

K6 Pakistani Karakoram 2015

Location: Nangmah Valley, Pakistan

Dates: July 4th to August 31st 2015

Aim: FA of the south face of K6 Central (7100m) and FA of Changi Tower (6500m)

Expedition Reference: 15-33

Author: Graham Zimmerman

Year: 2015

Introduction

Scott Bennett, Steve Swenson and Graham Zimmerman spent the summer of 2015 on a fruitful and very enjoyable expedition to the Pakistan Karakoram. They spent the months of July and August in the Nangmah Valley and during a season marked by poor conditions and bad weather in much of the range, were fortunate to open two beautiful and technical routes.

One of these first ascents was of Changi Tower a remote and technical 6500m rock tower and the other was the FA of the SW buttress of K6 West (7040m). The latter was a route which was chosen after the intended objective (the central pillar of the south face below K6 central) was deemed too dangerous to warrant an attempt.

Expedition Members

Graham Zimmerman



(29yo, NZ/USA, Geophysical Surveyor)

-2014 Finalist, Piolet d'Or (France)

-2010 NZ Mountaineer of the Year (New Zealand)

-FA West Face of Titanic Peak, Revelations Range, Alaska, May 2014 (V, M6, 5.8, 50 degrees, 4,000')

-FA Bossanova, Aguja Guillaumet, Argentine Patagonia, December 2013 (IV 5.11+, A2, 1,200')

-FA East Buttress of The Angel, Revelations Range, Alaska, July 2013 (V, 5.10, 50 degrees, 3,700') FA East Face of Mt Laurens, Lacuna Glacier, Alaska, May 2013 (V, M7, WI4, A1, 4,700')

-FA 'The Canadian Club', Stiletto Peak, Waddington Range, BC, Canada, Aug 2012 (5.11, 1,500')

-FA Vitalogy, SW Buttress of Mt Bradley, Ruth Gorge, Alaska, April 2010 (V, WI5, M6+, 5.9, A1 4,600')

-FA Central North Buttress, KyzylMuz (5100m), Pamir Alai, Kyrgyzstan, July 2008 (V, 5.10, AI3, 5,600')

-'Nosferatu', Vampire Peak, Southern Alps, New Zealand, November 2007 (NZgr 6, WI5+, 2,450'), 3rd Ascent

-Multiple 1 day ascents of El Capitan and other major walls in Yosemite Valley as well as many in Zion, UT and WA State

-Numerous other FAs in Alaska, WA state, CO state, British Columbia, Patagonia and New Zealand
Ascents of 5.12, M9, WI6+ and A3+

Scott Bennett



(29yo, USA, Arborist)

-2012 AAC Robert Hicks Bates award winner

-Speed Record Holder (24min 57sec with Brad Gobright) with on the Naked Edge in Eldorado Canyon, CO

-FA Bossanova, Aguja Guillaumet, Argentine Patagonia, December 2013 (IV 5.11+, A2, 1,200')

-FA East Buttress of The Angel, Revelations Range, Alaska, July 2013 (V, 5.10, 50 degrees, 3,700')

-FA 'North Pillar Sit Start' NW Ridge of Mermoz to the North Pillar of Cerro Fitz Roy, Jan 2010 (VI, 5.11 A1, 2000m)

-FA 'The Canadian Club' Stiletto Peak, Waddington Range, BC, Canada, Aug 2012 (5.11, 1,500')

FFA "Cosas Patonicas", West Face of Aguja Mermoz, Patagonia. February 2011 (5.11+ 600m)

FA of the Cerro Pollone Traverse, Patagonia. Made the FFA of the

West Pillar (5.11+ 600m), then the first integral traverse of the Central and East summits. February 2011.

Numerous other FAs in WA state, CO state, British Columbia and Patagonia

Ascents of 5.13, M7, WI5 and A3+

Steve Swenson



(61yo, USA, Retired)

-Winner of 2012 Piolets d'Or

Sasser Kangri II in Indian Karakoram 7518m First ascent via south face. 2012

Latok 2 7108m in Pakistan Karakoram - 2nd Ascent of S Ridge, 1st alpine style ascent 2006

K2 8611m in Chinese Karakoram North Ridge – w/o oxygen. Led expedition, second US ascent of K2. 1990

Note that the climbing CV for Swenson is very abridged. He has been on the forefront of American alpinism for the past 2-3 decades. The above selection highlights some of the significant ascents he has made in the last decade. On this expedition, Steve was leader due to his vast knowledge of the area and general seniority on the team.

Adventurous Activities

The approach to Changi involved a technical col and a very complex icefall that on the first attempt required 2 days to navigate and a 300m ice face to reach what was established in 2010 as the 'Polish Col' (5900m). An ABC was used part way out this approach which proved very important.

The team made the first ascent of Changi via it's North Ridge (M6, 5.10, A2, 600m) from August 8th to 10th in a marginal weather window. The climbing was beautiful and sustained on high quality granite.

It needs to be noted that there has been some confusion about the name Changi as a peak in the Amin Brakk group named Changui Tower (5700m) has in the past been misreported as Changi Tower. This mistake was found by a Polish team who attempted Changi Tower (6500m) in 2010 and has been confirmed by research completed this 2015 team.

