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and 24121

"RE 200" EXPEDITION - EXERCISE TOTAL ENIGMA

INITIAL POST EXPEDITION REPORT

General

1. This initial post expedition report will only include summaries of the relevant information on the "RE 200" Expedition. The full report will be produced by Aug 88.
2. The "RE 200" Expedition was an exploration and mountaineering expedition to the Chinese Karkoram. There was very little information available about the areas to be visited which would aid the necessary detailed preparations. The only records being those of Sir Francis Younghusband who traversed the Karakoram range in 1887 and Eric Shipton's book "Blank on the Map", which described his exploration of the main valley systems in 1937.
3. The team of ten included 7 Royal Engineers, 2 members of the Royal Artillery and one Royal Marine. Although the peak was 7,295m, non of the team had mountaineering experience over 5,000m, two had some climbing experience in UK and two were total novices. The philosophy behind putting such an expedition together was to provide a truly pioneering challenge where the team would have the technical knowledge required to overcome problems which would be beyond the limits of their experience. This undoubtedly leads to each person learning a tremendous amount about themselves, the importance of the team spirit and mountaineering, as they probed the limits of their experience.
4. The expedition was mounted by the Royal Engineers Mountaineering and Exploration Club (REM&EC) as part of the celebrations for the Bicentenary of the Corps of Engineers being granted the Royal Warrant. The other two anniversaries related to the expedition were of Sir Francis Younghusband's 1887 and Eric Shipton's 1937 expeditions to the same region of the Karakoram Range.

Aims

5. The expedition had two aims:
 - a. Photographic Survey of the Upper Shaksgam Valley. The Upper Shaksgam Valley is believed to be the source of periodical catastrophic flooding which has led to the deaths of thousands of people. The last major flood in the mid 1950s partly destroyed villages 250 miles down river, the first areas of inhabitation below the Upper Shaksgam Valley.
 - b. Climb Mount Crown, 7,295m. The Crown is estimated to be the third highest unclimbed mountain in the world.

OUTLINE PLAN

6. Planning Time Although tentative proposals for this expedition were being formulated 18 months prior to our planned departure, detailed planning only commenced 12 months later after provisional approval had been given by the China International Sports Travel (CIST), a Chinese Government approved body. This left a shortage of time for the organisational requirements to mount such a major undertaking. Usually 2 years is allowed for a committee to organise such Hymalayan expeditions. The successful plans were only achieved as a result of much timely co-operation by others and the expedition leader being given a significant amount of time from normal unit duties.

7. Outline of Events The expedition lasted from 24 Jul 87 to 8 Nov 87. Of this 13 week period only 8 weeks were spent in the mountains. The remainder of this period was spent as follows:

- a. Preparation in Hong Kong (HK) - 7 days.
Although this may seem generous, none of the team managed to have a day off due to all the essential last minute preparations of stores, visas, finance, liaison with sponsors and press coverage which is essential to gain sponsors.
- b. Transit across China to expedition - 17 days.
This included 6 days sight-seeing, a valuable benefit to be gained from overseas expeditions. Transit time could have been reduced by flying, but this would have been at greatly increased costs.
- c. Transit from expedition area to Karachi - 12 days.
This should have taken only 7 days but 5 days were spent being stranded on the Karakoram highway due to road blockages caused by numerous land slides.

See Annex A for an outline of events.

8. Finance The total budget for the expedition was £70,000. Of this over 25,000 was raised prior to departure. The interest on the loan is currently being paid for on a shares basis by the team members and the capital sum will be cleared by income earned by the expedition's fund-raising and business projects. An outline of expenses is at Annex B.

9. Manning A nominal role of expedition members including their responsibilities and previous experience is at Annex C.

10. Preparation Most of the team were able to attend a one week training period in the Alps. Bad weather prevented us from undertaking any routes. However, the period was successful in achieving its aim to train the novices in all techniques anticipated as necessary for them on the expedition.

