

Shuwert Expedition 2018 Final Report

MEF reference: 18-32

Country and region visited: Pakistan, Shimshal, Karakoram.

Summary

Philip De-Beger and I made the first ascent of Banafsheh Sar 6040m at alpine PD on 22nd September. This is the highest peak above the East Shuwert Glacier near the Shimshal Pass. Our guide Wasir Baig suggested the name.

General Information

Stated objectives: To make the first ascent of one or more of the following peaks above the East Shuwert Glacier - 6040m, 5940m, 5962m and 5971m, climbing alpine style.

To make the first ascent of peak 5912m above the Shuwert Glacier, climbing alpine style.

Heights of our objectives were taken from the Soviet 1:100,000 map. Jerzy Wala's 2014 Shuwert map uses the Soviet heights. The Google Earth heights are slightly higher. These are the Soviet heights with Google Earth heights in brackets: 6040 (6079), 5940 (6021), 5962 (6020), 5971 (6058), 5912 (5980). Peak 6040 is 6090 on the Gaia map.

Google Earth coordinates of main objective and base camp.

Banafsheh Sar	36.462939°N	75.750659°E
Base camp	36.451221°N	75.713064°E

Duration: 9th September to 2nd October 2018

Expedition members: Peter Thompson and Philip De-Beger

Previous Climbing in the Shuwert Valley

A search of the Himalayan Index, the Alpine Journal and the American Alpine Journal revealed that two peaks above the Shuwert Glacier had been climbed. In 2002 a Japanese team climbed Mingling Sar 6050m (also recorded as Lupjoi Sar and Mungarig Sar) from the Shimshal Pass. In 2007 a Japanese/Pakistani team climbed Shuwert Sar 6152m from the East Shuijerab Glacier. (The allocated heights are somewhat greater than the heights on the Soviet map).

Jerzy Wala's 2014 map indicates that in 2000 a Spanish expedition climbed Yaz Sar and Tarin Sar, approaching from the East Shuijerab Glacier. I believe Yaz Sar is the same peak as Shuwert Sar. Another peak is named on the map as Umeed Sar. I cannot find a report for this expedition in the journals.

Flights

PIA has a direct flight from Manchester to Islamabad which is cheap and has a good luggage allowance.

There are now more flights from Islamabad to Gilgit and I have managed to get on them both ways in the last few years. I get my agent Adventure Tours Pakistan to book these flights as they cannot be booked on the PIA website. Excess baggage is possible but is sometimes left off the flight if the flight is fully loaded to arrive later.

Getting a connecting flight to Gilgit makes it possible to reach the Hunza Valley in a day from the UK.

Permits

No climbing permits are required on peaks below 6500m in open zones. However, this year we needed a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to climb in Shimshal, an open zone. The NOC can be obtained from the Assistant Commissioner's office in Aliabad in the Hunza Valley in a day or so. Having a guide is required to get an NOC. I'm not sure if an NOC is needed to climb everywhere in an open zone.

Porters

Rates vary. A guide is useful in negotiations. We paid 700 rupees per porter per stage for seven stages to base camp, which took four days. We paid 350 per stage for the unladen walk back, seven stages. We had five porters up and four porters back at the same rate of pay who we summoned by satellite phone. We had a guide who left us at base camp and stayed in Shuwert village. Tips are usual.

Weather and Conditions

There was some bad weather at the start of the trek to base camp and there was a fair amount of snow on the Shimshal Pass. After this the weather was fine for a while and the snow at base camp and on the approach to ABC cleared. Snow on the mountain remained unconsolidated under a frozen crust. It was around minus 5°C at base camp at night.

Maps

Google Earth was used to help plan the trip.

Soviet 1:100,000 map covers the area and is available on the internet.

Jerzy Wala's 2014 Shuwerth Mountain Subgroup is available at www.pahar.in

We had a map on a phone from www.gaiagps.com with 10m contours which was convenient.

