

Hispar Expedition 2017 Expedition Final Report

MEF reference: 17-42

Country and region visited: Pakistan, Hunza Valley, Karakoram.

Objective

To make the first ascent of Machu (6630m) by the southwest and west ridges from the Machu Valley, climbing alpine style.

Or:

To make the first ascent of Machu by the southeast ridge from the Chaghuta Valley, climbing alpine style.

Google Earth coordinates of main objective and base camp.

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Machu | 36.234967 | 75.051874 |
| Machu Valley base camp | 36.200116 | 75.014579 |

The height of Machu is 6630m on the Swiss map, 6612m on the Russian map and 6603m on Google Earth.

Duration: 6th June to 30th June 2017

Expedition members: Peter Thompson and Aiden Laffey

Summary

We didn't know the name of the peak we were attempting until we arrived in Hispar village when we were informed that it was called Machu and that it had not been attempted before.

One option had been to attempt Machu from the Chaguta Valley but from a viewpoint above Hispar village this valley looked difficult to get up. However I had seen shepherd's huts on Google Earth at our proposed base camp in the Machu Valley. This was the case and our eleven porters reached our base camp near the huts at 4442m in a day from Hispar village, with a steep 1400 metre climb up from the Hispar River.

We agreed to pay the porters for four stages due to the scale and steepness of the walk, but nothing for the return due to the proximity of the village. We had seven porters at the same rate on the way down. Being above 6500m Machu required a permit and we kept a cook/guide and an assistant at base camp.

We made two carries to set up an advance base camp on the Machu Glacier at 4760m with only a short difficult section to get onto the glacier. We climbed a 700 meter couloir to get onto the southwest ridge at 5530m. Heavy snowfall enforced retreat, leaving our tent there. We returned and climbed to 5650m in poor snow conditions to find our way blocked by difficult ground to circumvent a rock peak and we went down.

Observations from above ABC confirmed that there was no good way along the southwest ridge from where we were to join the col and the west ridge leading to the summit. However two couloirs further up the Machu Glacier appeared to lead close to the col. Unfortunately, snow conditions were not good in these couloirs and we abandoned our attempt. It was hard to judge how narrow

the west ridge is. There are a few rock steps on it and although it is mostly at a reasonable angle it steepens considerably close to the summit.

Budget

Expedition costs

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| International flights | £1600 |
| Visas | £200 |
| Domestic transport and accommodation | £780 |
| Agency fee and permits | £600 |
| Food and equipment hire | £500 |
| Porters and staff including insurance | £1200 |
| Sat phone | £50 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £4930 |

