up a steep hill of gravel. I still have no idea how something could be that steep and that loose. For a while, we were granted relatively speedy travel by a few inches of snow and ice that remained plastered over the mud-and rock conglomeration below. As that ran out, we clawed our way up treacherously loose rock, where sometimes swinging an ice tool into the shattered mess became the best option. Forward progress became a delicate maneuvering of trying to step up without loosening the muddy, icy, wet concoction and taking an unanticipated ride down to the glacier far below.

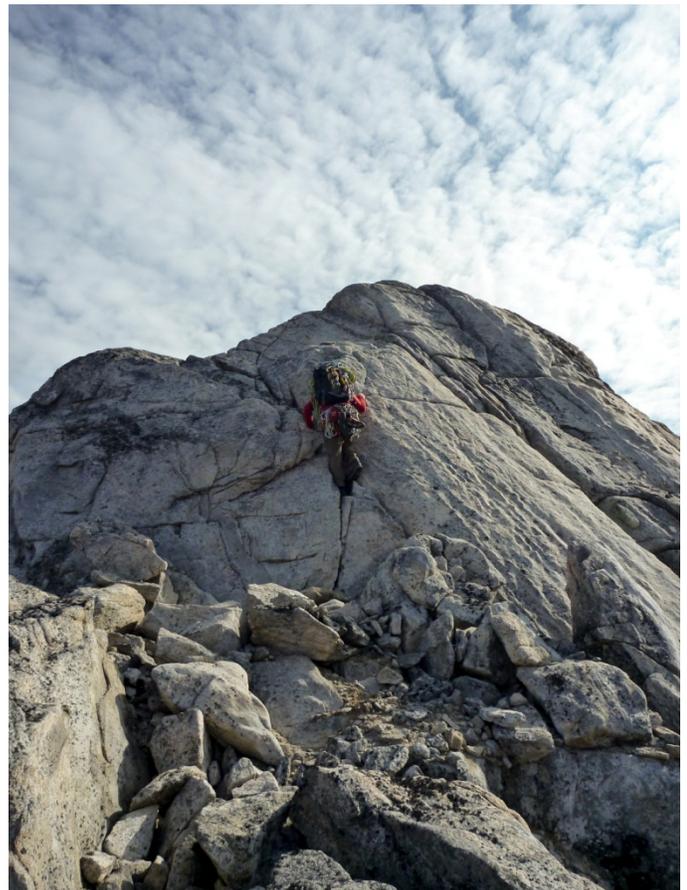
Having a special place in his heart for choss, Matt led the way until we finally arrived at the tiny col with twilight setting in. It had taken us seven hours when we had predicted three or four, and we were both shaken by the experience. Now knowing there was no way to descend the couloir, the only feasible route back to camp was the traverse the four peaks forming the north branch of the cirque. Not wanting to bail on our original objective, but not having enough food for a prolonged adventure, we made a plan to attempt the ridge to the south, but if it didn't seem like we could get up and down quickly, we would bail and head back across the four peaks.

A large glacier descended down the backside of the col, and we were thankful for a small puddle of water at the col itself. We cleared some debris and came up with two tenuous ledges on which we could sleep. It was late before we made it to sleep, which meant we didn't exactly get an early start. The trials of the day didn't exactly fuel our motivation.

We set off up the ridge to the south, following easy terrain at first then belaying for two pitches up a steep step. After some more easy terrain, we got a better view of what lied ahead. It was around 0900 in the morning, and we still had a long way to go, with some steep terrain to go both up and down. We called it and turned around. I think we both knew heading into the attempt that it was unlikely we would have time for a successful ascent and descent, but we made the token effort anyway.

At the col we regrouped and grabbed our stashed gear, then headed off in the other direction, making our escape back to camp. We expected we would be back to basecamp by the end of the day, but once again our expectations were shattered.

For the next day and a half, we navigated what may be the worst terrain out there. The ridge alternated between piles of loose blocks and short steep sections—also loose—but with a thousand meters of exposure on either side. It was mostly third and fourth class terrain, with some harder bits of low fifth class, but with every piece of rock suspect, it felt like a good idea to rope up. But then the rope would get stuck in the loose blocks and slow progress even more. It was a nightmare, with constant



The Tortures Traverse.

danger but little in the way of reward.

