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Alive!

Airport Police Officer
Doug Scarborough
near the summit
of Mt. Everest.

A CITY EMPLOYEE'S QUEST FOR EVEREST

Last year, Airport Police Officer
Doug Scarborough came within
1,000 feet of the top of the world,
Mt. Everest. Inside, he tells his
harrowing story and reveals his
plans to try again next year.

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Photo courtesy Officer Scarborough.



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Club Exclusive

Party at Knott's!

May 11. Hurry!

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Knott's BERRY FARM.

THE QUEST FOR EVEREST

/ Alive! Feature /

29,029 ft.



ALIVE! FEATURE

Last year, Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough took on the biggest challenge of them all, scaling Mt. Everest. Here's his story.

Alive! photos by Angel Gomez, Club Member Services Manager, and courtesy the author.

There aren't many bigger challenges than scaling Mt. Everest. At 29,029 feet (the height is currently in dispute), the mountain is as big as they come, and as difficult a physical challenge as pretty much anything on earth.

It proves the mettle of Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough that he would decide to take it on. Or that he would take it on again.

In May 2011, at the end of the two-month ordeal, having climbed through tough passages past the dead bodies of those who had not made it on previous attempts, Doug reached to within 1,000 feet of the summit of Mt. Everest, and could clearly see the top. But he had to turn around when a Sherpa determined it wasn't safe to continue.

Now he's getting ready to try again next year. Enjoy his story, told in words and in pictures.



Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough during his ascent last year.

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DOUG'S JOURNEY



Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough entering Camp III, 27,000 feet up.

Here's a recollection of last year's Everest adventure, written by Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough himself.

The entire expedition took a total of 58 days to complete and started when I arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal. From there, we drove into Tibet, stopping off at small villages to acclimate while en route to base camp. During each stop we would have to do "acclimatization hikes," where we would hike up in the hills to slowly make our bodies adjust to having less and less oxygen. The process shocks the body into producing more red blood cells, which in turn helps you absorb more oxygen into the system with each breath. During this time the hikers would go through symptoms of high altitude sickness, which included headaches, nausea, insomnia, and lethargy.

Once we reached base camp at approximately 18,192 feet, we were provided our own tents, a dining tent, a shower (a bucket and ladle) and a small toilet tent. We did multiple acclimatization hikes throughout the neighboring mountains before heading off to intermediate base camp and advanced base camp (a distance of 14 miles and an elevation of 21,300 feet). Advanced base camp (or ABC, which it had become known) was where we spent a majority of our time. The daily routine started with a Sherpa waking us up at 7 a.m. with hot tea, and then finding the energy to hike down to the dining tent. We then dined on breakfast and spent most of the day filling our time with activities such as reading, listening to music, doing crossword puzzles or talking with other hikers while our

bodies slowly produced the red blood cells we needed to sustain life at such altitudes.

From ABC, the climb up Everest was done in intervals, which consisted of climbing up the North Col to Camp I, and immediately turning back and resting at ABC. Then, the following week, we would climb up to Camp I again and spend the night and then turn back around and hike down. Our final acclimatization hike consisted of climbing up to Camp I for the night and then hiking up to Camp II at 24,750 feet without the aid of supplemental oxygen. At this point the body cannot acclimate any further, and then we just had to wait for the right time to make a summit assault.

We hiked back to Base Camp and rested in the mildly thicker air while we waited for the weather window to open at the end of May. This is the only time the jet stream moves away from the summit enough for hikers to make the climb to the top. During the week at Base Camp, we used a satellite phone to call our families, we got schooled on how to use the oxygen masks, and I prepared two syringes of dexamethosone in the event someone would come down with high altitude cerebral edema (or HACE as they call it). Then it was time to go.

We hiked up to ABC and waited while they configured weather reports coming in from Switzerland, Washington, and Beijing. Then the window opened and we were off. We hiked up to Camp I on May 18 and dined on noodles, cookies, and tea. The following morning we placed oxygen masks on and made the slow climb up to Camp II. It was a rough night with winds of 60 mph and an oxygen tank used as a pillow. From Camp II we hiked to Camp III at 27,390 feet (and deep into "the Death Zone"). Camp III was a surreal wasteland of broken tents, discarded oxygen bottles, cooking supplies and dead bodies. It is so high that we could only use this camp as a rest area where I dined on a British MRE dated from 1990 and a can of sardines. The Sherpas took this time to celebrate and eat chicken feet from a bag that looked like candy.