After utilizing the ascent of Changi to acclimatize the team had intended to attempt the central pillar on the South Face K6 Central (7100m) but were very disappointed to find that the lower 700m of the route were badly threatened by multiple huge seracs. Due to this, they removed their Advanced Basecamp (set up below the pillar) and began glassing the mountain for other potential routes.

They soon found what they were looking for on the western end of the K6 massif. The striking SW ridge of K6 West (7040m) offered huge relief, steep mixed ground and a line free of objective hazard.

Zimmerman and Bennett put themselves in a position to attempt the route with a cache at its base (Swenson having determined that he was not yet recovered enough from the earlier effort on Changi to attempt such a route bowed out from the attempt). On the 18th of August a weather window opened and the two younger climbers set off on the route with light packs and a minimum of equipment so that they might move fast enough to avoid an incoming storm.

At 1pm on the 20th they reached the top of K6 West (7040m) making the second ascent of the peak via the FA of its SW ridge (M6, 90 degrees, 1800m). The route was very sustained with a wonderful variety of climbing.

The route started with a steep snow slope that led to the ridge crest, on which they stopped to bivy early on the 18th due to excessive heat (at 5800m). They started climbing again at 2am on the 19th. The ridge offered fantastic and challenging climbing both on the crest and on its sides, when the crest became too corniced. The route then ran into the first of two buttresses which were turned to their west side via a series of ledges. The technical cruxes of the route were found in the mixed sections between these ledges, which offered very enjoyable and aesthetic climbing. Eventually the team reached a large steep ice sheet that led to the top of the second buttress. They reached an excellent bivy at the top of the second buttress (6600m) at 730pm and were treated to a beautiful sunset over the Karakoram.

Departing at sunrise on the 20th they left their tent in place and fought through exhausting deep snow up the final 400m to the summit. From the summit the views of the Pakistani and Indian Karakoram were spectacular.

They descended to their tent reaching it at 4pm and rested till dark when they began descending the West face. They made 19 rappels down the face, working hard to stay out from under the serac that defined the left hand side of the wall. A long traverse, a pitch of ice, and seven more rappels placed them back at the base of the route from where they walked back to basecamp which they reached at 1pm on the 21st, 12 hours before a storm came in dumping snow on camp for 3 days, after which the team began their travels back to civilization.



Changi Tower (the route followed the left hand skyline) and Scott Bennett climbing mixed terrain on route.



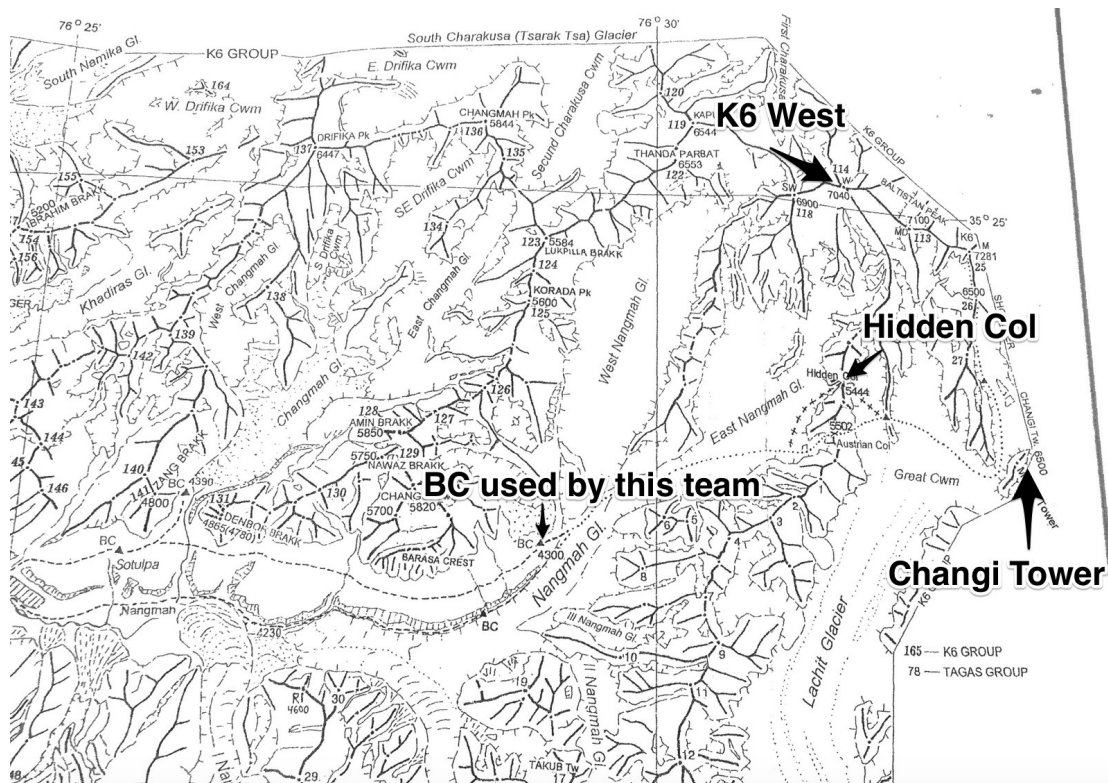
K6 West with line to summit indicated and Graham Zimmerman climbing mid route.

