

# Eyes on the summit: covers recall Canadians' ascent of Mount Everest

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Through a fortuitous meeting with Nevil Pike of Thornbury, Ontario, I was made aware of two covers, shown in Figure 1, that were prepared by the Nepal Philatelic Society to honor two events that relate to the first attempt by a Canadian team to conquer Mount Everest.

Pike founded CanEverEx in 1981 to market and promote the climb. He also designed the expedition's logo (Figure 2). The triangular logo is shaped to represent Mount Everest and, in the center, features a stylized version of the Canadian flag with the logo of Air Canada, the expedition's

main sponsor, replacing the flag's traditional red maple leaf.

A similar logo is found on Canada Scott 1145, a 36¢ stamp issued in 1987 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Air Canada (Figure 3).

The two covers shown in Figure 1 each are franked with two stamps that are appropriate to the events and are canceled with official handstamps provided by the Nepalese Post Office. Other covers bearing different stamp combinations exist, including one showing Nepal's monarch.

The cover with the Teleglobe Canada logo commemorates the first-ever

radio television broadcast from an earth station in Nepal via satellite. The 2.30-rupee stamp (Scott 343) was issued by Nepal in 1978 to salute the 25th anniversary of the first successful climb of Mount Everest by a team led by Sir Edmund Hillary (1919-2008). The stamp shows a view of Mount Everest's summit.

Sir Edmund was a technical adviser to the 1982 Canadian team and is shown in Figure 4 with the team.

The second stamp on the cover, a 15-paisa denomination (Scott 186), was issued in 1965 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the International Telecommunications Union. The oval cancel is dated "15 Sep. 1982/G.P.O. Katmandu, Nepal" under a logo of Teleglobe Canada. The text inside the inner rim of the oval reads, "• Teleglobe Earth Station Broadcast • 1982 Canadian Mount Everest Expedition."

Inside the envelope is a message from Teleglobe Canada: "As the first attempt by a Canadian team to climb Mount Everest is being made this month, Canadians are receiving daily television and radio news reports on the exploits of the mountaineers thanks to a special ultra-sophisticated satellite link-up established by TELE-GLOBE CANADA."

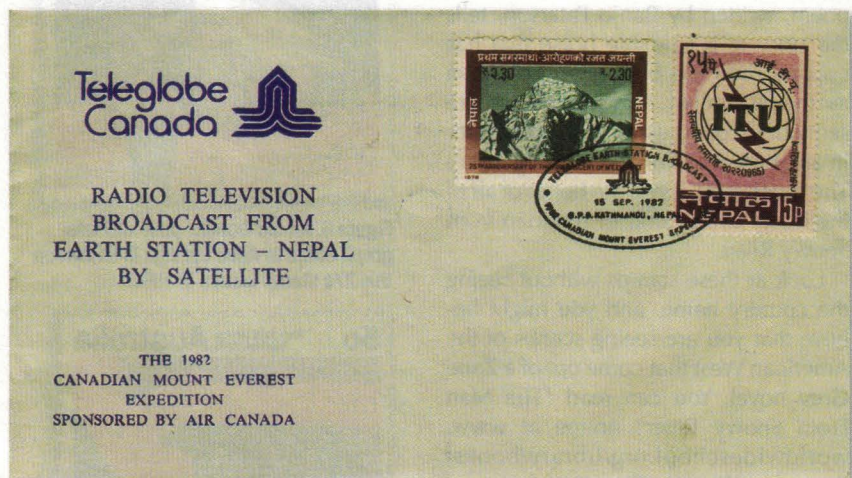


Figure 1. The Nepal Philatelic Society prepared two cacheted covers to commemorate two events that relate to the 1982 Canadian Mount Everest Expedition sponsored by Air Canada.

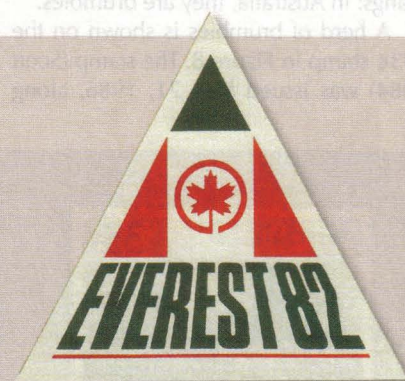


Figure 2. Nevil Pike, who founded CanEverEx to market and promote the 1982 Canadian Mount Everest Expedition, also designed the triangular-shaped logo of the expedition.





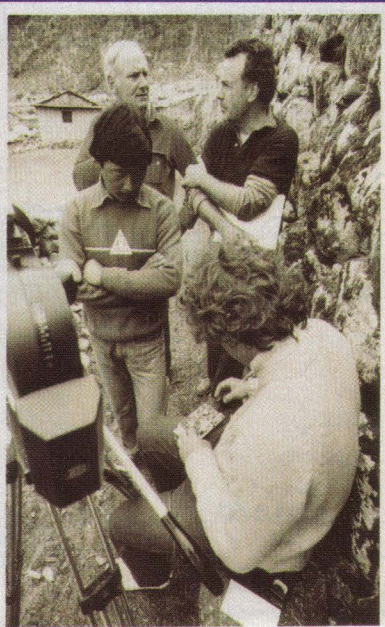
**Figure 3.** A similar logo is found on a 36¢ stamp issued by Canada in 1987 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Air Canada.