11. Problems The expedition faced six main problem areas. These were:

- a. Access to China by the Kunjerab Pass The cheapest and quickest route to the Chinese Karakoram open to mountaineers from Europe is via the Kunjerab Pass. This pass, between Pakistan and Xingsiang Province, was built by the Chinese in 1982 and opened to public use on 28 May 1986. Unfortunately, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office initially closed this route for our use because it lies in a disputed area and we were a military expedition. It was only during my visit to Beijing in Apr 87 to sign the Agreement for the expedition that I learned that we could use the route. As there was insufficient time to change the outloading arrangements via Hong Kong and Beijing and because the visits to various sites of Chinese antiquity had become an anticipated part of the expedition, the outloading plans remained unaltered but the return route was amended to take advantage of;

- (1) The quicker and cheaper departure route via Pakistan.
- (2) The opportunity to cross the Karakoram Range.

(3) The opportunity to complete a traverse of Asia from the East coast of China to the Arabian Sea.

b. Surcharges Yechung is a town between Kashi and the Karakoram Range which is closed to normal tourist travel. It is also the home of the Chinese Mountaineering Association's (CMA's) regional office for the Karakoram Range. They are responsible for administrative arrangements and provision of the Liaison Officer (LO) for all mountaineering expeditions. The CMA premises in Yechung offer good accommodation and it is the last point of civilisation before entering the mountains.

On arrival in Yechung we were informed by the CMA representative that, regardless of the agreement with CIST, the local government would not allow us to approach the mountain from the North as we had planned, and they wanted to charge us £4,000 filming fee in addition to the £3,000 already paid to the CIST. We felt cheated and after consulting the Defence Attache in Beijing, agreed to approach the mountain from the South but refused to pay the additional filming fee. After 2 days of refusing to pay and sitting in the CMA hotel the local government agreed that we could proceed providing we promised to discuss the possibility of payment after the expedition was over. We agreed to this:

c. Fuel Loss The CIST had agreed to procure fuel containers for us in Kashi. Unfortunately the containers were of poor quality and approximately 1/3 of our fuel was lost by spillage during the walk in.

d. Long Load Carry The possibility of an extended load carry was anticipated for both the North and South approach options. In both cases there was a 12 to 15 mile passage along glaciers which needed to be traversed to reach a base for the Crown. The CIST were uncertain, but believed that the camels would be able to travel on either glacier to reach a point near the mountain. Unfortunately, travel on the glaciers was far too difficult for the camels, so Base Camp (BC) was set up near the snout of Cravasse (Skamri) Glacier. This left a 14 mile route over which 6 of us carried most of the 1,600kg of stores to Advance Base Camp (ABC). During this outloading period 4 of the team were involved in the photographic survey of the Upper Shaksgam Valley. It took 7 days to outload all our stores to ABC. To achieve this, considerable determination was required to face the daily 25 mile round trip at 4,000m over rough terrain, with loads of 25 to 35kgs.

e. No suitable site for Camp 4 Our Camp 3 was cut into ice on a 45 degree slope on the windward side of a cornice. It was at 6,670m, only 615m from the summit. The only other possible place for a camp higher on the mountain was below the rock band at 7,020m. We chose to attack the summit from Camp 3, despite the extended daily route to put out fixed rope. This was in preference to spending several days digging another camp on steep icy ground, half way to the summit and load carrying all the equipment required to support the extra camp. If we had more time a Camp 4 would have been very helpful.

f. Kunjerab Pass closed by landslips The Kungerab Pass is often blocked temporarily by landslips. The heaviest rainfall since 1972 had caused dozens of landslips across the highway which closed the road between communities. We chose to leave our equipment at the border town of Soest, walk around the road blocks and hire vans in between the blocks to be able to reach Gilgit. After several days we were reunited with our equipment and were fortunate to be flown out of Gilgit to Rawalpindi by a Pakistan Air Force C130. Some people were stranded in the region for nearly 3 weeks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H P Morgan', with a stylized, cursive script.