Banafsheh Sar is 6040m on the Soviet map, 6079m on GE and 6090m on the Gaia map.

Budget

Expedition costs

UK travel	£150
International flights	£800
Visas	£260
Agency fee including domestic flights, gas, tent hire	£800
Accommodation and transport	£480

Guide and porters including insurance and tips	£900
Expedition food	£250
Sat phone	£50
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	£3690

Expedition income

MEF grant	£2900
BMC grant	£650
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	£3550

Balance-members contributions.

Diary

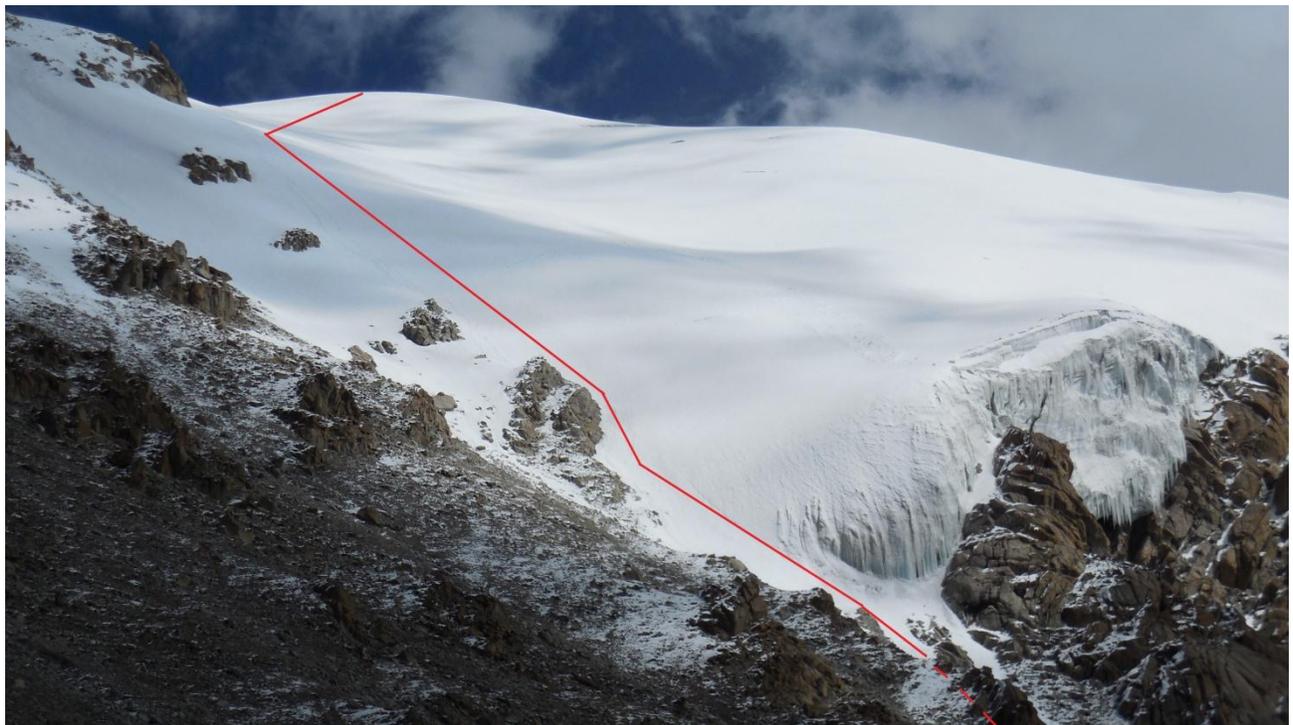
9 th September	Flew from UK to Islamabad.
10 th	7am flight to Gilgit. Taxi to Karimabad. Met Manzoor Hunzai, our helper and driver.
11 th	Found a Shimshali guide, Wasir Baig, in Aliabad and went see the Assistant Commissioner in Aliabad to arrange a No Objection Certificate.
12 th	Collected NOC. Drove in Manzoor's jeep to 3100m in the Sumayer Valley and hiked to 4200m on the miner's track for acclimatisation.
13 th	Shopping in Aliabad.
14 th	Drove to Shimshal with Manzoor and met Wasir. Stayed in Mingling Guest House.
15 th	Set off late with Wasir, four porters and two donkeys. Donkeys can now travel on the improved trail to Shuijerab village. Stayed at the new hut at Gharesar 3600m. It snowed.
16 th	A long day on the exposed Pamir-e-Tang trail to Arbab Parien 3900m.
17 th	Passing Shuijerab village we crossed a snowy Shimshal Pass 4743m to reach Shuwert village 4639m. People at Shuwert village were about to move to Shuijerab village before the onset of winter.
18 th	A short snowy trek to base camp at 4864m at the start of the East Shuwert Valley. Our porters and Wasir (his mother was in Shuwert village) left us. Wasir checked on us a few days later.
19 th	Recce up left side of East Shuwert Valley. Rocky and snowy.
20 th	Carry up to ABC at 5300m.
21 st	Up to ABC and bivi.
22 nd	Left bivi at 6am. Easy climbing but deep snow higher up. Roped up for a crevassed area. Reached summit of peak 6040m at 1pm. Returned to bivi.
23 rd	Returned to base camp.
24 th	Phil did a recce up the Shuwert Valley. Snowed at base camp.
25 th	Snowed at base camp. We were aware that more snow could make it more difficult for porters to cross the Shimshal Pass and we decided to end the expedition.
26 th	Wasir arrived as planned and we arranged porters by satellite phone. He returned to the village.
27 th	At base camp.
28 th	Wasir arrived with four porters. Trekking to Shuijerab village.
29 th	Trekking.