We made it up and down the first two peaks using a combination of solo climbing, lead climbing, simulclimbing, downclimbing, downleading, and rappelling. We started up the third peak before we stopped at a small puddle sitting underneath a remnant snowpatch. It was late in the afternoon and we were both drained from the mental exertion. We made a quick dinner and filled up on water before carrying on up and over the third peak. By the time we made it up and over the third peak it was getting dark, so we bivvied on the rock slabs above a snowfield. Save for a few emergency rations, we were out of food for the next day, and hoped it would be quick and easy to get over the fourth peak and descent 1100 m to basecamp.

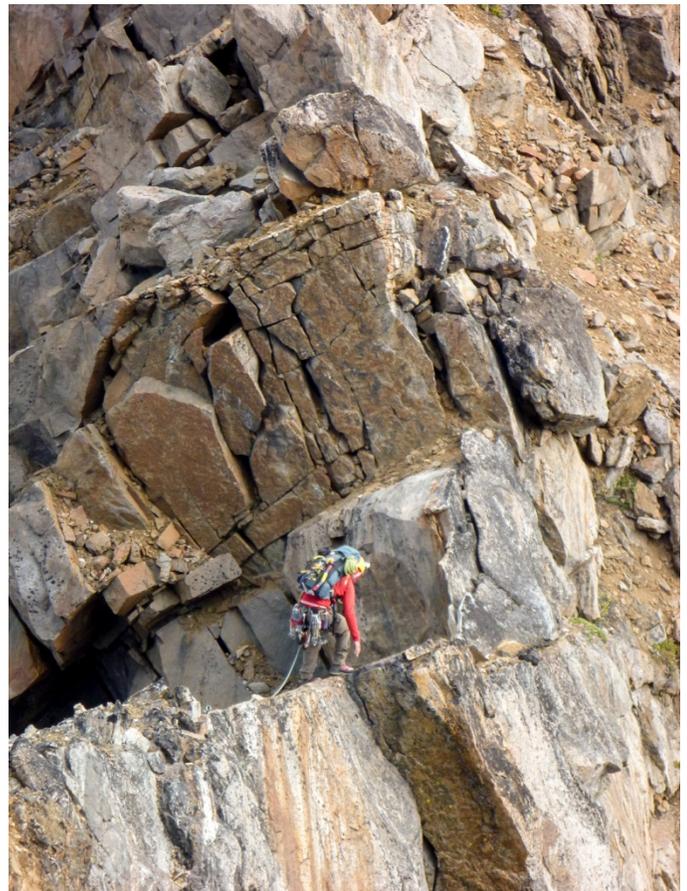
Once again, we were wrong. Making it to the fourth summit was mostly straightforward—as straightforward as choss climbing can be—but the descent became a nightmare. We elected to head down a ridge extending toward basecamp, which provided the option of downleading instead of rappelling from insecure anchors. We soon realized the first person down, though on belay, was in the most danger due to the loose rock. I was hit on the shoulder at one point by a chunk large enough to result in plenty of choice words, but we were fortunate enough to escape further catastrophe.

After descending several hundred meters in painstakingly slow fashion, we reached a point where it seemed best to rappel into a gully that ran alongside the ridge and extended all the way down to the broad, open cirque. We had already descended the lower portion of the gully during our reconnaissance, so we knew it was a viable option. It took a while to cobble together a reasonable anchor, then two more before we reached the talus of the gully. We walked, slid, and downclimbed our way down the gully, at least happy to know what was ahead. It was late afternoon before we made it back to basecamp.

Like our first trip, we had achieved some success. After all, we made the first ascent of four peaks (albeit the runts of the litter). But the feeling this time was completely different. There was no joy, just relief at having made it back alive. Really, that's all that matters.

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The days were noticeably shorter and cooler, the weather less stable. Suddenly, it seemed like the clock was ticking towards the end. Beckwith and Traver had found no success and seemed ready to throw in the towel, but Matt and I were still hungry for one more. After a diversion to help Libeck and Ethan Pringle retrieve some fixed



Typical terrain on the Tortures Traverse.