Expedition income

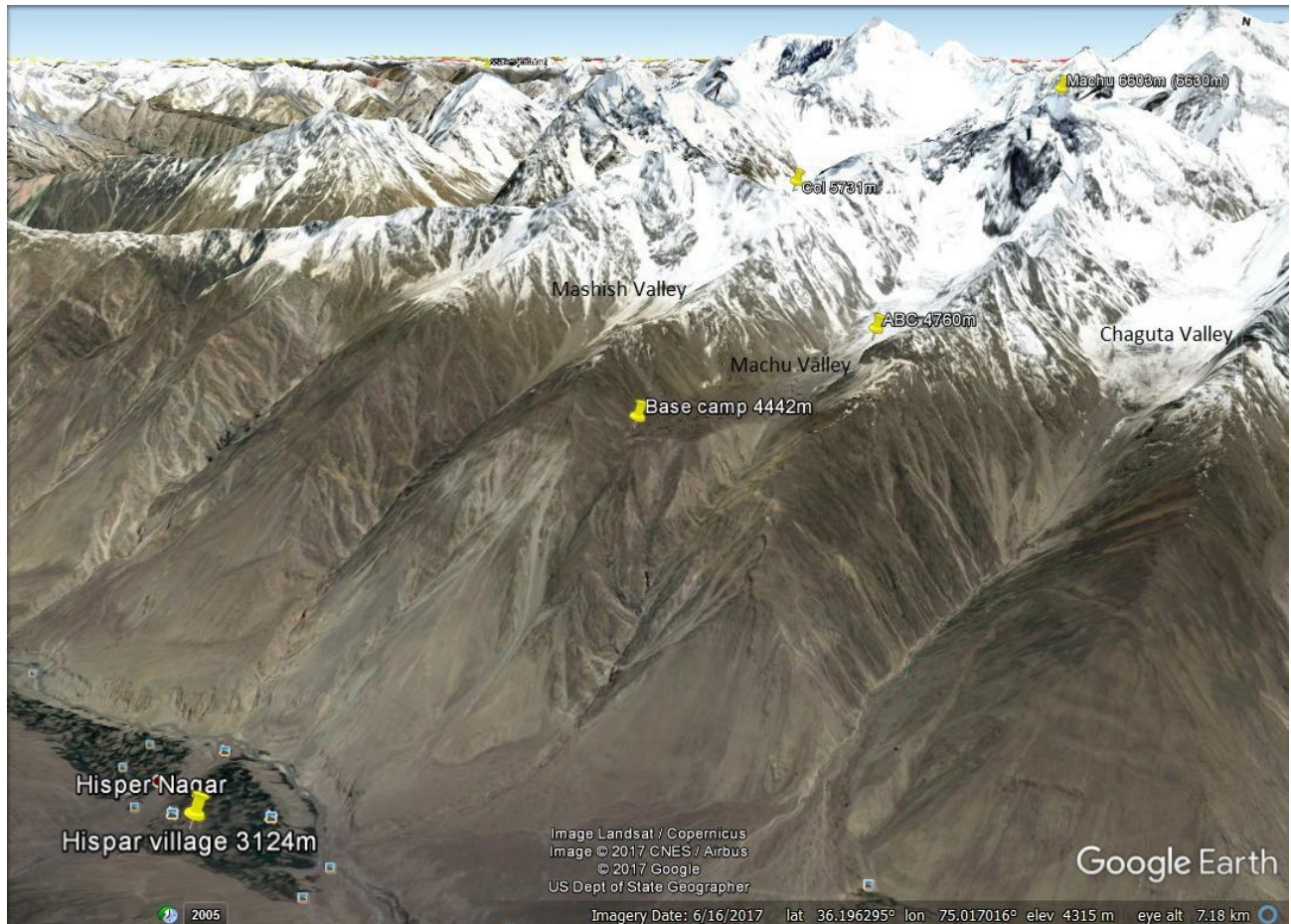
| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| MEF grant | £1450 |
| BMC grant | £650 |
| Alpine Club grant | £685 |
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| | £2785 |

Balance-members contributions.

Diary

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 7 th June | Flew to Islamabad. |
| 8 th June | In Islamabad. |
| 9 th June | Flew to Gilgit. Luggage left in Islamabad. Met our cook/guide Didar Ali and driver Manzoor. Shopping in Gilgit. Had briefing with tourism department. |
| 10 th June | Bad weather, flight cancelled and luggage didn't arrive. Drove to Karimabad in the Hunza Valley. |
| 11 th June | Acclimatisation walk. Luggage arrived by bus. |
| 12 th June | Jeep to Hispar village. Arranged porters. We hiked above the village to view the approaches to Machu. |
| 13 th June | Acclimatisation hike above Hispar village. |
| 14 th June | After crossing the Hispar River in a wooden box on a cable we reached base camp at 4442m in eight hours. Mohammed Ali from Hispar village remained with Didar the cook/guide at base camp as his assistant. |
| 15 th June | Recce up the valley. |
| 16 th June | Made a carry to ABC on the Machu Glacier at 4760m. |
| 17 th June | Made another carry to ABC. |
| 18 th June | Up to ABC to sleep. |
| 19 th June | We left at 5am and climbed a 700m couloir leading up to the southwest ridge. Reaching the ridge, we dug out a platform for our tent in an exposed position. |
| 20 th June | It snowed all day. Getting a poor weather forecast on the sat phone we started to go down the couloir to ABC at 6pm, leaving the tent on the ridge. |
| 21 st June | Walked down to base camp. Rain and snow. |
| 22 nd June | At base camp. |
| 23 rd June | Back up to ABC. |