Administration and Logistics

Destination Area



Satellite Imagery of general area (google maps)



Jerzy Wala Map of the upper Nangmah, full map is in appendices. Note that the elevation (4300m) for basecamp is not correct it is closer to 4500m.

The Nangmah valley lies in the eastern Pakistani Karakoram and derives from the Hushe valley appropriately 8 kilometers south of the town by the same name. The peaks in the lower valley are predominantly rock towers, higher the valley is dominated by the massive bulk of the K6 massif alongside Thanga Parbat.

GPS coordinates

Basecamp - 35°22'53.9"N, 76°29'17.5"E

Advanced basecamp - 35°23'48.2"N, 76°32'20.5"E

Changi tower - 35°23'53"N, E76° 34' 07"E

K6 - 35°25'12"N, 76°33'00"E

K6 West - 35°25'27.9"N, 76°32'14.6"

Research materials and Information Sources

The research for this trip was thorough and took place through the American Alpine Journal, the Alpine Journal, the British Alpine Club's Himalayan Index and direct contact with alpinists who have been in the area including Kyle Dempster and Steve Swenson (a member of this expedition who has spent extensive time in the region and did the vast bulk of the research for this trip). These resources provided a very strong idea of what the team should expect in terms of costs, timing, logistics and weather. The routes themselves remained fairly unknown as they had not been attempted and were in a lesser known corner of the range. Consultations with other alpinists as well as individuals familiar with the political situation in Pakistan allowed the team confidence that they would be able to maintain security while in country. Just before the expedition departed a wealth of beta was procured from the Polish Alpine Club which was very helpful in accessing Changi Tower.

Training

In order to prepare for the expedition the team members adhered to a rigorous training regime which involved aggressive circuit and cardiovascular training as well as time in climbing gyms. Training in the form of climbing itself was of course also undertaken by the team. This included ascents in Canada, USA, Alaska and New Zealand.

Permission and Permits

This section should start by noting that this was Graham and Scott's 3rd attempt to visit Pakistan (formerly 2012 and 2013). On the first attempt their visas did not come through in time, the second time the visa/permit process was shut down by the Nanga Parbat murders. This year they were able to shed some light on the last years problems.

The climbing permit for K6 was applied for in January, it was assumed that this would provide a large amount of leeway in terms of time to get the visa (in most cases the approved permit is required for the visa application to be processed). Despite this the permits did not come through until 2 weeks before departure at which time the team had to go into crisis mode in order to get the permits to the consulates (they had already sent in the passports a month beforehand) and get them back in time. This involved many phone calls and eventually a FedEx overnight pickup so that they could have their passports and visas arrive 36 hours before departure.

It needs to be noted that the Pakistani Consulate in Huston was willing to approve the visa for Scott long before the permits came through but the LA consulate was much more stringent for Graham and Steve needing to have the permits come through and taking the full stated processing time to send them back. For future parties in the US it may be advised to if at all possible work with the Huston Consulate.

Another important piece of information is that while waiting for the permits to be approved the team assumed that their application was under serious scrutiny from the approval bodies in Pakistan (Gilget Mountaineering Council, The ISI and Military Intelligence) but upon arrival discussion with personnel in Islamabad seemed to state that it was rather that the permits were dealt with not in the order in which they were received but rather in the order in which they were meant to depart. This meaning that the teams long anxious wait for permits and the risky feeling purchase of plane tickets before the permit or visa had come through had less to do with scrutiny rather more to do to the fact that the team was headed into the range later than many others (most other teams of course being on commercial high altitude expeditions). And that in turn, the permits were always going to come through and always come through late. This is obviously frustrating for a team such as this one but it does indicate that with this process, a high level of commitment should be prescribed.

It does need to be noted that the above statements are based on discussions with some of those involved in the process in Islamabad but should not be seen as fact, rather conjecture. The permitting process for the Pakistani Karakoram is a shady process which remains very unclear.

Finally, it needs to be noted that the requirements for the Liaison Officer have changed. In the past it has been required that the team outfit the LO, now it is simply required that the team give the LO a 1500\$ stipend to purchase his own equipment. Seeing as most of the LOs have no experience with mountains (let alone with the snow) it needs to be ensured that they are adequately prepared for their time in the mountains (there is a lot of used climbing equipment available in Skardu). They are also paid a stipend during their time with the team of 30\$/day in Islamabad and 15\$/day in Skardu and beyond. This should not be paid for days the team is covering their expenses since it is to cover food and lodging. Many larger commercial expeditions will simply give the LO their food stipend for the whole time as well as the equipment stipend while also giving them equipment and paying for all their food and lodging.

It is important that smaller expeditions hold a hard line with these stipends since they incur huge additional costs to the small budgets of smaller teams. A precedence must be maintained that small teams only pay the stipends for days when the LO is paying for their own food and lodging and do not bring the LO additional equipment and rather allow them to purchase their own with the equipment stipend.

