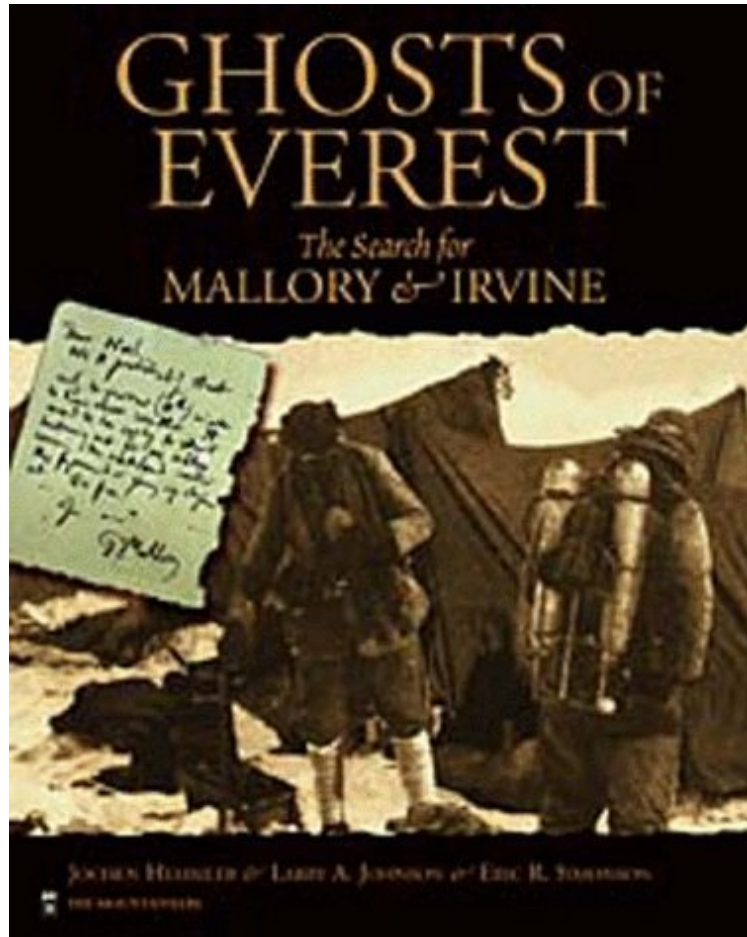


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## Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory Irvine

*Jochen Hemmleb, Larry A. Johnson, Eric R. Simonson*  
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**Jochen Hemmleb, Larry A. Johnson, Eric R. Simonson : Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory 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 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 Hemleb, 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.

Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory Irvine (From the Expedition That Discovered Mallory's Body)205 pp.  
"Unravels one of the most puzzling and compelling adventure mysteries of all time. On June 6, 1924, George Leigh Mallory and Andrew Comyn Irvine were only a few hundred feet short of becoming the first men to reach the highest spot on earth when they simply walked into the mist, never to be seen again. Did they reach the summit of Mount Everest - nearly three decades before Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay? This is the meticulous report of both the 1924 British Expedition and the 1999 Mallory Irvine Research Expedition which found George Mallory's body and answers to the questions that have plagued historians and mountaineers alike: Did they make it? And, if they did, what happened to them?"Keywords: JOCHEN HEMMLEB LARRY JOHNSON ERIC SIMONSON GHOSTS OF EVEREST SEARCH FOR MALLORY IRVINE EXPEDITION ADVENTURE MOUNTAINEERING

.com For three quarters of a century, adventure enthusiasts around the globe have speculated about the fate of British mountaineers George Mallory and Andrew Irvine. Did they reach the peak of Mount Everest before disappearing on June 6, 1924? How did they die? What was their fatal mistake? In 1999, the Mallory Irvine Research Expedition set out to answer these questions by retracing the steps of the doomed climbers, and in *The Ghosts of Everest*, they share their findings. William Nothdurft has gracefully woven the testimonies of expedition members Jochen Hemmleb, Eric Simonson, and Larry Johnson, all the while counterpointing the modern ascent with a captivating reconstruction of what befell the earlier one. There are also stunning photographs, which manage to be inspiring and beautiful and gruesome--occasionally all at once. And while it's impossible to establish exactly what happened to Mallory and Irvine, this account is persuasive enough to fascinate rock climbers and couch potatoes alike. --Melissa Asher  
From Publishers Weekly  
One of the great mysteries of modern exploration and adventure is whether British climbers George Mallory and Andrew Irvine reached Mount Everest's summit on their pioneering 1924 expedition in which both men vanished. Were they the first to scale the world's highest spot, decades before Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay made their successful ascent in 1953? On the 75th anniversary of the ill-fated duo's disappearance, a 1999 Everest expedition with Simonson as team leader, Hemmleb as historical adviser and Johnson as team coordinator attempted to retrace Mallory and Irvine's probable route and solve the mystery. Incredibly, they discovered Mallory's body remarkably intact, badly bruised and with a broken leg frozen in the snow. In a taut narrative that skillfully jump-cuts between the 1924 Mallory/Irvine expedition and their own, the authors make a compelling case that Mallory fell to his death and that he appears to have been roped to Irvine, who also fell and was injured. (Irvine's body was reportedly sighted by a Chinese climber in 1975, but this awaits further proof.) Did Mallory and Irvine make it to Everest's summit? "It is more likely than had previously been thought that they did make it. But it is still far from certain," conclude the authors. They base their analysis on their findings atop Everest, including personal letters and an inventory of oxygen tanks they found in Mallory's pockets. Their report, a work of historic importance that reads like a detective thriller, includes a moving foreword by Mallory's daughter, Clare Mallory Millikan, plus 100 photographs (80 in color, 20 sepia) illustrating both the 1999 search expedition and Mallory's 1924 attempt. First serial to *Outside*; author tour. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.  
From School Library Journal  
YA-Here is the inside story of the search for the long-lost British mountaineer. Mallory, one of the most accomplished high-altitude climbers of his time, and his companion disappeared from the slopes of Mount Everest in 1924 when they were close to becoming the first humans to reach the highest spot on Earth. In this skillfully crafted story, readers learn how Hemmleb, the young German graduate student and historiographer of Everest expeditions, linked up with Larry Johnson, another Everest enthusiast, and high-altitude expedition leader Eric Simonson in 1999 to put to rest the mystery of what became of Mallory. Stories of the original trek are intertwined with details of the modern research expedition. This beautifully composed, slightly oversized volume with heavy glossy pages has copious, lustrous photographs, including many from the earlier expedition, and several maps that perfectly support the text. This absorbing book evokes a reverence for Mallory and all those high-altitude mountaineers who have succeeded him in the climb to the roof of the world.  
Cynthia J. Rieben, W. T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.