30th
1st October
2nd

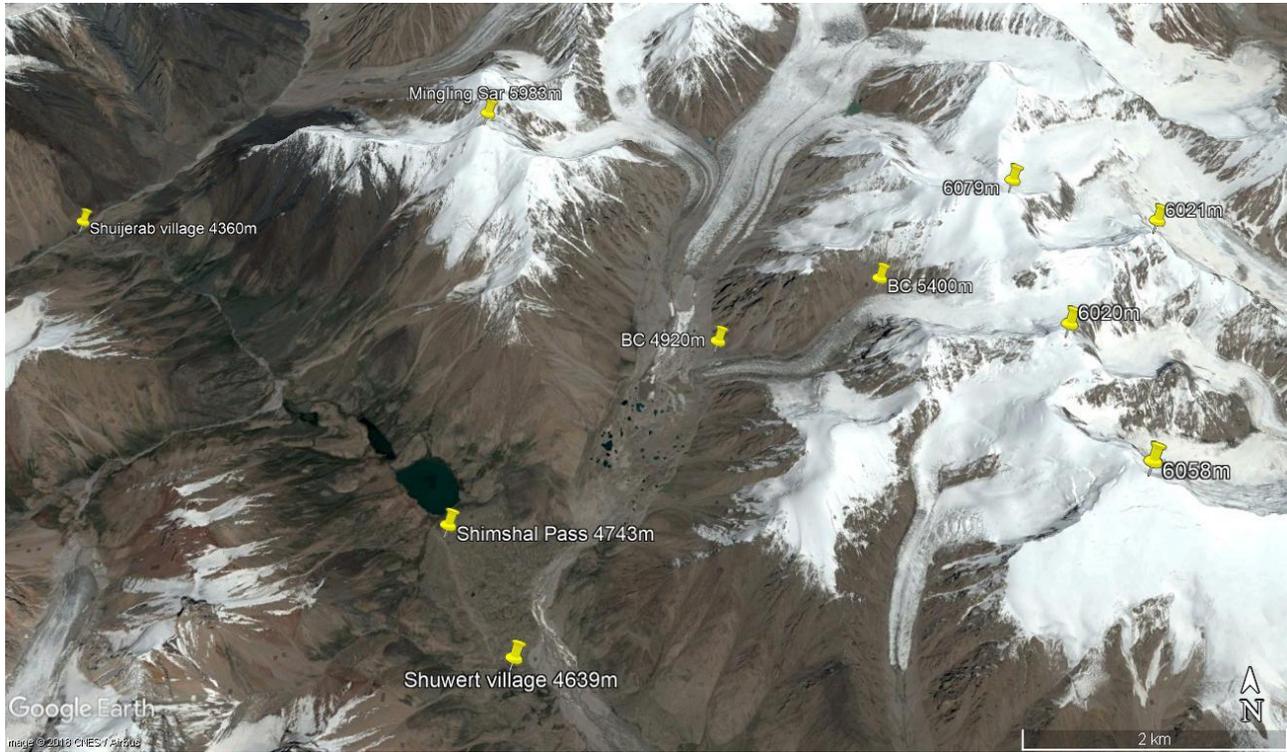
Trekking to Shimshal village and drove to Karimabad.
Drove with Manzoor to Gilgit.
Flew from Gilgit to Islamabad and I caught a connecting flight to Manchester.
Phil flew home the next day.



