

Elpoca Tower – West Face, Right Corner

19 July 2020 Dave Peabody and Angela Tse. Gully climbed by Dave Peabody and Mike Rohs 4 September 2016.

Gear: 12 draws with 6 extendable, single rack to 3". 70m half ropes if descending the route, could probably descend the S ridge with a single.

5.9, approx. 200m. A fun, relatively easy route to the top of a really cool feature. The lousy looking gully is actually fun to climb with immaculate rock on the right side, and the corner above has some nice climbing with some cool surprise pockets on mostly good rock. A bit more cleaning of loose rock will improve the climb overall. There are plenty of other options on this sub-peak for those that like slab, and the left-hand corner looks pretty good! While the climbing and route-finding are fairly easy, I think some experience with varied rock qualities (typical rockies choss) and easy run-outs is an asset. Not really a beginner's route, but definitely not a horror-show. Recommend trying a little later in the season as the gully can stay filled with snow late which would make that part of the climb much less fun. The grades below are guesstimates.

*After one pitch in the gully an old bolt, likely from the 80s, and fixed nut were found. Several inquiries were made as to the origin of these but nothing was discovered. Therefore it's possible this line was climbed many years ago, or maybe just the one pitch up the gully. No other signs of passage were found above. If anyone knows the story I'd love to hear it and get the proper FA recorded.

Approach – Hike the elbow lake trail from HW40 past elbow lake. Once in line with the tower, look for a faint trail heading north across a marshy area then up open slopes and mostly not as bad as it looks scree to the base of the gully. 1.5-2 hrs.

P1. 5.7 or 5.8. Make a move past a bolt to gain the gully/chimney. Stem and climb easily past 4 bolts up to a bolt belay around the corner from the rap station. 50m.

P2. 5.6 Continue up the gully past 5 more bolts to a few metres before its end. Look for a bolt on the ridge to the left before reaching the top of the gully. Traverse left to the ridge, climb up the ridge making a tricky move over a step to reach a rap station on a nice ledge. 80m. This pitch was simo-climbed a short distance on the FA but involved heavy rope drag. Probably better to split into two pitches. Could have another bolt added to an existing bolt midway to make a station.

P3. 4th class. Move left stepping over the gap and up the easy slope to a bolt belay. Not really a pitch.

P4. 5.9. Climb up from the bolt past a first bolt (crux) onto easier ground. Surmount the broken roof on its left (gear) and trend right past 2 more bolts into the main corner that leads to the summit. Climb on gear and two bolts to a belay station at a ledge.

P5. 5.9. Continue up the corner on gear and 3 bolts until the main corner turns right and overhangs. Avoid the loose rock on this by moving left to the arête and better rock. Clip one bolt, turn the arete, climb up past another bolt to a ledge. Move into a block corner with a bolt at its top, climb up on gear past the bolt, move left slightly into the next corner, plug a piece of gear and move up to the summit.

Descent: The route is equipped to be rapped on double 70s from a station to the right of the final belay. Watch the rock in the overhang near the summit on the first rap. Note the third rap (going down the gully) doesn't reach the last station, but ends on easy terrain. A short downclimb is required to reach the next anchor. Alternatively, the Orvil Miskiw S ridge route can be descended as per the description in Rockies South or Kananaskis Obscure.

Line of ascent. Dotted green line goes up the gully hidden by the rotten looking rock.



Elpoca Tower at centre of photo as seen from the trail just north-east of Elbow Lake.



Looking back down the corner from the final belay



Elpaca Tower W face

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Dave Peabody, Angela Ke

P1+2 w Mike Kohns Sep 2016

4-5 Pitches

12 Draws

Single Rack to 3

70 m Half ropes

