

BAFFIN ISLAND

Mt. Asgard, east face of South Tower. In July I soloed a new route on the 2,000' east face of the South Tower of Mount Asgard on Baffin Island. My route (VI 5.10 A2) consisted of mostly free climbing with an equal mixture of well-protected crack and runout face. I ascended the route in 16 long pitches and descended via 14 long rappels. The climb required 24 hours of climbing from the glacier to the true summit. No bolts were placed and no cracks were "cleaned." The summit was reached July 27.

JIM BEYER, *adapted from Alpinist Magazine*



Wide open spaces and waves of sastrugi on the Baffin Icefield Traverse. *Greg Horne*

Icefield traverse and Peak 1,850m, southwest ridge. From April 14 to May 5 Louise Jarry, Vicki Sahanatien, Doug Stern, Vivian Wasiuta, and I made a ski traverse of an unnamed icefield on the Cumberland Peninsula from Iqalugajut Fiord to Kaniqturusi Fiord (south fork of Padle Fiord), all east of Kingnait Pass. This was the first complete traverse of the icefield from its southern edge to its northern limit, and we made the first ascent of the highest peak in this icefield. The ground logistics consisted of a snowmobile drop-off from Pangnirtung and a pickup from Qikiqtaruaq.

This icefield had been previously visited by Mike O'Reilly et al. in 1974 (*CAJ* 1975, p. 99). They climbed 10 peaks. George Van Cochran et al. briefly spent some time there in 1977 (*CAJ* 1978, p. 36), and there is a vague report in the 1977 *CAJ* (p. 90) of a spring traverse by four skiers "from Padle Fiord to Kingnait Fiord over the glaciers and icecaps south of the Padle-Kingnait trough." No other details of this trip were reported.

From Iqalugajut Fiord we skied up a valley with a series of lakes to pass #1 (350m), with a small lake on its east side. We crossed the Kuugajuaq River valley, skied up a side drainage, crossed pass #2, and camped near the southern end of the icefield. We made a steep, cramponed pull of our sleds onto the edge of the icefield, traversed a gentle plateau, crossed pass #3, a



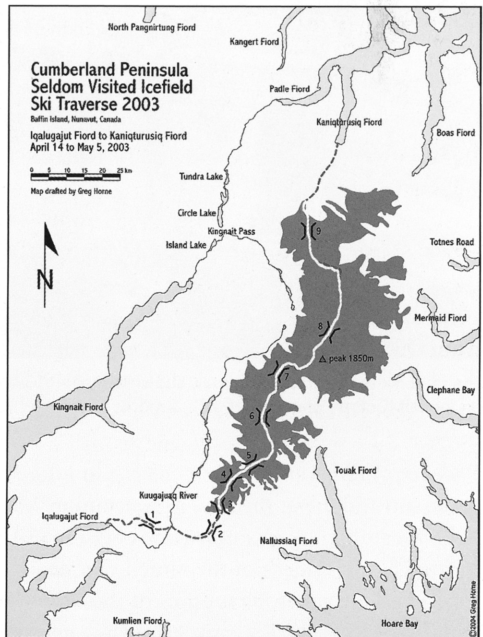
Vivian Wasiuta enjoying a sled-free day on the Baffin Icefield Traverse. Greg Horne

microwatershed crest, descended into a glacial basin, and climbed toward pass #4.

On April 20 we easily skied up to glaciated pass #4 (1,143m) and down the north side. We descended onto a valley glacier draining towards Nallussiaq Fiord and ascended it briefly, before crampon-hauling to pass #5 (1,130m), which is between Peak 1,520m and its 1,160m south shoulder. We skied around the east side of a 1,407m nunatak and coasted into a glacial basin. From a low point of 690m we headed north toward glacial pass #6 (1,143m). The north side of the pass appeared steep enough that we set up a three-rope lower of our sleds.