In Country Logistics

For climbing expeditions in Pakistan it is highly recommended to hire a local service provider to help with logistics. In this case the team hired the highly reputable Nazir Sabir Expeditions. The owner Nazir is deeply connected and has been running expeditions in Pakistan for decades.

In the case of this expedition the team opted to deal with many of their own logistics, including hiring and paying porters, cooks and transportation. Many expeditions these days chose to

have their logistics support company take care of all of this with a lump sum. This team chose to deal with this themselves due to Steve's experience in the area and his personal connections. It is also the best way to ensure that all those involved with the expedition are paid fairly.

Security

The team took a few major considerations due to security concerns.

The first was to not take the land route from Skardu to Islamabad (via the Karakoram Highway). The team felt that this drive would expose them to areas they felt unsafe and therefore decided to wait for the flights between these two cities. Luckily for this team the weather was good and the flights were running on schedule when they needed them, this should not be considered the norm.

The second was to keep a low profile in Islamabad, utilizing private drivers to get around when needed and staying in a nice hotel which had it's own security detail.

In Baltistan (Skardu and beyond) the team was far less concerned about security, despite this the government was supplying police officers for foreign teams. The armed guard was not felt to be necessary but was by no means unwelcome.

The final note needs to be that this team felt at no point were they threatened during the trip.

Transportation

Seattle -> Islamabad - All team members congregated at Steve's house in Seattle and caught a direct flight from Seattle to Dhufai followed by a second flight to Islamabad. Both legs were with Emirates, were on time and were very comfortable.

Islamabad -> Skardu - The team flew from Islamabad to Skardu due to security issues. This flight was taken with Pakistani International Airlines. While the team had no issues with weather delays on this flight, this should not be considered the norm, long delays are a regular occurrence.

Skardu -> Hushe - The team hired jeeps to carry all of their equipment, food and gas to the town of Hushe. This drive can be washed out in many areas which can necessitate the need for more jeeps which can incur high costs. The company used for this drive was Hushe Adventure Tours, they were prompt and safe.

Hushe -> Basecamp - The team once again caught a ride with HAT south from Hushe for 8 km to the town of New Khande. Here they met up with a large group of porters from both Hushe and Kahnde, 44 of whom they hired to carry loads to basecamp. This hike took two days on the way up and constituted 5 porter stages.

On the exit from the mountains all of the same methods were used in reverse.

Insurance

All team members carried rescue insurance through Global Rescue. They made sure that GR was well aware of the plans for the expedition and had the gps coordinates of K6 and basecamp.

On top of this it is required of any expedition going climbing the in the Pakistani Karakorum to make a 10,000\$ cash deposit with Askari Aviation. This is to cover the initial costs of a helicopter rescue. At this time there appears to be no way around this even with a 'guarantee of payment' from Global Rescue.

In Pakistan it is required to purchase insurance for all personnel. This was purchased to cover all porters and cooks. This was done by way of Nazir Sabir Expeditions.

Travel Transport and Freighting

All equipment was carried with the team members on their plane flights.

Food and Accommodation

All specialty climbing food was transported from the United States. This included bars, freeze dried meals and recovery powders. In Islamabad there is a 'western store' where many items can be purchased including peanut butter, chocolate, pasta and jams. All the most basic meal items (flour, sugar ect) were purchased in Skardu.

Communications

The team carried a Iridium Sat phone for forecasts and in case of emergency.

Medical Arrangements

On this expedition Graham was appointed the medical expert due to his experience as a EMT on the Yosemite Search and Rescue team.

An extensive medical kit was carried that included equipment and medicine for dealing with both trauma and sickness. Special equipment worth mentioning are a stethoscope (for monitoring lungs for liquid indicating HAPE) and a pulse-ox (for monitoring both recovery and blood o2 saturation).

Below is a list of medications carried, it is also noted whether they were purchased in country (at a chemist in Islamabad) or brought from the US (in most cases they were both brought from the states and more was purchased in country, the notes below are to serve as a reference for what can be bought in country since it can incur a significant cost savings to purchase drugs in country).

- azithromycin (Pakistan)
- ciprofloxacin (Pakistan)
- amoxicillin (Pakistan)

- diamox (Pakistan)
- Dexamethazone (USA)
- naproxen (USA)
- ibuprofen (USA) (note, a large amount of ibu was brought since it can be helpful to porters)
- paracetamol (Pakistan)
- peptobismol (USA)
- Dramamine (USA)
- vicadine (USA)
- OxyContin (USA)

Beyond this it should be noted that all team members were well versed high angle and glacier rescue techniques.

Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

A strict 'leave no trace' policy was followed on the entire expedition. In town the teams was careful to be respectful of the local Muslim culture by wearing pants and not eating pork.

Diary/log

July 1 - The team assembled in Seattle, WA. Scott came in from Boulder, CO, Graham from Bend, OR. Final equipment checks were made and the bags were packed for flights.

July 2/3 - The flight from Seattle to Dubai to Islamabad arrived at 1.30am on the 4th. Flying with Emirates was very easy. Upon arrival in Islamabad all baggage arrived, the team was picked up by Sultan, an employee of Nazir Sabir Expeditions and taken to the Chancellery hotel.