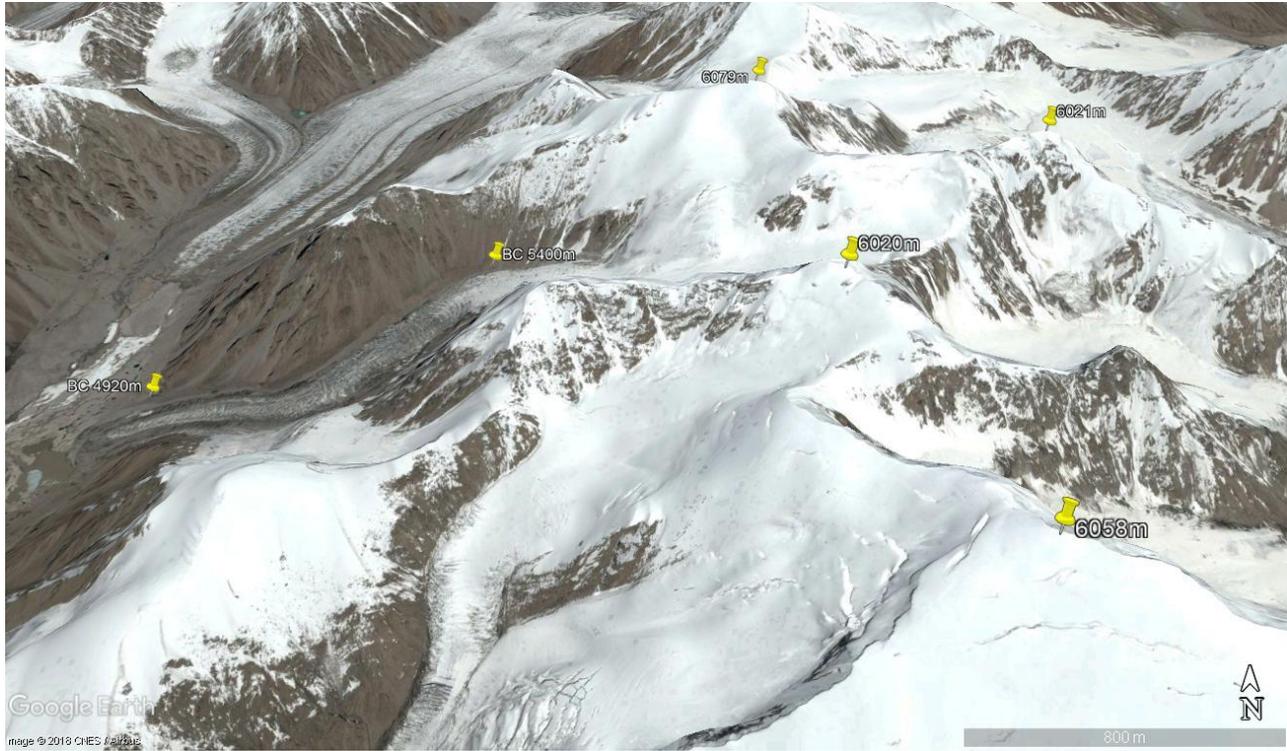
The East Shuwert Valley showing Banafsheh Sar 6040m (L) and a fore peak of Peak 5962m (R).