On the last summit of the tortures traverse.

ropes before their looming departure, we took a few rest days to heal both our bodies and minds. Knowing we only had time for one more climb, we took even extra time to maximize our potential, and made a plan to head toward the south faces of the five main towers on the south side of the cirque.

We set off on Sunday morning, August 26, using the inflatable canoe to avoid traversing around through the labyrinth. It made for both efficient travel, cutting the time by at least half, as well an amazing way to start a climb. With a sea mist slowly building, moving through the relatively calm water of the fjord, with rolling and crackling icebergs breaking the silence, was ethereal.

We landed the boat on a small bit of sand, pulled it ashore and shouldered our packs. We made our way up the steep hillside, which was divided by steep buttresses and a deep ravine. Progress was hard work, and we found frontpointing up steep vegetation to be the most efficient form of travel. At other times it was the old standby, loose talus. After a couple hours, we reached the sandy area at the terminus of the glacier where we had camped almost two weeks before. There we stopped and had a snack, basking in the warm sun. It was a rather enjoyable moment, standing out from the otherwise arduous tasks of an expedition. After a while, we continued on straight up the middle of the glacier, which for the most part was crevasse free and made for quick progress.

We reached the glacial col we had seen previously, and peered down into unknown terrain. The wretched series of crevasses and calving glaciers looked inhospitable, so we ascended part way up a hill to the south cently exposed from underneath the shrinking glacial system. From that point, we could access the south face of one of the major towers, which we called Hidden Tower—it sits tucked away behind Father Tower when in basecamp. We eventually made our way around to the slabs, where we spent the remainder of the afternoon trying to find a reasonable ledge for our two-man tent. Unfortunately, we found nothing big enough, so we split up for more bivvy's under the stars.

We made the decision not to climb the next day, instead giving ourselves an extra day to scope lines and become familiar with the terrain. We were happy with our decision when the cold of the night settled in. By the time we woke up the next morning, everything was covered in thick frost. We slowly gathered our gear and set off up the glacier, in the hope of finding a way through the mangled area at the base of a long snowfield that extended up



Loading up the inflatable canoe.



The glacier made for easy travel.



Approaching the south face of Hidden Tower.

to the base of the south face. By the time we reached the crevasses, the sun was already coming around—earlier than we expected—which made us a bit nervous. We struggled to find a way through, and considered several options involving crossing suspect snowbridges and descending into crevasses. After several failed attempts, we settled on a way through. At that point we made a hasty return to basecamp.

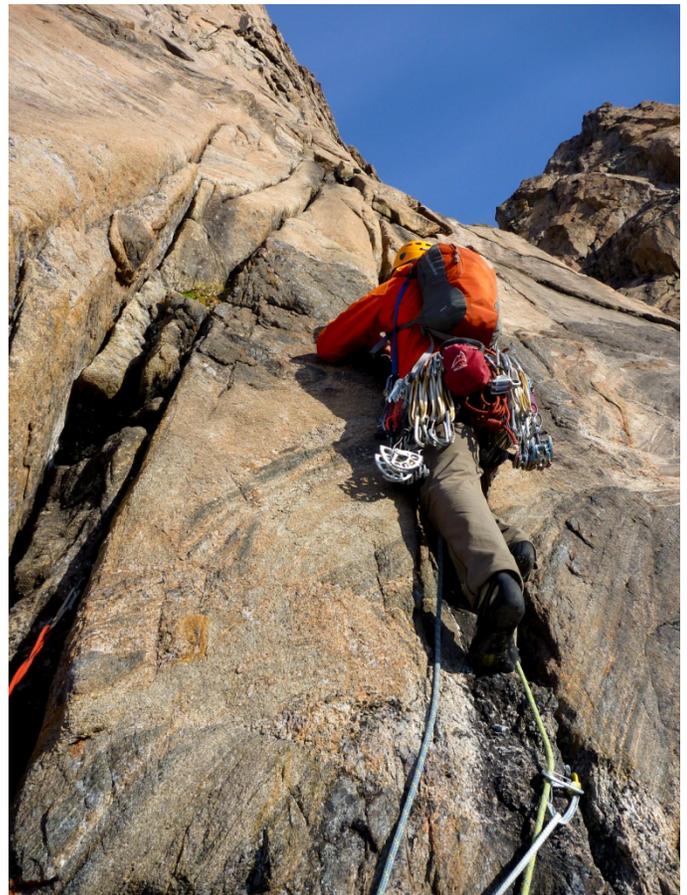
For the remainder of the day we sat in camp and eyed potential routes. As the sun traversed the sky it revealed previously hidden contours in the face. It also unleashed a barrage of stonefall, which screamed past where we had been earlier in the day. It was a good warning for the next day, and we planned our timing to avoid the couloir at any time it was in the sun.

