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Ten Injured Veterans Overcome Physical, Mental Challenges During Second Annual Adaptive Veteran Ascent of Grand Teton

Boulder, CO – Earlier this week, Paradox Sports partnered with Marmot to bring a group of US Military Veterans together to summit the Grand Teton. This is the second year in a row Paradox Sports has hosted an adaptive veteran ascent of the Grand Teton, with the inaugural climb taking place on Sept. 11, 2012.

“I’ve never seen mountains like this,” said Bobby Bradley, a 43-year-old Veteran from Vine Grove, Kentucky. “I went from not even thinking about ever doing something like this to summiting.”

The journey began when ten veterans, who had never met each other prior to the trip, headed to Grand Teton National Park for two days of climbing instruction with Exum Mountain Guides. It was Exum guide Mike Kirby, an experienced Army Ranger who served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, who helped inspire the idea for the inaugural climb. After leaving the military in 2011, Kirby was involved in an avalanche, which caused the eventual amputation of part of his frostbitten right foot.

“I just liked getting together with other veterans and doing something as cool climbing the Grand Teton,” said Kirby.

Fellow veteran and Exum guide Mike Abbey also joined the group for the second year in a row.

“Coming out of the military myself, they have a different perspective on things. They don’t have a lot of people to talk to in the civilian world. Being able to help them mean a lot to me,” said Abbey, who served eight years in the Marine Corps.

The morning of their departure, above-the-knee amputee Thomas Carroll experienced a mechanical malfunction. The computer sensor that allowed him to bend his prosthetic knee had failed, forcing him to swing his leg with each step throughout the duration of the grueling uphill hike.

“Seeing how hard he had to work to move and how dangerous it was for him to move through the same terrain is pretty unbelievable and put things in perspective for me. I



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have a whole new appreciation for the word “determination,” said Timpson Smith, a 38-year-old veteran who currently lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Married Veterans Tony and Jane Copper of Jackson, Wyo. were also a part team. The two-day journey was punctuated with a strong sense of camaraderie as the vets endured a 14-mile hike through boulder fields, caves and crevasses, as well as over 1,000 feet of alpine climbing.

“I am amazed, proud and humbled by the energy, camaraderie, and strength that I witnessed during the whole trip,” said Pablo Franck, who lead the trip on behalf of Paradox Sports. Franck, a 32-year-old below the knee amputee, was thrilled to be able to give back to the adaptive community. “I can’t feel any more proud for what we all accomplished.”

Paradox Sports will host another adaptive climb on Sept. 11 in Yosemite National Park where veterans will have the chance to climb El Capitan.

“Working with veterans is a big part of our roots,” said Tim O’Neill, executive director of Paradox Sports who co-founded the organization in 2007 with DJ Skeleton, an Army captain who was injured in Fallujah, Iraq.

This program was made possible through a grant received by Marmot, as well as various donations made by Native Eyewear, Mountain Hardware, Osprey Packs, Clif Bar Company and Kind bar. Paradox Sports would also like to thank Exum Mountain Guides for donating rental gear and the generous, hard-working guides who made this trip a success.

Participation in this program is open to all veterans. For more information or to register for the upcoming climbs, please visit <http://paradoxsports.org/programs/veterans-climbs>.

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Paradox Sports is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that improves people’s lives by creating an adaptive sport community built to inspire. More information can be found at www.paradoxsports.org, or on their [Facebook](#) page.