

Mystery on Everest

- 1 Were Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay really the first people to reach the top of Mount Everest? Some believe British climbers George Mallory and Andrew Irvine reached the summit **previously**—
5 in June 1924. Unfortunately, this is hard to **prove** because both men vanished on the mountain.

- Recently a team of climbers visited Everest, hoping to solve¹ this mystery. Near Everest's First Step, on the way to the summit, the team found Mallory's
10 oxygen tank—evidence that he and Irvine were near the top. Close by, a member of the team, Conrad Anker, discovered Mallory's body.

- When the team examined Mallory's body, they found items like a knife and matches, but no photos. Why is this **significant**?
15 Mallory carried a photo of his wife with him. He planned to leave it at the top of Everest, if he reached the summit.

Did Mallory and Irvine **achieve** their goal and reach the top? Probably not, says Anker. Here's why:

- Difficult path/Poor equipment:** Mallory and Irvine were last
20 seen near Everest's Second Step. This is a 27 meter (90 foot) wall of rock. Climbing this **section** of Everest is extremely difficult, even with modern climbing equipment. Without the right tools, it is **doubtful** Mallory and Irvine were able to **proceed** to the top.

- No frostbite:** Mallory and Irvine were near the summit late
25 in the day. Climbers who reach the summit at this time need to camp at the top. If you do this, it is common to **suffer** from frostbite. But Mallory's body had no sign of frostbite.

- So what happened to Mallory and Irvine? Anker thinks they probably turned back just after the First Step. When Mallory
30 was going down, perhaps he accidentally fell. Irvine's body has never been found. **Whatever** happened, they will be always be remembered as early Everest heroes.²

¹ If you **solve** a problem, you find an answer to it.

² A **hero** is a brave person, someone who does something great.



▲ Mountain climber Conrad Anker discovered Mallory's body on May 1st, 1999.

“Because it is there.”

—Mallory's response when asked why he wanted to climb Everest.



▲ Mallory took a camera like this on his climb. It has never been found.