

# Adventure World

magazine

FALL 2015



W100 

presented by:



USARA National  
Ranking System

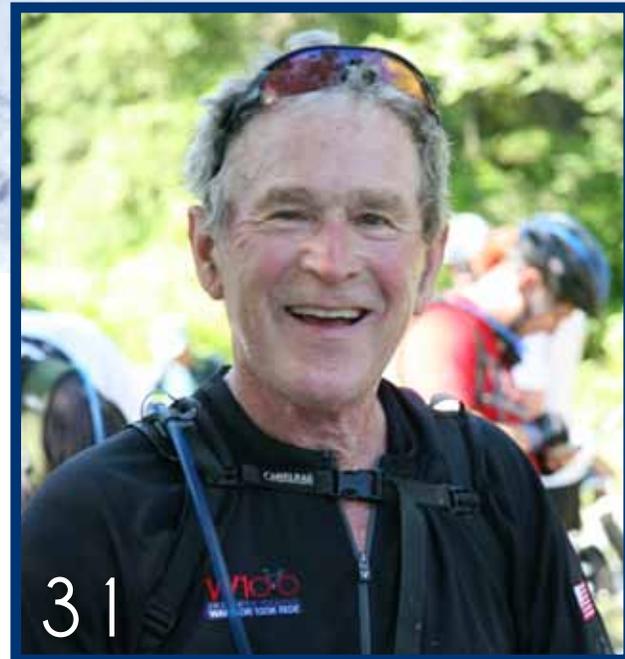
# USARA National Rankings

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YogaSlackers	60.00

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Editor:  
Troy Farrar

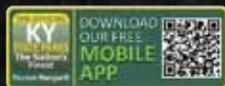
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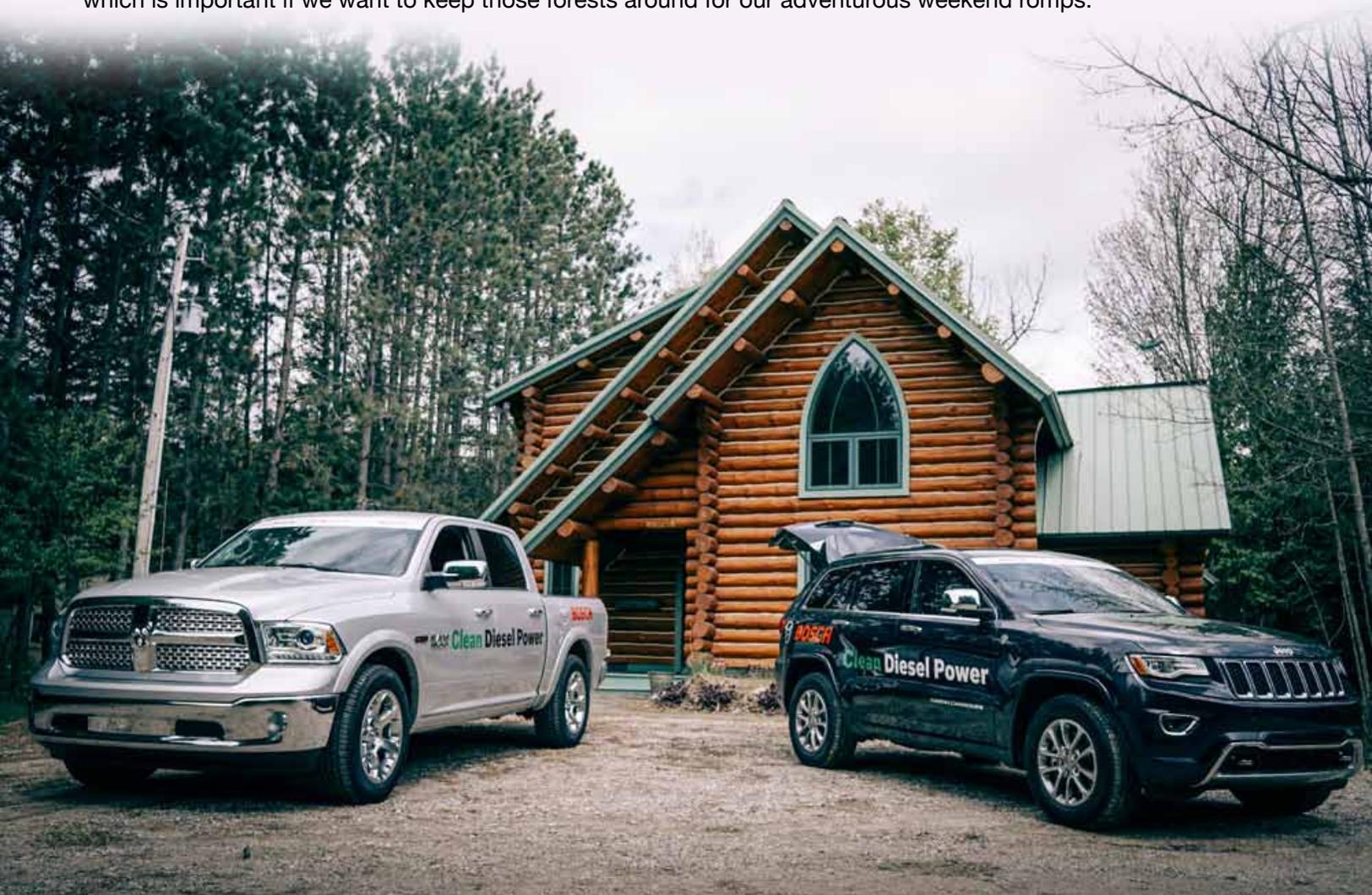