July 4th - In Islamabad, they exchanged dollars into rupees (8000\$ to ~816,000rp) at a secure banking location recommended by Sultan and went to the Western Store to purchase foods that would be unavailable in Skardu. In the later afternoon, they met with the representatives from the Alpine Club of Pakistan as well as their Liaison Officer to finalize confirmation for their permits and permissions for spending time in the restricted area near the boarder between India and Pakistan. In the evening they had all their baggage picked up by a jeep in order to drive it to Skardu. Due to security problems the team had decided not to drive the Karakorum Highway and rather wait for a flight from Islamabad to Skardu. Since the cost of taking all equipment on the plane was high they hired a jeep to drive it to Skardu,

July 5th - Luck was with the team; on the first day possible they were able to catch a plane flight from Islamabad to Skardu. Planes had not been flying for a week before hand and the weather had cleared the day before allowing the backlog of passengers to reach Skardu.

In Skardu, they set up shop at the Snow Land Palace Hotel and started the final phase of packing. It was here that the team met up with their cook Rasool, a wonderful man who's been good friends with Steve for over 30 years.

Note that the Snow Land Palace was the last place where the team was able to access the Internet.

July 6/7th - Full days in Skardu. Rasool bought the remainder of the food for the trip while the rest of the crew finished packing, weighing loads and obtaining smaller bills for paying porters. It should be noted that during this time a police officer was assigned to the team. This was a product of the Nanga Parbat murders. While the team never felt threatened in Skardu, it was still an appreciated measure.

The team also had to outfit the LO. It took Graham a half day in the Skardu markets to ensure that he was properly prepared.

July 8th - At 6 AM three jeeps showed up at the hotel and were loaded with all of the equipment and food. This included stoves for the porters, all of the cooking equipment and the tents. The team's drivers drove up the Indus River to the Shyok River, along which they headed north to the confluence with the Hushe River. The jeeps then followed the Hushe River north to the town of Hushe. Along the way they encountered three road wash outs. The first two they were able to overcome with some creative driving and the third was less than 0.5 km from town so they simply walked. That night they stayed in the Hushe Hotel, which was excellent.

It should be noted that washouts on these roads are a common occurrence and it is not unusual to have change jeeps in order to overcome them. This can raise the price of the jeep ride from Skardu to any of the trailheads into the Karakoram dramatically.

July 9th - The team awoke early and drove south to the town of Khande (8 km south). Here they met with a large group of porters, some from Hushe and some from Khande. The team went through the process of weighing loads (55 lb per porter load) and hiring porters and then were on their way into the Nangmah Valley which lies just above the town of Khande. They hired 44 porters for the approach.

It was an easy three hour walk to the first camp on the approach, which was situated in a light forest. The weather was clear and hot.

July 10th - The team and all of the porters started walking an hour after sunrise and by 10 AM were at what the porters stated was basecamp. The climbing team was certain, however, that there existed a more ideal, safer basecamp at a higher elevation (it was closer to the objectives and not in a field of alluvium that had a high flooding risk). The team insisted that the porters continue. Around this time it started raining and an argument erupted regarding whether the walk to this higher basecamp was 4 or 5 porter stages in length (on the map the lower BC is noted as the Polish Basecamp and the upper as American Basecamp). Eventually the team got the porters moving uphill and after another argument in a pouring cold rain they got to a site that would suffice as a basecamp. Although the team had beta for a BC near where they finally set up, there was no sign of a former BC anywhere in the vicinity. It is the team's assumption that the beta provided on the Wala map was for a location where a better basecamp might be rather than for an existing BC. The basecamp used was good; it was on the hillside easily identified by the large boulders around it with tent platforms built.

The original plan had been to pay the porters for 4 stages but in the end it was decided that they would be paid more for the extra walking. It should be noted for future teams that this upper basecamp is far preferable to the lower and is 5 porter stages from New Khande.

In a pouring rain, the porters ran back to town and the team got to work setting up basecamp on the hillside. At that point camp was left with the three climbers, Abas the LO (who had gotten rather worked getting to basecamp) the cook Rasool and porters Nadeem and Iberhiem.

July 11th - The day was spent setting up basecamp. The team dug tent platforms and allowed themselves to acclimatize (BC was at ~4600m). The weather remained disturbed.

July 12th - The team awoke at sunrise and headed up towards the glacier, setting up cairns and taking GPS readings. By the time they reached the point where they would need to get onto snow they were turned back in a pouring rain.

July 13th - Pouring rain, pinned in basecamp. Lots of hot drinks.

July 14th - The climbing team, Nadeem, and Iberhiem left BC at 3 AM, heading up the path from the 11th. Everyone carried 45 lb loads and got onto the glacier and headed to the Hidden Col where they planned to fix ropes to allow for easy gear transportation to the intended ABC on the far side.

The glacier was not very challenging to navigate and by mid morning everyone was at the base of the coulior leading to the Hidden Col. Scott and Graham fixed lines up to second half of the coulior while Steve made sure that Nadeem and Iberhiem had their climbing systems dialed. A gear cache was left at the top of the col (5400m) and then all headed back to camp. It was very hot and sunny and everyone was worked when they got back to camp. It was a much more significant approach than anyone had expected, taking ~12 hours this first time.