After Matt scrambled up a hillside, I was left sitting by myself. It's interesting where the mind wanders when you sit humbly amidst massive stone walls, free from all distractions. Childhood, girlfriend, family, life goals, death, the next life, the origin of life, the universe. Nothing is too big or too small, too banal or too complex. The sun slowly circled the horizon as it does in the arctic, giving the constant feeling that it's late afternoon. Finally, it was time for the last pre-climb attempt at a good night's sleep.

We made a hasty move from camp, eager to get moving and ease the chill. We left camp shortly after 0400, and were through the crevasses, up the snowfield, and established on the rock by 0600. We had picked a line heading straight up a buttress from the end of the snowfield. It would be the most aesthetic line of the trip if we could complete it.

Thanks in no small part to Matt's determination, we were on the summit 10 hours later. We had climbed 9 pitches on brilliant rock, following a system of cracks and corners. The climbing was wonderfully sustained, between 5.8 and 5.10 the entire way, with good protection and very few loose bits. In short, it would be a classic in just about any climbing area. Compared to our previous endeavors, it was nice to be rewarded for all our perseverance.

We took some photos on the summit, but didn't spend too long. For most of the afternoon a cold wind had whipped along the face, numbing our fingers and toes. Needless to say, we were eager to get back to our warm sleeping bags. We rappelled the route, leaving a small amount of passive gear. We reached the base of the rock as the remaining daylight was fading. We didn't rush in order to allow the loose areas to refreeze. By headlamp, we made our way back through the crevasses and down the glacier, arriving at camp around 2200. It was a relief



Beautiful rock on the southeast buttress of Hidden Tower.



First ascent of Hidden Tower.

to sit and wait as we boiled some water for tea and recounted the day's events. Just 48 hours later we were tucked into a bed, filled with pizza and beer. If only the world we were about to rejoin could understand.

### ROCK WARS IN GREENLAND: BECKWITH AND TRAVER LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

Recalling my own experiences is difficult, mainly because the outcome was monstrously different (in a not-so-productive way) to Mike and Matt's. I never knew it could be possible to have such polar opposite results within one team. What occurred in Greenland was definitely not what I expected, but it was certainly a deep learning experience in how to move forward from a disappointing or upsetting experience: you must force yourself to derive the positive from the negative. For me, finding that positive included accepting that although we did not reach any summits or complete any new routes, we were at least one of a lucky few who were privileged enough to visit and explore the beauty of East Greenland.



Siren tower, second from right, sits heavily guarded.

I remember the first time Steve and I walked towards the base of the Siren Tower. I had never been so close to something so big yet entirely virgin. It immediately drew us in; it was impossible not to be captivated by the steep lines cleaving their way up the cream coloured granite, particularly the offwidth/chimney system that dominated two-thirds of our intended route—a feature we thought would be the most viable route to the summit. During our brief time spent on the glacier among the various towers, we heard and saw some rock fall coming down on the far right hand side of the gully we planned to use for the approach. A couple days later, after the rain subsided, we were on our way back up the glacier to check out the, decide whether it was safe to continue, and carry up some light loads. In my opinion, I suppose this is the point where we went wrong.



Siren Tower, the steepest feature in the cirque, is still calling.

Although the rock fall we had seen was always on the far right hand side and safely out of the way, we should have waited longer—at least a couple days—to fully assess whether the rock fall could come from different locations. Instead of carrying up several loads of gear, maybe it would have been better to climb the first few entry pitches up the gully to get a deeper feel for the place. As it was, we spent several days ferrying loads before making a foray into the death trap. After experiencing two serious rock fall episodes whilst starting up the gully, with one rock slide swooping over our heads and cannon-balling the bergschrund we'd been standing on fifteen minutes previously, we could not justify the level of risk.