# Bosch Clean Diesel Technology

by Troy Farrar

I recently had a chance to attend a media event to learn more about the Bosch Clean Diesel Technology, and to test this system in real world situations. The results were impressive, but lets look at the numbers Bosch is able to produce before we get to the driving test.

The Bosch Clean Diesel Technology is available in both the Ram 1500 pickup, and the Jeep Grand Cherokee. The optional technology provides 30% better fuel economy than comparable gasoline vehicles, which equates to 40% extended driving range. What this means in real world terms is you will be stopping to use the restroom long before your vehicle needs fuel, as both of these vehicles boast an amazing 730 mile range on a single tank. This lower fuel consumption also means you will spend less money at the pump, leaving you more money to spend on those epic adventures in your new diesel vehicle. The Eco Diesel also produces 25% less CO2 emissions than a gasoline engine, which is important if we want to keep those forests around for our adventurous weekend romps.



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We tested a Ram 1500 that was equipped with a 3.0 liter V-6 EcoDiesel powertrain which produces 250 horsepower and 420 foot-pounds of torque. Now hold on to your hat, because the Ram 1500 is able to provide this output while delivering the top fuel efficiency of any half ton pickup in the US at a whopping 29 mpg. It's easy to see why Green Car Journal named the Ram 1500 as the 2015 Green Truck of the Year. As a matter of fact, Ram is the only truck manufacturer to offer a small-displacement diesel for its half-ton line of trucks. As impressive as these numbers are, we all know that the real proof is in the pudding, so let's get to the test scenarios. In the first test we pulled a 4500-pound boat & trailer out of the water like it was a feather, but that is no surprise since the Eco Diesel produces 50% more torque than gasoline engines. Over and over, even on a wet surface, the boat & trailer popped right out of the water and up the ramp due to the impressive low-end torque. Next we pulled a camping trailer on a hilly course, and I honestly could not tell the trailer was behind the truck. The Ram felt no different than when I was driving without the trailer, but that is not surprising as the pickup features 9,200 pounds of towing capacity.



