

South Face of Frenchbird with Kurz vor Knapp (nine pitches: VII-).

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO* Editor, *CLIMB* magazine

*Tasermiut Fjord, Ketil Pyramid, new route.* I arrived in the area at the end of July, hoping to be the first climber to solo a new big wall route. I was surprised to find eight teams with a total of 30 climbers at Base Camp, though by the start of the second week of August most of these had departed. My plan had been to add another route to the South West Face of Nalumasortoq but I found the small glacier on the approach rather too crevassed to cross safely on his own and instead turned further north to Ketil Pyramid, a ca 400m-high spire one kilometre southwest of Ketil's 2,010m main summit, accessed via the Uiluit Qaqa Valley and far removed from other climbers. It is ca 1,600m and most probably first climbed via its easy East Face (300m, III) in 1960 by British mountaineers, Wally Keay and Roger Wallis.

I spent till the start of August ferrying all my equipment up the trackless 1,350m of height gain to the base of the South Face. The South Pillar of Ketil Pyramid was reportedly climbed in the 1980s by a Swiss team to give 11 pitches from UIAA V to VI+ [although unconfirmed this is likely to have been members from the Christian Daphin/Michel Piola team, which put up a new route on the West Face of Ketil in 1984. The Pillar was certainly repeated in 1987 by three Danes and a Swede—Micheal Hjorth et al—in 1987]. However, the sheer south face to the right and the more slabby southwest face on the left remained untouched.

Adopting fixed rope tactics I began climbing up the center of the face on the 1st August and after six days climbing was just 20m below the east ridge. The climbing had been excellent, following diedres, cracks, and slabs in absolutely perfect granite. Then wind and rain prevented movement above base camp for four days and it wasn't until the 18th that I could finish the route and rappel the wall. Lost Friends is 425m and 10 pitches up to 65m each. Around half the route required aid (I carried a lot of equipment, including 54 Friends, 20 hooks, and 21 copperheads) and some bolts were placed. The difficulties were not severe, with the route felt to warrant an American grade of V 5.10a A3c.

THOMAS TIVADAR, *Munich, Germany*

*Tasermiut Fjord, Nalumasortoq, Prowed and Free; Ulamertorssuaq, Moby Dick, speed ascent.* On July 2 Nathan Martin and I started our 34-day expedition to the Tasermiut fiord in southern Greenland by climbing the dead-straight 2,500-foot route Non C'e Due Senza Tre (V 5.11+) on the right pillar of Nalumasortoq. We made it within 200 feet of the summit in a day before retreating in the dark. It was awesome. The following day it started to rain and continued for the next 12 days. Kind-of-a-bummer. After three days of clear weather we started up the central pillar by following the first eight pitches to the 2003 highpoint that Nathan reached with Tim O'Neil on a previous expedition. From here we followed excellent hand-to-finger cracks that would lead to the summit; however, three difficult pitches required cleaning, forcing us to hang on gear and forfeiting the free ascent on that attempt. We reached the summit at sunset and rappelled the route confident that another attempt would lead to a successful free ascent. Then it rained for 16 days straight. What a buzz-kill that was.

Eventually the skies and our heads cleared and on August 2 we completed our stunning 2,000-foot route, Prowed and Free (V+ 5.12+), all-free-in-a-day without using fixed ropes or

jumars; a first for this area. The dead-vertical route is stacked with hard crack climbing including five pitches of 5.12 in a row starting at pitch 8 with two of them racking in at 5.12+. It was amazing that everything came together at the last minute on such a gem. It was hard to pioneer this route in this style, and we hope future ascents will follow suit. Someone's gotta onsight this thing!

Totally stoked and high, with one day left before pickup, we set out on August 4 and climbed the classic route Moby Dick (VI 5.13-), on the 3,000-foot Ulamertorssuaq. We managed to race up the climb in 11 hours and 56 minutes, free climbing most of the route. The potential for more free routes in the area, 5.14 and beyond, is practically unlimited and is highly recommended. The granite is reminiscent of Tuolumne characterized by superb and endless cracks, knobby faces and surreal environment making for remarkable conditions. In 6 weeks we climbed only 4 days, but those were four of the best days ever!

JARED OGDEN, AAC

*Tasermiut Fjord, Ulamertorssuaq and Ketil, first ascents.* Eight young French climbers on their first expedition were in the area from the end of June to early August. Jérôme Masoundabe, Benoît Montfort, Magali Salle and Rémy Sifilio, all from the Pyrenees, climbed Moby Dick on Ulamertorssuaq from the 15th-17th July. They started up the route without sleeping bags or portaledges, reaching the good ledge at the top of pitch 15 on the first day. Next day they gained the narrow ledge at the top of pitch 28, and reached the summit the following morning, rappelling the route from the existing anchors. Their next objective was Nalumasortoq and on the 30th, together with Pierre Labbre, they started up the Original British Route on the southwest face of the Left Pillar (7b+ or 7a and A2). Ropes were fixed to the top of the 8th pitch, then on the 1st August these were re-ascended and a portaledge camp established at the top of pitch 10. On the second they continued up a superb series of jamming cracks and diedres, reached the top and descended to their camp for the night.

The other three members of this party, Frédéric Degoulet, Rémi Sabot, and Francois-Régis Thévenet from Lyon, had more ambitious plans, first tackling a new route up the tapering tower leading to the West Summit (1,830m) of Ulamertorssuaq, right of the characteristic barrel-shaped buttress. The first ascent of this pillar took place in 2000 when Canadians, Jia Condon and Rich Prohaska, climbed What's Bred in the Bone, a 1,100m line with 29 pitches, only two of which required aid (A2+). The rest gave fine free difficulties up to 5.10+, notably in the middle to upper sections where the climb followed a prominent right facing diedre, though some of this was interspersed with poor rock.

The Canadians climbed onto the right side of the pillar having first gained the top of the large hanging serac formation at its base. However two years previously an Icelandic team had tried to avoid the seracs by starting up the first few pitches of L'Inesperée on the main face (Daudet/Robert, 1996), then working up right across the intervening depression to reach the pillar. They found serious stonefall in the depression so retreated.

The three French, who took a similar start, appear to have experienced the same problems. At the second portaledge camp stonefall ripped through the fly while they were ensconced one night and they later were lucky to escape a huge volley while jumaring back up to Camp 3. Higher, one of the climbers pulled off a large flake directly above the belayers but fortunately managed to hold on and throw it clear. The trio had started up the wall to the right of L'Inesperée, close to the seracs, moved right on to the snow field at its top, then climbed compact slabby