July 15th - Rest day in basecamp.

July 16th - The team and porters once again departed early with loads and headed up to the col. From the top of the col they sent Nadeem and Iberhiem back to camp while the climbers dropped over the other side of the col onto the Lesheit Glacier. They rapped down the far side with duffle bags and proceeded to drag them to a protected ABC between two nunataks in the middle of the glacier.

They dug in the ABC and rested and acclimatized for the remainder of the day.

July 17th - The team got up early and walked back to the col where they climbed fixed lines and rapped back towards basecamp. There, they met Nadeem and Iberhiem, who had brought up fresh loads. The porters were then sent back to BC while the three climbers carried the loads back to the top of the col where they were cached.

The team then rapped and walked back to BC.

At this point there was no longer a need for porters Nadeem and Iberheim to help with carrying loads to the Hidden Col. Iberheim was laid off and Nadeem was retained to act as assistant cook.

It should be noted that despite this being clearly pre arranged it was still challenging to let Iberheim go. The people in this part of the country are desperate for work, particularly after the attacks in 2013, after which tourism has dropped by more than half. Iberheim had obviously

been hoping that he would be kept on. Sadly, despite him being a fantastic help the team was not able to.

July 18/19/20th - Poor weather, pinned in basecamp.

Between rain showers, Graham and Scott were able to start developing some of the bouldering around basecamp which proved to be quite good.

July 21st - With OK weather on the forecast the team headed to ABC to further acclimatize and get equipment in position to climb Changi tower. One of the main goals of this outing from basecamp was to find a route from ABC to the base of the tower. The obvious crux of the route was a large, steep icefall.

It was a warm rainy day and getting to ABC proved to be physically brutal. Another load was also carried to ABC.

July 22nd - Awaking at 3 AM, the team headed across the glacier to the icefall. By 1 PM it was too dangerous to continue seeking a way through the icefall due to heat and falling ice. The team was forced to bivy on a rock outcropping on the lookers left of the icefall.

July 23rd - At daylight the team continued toward the Polish Col from the bivy on the rock outcropping beside the icefall. They had to backtrack through some technical terrain and were eventually able to find a safe route through the top of the icefall and reach the final slope below the Polish Col. Here, they left a cache and then descended back to ABC.

July 24th - Everyone awoke at 3 AM and headed up to cache below the Polish Col for an equipment carry. Knowing where to go and with frozen snow conditions it only took 2 hours to reach the col from ABC. It then took 90 minutes to get back to ABC. At this point, it was decided to head back to BC due to an incoming storm on the forecast..

The walk back was arduous due to very soft snow conditions. The team arrived back at basecamp at 2 PM under beautiful clear skies.

At this point, nearly all gear and food needed for climbing was at the cache below Changi tower. It should also be noted that up until this point it has been hotter than the seasonal norm on the trip.

July 24th - The team enjoyed sunshine in basecamp by charging electronics, doing laundry and taking showers.

July 25th - The weather window continued another day allowing for the bouldering around basecamp to be further developed. It proved to be fantastic, much work was placed on safety, building landings, providing good spots and using any padding available.

July 26th - Still in basecamp. The weather window continued through the morning before ending with a bang in the early afternoon when a heavy thunderstorm came through.

July 27th - Basecamp. Poor weather.

July 28th - A small weather window appeared on the forecast so the team headed to ABC in order to put themselves in position to utilize it to attempt Changi. The snow conditions heading to ABC were once again very bad and it took a long time to reach ABC. They reached ABC around noon. Although the weather was good, clouds steadily built through the afternoon and by the early evening they had transformed into a full blown thunderstorm with heavy rain and lightning.

July 29th - The team walked back to basecamp in cloudy conditions. There was another large thunderstorm in evening.

July 30th/31st - In basecamp.

Graham and Scott walked up valley to scope a line on K6. It had been decided that the originally proposed line on K6 had too much objective hazard on its lower 700m and a new line needed to be found. Graham and Scott found such a line, possibly the only line on the south face safe from serac exposure.

August 1st - In basecamp, poor weather.

August 2nd - In basecamp, poor weather.

August 3rd - Heavy rain starting at 1 AM. Afternoon was better but once again the weather came back in the evening with precipitation but no thunderstorm.

August 4th - Light rain in the morning; the team remains in basecamp.

August 5th - The team headed to advanced basecamp due to an improving forecast. There were huge changes to glacier since the last time it had been crossed, it was much more dry. The hidden col was also very badly melted out. The weather was bad for this crossing to ABC but an evening forecast confirmed that the weather was in fact meant to improve the following day.

August 6th - The team spent the day resting at ABC in preparation for an attempt on Changi Tower. Steve showed signs of GI problems while the weather cleared.

August 7th - The team awoke at 12am to depart for the icefall below Changi but unfortunately Steve's condition had not improved. It was decided that the team should wait a day. This was frustrating seeing that the weather was once again very clear.