The message explains how the transmission network consists of a “triple-hop” satellite relay from Mount Everest to Canadian viewers. Canada Scott 1831c (Figure 5), from the 1999-2000 Millennium souvenir-sheet set, shows a progression of Canada’s telecommunications satellites.

The second cover bears the same 2.30re stamp that is affixed to the previous cover, along with the 4re stamp (Scott 344) from the pair of stamps that honors the 25th anniversary of the Mount Everest ascent.

The circular cancel was applied six days after two Canadians successfully made it to the top of the world’s tallest mountain. The cancel reads, “1982 Canadian Mt. Everest Expedition/ GPO/ 11. Oct. 1982/Katmandu.”

The cover is signed by four of the Sherpas who supported the expedition. The second signature from the top is that of Lhakpa Dorjee, who accompanied Laurie Skreslet (Figure 6), the first Canadian to reach the summit



**Figure 4.** Mountaineer Sir Edmund Hillary is shown in the background on the left speaking to Nevil Pike. The other two individuals in the photo are unidentified.

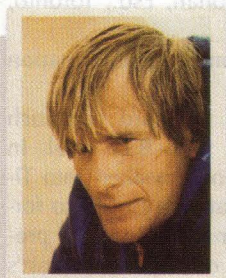
on October 5. The third and fourth signatures are those of Lhakpa Tshering and Pema Dorjee, who, on October 7, stood on top of Mount Everest with Pat Morrow (Figure 7), the second Canadian



**Figure 5.** Canadian communications satellites are shown on this 46¢ stamp issued by Canada in 2000. The stamp was included in one of Canada’s 1999-2000 Millennium souvenir sheets.

dian to reach the top.

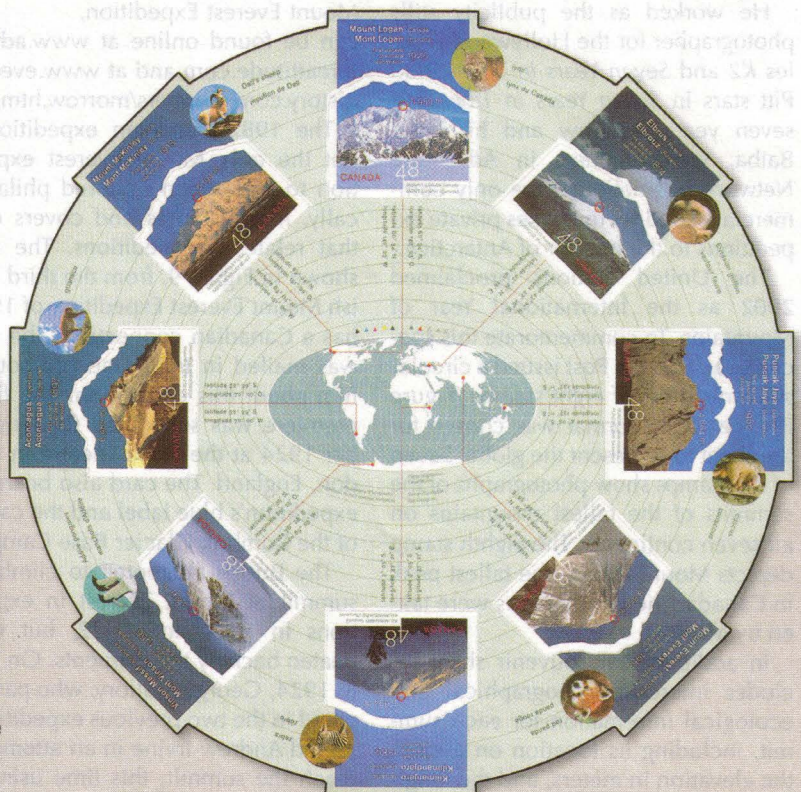
Patrick Allan Morrow (born 1952) is a renowned Canadian climber, explorer and photographer. Morrow’s career in photography was launched into the public spotlight when he scaled Mount Everest. This feat is listed in *Guinness World Records*. He was one of the 1982 expedition’s still photographers. He received the Order of Canada (shown on Scott 1446) for his exploits in becoming the first per-



**Figure 6.** Laurie Skreslet was the first Canadian climber to reach Mount Everest’s summit.



**Figure 7.** Pat Morrow was the second Canadian to reach the summit and the first person in the world to have climbed the highest peaks of the highest mountains on the seven continents.



**Figure 8.** Canada’s contribution to the United Nation’s Year of the Mountains in 2002 is this circular souvenir sheet of eight stamps.





