

# Everest For Heroes



## What is your motivation for this expedition?

In 1985 I joined the Army on 'a spur of the moment' decision, telling my friends that I would see them in a few years; not one to lose face I stuck to my word and ended up serving for 23 years in the Army Air Corps. Everest has become that next great challenge.

I have climbed all over the world both during my Army days and in the 2+ years following, I have made many trusted friends whilst dangling from the end of a rope on far flung mountains, and I have also met and lost some great friends on military manoeuvres, operations and training. My motivation for climbing Mt Everest is primarily to raise awareness and money to help those less fortunate than myself, those who have been spared immortality and are instead climbing notional mountains every day whilst overcoming the physical and psychological scars of war.

In addition to my expeditions primary objective I also have a personal, implied and actual responsibility to ensure that my fantastic team of mountaineering colleagues are best prepared, equipped, and led to the top of the world in 2012. And, their partners and loved ones are confident in the team's ability and in my leadership skills in ensuring that we all return from the Death Zone, triumphant, and as a stronger and wiser and fulfilled team, happy in the knowledge that our efforts will make other veteran's lives that much better on their long road to recovery.

## Who is in the team?

To climb serious mountains takes serious people, people you trust, respect and who you know will deliver the goods when needed,

people who will not falter, people who put the teams needs before their own, and will always be prepared to go that extra mile when called upon.

During my uniformed service I came across such people, and for several years we climbed together throughout the world, learning each other's strengths and weaknesses, sharing danger, hardship and triumph in equal measure. My team have won their place on the expedition by demonstrating the qualities required to climb the highest mountain in the world.

## The team is as follows:

- a.** Expedition Leader - Damon Blackband (Ex AAC Warrant Officer, Avn Crewman Instructor)
- b.** Expedition 2ic - Phil 'Darby' Allen (Ex RM Lynx Pilot)
- c.** Base Camp Logistics Manager - Howard Floyd (Ex AAC Officer and Apache Flying Standards Instructor)
- d.** Beth Hall-Thompson - (Ex RAMC Officer / Doctor)
- e.** Chris Hare - (Ex REME SNCO Aircraft Technician)
- f.** Dan Loxton - (Ex AAC Officer , Apache Pilot now RAF SAR Pilot)
- g.** Guy Davies - (AGC SPS Officer)
- h.** Andy McKintyre - (Ex AAC Warrant Officer Lynx Pilot)
- i.** Chris Rhodes - (Professional Mountain Leader)
- j.** Base Camp Manager Anne McCollum (Risk Management Consultant and Expedition Manager)

## What objectives have you set yourself?

The team have set themselves some essential objectives and also some demanding objectives. The priority of the team is to



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ensure that we are all suitable trained, equipped and prepared for the hardships involved in climbing a 5-mile high mountain in temperatures as low as minus 60 degrees along with the other associated risks involved with climbing at extreme altitudes in the Death Zone.

Our hardest objective, however, will be the delicate task of raising over 200k for the Veteran's charity Help for Heroes!

## How are you going to achieve them? | How can the public support?

In order to accomplish our goal it will take a lot of planning and brain-storming, after all, we are doing nothing new, nothing ground breaking and nothing special. What we are doing though, is 'doing' it ourselves! We are planning, training and fund raising ourselves, our efforts, our plans, our training and our decisions.

We have drawn up a plan that will see the entire team share the responsibility of the whole expeditions myriad of tasks.

We started the ball rolling in Oct 2009, gaining the support of a fantastic web design company to highlight our cause and to allow us access to the World Wide Web and all of the benefits that that brings.

Our next objective was to finalize the team, this we managed over the following few months and we have now a first class team, all capable of standing on the top of the world. We also secured the support and guidance of our first choice Patron; Sir Christian Bonington CBE, an ideal mentor and figurehead.

The next phase of our plan was to develop our marketing, media and publicity campaign, this is centered around our interactive website, here people can view, read and hear about our cause and make online donations and leave messages of support and remembrance as desired. Our media campaign also features a traveling road show, which will be traveling the length and breadth of Britain during the following two years, bringing our

cause to the entire nation.

We are also contacting various other businesses and industries asking for support and help, these include, Radio, TV, the Press and a whole number of likely sponsorship enterprises.

In addition to our fund raising activities the team are all upping their personal training and mountaineering activities, including the following planned training meets:

Aug/Sep 2010 - Alpine meet in European Alps, here the team will spend ten days climbing a number of demanding routes and ridges including a planned bivouac near the summit of Mont Blanc and an attempt of the Matterhorn's 'Hornli Ridge'.

Oct 2011 will see the team conduct its final 'testing' expedition where an attempt on Mt Pumori in the Himalayas will be the objective, a 7000m + peak and an ideal opportunity to test out the expeditions logistics, equipment and procedures, not to mention spending some time on a High Altitude Himalayan peak overlooking Mt Everest.

In addition to the above tasks the team are also all involved in the delivery of some exciting charity challenges throughout the next two years, these include: Everest 4 Heroes fund raising charity attempts on the 'National 3 Peaks'; the Yorkshire 3 Peaks and the classic 'London to Paris' cycle challenge to name but a few.

