

PIGEON MOUNTAIN

Pigeon Mountain is located south of the Trans-Canada Highway and immediately west of Mount McGillivray. Its western side is a gradual slope easing into Wind Valley while the northern and eastern aspects present impressive rock formations. Two prominent buttresses on the north side of the mountain provide the only climbing routes established to date. However, the deep valley on the east side of the peak, between it and Mount McGillivray, gives an interesting canyoneering hike equipped within chains, cables, and a ladder and almost 2 km long. Hints of copious amounts of rock can be seen higher up this valley from the highway and from Grotto Canyon. Near the end of the canyon on the left is University Wall, an impressively clean wall of gently overhanging rock 25-30 m high. The easiest looking line at the left end has been bolted, probably by the late Simon Parboosingh, but may not have been successfully red-pointed. This interesting crack is unlikely to yield routes easily and unfortunately is a long walk from the road.

Approach

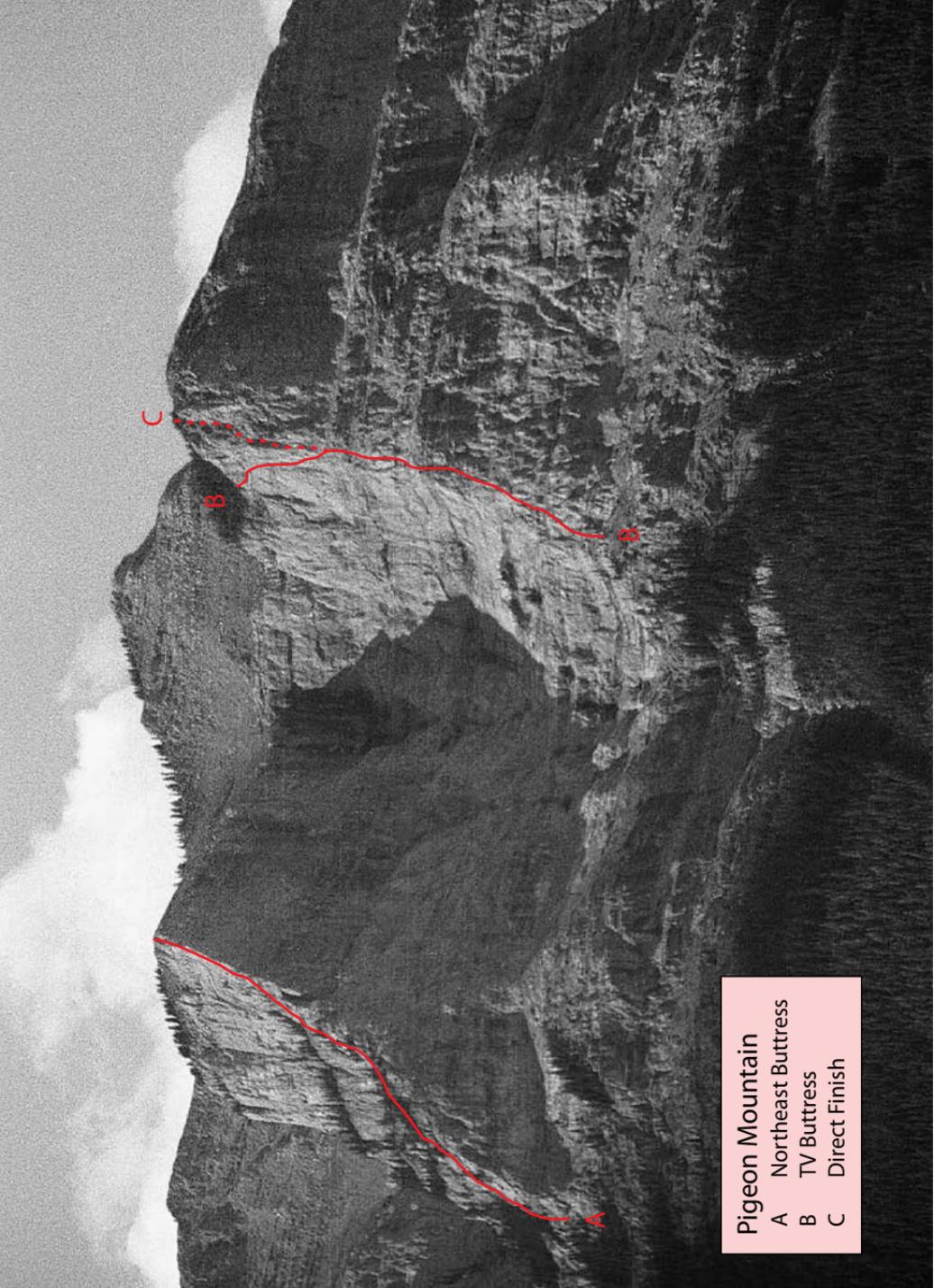
An unmarked, designated parking area on the south side of the highway, 3.6 km east of the Dead Man Flat overpass, provides access to the canyon and the two buttress climbs. From the parking area, head south on an old road for about 200 m directly toward the mouth of the canyon, and at the junction with the Trans Canada Trail, follow the right fork for a short distance before turning south again on a cleared track. After a jog to the right this continues south to the mouth of the canyon.