After a few hours of resting, we geared up and began the hike to the summit. Starting at 9 p.m., we formed a string of headlamps leading up the mountain from Camp III to the summit ridge line. At approximately 1:30 a.m.,



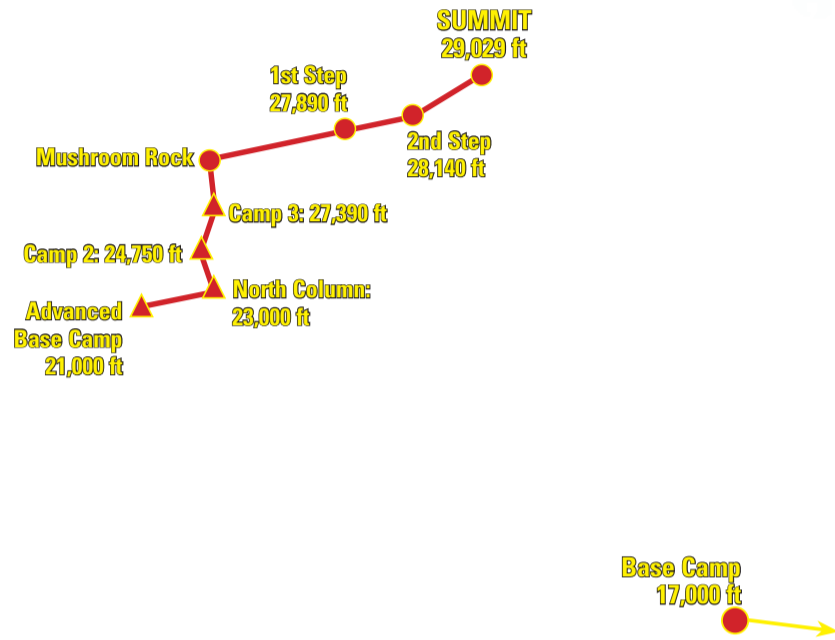
Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough (left) talks about his quest for Everest with Club CEO John Hawkins, during a hike in Griffith Park.

THE QUEST FOR EVEREST

our team stopped just past a dead body known as “Green Boots,” and the Sherpas began to have a disagreement about the time and the amount of oxygen they had. Nobody could seem to figure out the correct time, and they were going back and forth between Nepalese time and Chinese time (a difference of three hours). The Sirdar (head Sherpa) then made the decision that it was not safe to continue and turned us around. The moment was surreal at best. I was standing on the summit ridge of Mt. Everest at 28,100 feet (less than a thousand feet from the summit). I could see into Nepal on one side and down into Tibet on the other, and there was a dead climber lying in the snow just a few feet away from me. The summit was so close that I was not looking up at it anymore, but it was just lingering off in the distance at eye level and yet it seemed impossible to convince the Sherpas that we should press on. We had been hiking for almost 24 hours solid, and two months of preparation came down to this one moment; there was nothing left to do but turn around. It was heartbreaking, but I had never been so happy to be alive.

One of the hikers I met at Base Camp, John Delaney, died the following night as he made his way to the summit. Nobody will ever know exactly what he died of and his body is still attached to the rope, but he died doing something he had dreamed about. Another friend, Lyonards Ferandez, took off his mitts for ten minutes and got frostbite on two fingers. It was the most unforgiving and coldest place I had ever been.

On the five-day trek back down the mountain I promised myself I would sell my gear and never go back to Everest, but the summit was too close for me. I decided that I needed to see what was up that one last snowfield and stand on the highest point on earth. I will return to *Sagarna“tha”*, and this time I hope she will let me get there.



Doug's group climbs a ladder across a crevasse at the top of the North Col at Camp 1.

Airport Police Officer Doug Scarborough with his dogs, Jessie's Girl (left) and Scarlett.