

Mystery Solved (!?)

The September/October 2008 Addendum column about the mystery gear on the mountain created quite a stir among gear industry conspiracy theorists. We're sure the truth is still out there, but you'll have to judge for yourselves whether any of these readers and Addendum fans hit the mark.

Dear Editors:

I saw your article on "Mystery Gear on the Mountain" in *Gear Technology* of September/October 2008. You have requested our explanation for this mystery.

I failed to see the scale of this picture. Therefore I had difficulty in visualizing the gear's size. But comparing both pictures gave me the feeling that some smart photographer has manipulated this picture to throw off all engineers from their analysis efforts. It seems too good to believe the picture portrays reality, with all the rocks arranged precisely and the background of snow-covered mountains.

This is a face gear shown in the picture. It seems to be machined rather than cast, as would be true of a more ancient gear. It has a reduced-weight design for lower horsepower, as evidenced by the thin web and rim on the gear. Therefore your explanation that this gear may have been used for mining purposes doesn't fit very well.

The size of the gear looks like anyone could have carried it to the flat bed of a quarry and arranged all the rocks around it. The photographer may have put in the snow-covered mountain during his/her creativity efforts to fool engineers.

Regards,
Vallabh Vaghani, staff engineer
Hamilton-Sundstrand Aerospace
Rockford, IL

(The Addendum staff has unilaterally taken offense at the suggestion that the photographs presented last issue were anything but untainted originals. In fact, they assure the editors that the photographer is a well-known acquaintance whose knowledge and reputation in the obscure is without doubt.)

Good morning,

Let me first state that I do not know why the gear is there.

The picture appears to have been taken well above the tree line. The peak called "Mt. Baldy" in New Mexico is near the same latitude as Roswell. The height of Mt. Baldy is around 7,400 feet or so, and it is not in the Cimarron mountains.

Baldy Mountain, on the other hand, is at the same longitude as Roswell, but it is a couple hundred miles to the north (in the Sangre de Cristo mountain range). This Baldy Mountain is over 12,400 feet and is supposed to be the second highest peak in New Mexico. I haven't been on Baldy Mountain, but I have been on Mount Phillips 15 miles to the south. Phillips is above the tree



line at 11,900 feet. (The tree line is somewhere around 11,200–11,500 feet). If the gear is on Baldy Mountain, then it is on Philmont Scout Reservation (as is Mount Phillips).

Having been to Philmont three times, I would suspect that the gear has been hauled to the top of the mountain by a couple of rangers (or mischievous scouts), just to make for an interesting discussion.

There are several skits and dramas presented at the staffed camps to embellish the rugged history of the area. The staff camp at French Henry is well down from the summit on Baldy Mountain, but was supposed to be one of the better camps when I got to go there. The gear is probably tied to their evening program, likely as an incentive to get the scouts up to the top of Baldy Mountain. 12,400 feet is a tough climb with a backpack if you aren't acclimatized to the high elevation.

Sincerely,
Kevin Connor, H-1 senior drive systems engineer
Drive and Propeller Systems Tech Team, U.S. Navy
Cherry Point, NC

(The Addendum staff confirms that the pictures were indeed taken on the Philmont Scout Reservation. We thank Mr. Connor for correcting us about the true name of the peak—Baldy Mountain, not Mt. Baldy. The Addendum staff neither confirms nor denies any of the other details outlined above.)

Dear Editors:

During the recent earthquakes in California, the center of the earth may have shifted, causing huge cracks to surface to the outer crust of the earth. The power of these earthquakes, steam, flowing lava and back pressure can, in fact, expel matter from the center of the earth to the earth's surface.

These gears therefore prove that the earth's axis is made of high-strength, high-temperature gears. And that gears are, in fact, the center of the universe.

Gary Matosian, manufacturing engineer
Moog, Inc.
Torrance, CA

(“Interesting” was the only response the editors could get from the Addendum staff. But readers should be aware that an Addendum correspondent has been dispatched to investigate this theory.)