

July 03, 2005

A Belizean K2 report via Satellite phone from the Glacier leading to K2 on the Hymilayan Mountain Range in Northern Pakistan,. Phoned into Open Pakki Radio Show on www.lovefm.com , 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Belize time zone, every Sunday. Show hostess, Rosalie Staines.

Report given by Walter Santos, Master guide at Caves Branch Jungle Lodge, Member of the Belize National Disaster and Rescue Response Team, and member of K2 medical / Rescue support Team. Fellow K2 team member from Caves Branch is Lynwen Griffiths, who is documenting the entire expedition and will produce a 1 hour documentary upon return to Belize.

Rosalie: Walter! Good Morning! How are you?

Walter: Good Morning! We are at Himalayas, Pakistan and we're at 14,000 feet, and you believe my word, it's shaky. It's snowing heavily and storming. It's very very cold out here. You guys are fortunate...(static) I need you guys to ask some questions, so I could answer them.

Rosalie: What have you been doing this week, Walter?

Walter: We've been doing a lot..

INTERRUPTED BY R: "Have you rescued anybody?"

Walter continues:... of work, especially on medical site and rescue. It's been really, really hard for us to move on because of the weather and a lot of medical problems that've come up. We had a lot of porters with the acute mountain sickness which is a sickness that a lot of porters get. So far, this season, 100, at least 100 of porters from other expeditions have died.

Rosalie: Walter, how you and Lynwen doing? Are you healthy? Do you have any medical problems?

Walter: Lynwen and I, we are doing fine. We are working a lot and we are fine. She is doing fine, I am fine. There are no medical problems with us, yeah, we are doing really fine. The problem is with porters. There are 400 porters on the mountain at any time. Many of them are getting altitude sickness and many are dying.

Rosalie: So far, how is the expedition going? Have the explorers gone further than 18,000 feet at this point? Because of the loss of so many porters, have the expedition stopped?

WALTER IS DISCONNECTED.
10 minutes later calls back.

Rosalie: Walter, you are on the air.

Walter: Yes, it's very difficult to hear on this phone. You have to wait until I finish and then ask the question. It's very cold out here, it's freezing, it's been snowing. We are very shaky. It's been freezing out here. Anyway, we've been doing some real rescues out here for the porters, who are getting acute mountain sickness and sickness on glaciers and a lot of high altitude problems. Just for this season in Pakistan, which is just for 3 months.. There have already been more than 100 porters who've died from the mountain sickness. We've been treating them and we cannot move on from here because there were a number of porters who, if we would not get to them on time to rescue them, they would die within an hour. And the doctors have been working intensively, 24 hours.

It's been very tragic time, and for us.. we've been working extremely hard, especially in those hard conditions. We are almost at 14,000 feet and you know, it's a mountain. It's very, very difficult. You know, we are walking on the glacier and the glacier is extremely difficult to walk on. It's been very difficult for us.

Rosalie: What is the situation with the expedition? You are at base 14,000 feet, that's where the medical rescue team is based right now. What about the scientific expedition? Has it gone ahead or because of the terrible condition of the weather, are they still at 14,000 feet along with you, or have they gone higher?

Walter: No, no, no. We've been unfortunate.. the weather is very harsh.
DISCONNECTED>

Walter calls again after 10 minutes..

Rosalie: Walter, go ahead, Walter, we are listening to you.

Walter: OK, i just wanted to call up again because, you know of the technical problems that we have.. I wanted to thank Ian Anderson for putting me in this cold region and I don't think he can imagine how cold I am right now. I want to thank Belize Diesel, Toyota and the Belize Tourist Board for co-sponsoring this trip. And I want to thank Cave's Branch and it's dedicated staff, Ian Anderson, the Alvarado family there in Belize City and my girlfriend, Sandra Alvarado, and my family in Belize, especially my mom and dad.

And I am very happy here and I am working hard night and days. Lynwen and I hope that this weather stops and so we can continue on for the next 2 stops. Thank you very much Belize, and I am very happy to be a Belizian here in this region and telling everyone in Pakistan here about Belize.

Rosalie: Oh, that's wonderful, Walter. We want to thank you for taking the flight there. We are so proud of you and our prayers with you.

Walter: Thank you very much. Lynwen and I hoping that we will make another phone call next Sunday. Good Morning, Belize! I am calling from here, from Pakistan. Everybody is doing great. I don't know what else to say anymore, you know..
DISCONNECTED>

End of report, July 03, 2005

Clarification of report.

There have been approximately 100 local porters die on the mountain range this season so far. None of these porters that have died are part of the Belize K2 expedition. Although a number of our porters have suffered altitude sickness, our medical team was able to immediately address those problems without tragedy occurring.

All of the porters that Walter has said they are treating are those of other international expeditions that were moving to K2 at the same time as our expedition and that were caught in the same three day snow storm as Walter and Lynwen were caught in. As word moved from camp to camp that many were dying from altitude sickness, The Belize K2 Expedition doctors and medical personnel moved from camp to camp, administering life saving medical attention. Information is that the Belize K2 medical team was personally responsible for saving 41 lives from altitude sickness on the mountain during the storm of July 02 to 05 .

On July 05, the storm abated and all expeditions proceeded forward up the Glacier towards K2.

Next live report will be on Sunday, July 10, 2005 on Open Pakki radio show, broadcast live on internet, 10:30 am, at www.lovefm.com