H P MORGAN
Captain RE
Expedition Leader

OUTLINE OF EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
24 Jul	Reception at the Royal Geographical Society
27 Jul	Fly from Heathrow and Hong Kong
28 Jul - 4 Aug	Stores preparation etc in Hong Kong
5 Aug	Train from Hong Kong to Guanghou (Canton)
5-8 Aug	Train from Guanghou to Beijing (Peking)
9-11 Aug	Beijing, sight-seeing, Ming tombs, Great Wall, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven.
12-13 Aug	Train from Beijing to Xian (Sian).
14-15 Aug	Xian, Sight-seeing; Terracotta Army and the two towers.
16 Aug	Fly Xian to Urumqi (Urumchi).
17-19 Aug	Drive from Urumqi to Kashi (Kashgar).
20 Aug	Kashi, Sight-seeing; Bazar, Mosque.
21 Aug	Drive to Yechung.
22-23 Aug	Yechung - Clearnace problems with the local government and CIST caused an unscheduled stop of 2 days.
24-25 Aug	Drive to Maza Dala; The road head RV with 24 camels.
26-29 Aug	Walk to Shaksgam Valley over Aghil Pass (4,900m).
30 Aug - 7 Sep	Shaksgam Valley photographic survey by 4 team members with 2 camels.
30 Aug - 1 Sep	Walk to The Crown Base Camp (BC).
2 Sep	Recce route to Advanced Base Camp (ABC). Prepare stores.
6 Sep	Establish ABC.
8 Sep	Establish Camp 1.
12 Sep	Establish Camp 2.
21 Sep	Establish Camp 3.

26-30 Sep	Summit attempts.
1-2 Oct	Recover to BC.
3 Oct	Prepare stores.
4 - 10 Oct	Walk out.
11-12 Oct	Drive to Yechung.
13 Oct	Prepare stores.
14 Oct	Drive to Kashi.
15 Oct	Kashi.
16-17 Oct	Drive to the Pakistan village of Sost on the Chinese border.
18-21 Oct	Drive, walk and fly to Rawalpindi as and when the conditions permitted. (The roads were blocked by numerous landslides and only a few flights left Gilgit for Rawalpindi because of the bad weather.)
22-24 Oct	Preparation of freight for shipping to UK.
25-29 Oct	Train to Karachi via Lahore.
30 Oct	Karachi.
31 Oct	Fly to UK.

ANNEX B

OUTLINE OF EXPEDITION EXPENSES

1.	Flights Includes UK to HK, Islamabad to Karachi and Karachi to UK.	£ 5,000
2.	CIST Fee	£40,000
3.	CIST Surcharges The CIST are also trying to charge us an additional £2,000 fee.	£ 1,000
4.	Insurance This did not include the following which were covered by MOD; Medical and Casivai.	£ 1,200
5.	Equipment About 20% of our equipment was provided by the Army adventure training pool. Most specialist equipment for use above advanced base camp (4,500m) was purchased.	£15,000
6.	Freighting charges Pakistan to UK charges only. UK to HK were by courtesy of the RAF and charges inside China were included in the CIST fee.	£ 1,000
7.	Reception	£ 250
8.	Administration Nearly half of this was for phone- calls. The remainder was for Visa's, travel and postage.	£ 750
9.	Travel in Pakistan	£ 2,000
10.	Accommodation in Pakistan	£ 1,300
11.	Bank charges	£ 500
12.	Food	CILOR
		<hr/> £70,000

ANNEX C

NOMINAL ROLE

The nominal role of expedition members, together with their tasks and previous experience are given below.

NAME	RANK	AGE	TASK	EXPERIENCE
Morgan HP	Captain	32	Leader	Led 13 climbing and mountaineering expeditions to the Alps and USA.
Day JJD	Captain	30	Deputy Leader Surveyor/ Photographer	Led several Alpine mountaineering expeditions.
McManners H	Major	34	Photographer	Nil
Slack J	Second Lieutenant		Assistant Photographer	2 Alpine seasons.
Wood R	Sergeant		Stores	4 Alpine seasons. Led one expedition.
Aspinall A	Corporal		Climbing Stores	4 Alpine seasons.
Moore N	Corporal		Medic	Nil
Roberts I	Lance- Corporal		Stores Assistant	One winter in N Wales.
Nelson R	Sapper	19		One week in Scotland.
Ainsley C	Gunner			Nil