

hardest route in the Cascades.

Across the Nesakwach Creek drainage from Mt. Slesse lies the Mt. Rexford massif, well-loved by local climbers for its solid granite. In late June, Jesse Mason, Marc-Andre Leclerc, and I took advantage of reopened logging roads on the east side of the massif to climb a new route on the subsidiary Nesakwach Spires, following the buttress just right of the Priest-Coupe Couloir to the summit of the South Nesakwach Spire. The line went at D-, III 5.9, with 10 pitches, mostly in the 5.7 range but with a couple of short, probably avoidable cruxes.

Finally, Mt. Robie Reid has a massive northeast wall rising 1,700m vertically to the summit ridge. The true face has one route, the awesome Pacemaker (ED1/2, VI 5.10a A1), established over eight days, on the third attempt, by John Black, Reinhard Fabische, and Chris Rowe in August 1998. Last September, Chris Geisler and Tony Richardson finally made the second ascent and first free ascent of Pacemaker. They walked in from the logging road in five hours and bivied near the base, then climbed

20-some pitches, with much simul-climbing and long runouts to mid-5.10, past bolt anchors destroyed or damaged by a 2007 rockfall, to the Ice Block Ledge bivy, near the edge of the rockfall scar. Geisler estimated it at 50' wide, 60' high, and 30' deep, creating a massive new roof to circumvent. The next morning they climbed another eight long or simul-climbing pitches to the top of the face (28 pitches total, vs. nearly 40 on the first ascent), descended the standard route, and were back at their car before dark, with the route going at ED1/2, VI 5.10R.

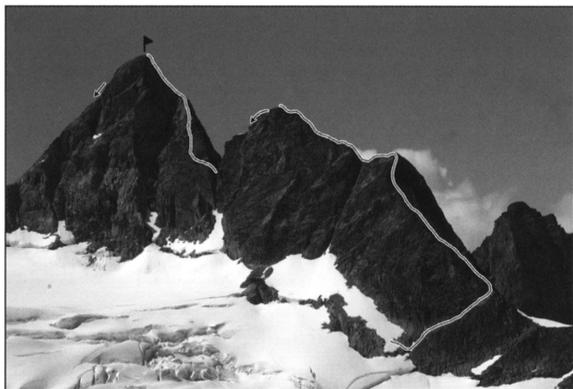
DREW BRAYSHAW, *Canada*, AAC



Pacemaker, on Robie Reid. *Scott Pick*

*Mt. Desire, East Ridge.* On July 17, with the support of the American Alpine Club and the McNeill-Nott Award, Brianna Hartzell, Eric Dalzell, Mike Pond, and I made our way to the Bella Coola Valley. Our objective was the unclimbed east ridge of Mt. Desire, 15 miles south-east. The brief glimpse we got of the route as the helicopter landed was our only beta. With a stellar forecast, the following morning we descended the crevassed glacier, downclimbed a 50° snow slope to a small band of rock, and climbed a ramp to the ridge proper. We began simul-climbing along the crest, occasionally pitching-out short sections of 5.7. We skirted an imposing gendarme to its north, returned to the ridge, and followed a beautiful knife-edge snow arête with amazing exposure.

Our first glimpse of the headwall gave us a collective sense of “Holy Shit!” As Mike and I studied the rock, we saw weaknesses and became enthusiastic. Brianna and Eric were less optimistic and descended, while Mike and I continued.

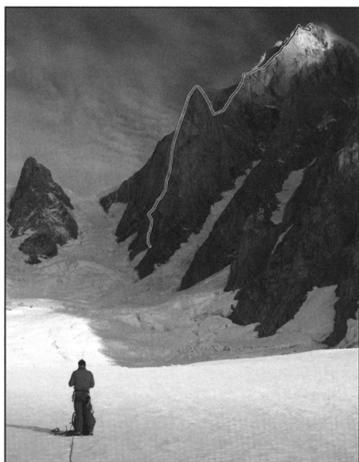


The East Ridge of Desire. *Matt Van Biene*

which we presumed was from John Clarke, who arrived in 1993 from the west and south [CAJ 1994, p. 78]. Our descent to the west began by a scramble down to a small col, then rappels down a steep snowfield and bergschrund, which put us within a hundred yards of our camp.

Mike and I climbed another two new routes, on unnamed peaks along the south ridge of Desire. Menery Ridge ascends the west ridge of Gayle Needle (III 5.8, optional 5.9+ variation on summit block). The Wanderlust Traverse bags Wanderlust Peak (south of Gayle) via a three-pitch rock and snow climb (5.10) that gains the north ridge, climbs to the summit, then continues along the east ridge over two smaller peaks.

MATT VAN BIENE, AAC



Defiance, on the southeast face of Mt. Combatant. The initial prominent tower is the Incisor, home to two other routes: Belligerence (Child-Collum-Mascioli, 1994), to the left of Defiance, and Smoke Show (Furneau-Maddaloni, 2004), to the right. Perseverance (Cusick-Kearney, 2000) climbs the next buttress to the left on Combatant's summit. The thin rib right of the Incisor, across the glaciated couloir, is Southwest Bartizans (Condon-Edwards, 2002) on Mt. Tiedemann. *Joshua Lavigne*

Mike and I descended into a notch in three rappels, bringing us to a rock bridge and the base of the headwall. We mostly simul-climbed, up 5.8. The climbing stayed engaging, the rock quality improved, and our position kept improving. The final section gradually steepened to just shy of vertical, with a final snow mushroom mantle. This was our introduction to first ascents (1,200', III+ 5.8), making for a special moment. We found a cairn on top,

*Mt. Combatant, Defiance.* After warming up on über-classic Skywalk Buttress (600m, ED1 5.9) with my girlfriend Carlyle Norman and our friend Scott Everett, Craig McGee and I turned our attention to a line on the southeast face of Mt. Combatant, with hopes of establishing a free climb up the Incisor and continuing along the ridge to the summit.

On August 26 Craig and I climbed the lower portion of the Incisor, encountering steep technical climbing with multiple loose, run-out 5.11 pitches. The crux pitch had intricate thin crack climbing that required cleaning and two pins (the only gear we left). After the crux pitch we discovered several pins, probably from the route Belligerence. (We think we shared three or four pitches with it). After seven pitches of intricate, sustained climbing, we rappelled, fixing our two lines and leaving gear at the base.

Two days later we returned and quickly reached the crux pitch. After a couple of attempts and additional