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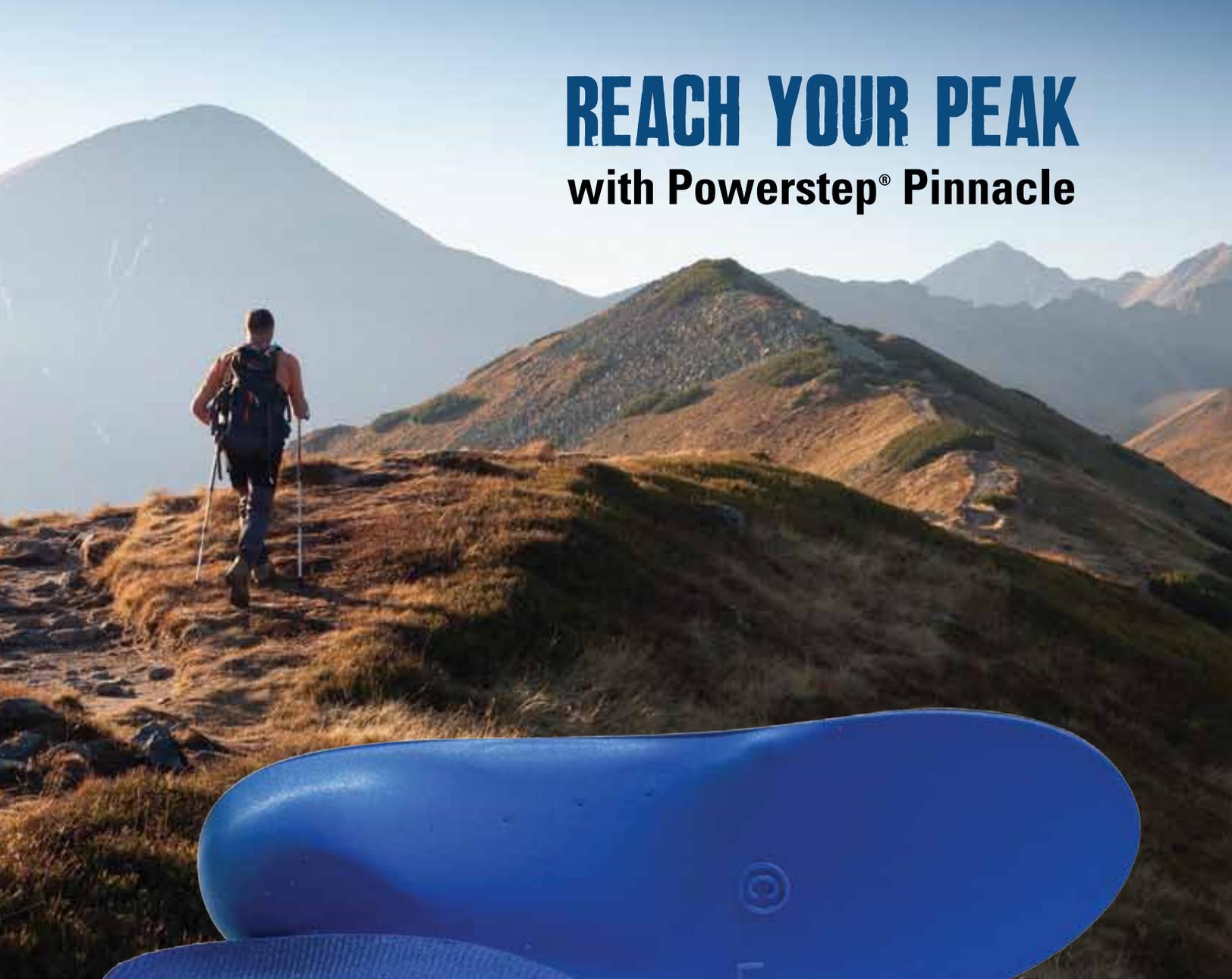
The Jeep Grand Cherokee was next and the 3.0 liter V-6 EcoDiesel powertrain boasts an impressive portfolio of numbers as well. The 30-mpg and 740 mile range on a single tank will also have you stopping way before the vehicle needs fuel. Not to be outdone, the Green Car Journal has named the Jeep Grand Cherokee Eco Diesel it's 2015 Green SUV of the Year. Producing 240 horsepower and a massive 420 foot pounds of torque, you will be hard pressed to find a SUV with similar numbers. Throw in a towing capacity of 7,400 pounds and the Bosch Clean Diesel Technology has transformed this SUV into a fire breathing dragon.

The Jeep Grand Cherokee provided a really smooth ride and was able to handle the off road test section with ease. We also found that it had ample passing power on the highway. Towards the end of the test drive I was driving about 10 miles an hour and I stomped on the gas to test the acceleration and guess what happened? The Grand Cherokee actually peeled out. I could not believe it. I actually just broke the tires loose in a diesel vehicle. Wow, I was impressed!