There were a lot of problems barring us from making a safe and successful attempt. First and foremost, the gully was incredibly active with rock fall at all times of the day. Moreover, the access through the gully to the base of the tower was significantly longer than what we first thought, meaning we would have been exposed to the rock fall for an excessively long time. The objective hazard just to get to the base of the tower was staggering, and just not worth it.

We spent the next two days ferrying loads back down to basecamp and giving the gully a final check over to confirm that we had made a good decision. Occasionally there would be a lull in rock fall for a few hours and we'd mutter between ourselves, "*maybe we should go back,*" only to then hear more large blocks cratering in the glacier below.

At this point I was feeling pretty deflated (as I imagine Steve was as well) about having to bail from such an inspiring feature. Situations like that always make me wonder if I made a bad decision. Was it my fault? Should we have never attempted it in the first place? Maybe we should have turned around at the first sign of rock fall no matter where it was coming from?

As recompense for our disappointment, we decided we would check out two untrammled glaciers north-west of our basecamp near the Glacier de France, using our canoe to access the areas and find out what prospects might exist in the interior. After three hours paddling, we decided to venture up one of the valleys and check out a ridgeline. Two hours later, we were at the base of the ridge.



Setting off to explore.

Steve proposed we rack up and shoot straight up the ridge, instead of bivying for the night, buying us some extra time back in base camp. We climbed swiftly over the next few hours and reached our high point around sunset. Unfortunately, we had to turn around again, this time due to the teetering blocks of choss that supported a short tower we needed to surmount. We were less than a rope length from the small summit.

Fortunately having to retreat was not nearly as demoralizing as leaving the Siren Tower. I felt it was at least good to gain a bit of height and get a new view of the fjords. Whilst downclimbing and body jamming ourselves between an extensive slab/narrow bergschrund, we were lucky enough to witness the northern lights. We reached the base of the ridge at 0700 and caught three hours sleep before descending the glacier to our canoe and paddling back to base camp.

Our last attempt on a featured dubbed *The Squid*, ended in similar unceremonious fashion. Poor rock quality again forced us to turn around before making much progress.

I don't normally like to use the word *failure* in the context of climbing because I think failure only applies to someone who does not try. We certainly did try our best, but I think we were shut down by a combination of bad luck, questionable rock, and being premature in setting up to attempt the Siren Tower without assessing the rock fall danger for a couple extra days. After it all though, we live on to climb another day.

## THE END GAME

It was getting darker earlier and earlier, usually accompanied by a cool, misty fog. The season was clearly changing, with the brief arctic summer being swiftly ushered out, and the only thing left to do was shuttling the debris of a three-week toil with Earth's titans back to the sea. We ferried as much gear as possible the night before, and we reassured when Salo came motoring toward the shore. The morning pickup at 0800 was arranged, all that was left was one more night in camp.

We were on our way shortly after the scheduled departure after an uneventful morning. Watching the basecamp transform back into a pristine environment was a bit sobering, especially considering it may be many years (if ever) before another team sips the perfectly chilled water from the spring or enjoys the squish of the moss under bare feet. There was little talk amongst the team, just a sense of eagerness to reenter the world. More than ever before, it seemed like everyone was ready for the expedition to end. Sure, there was much failure to go with some success, many grueling days spent arduously hoping from one loose rock to another with a heavy load, but maybe the more salient factor was the sense of entrapment that the cirque beset on our humble basecamp. The journey home seemed inexplicably long; the ocean waves were more vigorous, the skies ominous at best and spitting rain at worst. It was clear we were escaping at just the right moment.

We finally reached Tasiilaq sometime in the afternoon. We paid Salo and he sped off in an attempt to get home before the full brunt of the storm rolled in. We dumped our gear at the dock, sorted out a place to stay at the Red House, then moved everything again using Hans Christian's truck, which is graciously let us borrow. We were back in town, but it seemed moving equipment around would never end.

