

Greenland

WEST COAST

Paddle to the Peaks Expedition, first ascents between Maniitsoq and the Evigkels Fjord. Althea Rogers, Kelly Ryan, and I spent 65 days exploring the magnificent region between Kangerlussuaq and Maniitsoq. Mountains here rise directly from the sea, the coast cut by countless fjords and inlets. We left Maniitsoq on the longest day of the year, our modes of transportation being limited to kayak and foot. This type of exploration is especially significant in such a remote region. About as “ground-upwards” as you can get, our holistic approach to climbing and exploration allowed us to gain a better knowledge of the area, as well as emphasizing the importance of the Leave No Trace ethic. We paddled through glassy waters reflecting the golden glow of the midnight sun, our routine for much of the expedition being to sleep during the height of the day and exploring in the twilight hours. As we moved through the fjords, we examined the glaciers, snowfields and ridges for feasible routes on towering peaks and, discovering a line that enticed us, hauled our boats out of the ocean and unpacked our climbing equipment. Abundant light meant we were able to climb 15 hours or more per day. As weeks disappeared into months, we honed our organization: packing and unpacking heavily loaded boats went from a messy jigsaw puzzle to a balanced routine, only occasionally thrown by a forgotten cooking pot or jacket. By the finish, we had summited 10 peaks. These are listed in chronological order.

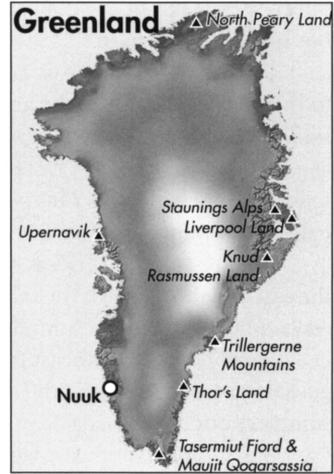
Suilaarsarfik (1,326m), west ridge, June 26. We climbed 500m of seasonal snow to a saddle, then scrambled along the crest to the summit (easy 5th class). On the summit we found evidence of previous ascents.

Peak 839m, south couloir attempt, June 29. The snow couloir led to a notch on the southwest ridge, where we retreated. Southwest buttress attempt, June 30: 5.6 to the notch gained the previous day, at which point we again descended. North Couloir, July 2: AI 3 for 400m to a snow dome and the summit plateau.

Peak 850m, west face, probable first ascent, July 5. One pitch of AI 3 gave access to a broad ice shield, which gave AI 2 climbing to the top of the face, followed by 4th class scrambling to the summit. This peak may have been climbed previously, most likely via the ridge, which can be gained easily from a prominent heli-ski drop off-point between Peaks 850 and 1,038.

Peak 741m, north ridge, July 7. From the glacier we scrambled for 300m up the ridge west of the peak, to where it joins a summit block. The climbing then got challenging. A crack system to the left of a large detached pillar led to easier ground, above which two to three pitches of steep 5.8–5.10, followed by three pitches of 5.6 or so, led to the summit (IV 5.9+).

Qaqqarsuaralak (1,334m), south ridge, attempts, July 15 and 22. Multiple attempts on both good and bad rock taught us the art of climbing in pristine places. The hardest climbing was a section or two of 5.8 to gain the south ridge from the west. Once on the crest, the climbing was straightforward (5.6), until the ridge becomes a knife-edge and the rock quality seriously



diminishes. It was here we chose to retreat. We don't know whether this peak has been climbed but suspect that it hasn't.

Peak 1,041m, southeast face, July 20. This gave us a reprieve from sitting out bad weather in the tent and proved to be an enjoyable climb. It could even be done in cloud. Third class scrambling up the face led to the ridge and the summit.

Qinguata Qaqqai (1,216m), northwest ridge, August 4. Third class scrambling up slabs, followed by scree slopes. This peak had a cairn on the summit, but we believe it is popular with heli-skiers and may not have been climbed from the ground.

Peak 1,444m, east ridge, August 8. A long glacier approach and a steep scree valley led to the east col, above which we followed the ridge (3rd class) to a flat plateau surrounded by steep walls, which formed the summit.

Peak 1,775m, southeast ridge, August 13. This is a massive peak with a long, demanding glacial approach. Once on the southwest ridge, reaching the summit proved easy, but the late summer conditions made accessing the ridge difficult.

Peak 700m, southeast face, August 19. A glacier approach followed by 4th class scrambling to the summit. A great bang for the buck.

BRAD WASHBURN CABOT, AAC

EAST COAST

Dronning Louise Land, various ascents. Gerwyn Lloyd, Tim Radford, and I, members of a North Wales-based mountain rescue team, visited the most northerly significant mountain range in Arctic East Greenland, an area known as Dronning Louise Land. Only two other expeditions had visited this region: a combined British Forces expedition, which traveled south through the area in 1953 for surveying, and a Tangent-organized team, which visited the western sector in 2000. We planned to visit the southeast, an area named The Fairytale Peaks by the 1953 expedition (so called because they did not reach it and said anything they recorded about it would be a fairy tale).

From Constable Point we flew north, refueling at Daneborg. We had requested the Twin Otter to land at N 75°57'59.23", W 25°8'16.30", but after much circling the pilot told us he could not land, due to extensive blue ice and crevasse fields. He flew northwest, looking for a safe landing site, finally dropping us on the edge of the ice cap at N 76°11'24.55", W 26°32'49.73", over 50km from our intended landing point. We estimated it would take us five or six days to reach our original destination, and as our pick-up point was well to the north, we decided it was unfeasible to visit the Fairytale peaks and reluctantly changed our plans, deciding to follow the edge of the ice cap north to our intended pick-up point at N 76°28'8.64", W 26°11'36.48". The majority of peaks we passed along the way would still be unclimbed.

We had a secondary aim: Southwest Dronning Louise Land had been identified as a potentially good site for meteorite collection. Theoretically, any meteorite should be visible as a rock that was distinct from the other specimens in the debris field. Unfortunately and somewhat surprisingly, the geology was so diverse that every rock appeared distinct from every other, and this part of our scientific program was not successful. However, we tried to take a small rock sample from each peak visited, and these were later analyzed.

Arriving on May 13, we made eight camps on our ski journey, being flown out of the area