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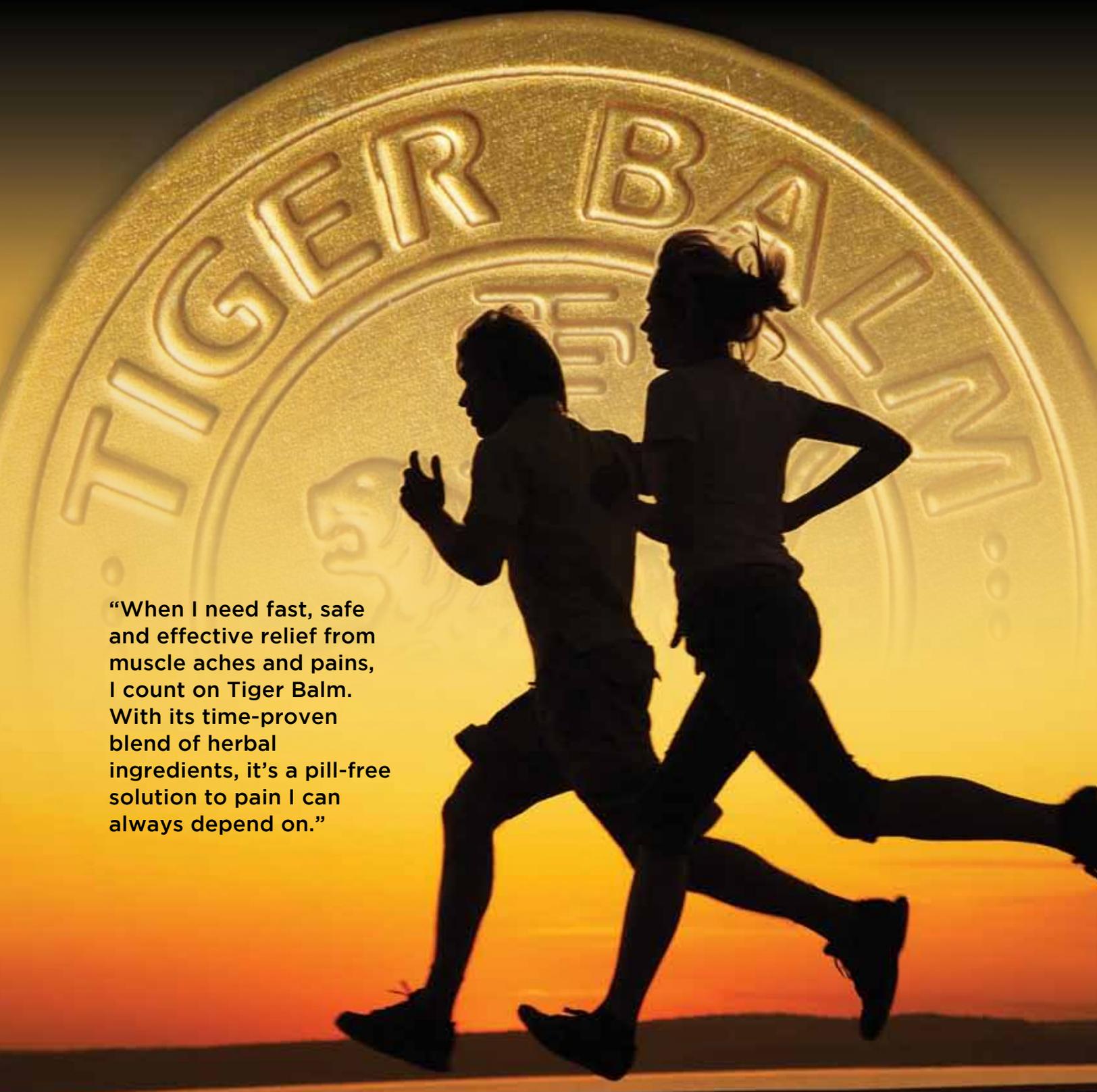
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At the end of the day, I was amazed by the Bosch Clean Diesel Technology. I was amazed at how quiet these Eco Diesel engines ran. I was amazed at the horsepower, torque and towing capacity of the Eco Diesel, and I was amazed at the fuel efficiency and range. Bosch's Eco Diesel technology is a winner and will provide you with all of the power, torque and towing capacity you need for your next adventure. And best of all, it will provide all of this while saving you money at the pumps. **AW**





