

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN'S

RETURN TO EVEREST EXPEDITION UPDATE

FEATURING **JAMLING NORGAY**
AND **ARACELI SEGARRA**
ON LOCATION WITH **CAUDWELL**
XTREME EVEREST EXPEDITION

DISPATCH # 3

DATE: *April 25, 2007*

LOCATION: *Everest Base Camp*

FILED BY: *Christian Kallen*

On March 24, 2007, an international team of doctors, scientists and filmmakers embarked on a three-month mission to conduct a series of medical experiments on the world's tallest mountain and to document the expedition for a new IMAX® Theatre film. Doctors on the **Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition** will risk their lives to bring back important medical discoveries about the effects of extreme altitude on the human body while giant screen film producers, **MacGillivray Freeman Films**, document the expedition for its new film, *RETURN TO EVEREST 3D*, a follow-up to the smash hit film *EVEREST*, the highest grossing IMAX Theatre film of all time. *RETURN TO EVEREST 3D* will also reunite two of the original stars of *EVEREST*, Jamling Norgay and Araceli Segarra, as they travel to Everest to help the Nepalese Sherpa people and conduct research on what has changed in the eleven years since their successful 1996 climb. *RETURN TO EVEREST 3D* will be released to IMAX Theatres and other giant screen cinemas on March 4, 2009, the 11TH anniversary of the original historic *EVEREST*.



INTO THE KHUMBU ICEFALL

As the Climbing Begins, the Research Continues

"Today was the day when we entered the Khumbu Icefall, and therefore started the climbing of Everest proper." So reports Roger McMorrow, breathing systems researcher for the Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition. "It felt good to put on the crampons, large climbing boots and harness. To hear once again the crunch of ice underfoot was a delight."

But entering the Khumbu Icefall is never a delight, pure and simple. This is perhaps the most dangerous obstacle on the path to the summit—aside from the extreme altitude itself. And this is the first challenge that faces those who would climb to the upper reaches of Everest, whether for personal accomplishment or professional need.

The Caudwell Xtreme team and MacGillivray Freeman advance film team are here for a series of practice climbs—to test their skills, their equipment and their commitment—and to begin the acclimatization process necessary before attacking the summit.

For Michael Brown, mountain filmmaker and co-director of MacGillivray Freeman's *RETURN TO EVEREST 3D*, it's a chance to test the team's helmet cams and mentally prepare for the challenge ahead. "Our team is carefully planning our trips through the icefall, to keep them at a minimum," Mike reports. "All told, I have been through this ugly place on 22 adrenaline-filled journeys. And this year there are three or four places that make me really nervous."

The route through the Icefall changes every year—and even within any given climbing season. It is created by ice from the highest ridges of Everest spilling over sheer, mile-high walls of stone in elastic yet brittle slow motion. At any minute, catastrophe can occur as the huge slabs of ice shift and break off.

"The places where avalanches have occurred are sometimes marked by huge ice boulders marking the debris flow," continues Brown. "The boulders are big enough to stick above the fresh snow, as big as refrigerators or TV sets. Near the top of the Icefall, the path takes a quick jog under a steep and calving ice face. It is places like this that we move as fast as our aching legs, hearts and lungs will allow."

In previous years, the first expedition on the mountain determined the path through the Icefall, choosing the most secure ice bridges, the most solid footing, the least risky route through the maze of seracs (ice towers). Now, that task falls to the Nepali Mountaineering Association, a group of experienced Sherpas who set the route and the ropes not just through the Icefall to Camp One, but up to the traditional locations of Camp Two and even Camp Three (at 26,000 feet) and above.

Ironically, through modern technology, the personal challenge of traversing the Icefall becomes a communal experience, as Kay Mitchell reports. "The MacGillivray Freeman and BBC film teams both had cameras that transmit a live video feed, so when the climbing team went up to practice traversing the ladders in the Icefall, we were watching as they walked across the crevasses. It was absolutely fantastic and terrifying at the same time."



The MacGillivray Freeman mountain film crew, led by co-director Michael Brown and cameraman Jack Tankard, shoots a scene in the Khumbu Icefall.



Michael Brown films a crevasse with the IMAX camera strapped to his body in a special harness.