August 8th - Once again the team awoke at 12am and with Steve feeling better they departed ABC at 1am for the cache of gear below the Polish Col. The icefall was in ok shape and by daylight the team was at the cache. Bags were repacked and the team began soloing up the 300m slope leading to the Polish Col (~45 degrees). Upon reaching the col Graham began leading up the initial snow slopes and into the mixed terrain above. The strategy was for the leader to fix the rope for the second to jug and clean the gear with a medium sized pack. The second would then fix a second rope for the 3rd who had on a larger pack. This worked very effectively and by the early afternoon the team had reached the vertical first rock band in the climb. Here Steve stayed back to build a bivy ledge while Graham and Scott continued above

into the rock band to fix a pitch and a half for the following day. By the late afternoon the team was at the bivy resting and hydrating with great weather prevailing.

August 9th - Departing just after sunrise the team jugged the pitch and a half fixed the night before and Scott started off leading the upper half of the climb. He moved quickly and effectively up snow and mixed ground to a dihedral that marked the upper section of the route. This he led in great style and by the early evening the team was nearing the top of the peak. Scott topped out as the sun was setting and by the time Steve came up as third it was dark.

Graham led the raps back to the bivy where they arrived around 3am (the tent had been left set up). The day's weather had generally been good with some intermittent snow showers.

August 10th - Graham continued leading the rappels back down to the Polish Col and then down the slope to the glacier below. It took a total of 18 rappels to get off the mountain. The team spent the night at the cache site.

August 11th - The team awoke at sunrise and made their way down through the icefall back to advanced basecamp carrying all of their equipment and garbage down with them. At this point it had been decided that ABC should be removed. Due to this the team went ahead and carried a load of equipment to the top of the hidden col before descending and spending the night at ABC.

August 12th - The rest of the equipment and garbage were packed up and carried over the col and the fixed lines on the col were stripped. The Hidden col was in very bad shape and the team was very happy to be finished with it. The team was also very tired at this point after many days of hard climbing and work and not enough sleep. They took medium sized packs and walked back to basecamp.

August 13th - Resting in basecamp

August 14th - Resting in basecamp

August 15th - The team headed up the cache of gear beneath the hidden col. Steve decided that he was not yet recovered from the climbing on Changi and therefor would forego climbing on K6. Graham and Scott decided to attempt a route on the the SW ridge of K6 West. Because of this a gear cache was established below K6.

August 16th - Resting in basecamp, a good weather window was forecasted starting on the 18th, Graham and Scott prepped in basecamp.

August 17th - Graham and Scott had intended to leave in the morning but Scott presented with some GI problems so they decided to delay a day. This turned out to be beneficial since the weather was quite poor. They received a fresh forecast at 9pm showing the weather window not lasting as long as initially predicted so they departed immediately. Reaching the glacier and later the cache the weather was poor with heavy snow so they set up the tent and bivied.

August 18th - They awoke at 5am when the snow storm cleared and started up the initial snow slope on the route. They climbed it to the ridge line that defined the route. The climbing up this slope was up to 50 degrees on terrible snow. They had intended to climb this in the middle of

the night but the snow storm forced them onto it in the heat of the day which made it more challenging. Once on the ridge they roped up and traversed 60-80 degree ice to reach a great bivy on the ridge crest. They stopped here in the early afternoon due to the heat of the sun.

August 19th - Graham and Scott awoke at 2am and quickly started moving up the ridge line towards the two buttresses that define the middle of the route. The ridge offered excellent climbing sometimes on top of the ridge but often on the sides where they encountered ice and mixed terrain up to 90 degrees and M4. When the route moved onto the buttresses they found an excellent series of ledges that led along the side of the buttresses and offered great mixed and ice climbing. They simul climbed the majority of this with the occasional belay and encountered climbing up to 90 degrees and M6. This then led them to a large ice field with an average of ~70 degrees. They simul climbed this to the top of the second buttress where they stopped to bivy just after sunset (730 PM). This was an excellent bivy on a wide part of the ridge where they were able to take off their harnesses and get a few hours of badly needed sleep.

August 20th - They left the tent in situ and headed for the summit at sunrise. The climbing to the summit proved to be challenging deep snow and they had to fight hard to get to the top which they reached at 1pm. The descent was much easier and they reached the tent at 4pm. This included one rappel.

Knowing that a storm was coming they only 'slept' for a few hours before waking at 830pm to start the descent.

August 21st - They descended down the ice sheet that defines the majority of the west face of the mountain for 19 rappels and then traversed a basin below the west face before climbing a single pitch of WI3 that put them atop the snow (now ice) face they had initially ascended. They made 7 rappels down this to the base of the route. They then walked back to their cache, packed up what remained there and headed back to basecamp.

This last bit of kit was the final gear left above basecamp. They arrived back at basecamp at 1pm exhausted.

August 22nd - The team rested in basecamp and prepped for departure. The weather was poor and heavy snow arrived in the early afternoon.

August 24th - The team rested in basecamp and prepped for departure. The poor weather continued. Some of the porters arrived in the evening despite conditions but most of them stayed at a lower site planning to come up in the morning. The team packed up everything they could to be prepared for departure in the morning.

