

Monday, April 3 2017

## **Heroic war veteran to plant Welcome to Yorkshire flag on top of Everest**

A Yorkshire mountaineer, who abandoned his dream of reaching the top of Mount Everest to save the life of a fellow climber, has set off on his second epic attempt to reach the summit. This time he plans plant a Welcome to Yorkshire flag on top of the world's highest mountain.

Leslie Binns, 42, from Rotherham, in South Yorkshire, was in sight of the summit when he sacrificed his lifetime ambition to save Indian climber Sunita Hazra who nearly fell to her death.

Leslie, who was in the Army for 13 years and received awards for bravery, was left blind in his left eye after being hit by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan in 2009.

The father of one is now making a second attempt to summit the world's highest mountain to raise money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity, which helped him retrain after he was medically discharged from the Army.

He left Yorkshire today clutching a special Welcome to Yorkshire flag to board a plane to Nepal where he will begin the journey to Everest Base Camp. He is expected to reach the summit late May.

Leslie said: "I am very excited and I am hoping I am going to get to the top this time.

"Going back to where people have died is going to be tough but I have got to look at the positives – I managed to save someone's life and now she is back with her family."

Leslie will be taking a different route up the mountain this time, starting in Tibet rather than Nepal. He will also celebrate his 43<sup>rd</sup> birthday at 7,000m on April 30.

"It is the most physically and mentally exhausting thing I have ever done," he said. "But when you are there it is unbelievable – I can't describe how incredible it is to be literally on top of the world!"

“I’m honoured to be raising money for ABF The Soldiers’ Charity as they have been a massive support to me since leaving the Army and I hope I can do Yorkshire proud by flying a special Yorkshire flag from the highest point on earth.”

Leslie is being supported by Welcome to Yorkshire throughout his epic journey and you can follow his progress through @welcome2yorks social media channels.

Sir Gary Verity, Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire, said: “Leslie is an incredible man and his story is truly remarkable. He embodies true Yorkshire grit and determination and I know the county will be with him every step of his epic climb! We wish him all the very best.”

To donate to Leslie’s epic challenge, visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/EH2017](http://justgiving.com/fundraising/EH2017)

**ENDS**

**Image: Leslie Binns with fiancée Lindsey Empringham and 3-year-old daughter Emma.**

**Editors’ Notes:**

- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is the official destination management organisation for Yorkshire, working to grow the county’s visitor economy.
- **Welcome to Yorkshire** is a not-for-profit membership organisation, funded in part by grants, sponsorship and Welcome to Yorkshire members. All money raised is reinvested directly back into promoting Yorkshire.
- Key facts include:
  - Tourism in Yorkshire is worth £7 billion annually
  - The county’s industry employs almost a quarter of a million people

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