

Volume 11

Number 034

Quest for Mt. Everest - III

Lead: After repeated pre-war attempts, in the early 1950s Mt. Everest finally bent to repeated assaults. The mountain was scaled by New Zealand beekeeper, Edmund Hillary, and Sherpa guide, Tensing Norgay.

Intro. : *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts

Content: After World War II, Communist China invaded Tibet and blocked exploration of Everest from the North. The southern approaches were taken through Nepal and a reconnaissance expedition was

mounted by that route in 1951 by the Brits. The following year two strong Swiss teams attempted to scale the mountain in the Spring and Fall but were stopped by severe weather both times just short of the summit.

It fell to Britain in 1953 to claim the prize. An expedition mounted by the Royal Geographical Society brought a team to the mountain. It was led by Colonel John Hunt, an Army staff officer and accomplished mountaineer. He was joined by Empire Everest veterans and a number of experienced Sherpa climbers. By May 28th the final based camp was established at just under 28,000 feet. Two teams were selected for the final assault on the summit.

The first fell just short and on May 29th Tensing Norgay and Edmund Hillary began the final part of the climb. They arrived at the south summit at 9:00 AM and after scaling the last obstacle, a very steep spur of rock later named Hillary Step, by 11:30 they were at the top. After congratulations and pictures, a brief bite to eat, all of which took 15 minutes, they made their way off the top of the world and down to their base camp. Hillary is reported to have said to his companions, “Well,...we knocked the bastard off.” A *London Times* reporter got the news out and it arrived in the City on the eve of the coronation of the new Queen Elizabeth II.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Dyhrenfurth, Gunter Oskar. *To the Third Pole: the History of the High Himalaya*. London, UK: W. Laurie Publishing, 1955.

Hunt, Sir John. *The Ascent of Everest*. New York, NY: Dutton, 1954, 1993.

Morris, Jan. "Finally, the Top of the World," *Smithsonian* 14 (1, May 2003): 54-63.

Royal Geographical Society, *Everest: Summit of Achievement*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2003.

Unsworth, Walt. *Everest: A Mountaineering History*. London, UK: Baton Wicks, 2000.

Younghusband, Sir Frances. *The Epic of Mount Everest*. New York, NY: Longmans Green and Company, (1926).

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/everest/>

<http://www.panoramas.dk/fullscreen2/full22.html>

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.

