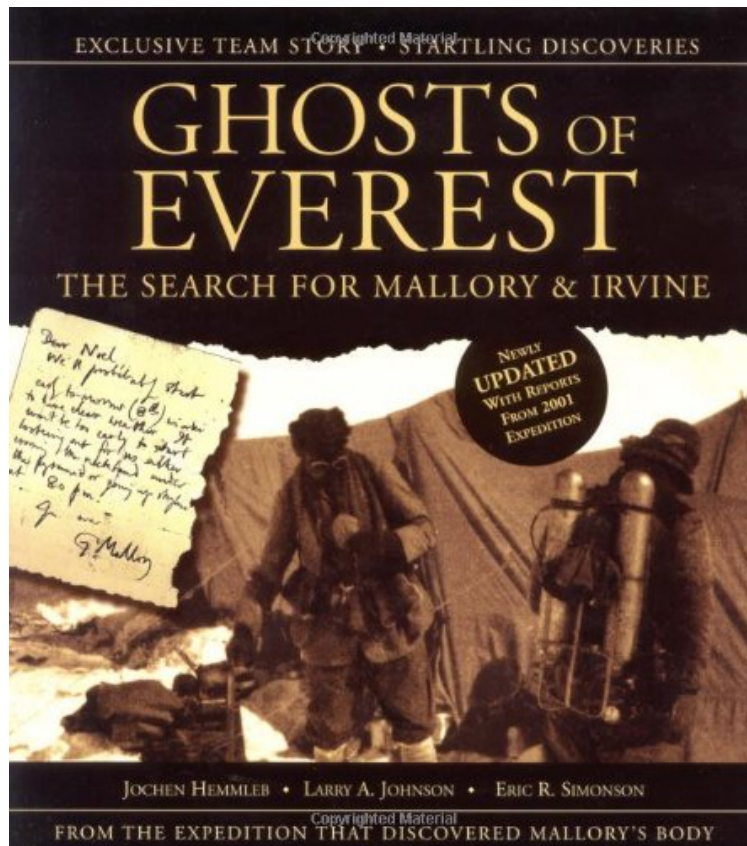


(Free pdf) Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory and Irvine

Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory and Irvine

Jochen Hemmleb, Larry A. Johnson, Eric R. Simonson
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#1336049 in Books Mountaineers Books 2001-09Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 .49 x 8.56 x 9.44l, #File Name: 0898868505208 pages | File size: 62.Mb

Jochen Hemmleb, Larry A. Johnson, Eric R. Simonson : Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory and Irvine before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory and Irvine:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Wish I had Been There!By Christian S. CoanEric Simonson and I were great friends in College and unlike many of our classmates, he has not wasted his life on silly pursuits, but rather has furthered our respect for and understanding of one of mankind's greatest quests: the conquering of Everest.Even in college, Eric was an accomplished Climber, Skier, Mountaineer, Geologist and Rescuer.This riveting account of the discovery of Mallory's body answers many questions about the climber's last Summit attempt. and reveals many details about the climber's abilities and equipment.We still have questions, but Simonson's book brings us a sense of closure we have heretofore not had regarding Mallory's climb.A great book and a great adventure brought to us by a great Climber and Good Friend.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Unraveling the Mystery of George Mallory and Andrew IrvineBy timcon1964Nearly half a century after making the first documented ascent of Mt. Everest, Edmund Hillary said of George Mallory's 1924 climb, "It would have been a just reward for Mallory if he had reached the summit." Ghosts of Everest, written by William Nothdurft (based on the accounts of Jochen Hemmleb, Larry Johnson, and Eric Simonson), describes the 1999 expedition that sought evidence of Mallory's fate. The book's