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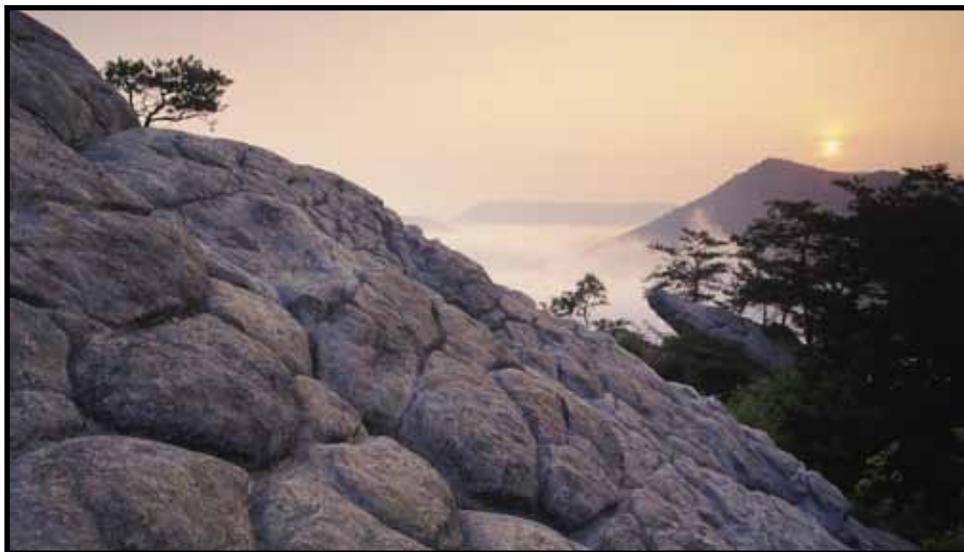
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## 2015 USARA Adventure Race National Championship

The USARA is excited about the 2015 USARA Adventure Race National Championship in Pineville, Kentucky. Stephanie Ross of Flying Squirrel Adventures has proven to be an excellent race director by creating an epic course in 2011 and we expect more of the same this year.

The challenging and beautiful terrain combined with an experienced race director should provide an epic course to remember. There are still plenty of regional qualifying events for coed & single gender teams and the coed masters teams have open registration and do not need to qualify. Don't miss this epic event and the chance to create some life long memories. **AW**

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## September 26th-Island Quest AR

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[QuestAdventureRaces.com](http://QuestAdventureRaces.com)



# Product Reviews

Fall 2015



## *Source Whistler*

The Source Whistler boasts 20 liters of cargo space and a 3 liter bladder making the Whistler the perfect light weight pack for longer rides or races. The Whistler is packed full of features such as a helmet sling, a rain cover, padded and vented back & shoulder straps, an adjustable sternum strap & zippered waist pockets. The large internal storage area also features a zippered smaller pocket and a sleeve for conveniently separating gear. The hydration compartment is insulated and the para cord zipper pulls are a great final touch. The Whistler features all of Source's great hydration technology such as Glass Like, Grunge Guard & Taste Free which keep your bladder clean, free from bad tastes and easy to maintain. For those longer days in the saddle, you can't go wrong with the Whistler. [www.sourceoutdoor.com](http://www.sourceoutdoor.com)

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## *Source Dune X-Fit*

The low profile & light weight Source Dune X-Fit is a technological marvel that will keep you comfortable during hours of exploring. The X-Fit shoulder straps guarantee a perfect fit and allow freedom of movement no matter what the activity. The Dune X-Fit includes the 1.5 liter Source WLP Low Profile Hydration Bladder which is a marvel in itself. The donut shaped WLP keeps its shape no matter the level of fill and virtually eliminates the sloshing that is usually present when running. An adjustable sternum strap, breathable back & contoured shoulders make this pack comfortable and the easy access zippered hip pockets make refueling a snap. The Source Dune X-Fit is in a different league than other hydration packs and a must have for the serious runner. [www.sourceoutdoor.com](http://www.sourceoutdoor.com)



