



# CASE STUDY - Exercise Tiger Karakoram

© UK MOD Crown Copyright

"...the ruggedised laptops sustained plenty of knocks and unavoidable ill-treatment during transit and on the mountain. The laptops handled the trauma with ease. They continued to perform to an optimal level in temperatures as low as -20°C for over 5 weeks"

Major Matt Hing  
Expedition Leader  
Exercise TIGER KARAKORAM



## MOUNTAINEERING ASSOCIATION SELECTS BLAZEPOINT TO SUPPORT HIGH-ALTITUDE MOUNTAINEERING EXERCISE

In October 2010, an eleven strong expedition, from the Army Mountaineering Association, travelled to India with the aim of conducting exploratory mountaineering in the Himachal Pradesh region and summiting several unclimbed peaks. Commenting on the area Major Matt Hing, Expedition Leader, said that, *'The Himachal Pradesh area of northern India offers a vast amount of mountaineering opportunities. There are tens if not hundreds of unclimbed peaks and unexplored glaciers that would all make excellent mountaineering expeditions. This is a fantastic area'*.

Whilst the history of military mountaineering can trace its roots back into the 19th Century, the Army Mountaineering Association has been formally sending mountaineers to all corners of the World for the last 53 years. Exercise TIGER KARAKORAM was a continuation of this tradition.

The team was equipped and prepared to climb 'alpine style' throughout. This minimized the Expedition's impact on these untouched mountains and fitted in with the ethics of the team. Employing alpine techniques of moving light and fast on unclimbed peaks in the Himalaya required a level of competence, confidence and a state-of-mind that allowed

for that additional level of commitment. For most the Expedition Team, this was their first time in the Himalaya and most have never been so high before. Team training and selection, whilst developing the hard-skills required for mountaineering, had focused on the soft-skills required to mentally prepare for such a challenge.

Things, however, did not go to plan and there were constant adjustments to meet changing circumstances. For example, ill equipped porters and un-seasonal snow storms provided additional challenges. Despite this, success came early when three members of the Expedition made a first-ascent of Peak 5900 and named the peak, 'Sher Khan'. Later, one of the climbing teams turned-back at 5922m on an unclimbed 6030m peak after encountering increasingly technical and committing ground. Then an un-seasonal snow storm deposited a foot of snow over the area making the climbing conditions too dangerous. With another storm forecast there was concern that they would be trapped at Base Camp, and so they moved south to a different climbing area. From there they climbed a 5928m high peak, 'Hanuman Tibba'.



The Expedition members were tested mentally and physically by the harsh conditions (living at 4600m+), the weather (minus 13 degrees C in the tent at night) and the climbing. Dynamic risk assessments, leadership, teamwork and physical toughness were all developed throughout the Expedition, including a range of other personal attributes and skills vital to operational capability.



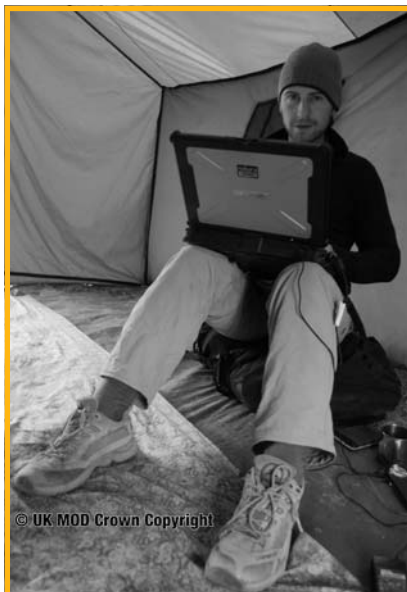
Sergeant Mark Dowland, whilst summarising his experience, said that, *'As a developing mountaineer this Expedition was an invaluable experience and insight into the world of high-altitude mountaineering. As soldiers we are taught to prepare for the unexpected, but exploratory mountaineering provided us all with extreme physical and mental challenges. It definitely pushed all of the Expedition members beyond their comfort zones.'*

The Expedition had a robust communications plan in order to keep in touch with home and also in case of emergencies. In addition, support was provided by the India-based RIMO Expeditions. The wish to use an India-based company was a critical factor in the planning to ensure that any fees paid go to India.

BGAN Satellite Antenna's in conjunction with Blazepoint's ndura RUGGED® laptops facilitated email, telephony, the Blog and Wx updates. The antenna's provided with free air time by Thales UK, produced an outstanding performance and future expeditions must continue to comms recce potential campsites to ascertain whether the BGAN can 'hit' the satellites in a geo-stationary orbit over the equator.

Maj. Matt Hing commented; - *"Provided by Blazepoint, the ruggedised laptops sustained plenty of knocks and unavoidable ill-treatment during transit and on the mountain. The laptops handled the trauma with ease. They continued to perform to an optimal level in temperatures as low as -20°C for over 5 weeks, providing a quality service for internet access, word processing and information exchange. Exercise TIGER KARAKORAM chose these laptops based on robustness, endurance and the ability to perform in an arduous environment, they did not disappoint."*

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT**  
James Munger-Styles  
Head of Marketing, Blazepoint Limited



**"... Exercise TIGER KARAKORAM chose these laptops based on robustness, endurance and the ability to perform in an arduous environment, they did not disappoint..."**

**Major Matt Hing**  
Expedition Leader  
Exercise TIGER KARAKORAM



All images used in this case study have been released under the new Open Government Licence (OGL).  
© UK MOD Crown Copyright



Blazepoint Limited, 2 Tower Estate  
Chalgrove, Oxford, OX44 7XZ, UK

**WEB:** [www.blazepoint.co.uk](http://www.blazepoint.co.uk)  
**TEL:** +44 (0) 1865 892 050  
**FAX:** +44 (0) 1865 892 031  
**EMAIL:** [sales@blazepoint.co.uk](mailto:sales@blazepoint.co.uk)