Banafsheh Sar 6040m showing the upper part of the route.



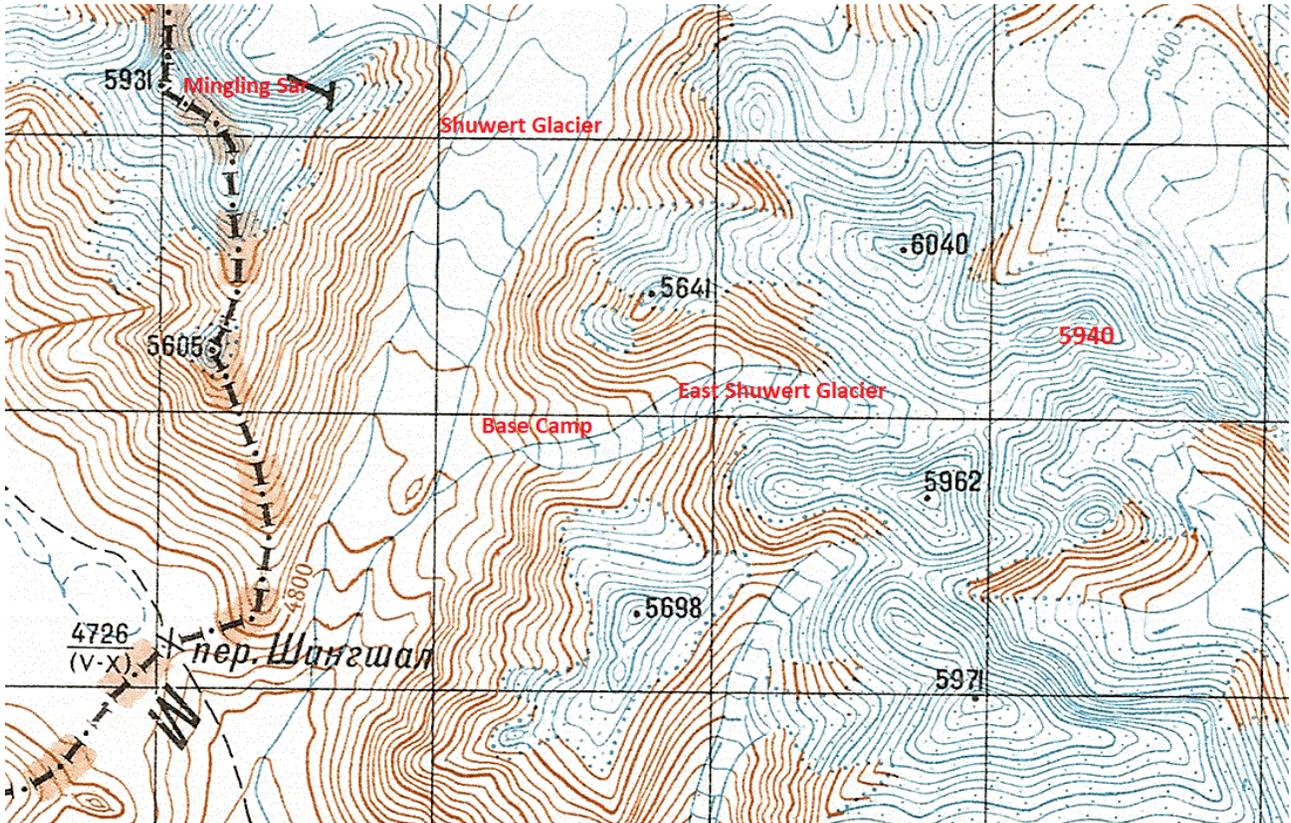
Google Earth map showing the approach and the Shuwert Valley with GE heights.