August 25th - By 9am the remainder of the porters had arrived at basecamp. The weather was poor overnight but cleared in the morning. The team packed up all of their equipment, sorted loads and then along with 27 porters headed for the road.

This walk took all of the early afternoon and was longer than the approach due to a washed out bridge which added a half stage to the walk.

Upon arriving at the road the team met up with a caravan of jeeps, paid and thanked the porters and caught a ride to the town of Hushe where they spent the night.

August 26th - The team drove to Skardu

August 27th - The team worked in Skardu, preparing for departure

August 28th - The team worked in Skardu, preparing for departure

August 29th - The team caught a morning flight to Islamabad.

August 30th - The team hung out in Islamabad

August 31st - The team departed for the United States

Conclusions

The K6 2015 Expedition was a huge success. Not only were two fantastic climbs completed but the logistics went off essentially without a hitch and the team got along amazingly well. This was due both to strong planning and an element of luck which the team was prepared to punctuate upon

Huge thanks to the Mount Everest foundation for their gracious support.

Appendix 1 - Budget

| In Country Exp | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-----------|------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Date | item | cost (rp) | Cost (usd) | | | |
| | | | | 7.10.15 | porter in | 176000 |
| | | | | 7.10.15 | tip | 200 |
| 7.4.15 | Western store | 95970 | | 7.10.15 | kerosene | 4000 |
| 7.4.15 | Batts from super | 1000 | | 7.17.15 | HAP 1 (Ibrahim) | 260 |
| 7.4.15 | pharmacy | 1898.26 | | 8.13.15 | food resupply | 8790 |
| 7.4.15 | pharmacy (h2o) | 810 | | 8.13.15 | resupply porters | 9500 |
| 7.4.15 | tips to baggage help | 600 | | 8.25.15 | porters out | 112580 |
| 7.4.15 | payment to sultan | | 500 | 8.25.15 | Sidar (Fida Ali) | 5000 |
| 7.4.15 | transport to Skardu | | 500 | 8.25.15 | porter (Hadem) | 10500 |
| 7.4.15 | tips to help | 300 | | 8.26.15 | jeep to hushe | 3000 |
| 7.4.15 | tip to driver | 2000 | | 8.26.15 | jeeps to skardu | 24500 |
| 7.4.15 | Tips | 300 | | 8.26.15 | snacks | 840 |
| 7.4.15 | LO stipend | | 1500 | 8.26.15 | hotel | 10460 |
| 7.4.15 | LO fee (part) | | 500 | 8.26.15 | driver tip | 80 |
| 7.5.15 | hotel | 21500 | | 8.27.2015 | Hassan Ali doc | 540 |
| 7.5.15 | driver tip | 100 | | 8.27.2015 | haircuts | 1200 |
| 7.5.15 | tea @ airport | 390 | | 8.27.2015 | Cook wage | 1200 |
| 7.6.15 | rasool doc | 380 | | 8.27.2015 | AssCook wage + tip | 800 |
| 7.7.15 | tent | | 200 | 8.27.2015 | Lunch | 2100 |
| 7.7.15 | gas | | 200 | 8.27.2015 | driver tip | 100 |
| 7.7.15 | jeep to skardu | 5000 | | 8.28.2015 | Rasool doc apt | 30000 |
| 7.7.15 | food shop skardu | 104,570 | | 8.29.2015 | Street food | 500 |
| 7.8.15 | Skardu hotel | 2360 | 400 | 8.29.2015 | hotel food | 5600 |
| 7.8.15 | lunch | 2000 | | 8.29.2015 | Hotel | 37949 |
| 7.8.15 | water | 1800 | | 8.29.2015 | excess baggag | 14000 |
| 7.8.15 | melons | 500 | | 8.29.2015 | Tips | 750 |
| 7.8.15 | shoes | 550 | | 8.30.2015 | NSE w tip | 4000 |
| 7.8.15 | jeep ride | 30000 | | 8.30.2015 | driver + tip | 1200 |
| 7.8.15 | jeep tip | 1700 | | 8.30.2015 | lunch | 5300 |
| 7.8.15 | hushe jeep | 500 | | 8.31.2015 | LO | 200 |
| 7.9.15 | hotel+food | 9600 | | 8.31.2015 | Excess baggage | 158 |
| 7.9.15 | cook tips | 1000 | | 8.31.2015 | hotel | 336 |
| 7.9.15 | guards | 1000 | | 8.31.2015 | exit tax | 30 |
| 7.9.15 | Kande jeep | 5000 | | | | |
| Pre Trip Expenses | | | | Totals | | |
| Peak Fee | 1500 | | | Pre Trip Expenses | | 11273.5 |
| Environmental Prote | 272 | | | In Country Exp (rp) | | 7684 |
| Skardu Plane Ticket | 1380 | | | In Country Exp (USD) | | 759517.26 |
| Group food | 1031 | | | Trip Total | | \$26,403.75 |
| Group equipment (ro | 314 | | | Calculations utilize an exchange rate | | |
| outgoing excess bag | 948 | | | of 102rp to 1USD | | |
| misc (Visa overnight | 35 | | | | | |
| Flights | 5793.5 | | | | | |
| Total | 11273.5 | | | | | |