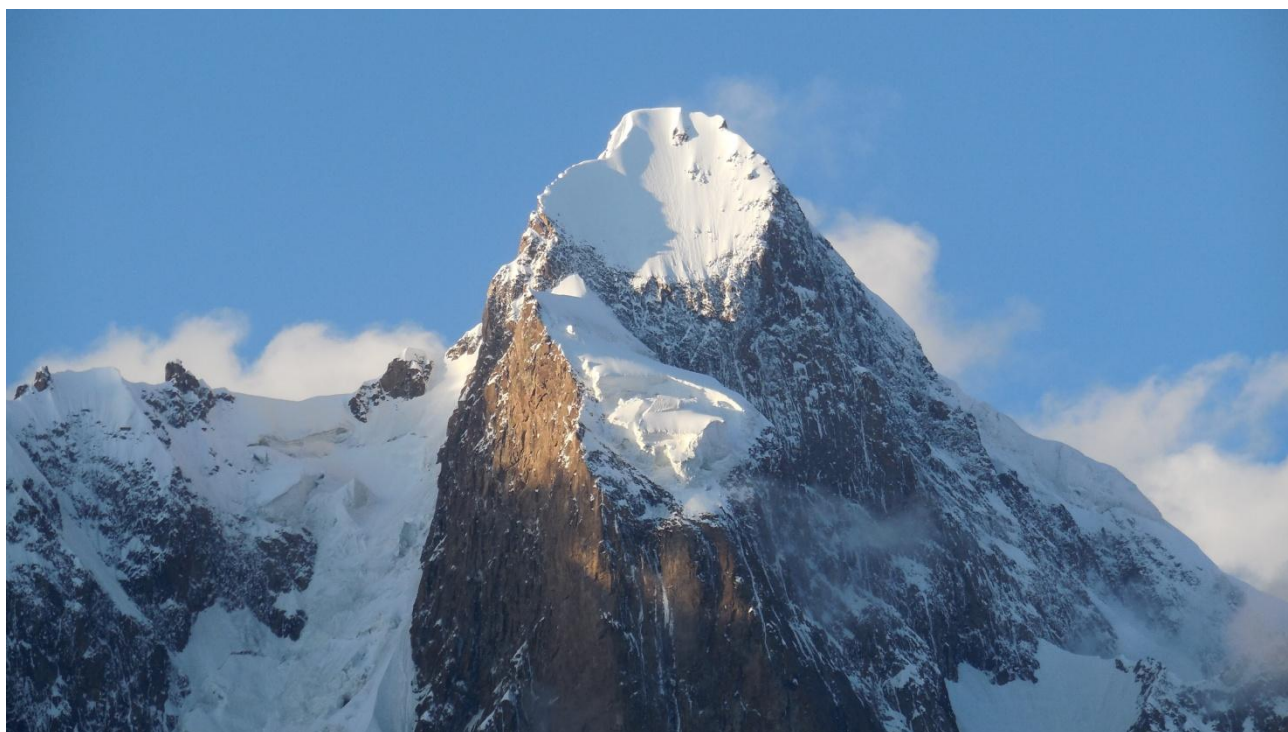
- 24th June We left at 4am and climbed to our tent. We climbed up the southwest ridge on soft snow slab that seemed unstable to 5650m. Crevasses and difficult ground to get past a rock peak barred our way and we decided to retreat.
- 25th June We returned to ABC. Walking further up the Machu Glacier we could see another couloir/snow slopes joined the southwest ridge beyond the rock peak in the vicinity of the col where it joins west ridge leading to the summit. This looked like a possible route, but parts of it had recently been swept by avalanches and we decided not to attempt it and to the finish the expedition. Another long and steep couloir further on also leads directly to the west ridge. We carried our stuff back to base camp.
- 26th June Mohammed Ali went down to Hispar village to arrange porters.
- 27th June The porters arrived at 7am. We made a quick descent to Hispar village with some good scree running. We drove by jeep to Karimabad, collected some luggage and continued to Gilgit.
- 28th June Midday flight to Islamabad.
- 29th June Flights home.
- 30th June Arrived Manchester and Dublin.



Map showing Hispar village, base camp and Machu.



Machu with the west ridge (left) and the southwest ridge (far left).



Machu and the west ridge (left). The west ridge steepens towards the summit.



The couloir we climbed to get onto the southwest ridge.



Aiden on the southwest ridge with the top of the couloir left of the tent.



Slopes leading to the southwest ridge beyond the rock peak on the left which stopped us.



The long couloir (centre) from the Machu Glacier leading directly to the west ridge.



Unclimbed peaks on the other side of the Hispar Glacier from Machu base camp. From left to right: Makrong Chhish 6607m, Gandes Chhish 6346m and Men Chhish 6407m.



Machu with the west ridge (left) and the southeast ridge (right).

Acknowledgements

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