Figure 9. The front and back of a philatelic souvenir postcard addressed to Toronto, Ontario, Canada, from the 1924 British Mount Everest Expedition.

son to reach the summits of the highest peaks of all seven continents: Mount McKinley in North America (1977), Aconcagua in South America (1981), Mount Everest in Asia (1982), Mount Elbrus in Europe (1983), Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa (1983), Vinson Massif in Antarctica (1985), and Puncak Jaya in Oceania (1986).

He worked as the publicity stills photographer for the Hollywood movies *K2* and *Seven Years in Tibet*. Brad Pitt stars in *Seven Years in Tibet*. For seven years, Morrow and his wife, Baiba, were partners in Adventure Network International, the only commercial expeditor that takes private expeditions to the interior of Antarctica.

The United Nations proclaimed 2002 as the International Year of Mountains. To commemorate this special year, Canada Post issued a circular souvenir sheet of eight stamps (Figure 8). The round format was chosen for the sheet to represent the globe. Seven of the stamps show photographs of the summits of the tallest mountains on all seven continents. The eighth stamp depicts Mount Logan, the tallest peak in Canada. The photographs were taken by Morrow.

In addition, the souvenir sheet includes interesting geographical and ecological information for each summit, including its location on a map, the elevation in meters, and the longitude and latitude where each summit can be found.

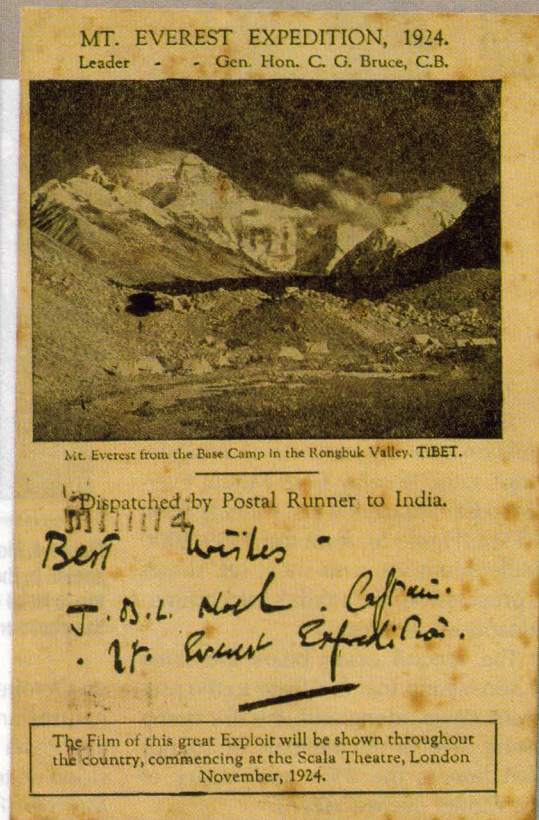
In my October 2002 O Canada article | Scott Stamp Monthly

cle in *Scott Stamp Monthly*, I provide information about this souvenir sheet and the mountains depicted on the stamps.

Additional information about Skreslet and Morrow and their many exploits, as well as the 1982 Canadian Mount Everest Expedition, can be found online at [www.adventureattitude.com](http://www.adventureattitude.com) and at [www.everest-history.com/climbers/morrow.htm](http://www.everest-history.com/climbers/morrow.htm).

The 1982 Canadian expedition is not the only Mount Everest expedition to have been honored philatelically. Many stamps and covers exist that relate to expeditions. The card shown in Figure 9, from the third British Mount Everest Expedition of 1924, has a Canadian connection. The card was mailed in India and promotes a film about this expedition. The film's premiere was scheduled for November 1924 at the Scala Theatre in London, England. The card also bears the expedition's blue label and the cancel of the Rombuk Glacier Base Camp.

The British attempted to climb the summit of Mount Everest in expeditions in 1921 and 1922, but were beaten back by the elements. On June 8, 1924, George Mallory, who participated in the two previous expeditions, joined Andrew Irvine in an attempt to reach the summit, this time using Irvine's modified oxygen apparatus. The two men never returned. Mallory's body was found in 1999, but Irvine



was never located.

Mallory is famous for his response to a reporter who asked him why he wanted to climb Mount Everest. His answer, "because it's there," has become a classic statement.

The card was postmarked at Calcutta, India, June 2, 1924. According to the back of the card, the souvenir was "Dispatched [from the base camp] by Postal Runner to India." It is addressed to a Denis G. Honan, Esq., Toronto, Ontario.

I have not found any information about Honan.

The sender of the card is British explorer Captain John B.L. Noel. In 1913, Captain Noel sneaked into Tibet, a country that was closed to foreigners at the time. He made a preliminary survey of Mount Everest's northern approaches. He, like Morrow in 1982, was the 1924 expedition's still photographer.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Nevil Pike and CanEverEx for permission to use the images that appear in Figures 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7. ■

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