

Alaska

BROOKS RANGE

Arrigetch Peaks, various activity. After a season of work for the Alaska Outward Bound Center, seven O.B. staff and three others spent 18 days, from August 18 to September 5, in the Arrigetch peaks. Our group was Nettie Pardue, Tina Woolston, Robert MacKinnon, Jared Coburn, Mike Morley, Mike Zawaski, Jeff Brislawn, Mark Sundeen, Erik Bluhm, and I, Jeff Pflueger. We divided into climbing

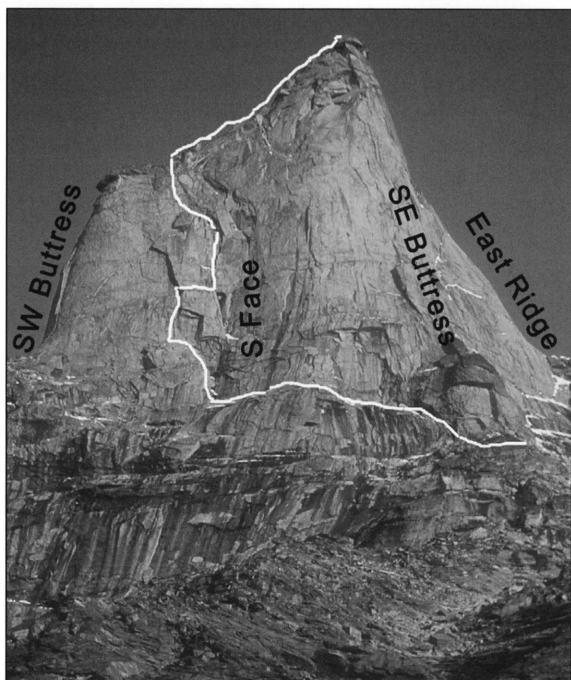
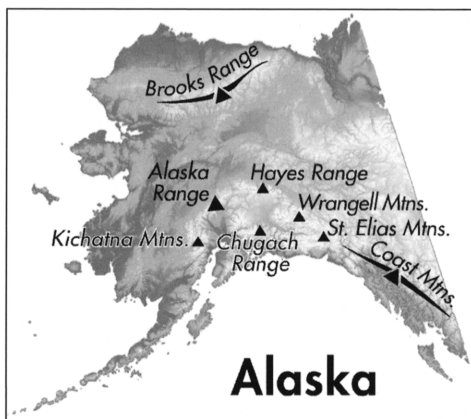
pairs who were off for days at a time from two established base camps, up Arrigetch Creek and Aiyagomahala Creek. Pairs kept in contact via radio. Each of us brought two or three plastic bear containers for food caches.

Winter was coming to the Arrigetch. Frosty conditions had eliminated mosquitoes, but kept northern aspects encrusted with enough snow and ice to limit our climbing to thawed southern aspects. We watched the brilliant reds, golds, and yellows of the tundra deepen and saw the days dramatically shorten as winter came. One-third of the days were crisp, blue, and beautiful; one-third overcast; and one-third produced some rain and snow. The combination

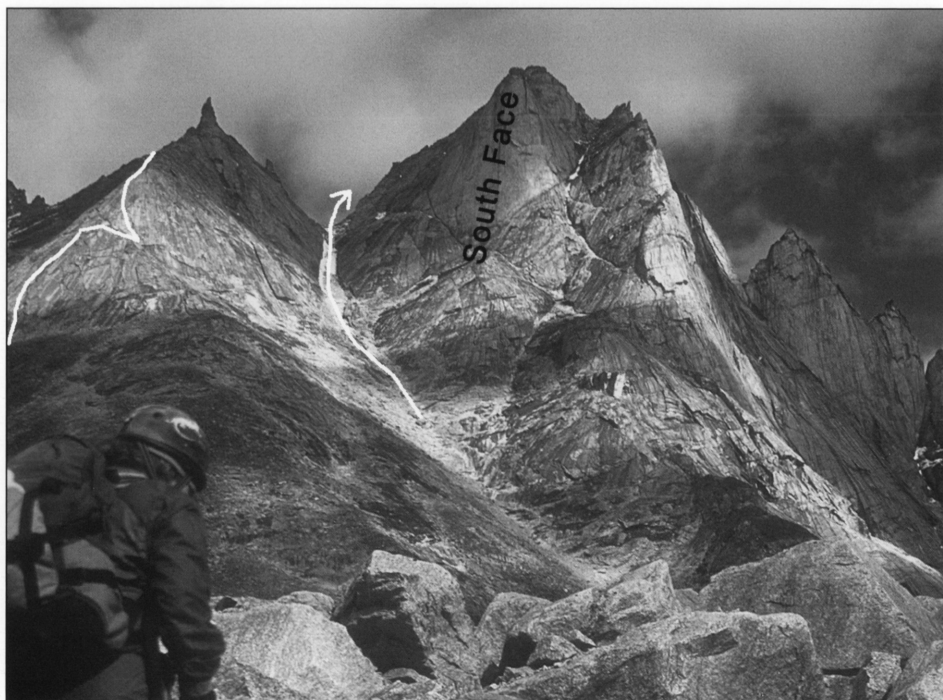
of good weather and stunning topography did not grant respite from either climbing or planning the next climb.

