

Northern Lindbergh Mountains, first ascents. On June 22 British climbers, John Booth, Brian Combs, Richard Denison, Ian Jones, Dominic Matters, and I departed Akureyri airport, Iceland, in a reserve Twin Otter, the normal plane at that time being “stuck in Greenland.” We refueled at Isafjordur, then flew directly to Greenland, reaching the limit of the pack ice in approximately one hour and landing after a further 20 minutes. On reaching the Kronborg Glacier, we had turned inland and flew approximately northwest over Gunnbjorns Fjeld and the Kong Christian IV glacier to land at 69° 07'N, 31°02'W on the previously un-named Lanchester Glacier. Weather conditions were perfect and our equipment dump had been located by the pilots prior to landing. About 20-30 cm of snow (now consolidated) had fallen in the three weeks since its deposit.

We spent the first one-and-a-half days establishing base camp, then embarked on our first ascent. This first peak was climbed by all six members (on two ropes) as a day ascent from base. In the following three days, we first split into threes, then pairs, to make five further ascents, missing one day due to bad weather. On the fifth day after our arrival we split into two groups of three and went exploratory ski-touring on adjoining glaciers. The group making the northern tour explored two glaciers and made one ascent, whilst those on the southwestern tour visited the western rim of the Southern Lindbergh Plateau and made four ascents (including a second ascent). On returning to base, a group of three made a further day ascent.

After another rest day due to poor weather we set off in two groups (four and two) on four-day exploratory ski-tours to the west. During this period we made a total of 12 ascents, mainly in pairs. These included a number of nunataks on the edge of the icecap. On one summit we found a survey pin drilled into loose rock. This is believed to have been placed in 1934 by Martin Lindsay's team during the leveling of “The Monarch” (a.k.a. Gunnbjorns Fjeld). After two further rest days due to poor weather we set off on the last of our four-day ski-tours in two groups of three. These took us to the east and southeast, where we made three further ascents. The final attempt at a day ascent from base camp was aborted due to poor weather, and the team was collected by Twin Otter after 23 days on the glacier.

Although most peaks involved some ski-mountaineering, all climbing was done on foot, using crampons as appropriate. Plans to utilize traction-kites for glacier travel were hampered initially by lack of wind, and subsequently by our abilities at kite flying and skiing in lace-up boots. Both improved toward the end of the trip.

Weather conditions were typically excellent with only four days of bad weather out of 23. Recorded temperatures ranged from +10°C to -16°C, though wind-chill could bring this down to -30°C. There was very little wind during the first half of the trip, but it became much stronger during the second half.

The team also had a well-defined environmental strategy. Snow was melted using solar ovens wherever possible, reducing the fuel usage to less than 20 liters of SBP/Coleman fuel. All solid waste was contained and removed from Greenland. Food and packaging waste was taken to Isafjordur for domestic disposal, with all solid human waste repatriated to the U.K. We believe we were the first expedition to repatriate all its human waste.

In summary, this was a highly successful expedition, during which extensive exploration was made of an area ca 1300 square kilometers. A total of 28 peaks were climbed, including 25 first ascents and subsidiary summits. The terrain was largely on snow and ice, with the poor quality rock avoided wherever possible. Route grades ranged between Alpine F and AD. Snow conditions varied considerably in the region, though generally improved closer to the icecap (hard ice in places). Around base camp most snow slopes consisted of a three-centimeter crust

overlying 20-30 cm of powder, which in turn lay on a firm base. When moving in boots or crampons, the top crust broke about 75 percent of the time, so glacier travel was made entirely on ski, using pulks to transport food, fuel, and equipment. Significant first ascent and new route potential remains in the Northern Lindberghs, particularly at the unexplored northern end of the nunataks.

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NORTH PEARY LAND

North Peary Land, first ascents, a traverse of the peninsula, and confirmation of the world's most northerly peak. Our nine-person Return To The Top Of The World Expedition landed at Frigg's Fjord, then traversed the peninsula to the north, going up the Syd Glacier, across the Polkorridoren, and down the Nord Glacier. Along the way five climbers (John Jancik, Joe Sears, Vernon Tejas, Ken Zerbst, and I) made the second ascent of Helvetia Tinde on July 17 via a new route up the east ridge. The ca 1920m summit of Helvetia Tinde was first climbed in 1969 by the British Joint Services Expedition and is the highest peak in the most northerly mountain range on earth, only ca 750 km from the geographic North Pole. We carried the Joint Services British flag to the summit of the highest peak in the Roosevelt Range 32 years after they carried it there. The next day all nine team members (David Baker, Terri Baker, Jancik, Jim McCrain, Jim Schaefer, Sears, Tejas, Zerbst, and myself) made the first ascent of the highest unclimbed peak in the most northerly mountain range on earth.

Our aim, on reaching the north coast, had been to locate and climb the northernmost mountain on earth. During the next five days we recorded altitudes of summits, altitudes of saddles, and GPS readings for 14 peaks. On July 23 four team members (Sears, Tejas, Zerbst, and myself) crossed the sea ice at Sands Fjord to make first ascents of four peaks (Peaks 1, 2, 3, 4) on Cape Christian IV. The following day David Baker, Jancik, McCrain, and Schaefer made the second ascents of two peaks (Peaks 5 and 6) previously climbed by the 1997 Euro-American Expedition and claimed by them as the most northerly mountains on earth.

On July 25, Sears, Tejas, Zerbst, and I climbed Peak 5 with all but Zerbst continuing across Peak 6 and a small point called Peak 7 to make the first ascents of Peaks 8 and 9. The final peak of that day (Peak 9) was farther north than any other known summit. We continued east along the coast to Cape Morris Jesup, where we were to meet our airplane. There McCrain climbed a small hill and Tejas climbed four other summits to collect measurements. Upon our return to the United States, we submitted our data to several authorities and agencies in Denmark and the United States, asking help to determine what is a peak and what is a sub-peak. With all the peaks on both sides of Sands Fjord lying within the same minute of latitude, this decision led to much debate. The consensus was that Peak 6, at 83°, 36.427' north, is the actual summit of the most northerly mountain.

Six members of this expedition had been together in North Peary Land in 1996 as part of the American Top Of The World Expedition. During that expedition, we had walked across the sea ice to Kaffeklubben Island and then on to Oodaaq Island, considered the northernmost land on earth. In the spring of 2001 we compared readings with staff members at both GEUS and the Danish Polar Centre, and found discrepancies. On the flight to North Peary Land in 2001 we were able to fly over these islands and determine that our 1996 island is a new island. It has