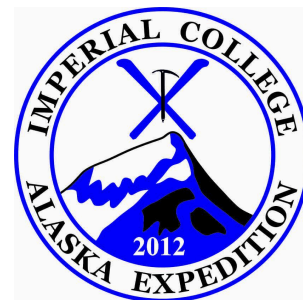


Imperial College Alaska Expedition Preliminary Report



Name of Expedition: Imperial College Alaska Expedition

Names of all expedition members:

Sara Arbos-Torrent: *Expedition Leader*

Boris Korzh: *Training and Equipment Officer*

Sam Thompson: *Medical and Communications Officer*

Arnaud Sors: *Finance Officer*

1- Aims and Objectives of expedition

The overall aim of the expedition is to live for month, unsupported, on the ice and rock of the rarely explored territories of the Wrangell Mountains in Alaska and make a number of first mountain ascents.

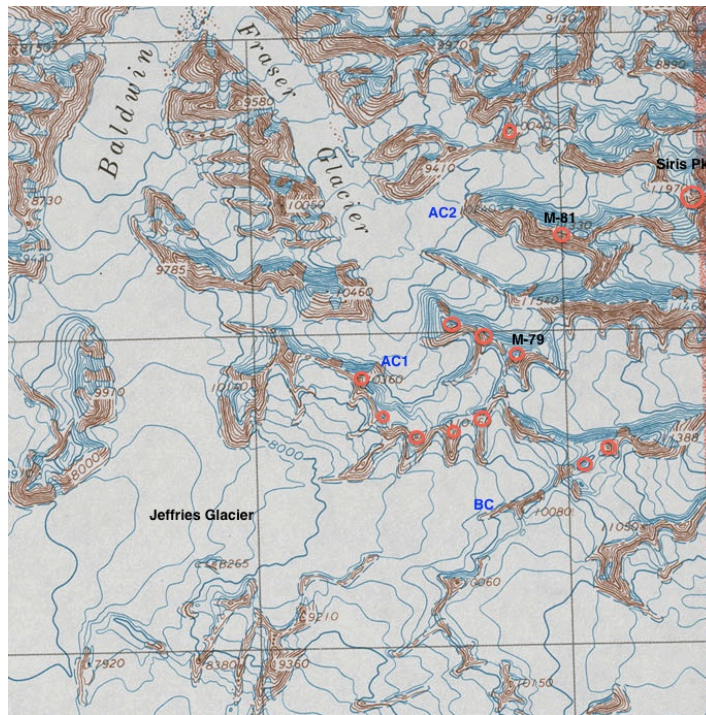
The general objectives are:

- To explore rarely visited territories of the Wrangell-St Elias Mountain Range.
- **To attain first ascents of previously unclimbed peaks using both ski mountaineering and alpine climbing techniques.**
- To identify other potential objectives in the area for future expeditions.
- To obtain relevant aerial photographic material both of the objectives and the glaciers.

This will contribute to both the report production as well as an aid tool for the planning of future expeditions to that area.

- To inspire other members of Imperial College as well as the wider mountaineering community to explore Alaska.
- To extend the ski mountaineering, alpine and expedition experience of all members.

Map of the main objectives attained:



2 - Expedition dates

The main dates of the expedition were from 1st June until 10th July. Accessing the Baldwin glacier was relatively straight forward as we were flown in on a glacial plane.

In total we spent 31 days (30 nights) on glaciated terrain.

3 - Technical details of the expedition

We climbed 14 independent peaks / mountains. Several of these had previously been climbed by other parties, but 6 of them have no reported ascents. We also established new routes on some of the peaks that had already been climbed. Moreover, some of the peaks we climbed via 2 different routes. Generally the peaks that had been climbed were done so by the easiest / most straight forward route. Hence, there were still some excellent unclimbed lines that offered great technical climbing.

In general the rock was of a poor quality. We encountered some granite but generally the rock was very unstable and tended to brake very easily. We therefore made the decision to choose our routes based on the quality of ice and snow on a particular line. There were a number of North Faces that were in good condition. These offered the most technical climbing in the safest way. The grade of climbing ranged from Facile to Difficile. The majority of routes climbed were in the Assez Difficile range.

The maximum height reached was on Siri's Peak (the highest mountain in the area) at 3660 m.

4 - Weather

The weather conditions were extremely mixed. Out of the 31 days we spent there, 15 had good weather and 15 were very poor. On the 15 good days we were able to climb, and so long as an early start was made, the conditions were generally good. Temperatures rose considerably during the afternoon to above freezing.

On the poor weather days the weather really was awful! Snow storms, high winds, zero visibility, and cold temperatures were commonplace. On such days, having no type of permanent tent (community tent), we were confined to our pair shared tents.

We experienced a full range of conditions over the 31 days. Ranging from periods of extended high pressure bringing cloudless skies and solid neve. Right through to 50 cm dumps of snow overnight. Avalanches after 'big dump' days were extremely frequent.

5 - Medical Report

An accident occurred on the evening of the 22nd of June. It occurred on the final part of the descent of one of the unclimbed peaks, 41330ft. One of the members of the party, Sara Arbós, slipped with the misfortune of landing onto the ice-screw that was attached to her harness. The ice-screw perforated her trousers and created 2 lacerations on her upper thigh. No bleeding was present. She carried on climbing and skiing until basecamp was reached. There, the wound was assessed by all the members and disinfected following standard 1st aid procedures. The emergency procedures established in the risk assessment were all undertaken. The insurance company was informed and Prof. Imray contacted. Imperial college was also informed as protocol establishes. The lacerations although not at all life threatening were 8cm long, by 0.5cm deep and 6cm long by 0.35cm deep. Although stitching material was available and all members of the party were able to perform such treatment, evacuation was chosen to be the best approach in order to avoid risk of infection and due to the reduced mobility that the casualty would have had after the treatment. Good weather was forecasted for the following day easing the plane evacuation procedures. On the 23rd of June at 8am evacuation of the injured took place, the other 3 members of the party remained for another 10days in the glacier and left at the scheduled day, 5th of July. The evacuation procedure was as follows, flight from the Glacier to Kennicott, friendly and very helpful reception by the rangers, long negotiation with BMC insurance, charter flight from Kennicott to Anchorage. Arrival at the hospital by 6pm on the 23rd of June. We would like to specially thank Pilot Martin Boniek for his invaluable help. The lacerations were further disinfected. The hospital's doctor and nurse noted the proficiency of the *in-situ* disinfection and 1st aid procedures followed. 8 stitches were given in total. She remained in Anchorage for another 4 days while negotiating with insurance. Finally, she was transferred on an earlier flight and arrived in the UK on the 28th of June. On the 29th of June Addenbrook's hospital in Cambridge was visited as a check up on the wound. The wound was following good progress, several other checkups took place in the UK. The wound did not get infected and no antibiotics were taken. It healed nicely within 4 weeks.