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RETURN TO EVEREST PRODUCTION TEAM

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR: GREG MACGILLIVRAY

PRODUCER: SHAUN MACGILLIVRAY

CO-DIRECTOR: MICHAEL BROWN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: BRAD OHLUND

DIRECTOR OF MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY:

MICHAEL BROWN

CAMERA: GREG MACGILLIVRAY, MICHAEL

BROWN, JACK TANKARD, RON GOODMAN

EDITOR: STEPHEN JUDSON

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: HARRISON SMITH

EDUCATION PARTNER:

SAINT LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER

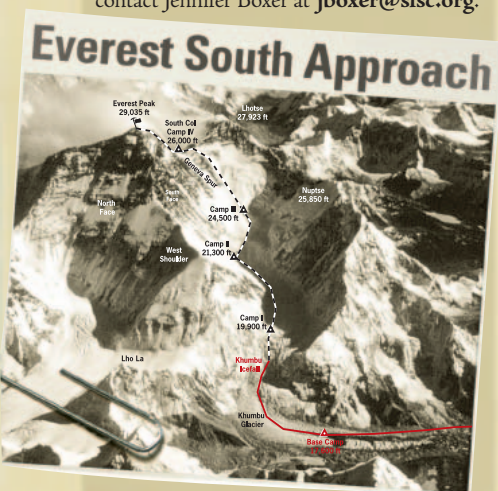
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MacGillivray Freeman Films is proud to support *Science Beyond the Boundaries*, a program of the Saint Louis Science Center encompassing a network of science centers reaching over 10 million visitors annually throughout the United States and Canada. A 2-disk set of educational and exhibit development materials regarding *Caudwell Xtreme Everest*, including hands-on science activities, posters and a live demonstration script, is available to all participating science centers at no cost. For information about joining the network or to order the disks, contact Jennifer Boxer at jboxer@slsc.org.



Research Never Ends

Now that the Caudwell Xtreme Base Camp is running smoothly, the expedition members have split into two smaller teams—the research team that will stay at Base Camp and the climbing team headed for the upper region. Says expedition leader Dr. Mike Grocott: “The research is going beautifully. Even if we don’t make it to the top, this expedition is on course to be a success.”

The first of over a dozen volunteer trek groups have begun to arrive at Base Camp for their three-day stays. A new trek group arrives every five days or so, and at any given time there are four or so groups in Nepal—one at Base Camp, two or three on the trek route, one in Kathmandu and perhaps another leaving. As each group is 15 to 20 people strong, it adds up to a significant body of information for Caudwell’s research into low oxygen levels.

The trekkers soon learn that they are absorbed into the project perhaps more than they bargained for. Most Base Camp residents look forward to daybreak and that first cup of “bed tea”—hot black tea with milk, sugar and spices—delivered to their tent door by the hard-working Sherpas. But the Caudwell research subjects, trekkers included, have to do without.

“Every morning the doctors log our blood pressure, our respiration rate and our blood oxygen saturation after rest, and then again after two minutes of exercise,” says Kay Mitchell. “Tea acts as a stimulant, so it throws the figures off.”

So the trek volunteers for the Xtreme research have to do without their morning tea for the three days they are at Base Camp, and they complain mightily. “They moan about it,” Kay somewhat gleefully points out.

“Then we tell them that we’re doing without it for 90 days, and they shut up.”



Caudwell's high altitude eye study: many climbers on Everest will experience tiny bleeding at the back of the eye.

Movies to Match The Mountains

But it’s not all suffering and deprivation for the trekkers at Base Camp. The first evening after they arrive, Kay sets up the DVD player and shows them a movie—*EVEREST*, the IMAX Theatre film produced by MacGillivray Freeman Films in 1998. “It’s a great way to show the trekkers just what the climbers are going to be going through. We’re planning to do it for every single trek group.”

Ironically, Kay is at Base Camp because of *EVEREST*. “The reason I’m involved in this project is because of that blink’in movie!” She saw *EVEREST* in London when it first came out, and the next morning told a colleague at the hospital where she worked, “I went to this movie last night, and it was brilliant, and I’d really like to go to Everest.”

Her colleague told her he was going to organize an expedition there and if she was really interested she could be his base camp manager. “I said oh, yea, that’s really going to happen. So I pestered him for about three years, and three years later here I am!” Her colleague just happened to be Hugh Montgomery, the research leader of the Caudwell Xtreme Everest team.

“So it’s all the fault of MacGillivray Freeman Films,” sums up Kay Mitchell, “that I’m standing in the snow in the middle of Base Camp!”



The MacGillivray Freeman advance film team's office at Everest Base Camp.

Next: Director/producer Greg MacGillivray arrives in Kathmandu with Jamling Norgay and Araceli Segarra.

Photographs courtesy of the Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition. For more information about the Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition, visit www.xtreme-everest.co.uk.