# Product Reviews

## Source D|vide

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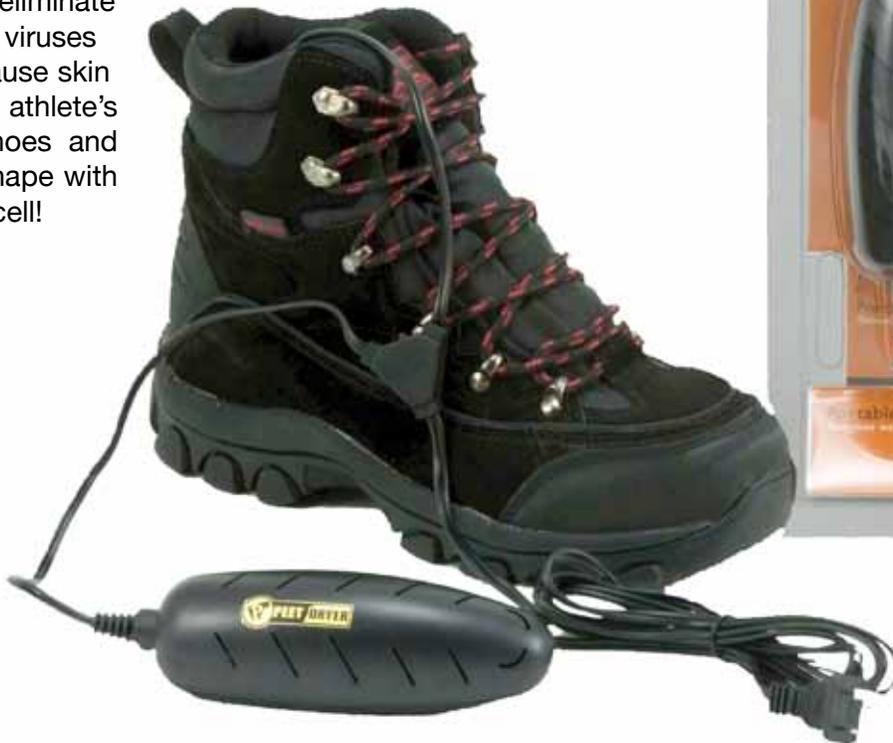


# Product Reviews

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## *Peet Dryer*

The Peet Dryer Powercell is a light weight shoe dryer that is small enough to take on trips and powerful enough for the wettest footwear. Simply plug in the Peet Dryer Powercell and have warm dry shoes in a snap. Dry shoes that don't stink are great, but the Peet Dryer Powercell provides a lot more than just warm dry shoes. The Powercell will extend the life of your shoes, eliminate odors and remove viruses & molds that can cause skin irritations such as athlete's foot. Keep your shoes and your feet in great shape with a Peet Dryer Powercell!  
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## *Vasque Pendulum II*

The Vasque Pendulum II is the perfect hot weather trail runner as the one-piece mesh upper provides maximum breathability while keeping out the trail dirt. The seamless & bonded upper provides a great fit and has no stitching that could rub or chafe and the foot bed consists of a soft slow rebound foam for fantastic compression resistance. The Pendulum II has a segmented rock plate which gives good flexibility and minimizes impact to the foot by rocks or roots. Add all of these features up and you have one really nice trail running shoe. The Vasque Pendulum II is a light weight, super comfortable trail runner that will take you wherever you want to go.

