

## MIYAR NALA

*Miyar Valley, upper glacier exploration and short new routes.* A four-strong party from England and Scotland (Graham Little, Jim Lowther, Kevin Kelly, and myself) visited the Miyar Valley in May. The area offers large granite walls in a mountain setting. Various parties have been to the area since it first came to prominence after a visit by an Italian team in 1992. Most teams have established base camps at the snout of the Miyar Glacier and climbed in the adjacent valleys. Previous trips have given a variety of names to side glaciers that already have local names. We journeyed further up the Miyar Glacier to the junction with the Jangpar Glacier, which we explored and found to offer some impressive mountain big wall potential.

May seemed to be too early to attempt technical rock climbing, as ledges held much snow from an unseasonably late fall (the heaviest for 25 years), which was melting and flowing down the rock walls. We climbed two snow routes. On one, we dropped a pack after completing the difficult climbing; this forced a retreat short of the summit. We climbed three rock routes on slabs and spires nearer base camp. In brief:

Christina Peak, 5,420m (GL, JL May 14), by south face at PD.

South face of Pt 5,960m (BD, KK), retreat from 5,800m after dropping a rucksack.

Lammegier Spike 5350m (GL, JL May 22), Alpine D.

First ascent of 600m+ rock route on slabs above Khai Got on east side of Miyar Nala (BD, KK), UIAA VI.

Many of the currently available maps of the Miyar Nala and the glacier area are generally small scale and often of poor quality. The sketch maps produced by the Slovenian and Italian expeditions, while useful, are often not topographically very accurate. Some of the heights claimed for climbed peaks are exaggerated.

There is also mounting confusion over the names of the glaciers that lie to the east of the Miyar Nala/Glacier. Dali Got below the snout of Miyar Glacier has been the site of several expedition base camps and as such is a useful reference point. The following names have been used, with our favored versions (which are often local names) given first, followed by alternatives.

Glaciers linking to the Miyar Glacier:

Jangpar Glacier (no alternatives): the final glacier to join the Miyar Glacier (about 6 km above Dali Got at its snout).

Glaciers not linking to the Miyar Glacier:

Dali Glacier (Spaghetti Glacier, Thunder Glacier): lies directly above Dali Got.

Chhudong Glacier (Tawa Glacier): lies just over 1 km down the valley from Dali Got.

Takdung Glacier (Nameless Glacier): lies 4 km down the valley from Dali Got.

BRIAN DAVISON, *United Kingdom*

*Miyar Valley, Neverseen Tower (5,700m), Mai Blau.* Eloi Callado and I arrived there at the beginning of September, and after setting up our base camp (4,800m) at the glacier's moraine we started carrying the stuff to the base of the wall (5,050m). To reach the base we had to cross the glacier and climb a 400-meter snow ramp (35°-40°). We put up a new route called Mai Blau (in Catalan that means Never Blue) on the west face. It was a natural line that combines cracks

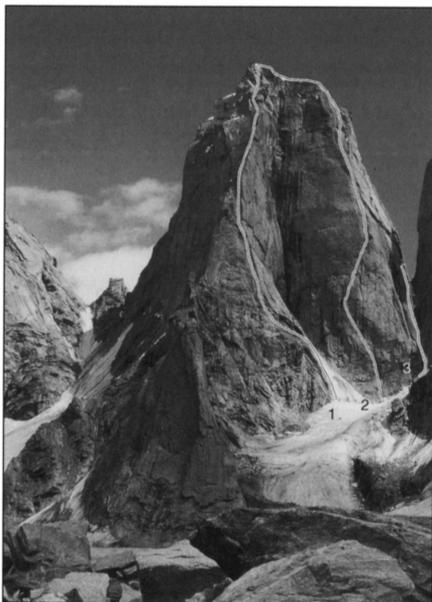
and slabs. The route name reflects the bad weather: the sky was never blue. Last summer the monsoon had been bad and the post-monsoon was not much better. The sky sometimes cleared in the morning, but it would cloud over and snow in the afternoon.

We climbed in “capsule style,” setting two camps on the wall (at the second and fifth belays). We spent 13 days living on the wall (12 bivis) to climb 13 pitches, some of them longer than 70 meters, graded A3+/6b/70° (890 meters climbed, not counting the snow ramp). On the summit day we climbed alpine style the last four pitches and the final Ca 150m snow ridge. But before the final attack on the summit, we rested two days on the portaledge because of the weather.

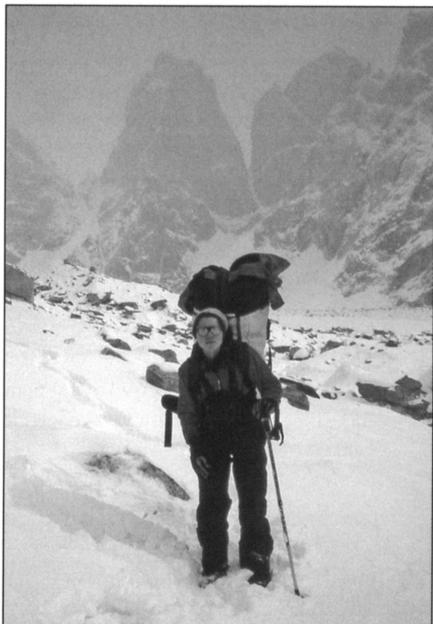
We rappelled down the route (there are bolts only at belays) from summit to the second camp, and the next day continued to the base of the wall. After this journey a three-day non-stop snowfall started. We were stuck for the next two weeks at the base camp glacier without the possibility of walking down to the main valley. It was time to return home, but we couldn't move, and conditions in base camp were harder than on the wall. We had 1.5 meters of new snow, and problems with cooking in the tent in base camp. We waited to leave until the weather changed. We were in a remote zone, and during five weeks in the valley, we didn't see anybody. Just some shepherders during the first trekking days. That's all!

It's difficult to find porters in the area, so we brought them from Manali (the most important town in the area). But to return to Manali we needed to cross a road pass (Rothang Pass, 4,800m) that is at the same altitude as base camp. We were afraid that the road could be closed because of the snowfall. But snowplows were working there, and with a 4-wheel-drive car we could have crossed it. The problem was that our driver decided to turn back before crossing it, so we finished our adventure hitchhiking on a truck.

SILVIA VIDAL, *Spain*



Neverseen Tower (5,700m). (1) Italian route (Di Vincenzo-Marcheggiani-Miele, 1992—reported in AAJ 1997). (2) Mai Blau (Callado-Vidal, 2004). (3) Spanish/Catalan attempts (Casablancas-Llongueras, 1999, 2001). Xavi Llongueras SGIM



Eloi Callado starting the epic snow-filled hike out from Neverseen Tower. Silvia Vidal