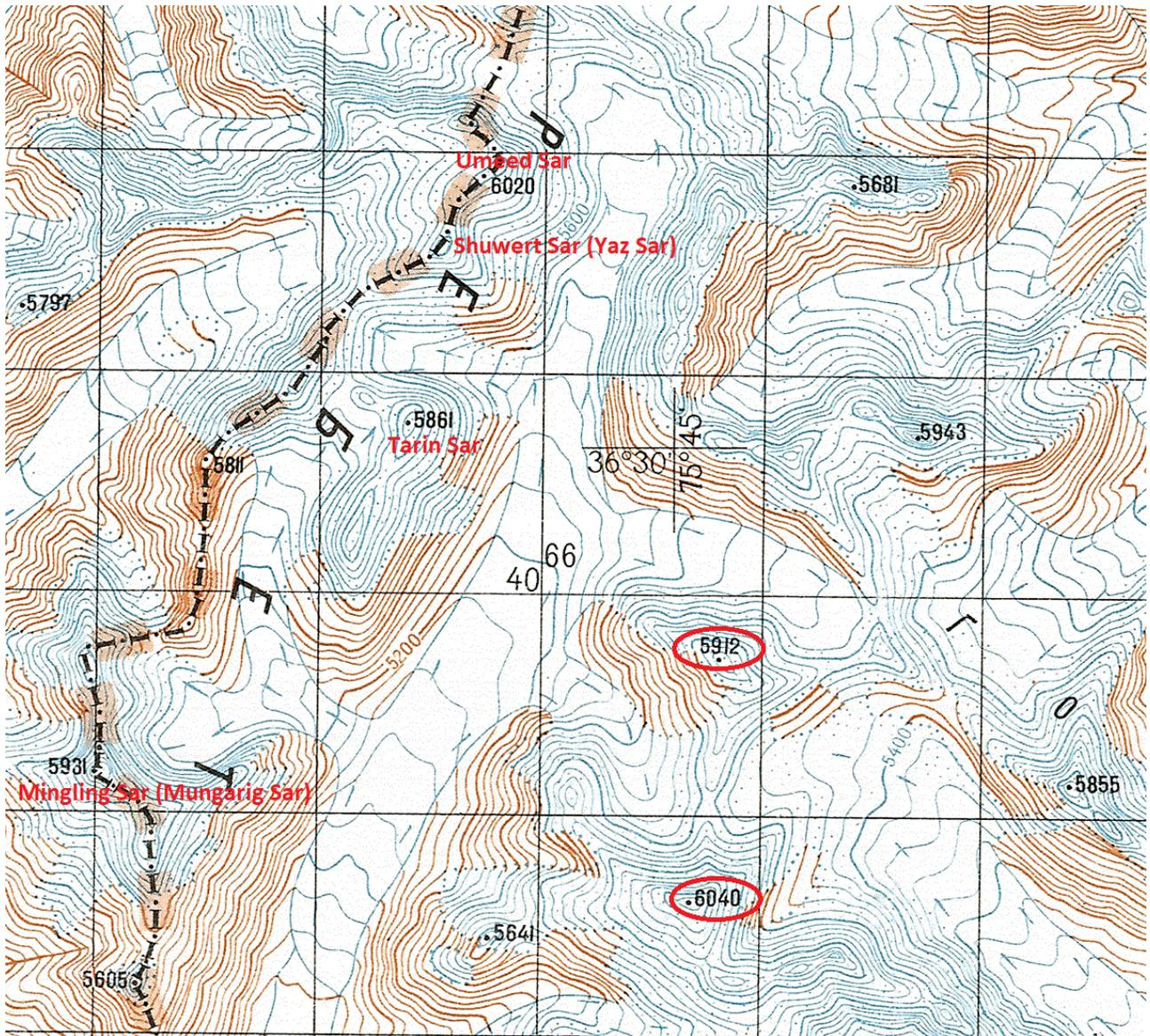
East Shuwert Valley, Banafsheh Sar (6079m GE height) and other objectives.