Another basin was crossed to glacial Pass #7 (1,295m). The descent ended in a jumble of moraines. We now reached one of the major valley glaciers flowing from the core of the icefield toward Touak Fiord. The “Walking Weasel Glacier,” so named for the uncharacteristic tracks observed, was crossed to a camp positioned for the next day’s climb. On April 25 we short-rope up the rocky-spur southwest ridge of the highest peak (1,850m) (Zone 20W, 477775E 7336700N, NAD 27) of this unnamed icefield. The summit was a classic alpine snow arête.

A 10km move of camp to the north,

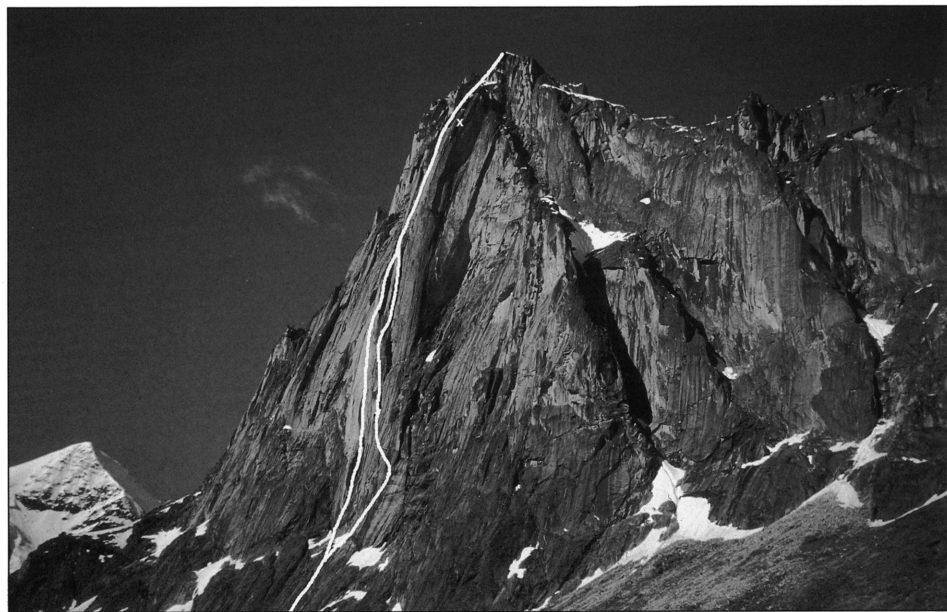


just north of glacial pass #8 (1,275m), placed us in a great position to make numerous ascents as side trips. The next morning we woke to the sound of snow falling on our tents. For the following eight days we slowly advanced north in a whiteout, as 40cm of fresh, wet snow fell during the storm. The foul weather continued long enough that any thoughts of peakbagging vaporized, and reaching the ocean took priority. As we reached our last pass, glacier Pass #9, north-northeast of Peak 5,930', the clouds lifted long enough to see the ground horizon and pick a reasonable descent line.

The snout of the retreating glacier was a debris-piled, hummocky obstacle course in flat light, making for tiring, slow traveling. This valley and the south end of Kaniqturusiq Fiord are sheltered from significant winds. Through the night of May 6-7 we returned to Qikiqtarjuaq by snowmobile in about seven hours.

GREG HORNE, *Alpine Club of Canada*

VAMPIRE SPIRES



The Phoenix in the Vampire Spires, showing Freebird on the right (Childers-Shull-Young, 1998) and Wallflowers on the left (Caton-Patterson, 2003). X marks Caton and Patterson's highpoint. *Jasmin Caton*

Phoenix, Wallflowers to near summit. On June 30 a tiny Hughes 500 helicopter dropped Amelia Patterson and me at the base of a stunning 2,500' granite face known as the Phoenix. It is the largest feature in the Vampire Spires group of the Ragged Range in Canada's Northwest Territories, 15 miles north of the famed Cirque of the Unclimbables. Thanks to our adventurous spirits and the generous support of the Alpine Club of Canada, we hoped to complete the first female ascent of the Phoenix, either by establishing a new route or completing a second ascent