

Editorial: Star Newspaper - 25 May 2006

A proud moment

Congratulations to Sean Disney and Vaughan de la Harpe, who successfully summited Mount Everest this week, becoming only the third and fourth South Africans to join the Seven Summits Club - those incredibly gifted climbers who have conquered the highest peaks on each of the seven continents.

Climbing Everest, at least in the eyes of armchair adventurers, might have lost a bit of its allure. As it is, Disney and De la Harpe accomplished this on the heels of New Zealander Mark Inglis, a double amputee who had made history by scaling Everest just days before.

But the fact that so many people have successfully made the ascent does not lessen the scale of the risk every mountaineer takes, or of the deep reserves of strength, both physical and mental, that each one must have.

We were graphically reminded of this as Inglis descended, passing 34-year-old Briton David Sharp, who was in extreme difficulty and later died on the mountain, exhausted and disoriented.

Everest is an unforgiving monument to humanity. Many have tried to climb it but failed.

Many who have successfully made it emerged with their honour in tatters.

Disney and De la Harpe achieved high honour, and for that we salute them.