We shared a pizza and a beer, of course, and our stench did little to keep curious locals away. It was a short night though, not a raucous victory celebration. Unable to change our flight to Reykjavik, we were left to spend a few more dreary days in Tasiilaq. We used some of the time to wrap up our loose ends, but a good portion was dedicated to preparing a presentation to give at the local school.

Climbing is an undeniably selfish pursuit, but as with Royer and Traver's past expedition to Kyrgyzstan, we wanted to do something as a small token of good will to the people of Greenland. As it was, we arranged to give



**Moonrise over the fjord.**



**Departing the Mythics Cirque under ominous skies.**



**A supply ship unloads in Tasiilaq.**

a presentation about our past adventures, and climbing in general. After some logistical snafus with the tourist office, we finally met with the assistant principal and were able to speak with her 10<sup>th</sup> grade English class—with her acting as interpreter. We brought in piles of gear and flaunted the most outrageous photos from a truly fortunate slate of adventures we had previously undertaken. The students ate it up, and by the end were using ice tools to hang off anything they could find, placing cams in the chalkboard, and generally wreaking havoc on the classroom. More than one inquired as to why we didn't take them climbing; clearly, the enthusiasm was high! Whether we just helped the students avoid a boring class or we actually inspired someone to check out the land of opportunity beyond the town, we left with a good feeling.

Reversing all the travel and moving hundreds of kilos of gear was as expected: a necessary evil. From the Red House to the shore in Robert Peroni's SUV, a speedboat to Kulusuk, an ATV to the airport, a small prop plane to Reykjavik, a taxi to a hostel—a tasty meal other than pizza and a night in town—another taxi to the bus station, a bus to Keflavik airport, and finally flights home followed by more travel. Sometimes it's easy to wonder if all that nonsense is worth it; wouldn't it just be easy to go climb something near home?

It's hard to explain to people outside of climbing why we choose to do what we do. Sometimes it's even hard to explain it to ourselves. During those hard days of hauling gear—less than 10% of our days were actually spend rock climbing—it's easy to second guess the decision and write off all future expeditions. Maybe for some that feeling is stronger than others, but either way it almost always seems that sometime after that first night in your own bed an insidious thought creeps into your head: what's next? The memories of pain, sweat, dirt, and fear fade away, leaving more room for the memories of overcoming adversity, the summit view, or just good friendship.



Sitting outside the tourist office in Tasiilaq.



Posing for photos after visiting the local high school.

12 APPENDIX A: TOPOGRAPHIC MAP



## 13 APPENDIX B: TIMMIARMIUT

Timmiarmiut, also referred to as Tingmiarmit, is unexplored as a climbing objective, but has a long history as a small hunting/whaling settlement up until the late 1970s. Timmiarmiut is just one of many coastal mountain areas along Greenland's east coast, however it appears to have many steep walls. Several residents of Tasiilaq that we engaged with had been to or heard of Timmiarmiut, and they all seemed positive about the potential for climbing.

The approximately 200 km of coastline between Tasiilaq and Umiivik is relatively barren when viewed from the perspective of a climber in search of vertical and technical terrain. However, beginning at southern Umiivik (63°65'84.49"N 40°68'00.38"W), the coastline begins to transform into a vast system of relatively unexplored walls and peaks. Specific areas to the north of Timmiarmiut include Thors Land, Odins Land, and Skjoldungen (63°47'25.98"N 41°88'62.00"W). Compared to the areas to the north of Tasiilaq (e.g., Sweitserland) and surrounding Constable Point (e.g., Ren Land), the southeastern coast has rarely been visited. Too far from Iceland for a float plane, it requires travel via boat, which may be possible from either the south (Cap Farvel) or Tasiilaq. The duration and expense of this journey has likely led past expeditions to other areas. Recent photographs of the area—obtained thanks to a mineral exploration company—reveal steep peaks, although the quality of the rock is difficult to determine.

Even more than before visiting Tasiilaq, we believe the Timmiarmiut region has substantial climbing potential. As evidenced by our efforts, local weather and sea conditions can be a substantial hurdle to access. Arranging for a larger boat—of which there are few, if any, in Tasiilaq—could alleviate this concern.