

## Mallory Mystery Solved!

Yesterday, 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1999, during a research expedition- where the team was looking for clues to the mysterious disappearance- a body was found on the Northwest ridge of Everest. This body is believed to be the remains of George Mallory; this discovery comes 75 years after his initial disappearance.

During 1923, Mallory and Irvine were part of an expedition on Everest; their main goal was to be the first to the summit. Mallory (who was the main climber in the group) selected Irvine to be his climbing partner on the third attempt due to the addition of oxygen tanks to support the climb; this was despite Irvine's lack of climbing experience at high altitudes. Originally, Mallory and his climbing partner, Andrew Irvine, disappeared on June 8th, 1924 within 2,000 feet of the peak, taking with them the answer to the question of whether they had been the first men to reach the summit. Mallory reported through a sherpa, offered "perfect weather for the job" -- a first ascent of the world's highest mountain.

Asked earlier why he wanted to climb Everest, he had famously replied, "Because it is there." During their summit attempt, Mallory and Irvine vanished, last seen by Noel Odell, a teammate who said, "I could see spotting two tiny "objects" moving across a distant slope about 12:50 P.M., before the mist swallowed them." They were believed to have been killed after being blown down by a fierce blizzard.

Previously, in 1933 ( which is seven years after the pair disappeared) an ice axe belonging to Mallory was discovered at the elevation of 8460 m; this is close to the area where they were last seen. Odell has dismissed this discovery stating, " This isn't evidence there bodies were here. The ice axe could have been left there to be collected on their descent." In addition, in 1991, an oxygen tank ( from 1924) was found on the North west ridge; this has been confirmed to be Mallory's or Irvine as no other climbers were in the area during 1924!

Earlier in April 1999, an expedition set out, retracing Mallory and Irvine's steps looking for clues; they were hoping to locate Mallory's camera, which would contain pictures of the summit climb. Conrad Anker, who was the first climber to spot the body. He reported seeing something "whiter and whiter" than the surrounding rock and snow. He climbed over and realized what he was seeing was a body, but one that had "been there for quite a while." It is believed that sub-zero temperatures and dry air have left the body well preserved, though details have yet to be made public. Eric Simonson, the leader of the Mallory and Irvine Research Expedition, announced only that, "the remains were conclusively identified." According to other reports, Mallory's leg was broken and his shoulder damaged, suggesting that a fall must have contributed to his death. He was tied to a length of climbing rope. Mallory's snow goggles, worn to protect his eyes from the blinding glare of sunlight on snow, were reportedly found in his pocket; if so, he might have removed them once the sun went down. He was identified from the name on his clothing.

As of right now, investigations and further expeditions ( once the climbers have acclimatised) are occurring to determine if the pair made it to the summit. Irvine's body still has not been located. Will this discovery prove that Mallory and Irvine were the first to the summit- instead of Hillary and Norgay?