

Lonnie Bedwell becomes first blind veteran to summit Everest

Navy Veteran is only fourth blind person to summit planet's highest mountain

DUGGAR, IN, USA, August 16, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Lonnie Bedwell, a blind veteran of the U.S. Navy and Move United Warfighters Ambassador, summited Mount Everest on May 22. He is the first blind veteran to summit the planet's highest mountain and only the fourth blind person to ever do so.

Bedwell was led to the top of the world's highest mountain by fellow "Sightless Summits" team members Michael Neal and Bryan Hill, Ryan Waters, owner of the guide company Mountain Professionals, and Finjo Sherpa. The team started the trek up the mountain on April 6 from Lukla Nepal and reached basecamp the first time on April 15. The team then performed acclimation climbs up Mount Lobuche and to Camp Three. The team then had to wait a grueling 17 days for a weather window to open up before they could attempt their push toward the summit of Mount Everest. After reaching the summit, the team returned to Lukla on May 26.

“

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Navy Veteran and Blind Adventurer Lonnie Bedwell



Lonnie Bedwell, a Navy Veteran, Becomes the First Blind Veteran to Summit Mount Everest

Extreme sports is nothing new to Bedwell. He has kayaked some of the most challenging whitewater in the world and is responsible for the first blind descents of Africa's fabled Zambezi River's Batoka Gorge and West Virginia's world-renowned Gauley River. Prior to May 2023, Bedwell was best known for the first blind descent of the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon — an effort successfully completed in 2013 as part of a team assembled by Team

River Runner. A command performance in the Grand Canyon in 2014 resulted in Bedwell being named the National Geographic 2015 Adventurer of the Year.

A former Navy Petty Officer, Bedwell was critically injured in 1997 in a hunting accident that instantly took his sight. Nevertheless, he raised three daughters as a single father, teaching them all to hunt and fish — and, against all odds, to drive. Once the girls graduated from high school, Bedwell continued to challenge himself, ultimately becoming a renowned extreme sports athlete.

Bedwell is attempting to climb the highest peaks on all seven continents. Prior to the May 22nd summit of Mount Everest in Asia, he had successfully completed Kilimanjaro in Africa, Aconcagua in South America, and Denali in North America. These journeys require dedicated teamwork and high-stakes problem solving and underscore the energy and passion that Bedwell brings to his work.

On this trip, Bedwell collaborated with the Blind Veterans Association to help bring awareness to the BVA, and hopefully inspire others to simply live life. This expedition was supported by Move United and other contributors such as Choosing to See and Pacific Office Automation. With his trip taking place just before Memorial Day, he also had the sacrifices other veterans have made for him and the nation. “They deserve my best. Every step I take is an effort to pay them back,” Bedwell said.

His mission is to motivate and inspire others to embrace life with confidence and courage. Bedwell is dedicated to helping others to enjoy full lives and while he is an advocate for children and veterans with disabilities. Blindness does not define either him or his efforts on behalf of others. “I want people to realize the unlimited potential that is in each of us,” he said. “I hope this inspires people to believe in themselves, their value, and their purpose.”

He has appeared on The Today Show, Steve Harvey, the Breaking Booby Bones television show, and has been featured in the documentary films: Feel of Vision, Dreamline Blind, Long River Home, and countless other publications. He’s the author of the award-winning book “226” (the length in miles of the Colorado River stretch through the Grand Canyon) and shares his passion for life and adventure with audiences around the country.

Shuan Butcher

Move United

+1 2402682180

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