Jared and Mike M. climbed six pitches of the northwest ridge of an unnamed peak they dubbed "Notchtop" in the upper Aquarius Valley (represented on the Survey Pass B-3 quad as a long ridge between two glaciers at the head of the valley). The approximate GPS is N67.40149 W154.14952. The route covers excellent rock and has interesting moderate climbing (5.7/8). They were stopped a pitch from the summit by difficult climbing and cold temperatures. The two also attempted the unclimbed east ridge of Ariel but retreated because of extremely rotten rock.

Jeff P. and Robert climbed a new route on the south face of the



The Badille, showing the MacKinnon-Pflueger route.



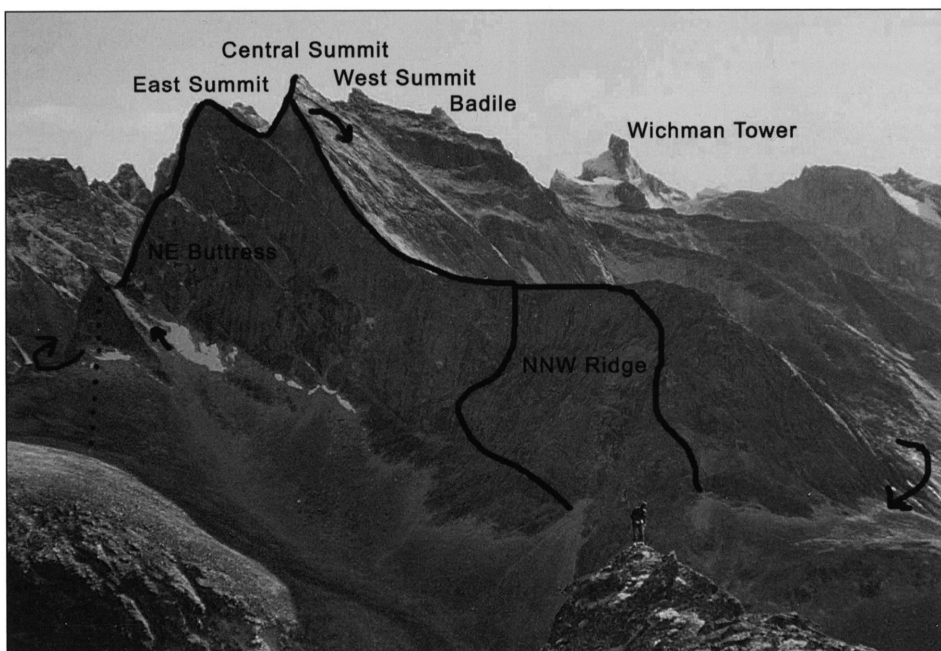
Caliban, showing Caliban East Summit, (gullies-slabs, 3rd or 4th class). first ascent possibly by Lorna Corson and Norm Larson, 1993; South Face route, attempted by Corson-Larson, 1993 (triangular orange face with loose flakes); route by Pflueger et al 2002. Jeff Pflueger

Badille (III 5.8). The route traverses from the talus on the southeast side of the peak, follows the obvious left-trending crack system/gully to the summit ridge, and continues along the ridge to the summit. This is an excellent and varied route to a stunning central summit in the Arrigetch peaks.

Jeff P. and Nettie climbed six pitches of moderate slabs and cracks (5.8) leading directly to the southeast ridge of the west summit of Caliban (7,181').

Mike Z. and Jeff B. climbed the south face of Elephant's Tooth (5.7) to the summit. They later attempted the northeast buttress of the Parabola, starting from a notch visible from north of the buttress. They climbed six pitches (5.9) before turning back beneath a chimney full of large loose blocks. This was probably the Bitenicks-Reichert route reported in the 1998 AAJ (pp. 205–6). Later, Mike Z. and Jeff B. climbed a route on the south face of the East Maiden and reported about five pitches of good climbing (5.8). The route starts up flakes below a left-facing dihedral in the center of the south face, exits the dihedral to slabs on the right, and continues straight up to the summit. This route may be a direct variation of a route previously described in the 1977 AAJ (pp. 165–6).

Two teams (Jeff P., Robert, and Nettie, and later Jared and Mike M.) climbed the spectacular north-northwest ridge of the Parabola (III 5.7). The ridge is southeast of the largest lake in Aquarius Valley. The teams ascended from the east, via 700 vertical feet of easy 5th class, to the flat ridge top. Six pitches of moderate climbing (5.7) followed the ridge south to a false summit. Neither team climbed the final few pitches of icy slab to the central summit of the



Parabola showing NNW ridge, FA possibly by Stuart Parks-Joan Unger, 1993; NE Buttress route, Joe Reichert-Bitenieks. West Summit (5,900') Arthur Bacon, George Ripley, David Roberts, Robert Waldorp, 1969. Jeff Pflueger

Parabola. The descent involved one rappel west from the ridge to the slab gully and four rappels down the slabs north of the ridge. A stopper inscribed "R.W. Freed" and bail slings were found along the route.



Robert MacKinnon on the west ridge of Shot Tower at dawn. Jeff Pflueger

As a fantastic end to our trip, three teams (Jared and Mike M., Mike Z. and Jeff B., and Jeff P. and Robert) on three consecutive days climbed the west ridge of Shot Tower (IV 5.8 C2). Stunning! Robert aided the final headwall with the help of two fixed pins and a handful of small offsets and TCUs, but he paid the price for a skimpy aid rack and some back cleaning when he fell 20' during the final mantle at the top! To descend it is best to rappel the route and remain on the ridge, including tensioning around the "Mushroom."

JEFF PFLUEGER