The upper Shuwert Valley showing objectives and previously climbed peaks.

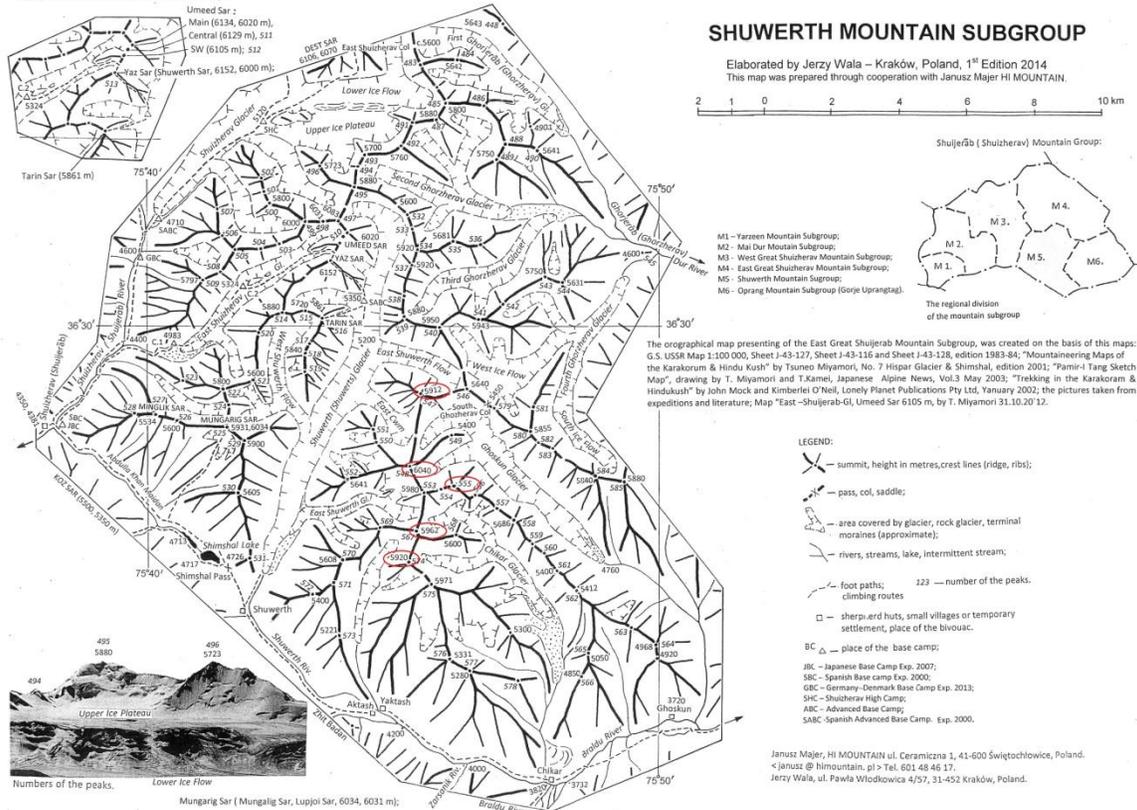


The Soviet 1:100,000 map of the area.



Soviet map of the upper Shuwert Valley showing objectives and previously climbed peaks.

KARAKORAM
Shujerāb Mountains (Ghuzherav Mountains, Northern Karakoram) PAKISTAN
Shujerāb (Shizherav) Mountain Group



Jerzy Wala map showing objectives.

Acknowledgements

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Report compiled by Peter Thompson, Alpine Club.
 Contact: peterthompson137@gmail.com