dust jacket proclaims that this expedition "found answers to the question that has plagued historians and mountaineers alike: Did they make it? And if they did, what happened to them?" Key interpretive portions of the text are informed by the conviction, or the wish, that Mallory and his companion Andrew Irvine did make it; but this volume leaves us, not with answers, but with new evidence on which to ground new or old hypotheses. Nothdurft begins by briefly recounting Mallory and Irvine's 1924 climb and their mysterious disappearance. Then he discusses Hemleb and Johnson's interest in unraveling the mystery, and describes how that interest eventually led to the 1999 expedition. He devotes four chapters to the planning and organization of the 1999 expedition. This is perhaps rather more space than some readers might have wished; but it is useful to understand the scope of the financial and logistical underpinnings of this venture, and to realize that Simonson had managed to enlist in it some of the world's best climbers. The book then provides a good overview of the 1924 British expedition. Nothdurft describes the dramatic discovery of Mallory's body. This discovery began to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge about his final climb. The limited extent of his injuries indicated that he had not fallen from the top of the Northeast Ridge. Tied around his waist was a rope, which suggested that he and Irvine had been together at the time of the fall. He was not wearing oxygen equipment. Also missing was a photograph of his wife Ruth, which he had planned to leave on the summit. But he was carrying letters, some of which bore notes relating to the supplies for his attempt on the summit. In analyzing the evidence, Nothdurft has chosen to substitute for the traditional question, "Is there evidence that Mallory and Irvine summited?" the alternative question, "Is there evidence that they did not summit?" And he answers this question in the negative. This approach opens the way to many possible interpretations. In evaluating evidence, Nothdurft customarily adopts the interpretation most consistent with a successful climb. He would have readers believe that Mallory and Irvine each carried three full, or nearly full, oxygen bottles on that fateful day. If they carried only two bottles, they would have had oxygen for only eight hours--not enough time for them to reach the summit. But three bottles would have given them 12 hours of oxygen, thus significantly improving their prospects. Mallory's notes list five nearly full bottles. Do these represent all the full bottles? There must have been more if each climber could have had three bottles. Ghosts makes great play of a list of six partial bottles. But the oxygen in these appears to have been about 90% exhausted; so that one of these bottles would have given a climber only 20 or 30 extra minutes of oxygen. Most challenging to the argument in Ghosts is Mallory's note to his colleague Odell, "we'll probably go on two cylinders--but it's a bloody load for climbing." If two were a "bloody load," what would three be? Mallory was apparently not wearing goggles when he fell. Nothdurft believes this demonstrates that Mallory was descending the North Face in the dusk, and sees this as proof that the pair each carried three oxygen bottles, because the oxygen in two bottles would have been exhausted earlier, forcing them to descend in daylight. Another explanation is readily available. A few days earlier, another British climber, Edward Norton, had removed his goggles in order to see where to place his feet--snow blindness was a danger, but falling off the mountain was a greater danger. The accumulation of snow on the mountain may be seen as evidence that Mallory and Irvine failed. Norton described an abundance of "powdery snow into which I sank to the knee or even to the waist, and which was yet not of a consistency to support me in the event of a slip." The snow on the summit pyramid could have been worse. Mallory had intended to place a photograph of his wife Ruth on the summit. Nothdurft implies that, since this photo was not among Mallory's effects, he must have left it at the summit. Quite possibly, he left it at the highest point he did reach, even if it were not the summit. Two members of the 1999 expedition (Conrad Anker and Dave Hahn) did climb to the summit. They found an oxygen bottle evidently left by Mallory and Irvine--but it was below the First Step, and thus does not place them close to the summit. Several aspects of the 1999 climb merit attention. First, the climbers left their high camp at 2:00 a.m. and did not reach the summit until 2:50 p.m. Thus, the climb took over 12 hours. Second, Anker surmounted the Second Step easily on this occasion. When he attempted to repeat this success in filming *The Wildest Dream* eight years later, he nearly fell down the North Face. How easily Mallory could have mastered the Second Step would have depended on conditions at the time. Third, Anker and Hahn, descending the mountain in the dark, were able to rappel down the Second Step. Was this option open to Mallory and Irvine? Did Mallory and Irvine reach the summit? Nothdurft's conclusion: "The plain truth is that there is still no definite answer." To this reviewer, the evidence suggests that Mallory expected to reach the summit in eight hours. If the ascent were to take much longer than that, the return to the high camp could not have been completed until after dark--a very risky proposition. If Mallory thought the ascent could be completed in eight hours, this could explain his inclination to carry only two oxygen bottles. Two bottles would provide an eight-hour supply of oxygen--and the 1924 climbers apparently believed that oxygen was not essential when descending. But the experience of most modern climbers suggests that it would have taken Mallory and Irvine twelve or more hours to attain the summit. At what point did they realize that they might not have sufficient oxygen to reach the summit, or enough daylight to return to their high camp? And how did they respond? We may never know the answers. In any case, few would dispute Nothdurft's argument that what really matters is "the scale of their achievement given the resources available to them, their astonishing strength and grit, the indomitability of their desire." Although it does not solve the mystery, this book is of great value to those interested in the 1924 and 1999 expeditions. It offers a dramatic account of the discovery of Mallory's body, and provides high quality photographs of the 1924 and 1999 climbers, the effects found on Mallory's body, and views of Mt. Everest and nearby peaks. 0 of 0

people found the following review helpful. Terrific!By CuriousCatI listened to this years ago and it remains one of my favorite nonfiction books. At the time I had zero interest in mountain climbing (still not interested, though some of the personalities involved now intrigue me). I selected the book because it was on clearance and I believe it's important to learn new things, even if they aren't an area of special interest. To my astonishment, from the start I was completely drawn into the story. It actually isn't about mountain climbing, it's about trying to find a lost expedition. I owned it on tape and have now gotten the CD so I can reacquaint myself with this mystery.

This is the inside story of the 1999 expedition to find the bodies and solve the enigma of George Mallory and Andrew Irvine, who tragically and mysteriously died on Everest on 8th June 1924, in an attempt to reach the peak.