Madison Mountaineering
2015 Everest Expedition

What follows is a work in progress. You can track this story as it unfolds at http://madisonmountaineering.com/dispatches/

Audio Dispatch: Team safely in Gorak Shep,

April 27, 2015, Transcript of Garrett’s audio dispatch via sat phone: This is Garrett Madison calling in from Gorak Shep. Today the team was able to descend from Camp 2 on Mount Everest down to Camp 1. We had a good break in the weather and then from Camp 1 we were able to be evacuated by helicopter down to Base Camp. We got down to Base Camp and were able to sort through what was left of our camp after the wind blast from the landslide triggered by the earthquake here in Nepal. It was a very sobering couple of hours sorting through the rubble of what was left of our camp. Now we are on our way down the valley. All team members are doing well. Michael and Ron are in Kathmandu at the moment. The rest of the members are here at Gorak Shep in the Khumbu valley and we are working our way down slowly towards Lukla and Kathmandu.

We are still just incredibly devastated by the loss of our Base Camp doctor, Marisa Eve Girawong. She supported us throughout the expedition, took good care of us and insured that we were healthy throughout. We are just totally devastated that we lost her in Base Camp due to wind blast from the landslide.

We will check in again tomorrow. Thank you.


Team Hopeful for Helicopter Evac

April 26, 2015, Transcript of Garrett’s audio dispatch via sat phone: Hi, this is Garrett Madison calling in from Camp 2 on Mount Everest here with the guiding team. It’s been a rough 24 hours for us. Yesterday as many of you know there was an earthquake in Nepal and it shook up the Western Cwm pretty badly while we were climbing. We managed to make it to Camp 2. And at that point we got on the radio to base camp and learned that our base camp had been devastated and that one of our
members, our beloved doctor Eve Girawong was in critical condition. Over the next few hours we learned that she had passed away and it was very hard on all of us.

We have been up here at Camp 2 hanging tough but we are running low on food and fuel and we have to get down. There’s no path or route through the Khumbu icefall at this point in time. The teams that have tried to make their way through the icefall today were unsuccessful and will not be attempting again in the future. So at this point our only option to get down is by helicopter evacuation.

Our plan is to descend tomorrow to Camp 1 and hopefully with good weather fly to base camp to reconnect with the other members of our expedition who survived the avalanche at Everest base camp.

Again our hearts go out to the family of Eve Girawong. She is loved by all of us in base camp and a great addition to our team and helped us tremendously. She will be missed greatly. We are very sorry for her loss.

Thank you. I will check in soon. Madison Mountaineering Climbing Team is Safe at Camp 2

Exhibit 1. Locations of Madison Mountaineering expedition members as of April 26, 2015

All of our surviving Everest 2015 personnel are doing well. Here is an update on their current locations:

At Everest Camp 2:
1. Alan Arnette
2. Andrea Cordona
3. Ankur Bahl
4. Haley Ercanbrack
5. Joe Ashkar
6. Karl Nesseler
7. Koei Kasamatsu
8. Louis Carstens
9. Masayuki Hatakeyama
10. Rosier Alexandre
**Our Hearts Are Broken**

It is with deep sorrow and profound grief that we can confirm the loss of our Everest/Lhotse base camp doctor, Marisa Eve Girawong. Eve perished in the aftermath of the avalanche that struck the base camp area following the devastating Nepal earthquake earlier today.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Eve and her family and friends.

We will have more information later after daybreak in Nepal and additional updates from our team. Thank you for your combined prayers and well wishes.”

*Posted by Kurt, April 25, 2015*

**Marisa Eve Girawong,** Base Camp Doctor - Everest / Lhotse and physician’s assistant working in a Level 1 Emergency Room, with a focus on trauma and wilderness medicine.

In 2012 Eve completed her medical training at John Stroger Hospital of Chicago, recognized as one of the top emergency programs in the nation, graduating with honors for Master of Medical Sciences & Physician Assistant studies.

Eve was completing a second Master’s degree and postgraduate diploma in mountain medicine at the University of Leicester (UK).

Since 2013, she had been involved in expedition medicine training in Scotland as well as participating in wilderness medicine in the Everest Region since 2014. She was an avid indoor and outdoor rock climber for several years and, as a mountaineer, had successfully reached the summits of Mt. Washington and Mt. Rainier.
Devastation at Base Camp

Exhibit 2. Photo of devastation at Everest Base Camp taken minutes after the avalanche.

Source: Azim Aff, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia climbing team

On April 25, 2015, many people were killed, including a Google executive, when the 2015 Nepal earthquake triggered an avalanche that hit the Everest Base Camp. Eighteen bodies were recovered from Mount Everest by the Indian army mountaineering team. The avalanche began on Mount Kumori, moved through the Khumbu Icefall on the southwest side of Mount Everest, and slammed into Everest Base Camp.


Exhibit 3. Base Camp after avalanche, one of 19 photos on the CNN website.
Exhibit 4. Map of earthquake epicenter and aftershocks in the vicinity of Mt. Everest

Exhibit 5. The above graphic from an earlier chapter in High-Stakes Leadership shows the altitudes of Base Camp (17,600 ft.) Camp 2 (21,300 ft.) and the Summit (29,029 ft.). The earthquake struck while the Madison Mountaineering team was climbing from Camp 1 to Camp 2 in the Western Cwm.¹ As of this writing (26 April, 2:30 PM GMT) the climbing team is safe at Camp 2.

¹ The Western Cwm, pronounced koom, was named by George Leigh Mallory, who first saw it during the initial Everest expedition of 1921. Cwm is a Welsh term for valley.

Exhibit 6. The above graphic, described in detail in an earlier chapter, clearly shows the risk and the difficulty of traversing the Khumbu Icefall, one of the most dangerous sections on Everest.

**Helicopter Reconnaissance of the Khumbu Icefall**

May 11, 2015, Garrett charted a helicopter to conduct a reconnaissance of the new route through the Khumbu Icefall. The following photos are from that flight.

Exhibit 7. The 2014 and 2015 routes through the Khumbu Icefall. On April 18, 2014, 16 Sherpas died in an avalanche in the Icefall and nine more were injured.
Exhibit 8. The 2015 route through the Icefall moved the route from the more avalanche-prone side of the Icefall. This new route, however, presented its own challenges, such as the need to climb a four-story ladder out of a crevasse. The Khumbu Icefall is a glacier moving several feet a day.

Exhibit 9. Portion of 2015 route through the Khumbu Icefall. The depth of the chasm is more than four stories. The next exhibit provides greater detail.
Exhibit 10. Four story ladder to climb out of crevasse on the 2015 route through the Khumbu Icefall.

Photo: Garrett Madison