Access to the two buttresses is probably best made via a gully that cuts down through the trees directly below them. From the mouth of the canyon, climb the opposite bank and angle up left below a cliff band to gain a bench below the gully. Climb the gully that is fairly open but has a few small cliffs bands. At the top of the trees the two buttresses are easily accessible on either side. As descent from the mountain is made to the west, a more diagonal approach may be worthwhile for TV Buttress. Perhaps the best starting point is an old road 3 km west of the overpass, from which a short hike through fairly open trees leads to the Trans Canada Trail, which parallels the highway at this point, and the creekbed just beyond. A diagonal line up through the forest, which generally is not difficult to walk through, leads up steeply to the base of the buttress.

Descent

Probably the easiest descent is to continue up from the top of the cliffs to the summit of the mountain and then go down the hiking trail on the southwest side. The trail initially heads south and then follows the Skogan Pass cut line west to the trail head parking area near the old ski hill site at Alpine Resort Haven. A more direct descent may be made by heading straight down the fall line from the survey marker farther along the ridge toward the ski hill visible below. A small, blazed trail leads down through the trees to the cleared slopes and hence to Alpine Resort Haven. From here it is almost 5 km back to the canyon parking area.

The descent originally used from the top of TV Buttress involved scrambling down the ramp on the sloping right-hand side of the face to a prominent bowl at the west end. At least one



Pigeon Mountain

A Northeast Buttress

B TV Buttress

C Direct Finish

rappe was necessary. From here a trail, which improves lower down and is flagged, goes down the east side of the steep, treed water course to reach the highway at a small cliff 1.7 km east of the overpass. Just before the highway the Trans Canada Trail is crossed at a bridge over the creekbed.

Northeast Buttress 410 m, 5.7

G. Crocker & H. Gude, 1967

F.F.A.: N. Preshaw & R. Preshaw, 1989

This is the razor-sharp ridge on the left that stands so proud when seen from the Trans-Canada or 1A highways. It was originally climbed using a small amount of aid near the top, but has since been done free. Much of the climbing is easy and despite the attractiveness of the line, its circuitous approach and descent give it very limited appeal.

Start The route starts on some tree-covered slabs directly below the crest of the buttress as it emerges from the forest.

- 1) 40 m, 5.4 Climb up and belay at a convenient spruce tree.
- 2) 35 m, 5.4 Cross over to the right side of the buttress crest and go up a sloping ramp to a piton where the ramp steepens.
- 3) 45 m, 5.6 Climb a short wall to the left and regain the crest. Continue up easy slabs to a grassy ledge.
- 4) 55 m, 4th Scramble through some trees.
- 5) 45 m, 5.4 Continue up staying near the crest to a large ledge.
- 6) 40 m, 5.4 Climb a series of ledges to a loose belay.
- 7) 45 m, 5.5 Go up the ridge and over a loose pinnacle to a grassy ledge.
- 8) 40 m, 5.5 Climb the wall directly above and meander up the ridge to a ledge with a small tree.
- 9) 25 m, 5.6 Climb up slabs to a small, exposed ledge on the crest of the buttress (hidden piton 2 m higher). The aid crack used on the first ascent is visible 10 m left of the buttress crest.
- 10) 40 m, 5.7 Climb directly up the crest to an overhang (piton), move up and left on small holds past a small overhang to another piton (exposed), and then step right and go up a small corner to finish.

TV Buttress 5.7/5.9

C. Perry & J. Martin, August 1977

Direct Finish: A. Lucuyer & T. Calow, 1997

This is the rounded buttress right of the Northeast Buttress and closer to the road. Like its neighbour, it offers little in the way of good climbing and its uninterrupted view of the industrialized north side of the Bow Valley is less than magnificent.

Third and fourth class climbing leads up the buttress crest to the first steep band, which is detoured on the left. A wide ledge leads back right to a break that is climbed past a few fifth class moves to the base of the steep upper headwall below a crack on the prow of the buttress. Climb up and left for about 25 m to an indistinct groove that leads in two pitches (5.6 and 5.7) to a large ledge. Make a long traverse left to gain the top by an easy break in the steep wall above. Instead of moving left to the indistinct groove, the direct finish climbs up and right to the obvious corner system in the prow of the buttress. This is followed for two short pitches (5.9) directly to the top of the buttress. It is presently quite vegetated and dirty but is a much better line.