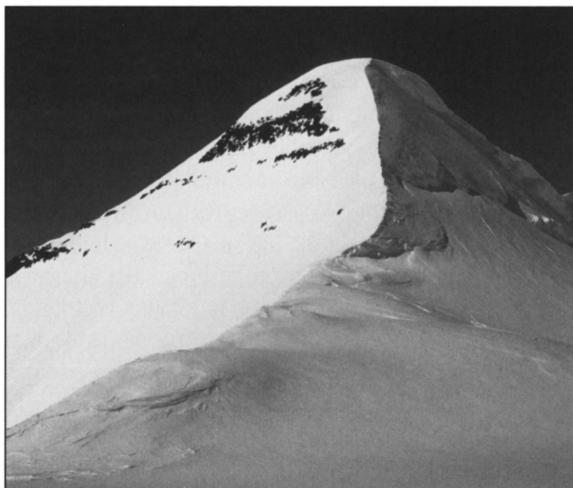


and an endless array of unclimbed peaks to the south. Other ascents included: One Down (2,750m); Pt Alice (2,316m); Kathleen (2,746m); Pearl (2,673m); Malago (2,788m); Pt Whympet (2,546m) and Gordon's Choice (2,680m).

This area has been something of a preserve for British climbers, who have visited the mountains of Knud Rasmussens Land five times in the last three years. However last year's expedition note that there is still enormous potential for first ascents in the lower grades.

JEREMY WINDSOR, *United Kingdom*

*Watkins Mountains, two possible first ascents close to Gunnbjørns Fjeld. Named by the Vikings "Hvitserk" or "White Shirt," Gunnbjørns Fjeld stands as the Arctic's highest mountain. Its 3,693m summit is not technically difficult to reach, but a good degree of mountaineering skill is still required. Our summit day was clear and cold, allowing stunning views of the surrounding Watkins Mountains and the distant Polar Plateau. I had only been in Greenland for three days and already I was so high. I could feel inside me that this was going to be another momentous trip.*



The possibly virgin ridge of peak 3,535m (GPS: 3,421m) near Gunnbjørns Fjeld. *Nigel Vardy*

We then climbed two virgin peaks in two days—one ascending a long exposed ridge and another through deep snow before returning to base camp. The peaks are situated just south of Gunnbjørns Fjeld, one marked 3,535m, and the other a short distance to the north west and situated on the south west ridge of Gunnbjørns Fjeld. We GPS heighted them at 3,421m (N68° 53.412' W29° 52.691'—via west ridge) and 3,265m (N68° 53.440' W29° 51.505'—via east ridge) respectively. The lower peak is not marked on any map. Few people have the opportunity to climb a virgin peak—to stand where no one else has been before and survey all below them. It's a wonderful experience and for me a very personal one. Being that first person does not fill me with pride or prowess, more an inner peace where I can find my soul again. Perhaps climbing itself is one of the world's great soul searchers. Other climbers who summited these peaks: Phil Poole, guide, and Liz Roche, UK, and Ulrich Goerlach and Wolfgang Schaub, Germany.

NIGEL VARDY, *United Kingdom*

*Editor's Note: Claims that these two tops were previously unclimbed arise solely from the fact that they have not been registered with the Danish Polar Institute. Parties have traveled between them (crossing between GBF and Cone) since 1988 at least, but as they are rather more "bumps" than summits, it is possible they have been ignored until now. The team later traveled east to the Silk Road Glacier and made the second ascent of Outpost (2,848m).*

*Watkins Mountains, first ascents from the Fleece Glacier.* Toward the end of May a British expedition comprising Jim Hall, Bob Kerr, Ros Murray and Rae Pritchard was landed on the Wooley Glacier at 2,400m and from here explored a previously unnamed side glacier to the east. This is the next glacier south of the Silk Road and it seemed appropriate to name it Fleece. Three probable first ascents were made: Pt 3,020m (dubbed Afternoon Peak), a subsidiary summit to the north west of Midnight Peak (first climbed by Scott Umpleby's five-person expedition in 1999). The grades of each were not much more than Alpine F and the climbs completed in ski mountaineering boots. Unsuccessful attempts were then made of the attractive Pt 2,725m further east down the glacier, and Julia (3,455m, the 7th highest peak in Greenland), which lies on the west side of the Wooley. Some of the team's original unclimbed objectives from the Wooley were apparently Peak (3,249m) on the south side of the glacier; Pt 2,908m (dubbed Wyvis) and its subsidiary (south west) top (2,750m: dubbed Minaret) on the north side of the glacier. It seems that many of the team's original objectives were climbed the previous month by a Royal Navy expedition, which was just leaving base camp as the four British climbers arrived.

The team completed their stay by moving base camp west to the foot of Gunnbjorns Fjeld (3,692m), the highest peak in the Arctic. From here they climbed both GBF and 3,682m Dome or Qaqqaq Kershaw, the second highest, both long days mainly on ski. [Compiled from Jim Hall's MEF expedition report.]

JIM HALL, *United Kingdom*

*Mikis Fjord, ascent of Red Peak.* Hoping to find anchorage in Kangerdlussuaq Fjord, which would give access to the Lemon Mountains etc, a small British team sailed in mid-May from Portsmouth, UK, via Iceland to the East Coast of Greenland. Bad weather and then the subsequent snapping in two of the boom, forcing the yacht to return to Iceland for repairs, caused delays. When they eventually reached their destination at the start of August, sea ice made penetrating the Kangerdlussuaq impractical and by the time an alternative venue, the Mikis Fjord nine kilometers east up the coast from Kangerdlussuaq, was reached, the five climbers on board, Tim Broad, Rob Jones, Steve Lodge, Peter Watson, and Stewart Wright, had only a week in which to achieve any ascents and were forced to concentrate on the mountains close to the head of the fjord. Unfortunately, the weather that week proved less than favorable, with gales to begin and sunshine appearing only at the end.

Two peaks were attempted from sea level. After climbing through an icefall (300m of climbing up to Scottish III/IV), a crevassed glacier was followed to 876m below the rocky pyramid of Mikis Peak (1,289m) on the south side of the fjord. A shattered rock wall of 100m led to the narrow and crumbly East Ridge but the team retreated around midnight at an altitude of ca 1,100m and returned in a 22-hour day. However, later they were able to climb 870m Red Peak, east of the fjord head, via a long glacier approach followed by scrambling on shattered rock to the broad summit. Two routes of ascent were taken: a dangerously loose gully on the South West Flank, and the rather more stable North Ridge.

PETER WATSON, *United Kingdom*