Well wishers and fund raisers wishing to help the team raise money for our cause can join us on any of these advertised challenges by logging on to the expedition website [www.everest4heroes.com](http://www.everest4heroes.com) and follow the online links. Or they can simply support us in our challenge by buying a 'foot or more of Everest' for £5 a foot and ensure that they help us achieve our ambitious goal of raising over 200k for Help for Heroes.

## What training are you doing?

With regards to training I am personally putting in as much training as physically possible, with running my own outdoor pursuits



company; Imp Adventures and running three triathlons this year, interspersed with mountaineering trips and challenges to Vietnam, Cambodia, Peru, Argentina, China, Nepal and Tanzania. I would say that this year is rather busy already!

### **How are you going to plan the trip?**

The plan for climbing Mt Everest from the Tibetan side via the difficult North Ridge is clearly explained on the expedition website [www.everest4heroes.com](http://www.everest4heroes.com), however, it follows a prolonged period of acclimatization where numerous progressive trips will be made up and down the mountain stocking each of our three high camps above Advanced Base camp until we are all suitably acclimatized and prepared as we can possibly be before mounting an attempt on the summit, weather allowing.

### **How much of the money that you raise will go on the expedition itself?**

Difficult question, we would all like to give every penny that we raise to Help for Heroes, unfortunately short of one of the team winning the lottery or an oil tycoon underwriting the expedition we are going to have to use some of the money raised to pay for vital trip expenses. The team's plan is to try and gain support and sponsorship for all of our essential costs, flights, tents, clothing and equipment etc etc, the more support and generosity we receive will ensure that the majority of our fund raising goes directly to service veterans, leaving only essential costs such as permit fees being taken out of monies raised. The team are also funding virtually all of the training expenses themselves, making this a very big commitment for all concerned indeed.

### **Have any of the team climbed in Nepal before?**

Several of the team have climbed and trekked in Nepal before, including: Darby, Beth, Guy, both Chris's, and myself. Beth spent time working as the Everest Base Camp Doctor in 2007 and Darby and myself climbed to over 6000m in 2010, with the others having climbed and trekked on Mera Peak, Island Peak and classic treks such as the Annapurna Sanctuary and Everest Base Camp treks.

### **How do you think extreme altitude and harsh conditions will affect you?**

For those interested in the effects of altitude, Dr Beth as put together a few interesting articles on altitude-related problems on the expedition website [www.everest4heroes.com](http://www.everest4heroes.com). Altitude takes no prisoners, everyone will suffer at some stage from altitude-related illnesses, whether it be cold injuries or more serious cases of Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). The best prevention is avoidance by education, and we are all making it a priority to learn as much as we can about travel at altitude so as to alleviate the chances of altitude-related illnesses.

### **What do your partners think about this?**

After many years of leaving our partners behind whilst we deployed in our old 'green and black' outfits, we have now decided to include the Mountaineering 'WAGS' on as much of our training as possible. This includes bringing along our partners and families to the European Alps to join in when possible, and during the actual climb on Everest's North Ridge to visit Base Camp, coinciding with our hopeful summit return.

### **What is the website address?**

For more information please visit [www.everest4heroes.com](http://www.everest4heroes.com) or email myself Damon Blackband at [damon@everest4heroes.com](mailto:damon@everest4heroes.com) or call me on 07768 608914 to discuss any related issues or sponsorship opportunities.

### **This will be the achievement of a lifetime: how will you wind down afterwards?**

By hopefully marrying my Fiancée Kathryn at Everest's base camp and having the biggest mountaineering 'ging gang gooly' that Everest Base Camp as ever seen, complete with white down jackets, and Howard Floyd serenading the bride on his trusty travel guitar.

### **Do you have any plans after Everest?**

World peace and to work with children and animals...or simply to seize every opportunity and continue on a lifetime of opportunities well taken!



IN SUPPORT OF  
**HELP for  
HEROES**

CHARITY NO  
1120920



Founded in 2008 by ex Army Warrant Officer Damon (Boris) Blackband, Imp Adventures aims to provide exciting and affordable adventures for all ages and abilities.

By keeping things simple and the overheads low, Damon is able to offer fantastic trips that bring the adventures of a lifetime within the reaches of your lifetime.

Imp Adventures offers private guiding, corporate challenges, and charity events as well as open challenges for individuals. If it's raising money for a charity that's dear to your heart or you just simply want to enjoy the freedom of the hills with like minded people, we can accommodate your every need.

Imp Adventures offer challenges, adventures and expeditions throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland as well as within Europe and further afield to the greater ranges. If you can't find what you're looking for on our website then please feel free to propose a challenge or adventure and let us do the rest.

Imp Adventures PROMISES to offer you the cheapest deals on all of its challenges, If you can find the same adventure with the same level of service and support elsewhere we will better it - guaranteed. Imp Adventures only use enthusiastic, experienced professionals to run its challenges, for us this is a way of life and not just a job. For further information please visit [www.impadventures.com](http://www.impadventures.com)

