

# Harry launches Everest expedition for injured sailors and marines

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**Prince Harry launched a mountaineering expedition to the Himalayas yesterday for Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel who are recovering from injuries or trauma as a result of conflict.**

Exercise Khumbu Challenge, which is due to take place in October 2009, will take in peaks of the foothills of Everest. As royal patron of the expedition Prince Harry signed pennants to be taken up the mountains at a ceremony in Her Majesty's Naval Base Devonport, Plymouth, yesterday, Tuesday 4 November 2008.



Also signing the pennants were the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, and expedition military patron Flag Officer Sea Training, Rear Admiral Richard Ibbotson.

Admiral Sir Jonathon Band said:

"This is a fantastic challenge. Some of these people have suffered some really rough luck serving their country doing what they can in the war. Now they will be facing this huge mountain, I wish them all the best."

The expedition aims to give Royal Marines and other Royal Naval personnel who were injured and suffered trauma during conflict a rare opportunity to continue their therapy in a novel, rewarding and challenging environment.

Royal Marine Corporal Steve Perry, expedition leader, devised the exercise. He said:

"This is a an opportunity of a life time for able-bodied members of the Royal Marines and Royal Navy and those who have been injured in conflicts and elsewhere to continue their therapy in a challenging and military environment.

"Expeditions of this nature bring to the fore the natural qualities of Service personnel, especially the Royal Marines who are at the sharp end of operations in Afghanistan. The determination, fitness, team work and self-confidence needed to train for and succeed in a tough mountaineering expedition will reinforce their medical and physiotherapy.

"They will be in a safe military team and support network where their special needs can be catered for. If you give Royal Marines a physical challenge they will strive to succeed to their utmost. They now have 12 months to prepare

from what for some is a very low base compared with what they have known. It is what they thrive on. I am proud to be working on this with them."

The expedition will comprise four teams totalling 85 personnel of all ranks and of all levels of mobility and ability. Amongst the expedition members at



yesterday's launch event, which took place in Devonport's sports centre, were Marines Ben McBean (Prince Harry's 'real hero' after the two returned from Afghanistan in February) and Mark Ormrod. Both have lost limbs after injuries sustained serving with Taunton-based 40 Commando in Afghanistan a year ago.

Marine McBean tackled the sports centre climbing wall under the guidance of Major Jim Bonney, who lost a leg after a climbing accident. As Marine McBean climbed, Prince Harry watched and promised Ben he would buy him a beer if he reached the top of the wall.

Marine McBean tackles the sports centre climbing wall under the guidance of Major Jim Bonney

On his safe return to the floor Marine McBean said:

"This expedition will show that even if you are injured fighting in Afghanistan then there is still a future in the Royal Marines. We are not forgotten, but can still work in the marines and also undertake a strenuous mountaineering challenge."

Major Bonney, who is categorised as operationally fit, said:

"This challenge gives injured personnel a new focus away from their injuries and gives them a boost to their self-esteem and pride and introduces them back into the military ethos and team spirit. It will enhance their rehabilitation and help bring them back into as high a category of military fitness as possible."