[www.vasque.com](http://www.vasque.com) **AW**





# Adventures on the Roof of Iraq

by Jan Bakkar

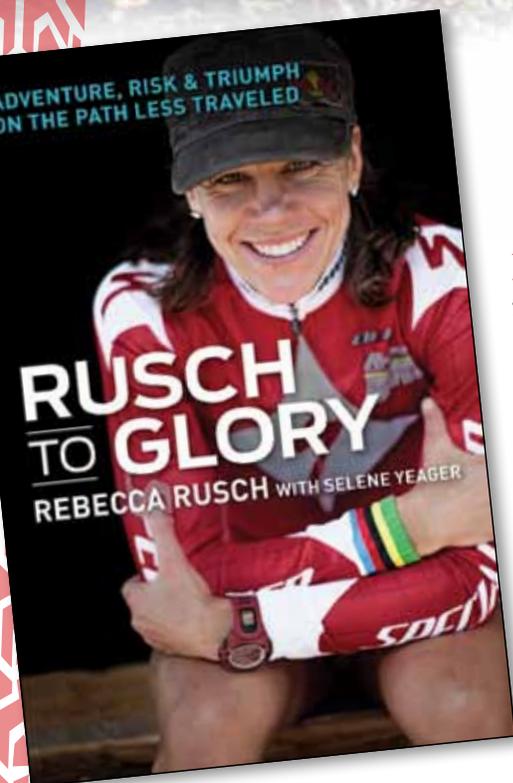
In April 2014 an international expedition team visited the mountains around Choman in the East of Iraqi Kurdistan, close to the Iranian border. We aimed to climb Mount Halgurd (Iraq's second-highest peak) in winter conditions and, time and weather permitting, to attempt a first winter ascent of an unnamed neighbouring peak. As we travelled, Iraqi Kurdistan had been considered a safe place for almost a decade. The Kurds had been in firm control of the autonomous region since 2005 and with no major incidents reported before our departure, we were able to set off with confidence. During the writing of this article, the security situation in Northern Iraq has changed dramatically, making our expedition a privileged insight into Iraqi Kurdistan's potential as a climbing location. Here's why, in the future – whatever the challenges of travel in a post-conflict region – we should all be considering an adventure on the roof of Iraq.

“Sorry, WHERE are you going?” People usually asked twice to establish they heard my answer correctly the first time. To most, Iraq is Iraq. Military deployment aside, you don't go there. Period.

Years ago I had visited bigger neighbour Iran and experienced the same scepticism. With the best of intentions, friends and family urged me to rethink my plans. It turned out to be a country with the most hospitable people on the planet (albeit that the visa application procedure had suggested otherwise). Ever since that eye opener, I tend to do my homework when I choose a destination, rather than settling for the one-sided view that the mainstream media give us of countries experiencing conflict. There are of course areas of Iraq to which it would have been irresponsible to travel, but writing off a whole country because certain parts are in trouble seems foolish. I discovered that Iraqi Kurdistan was a relatively peaceful region, and one that harbours a phenomenal mountain range, including many unclimbed peaks: The Zagros Mountains.

Our expedition's flight path from Vienna to Erbil takes us over the snowy peaks of the Zagros range, where we will soon be roaming around ourselves. It is exciting but incongruous to see a white blanket of snow amidst the stark, arid landscape. Moments later we land in the busy capital of the autonomous region of Kurdistan that covers

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the North Eastern corner of Iraq. The Citadel still dominates the Erbil skyline, despite the high-rise office buildings and hotels that have been built recently. The Kurdistan economy is booming. In the organised chaos of the town, our presence doesn't go unnoticed. Our search for the best available kebab joint attracts a lot of local attention, and provides insight into the hospitality of the people. Iraqi Kurdistan seems to offer the full package – stepping into the unknown, sampling the Kurdish welcome, and climbing some serious mountains.

Our Land Cruiser zips through an ever-changing landscape, taking us from bone-dry desert to the lush mountain valleys of the Zagros range. We are headed for Choman, the “Chamonix” of Kurdistan, with the difference that we are the only climbers in town, and there are no fancy brand shops to sell us last-minute kit. We even struggle to find decent, not-too-dirty fuel for our WhisperLite petrol stoves, eventually settling on ordinary petrol, filtered with a sock. The team is generously hosted by our local guide Omar and his family. No Airbnb needed in this town! Choman is surrounded by an arena of alpine peaks. In awe, we stare at all the possible climbs we could attempt here.

Those peaks have barely seen any human beings on their slopes. The latter may have something to do with the landmine fields, scattered along the border with Iran. These mines were placed in the 1980s during the Iran/Iraq war. Most of the minefields have been



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identified and marked; only the remote and inaccessible ones remain unmarked, on the mountain saddles at higher altitudes. Unfortunately, these are the very altitudes at which we intend to climb, and only local knowledge will keep us safe. Dr. Dolemeri, Chairman of the Kurdish Mountain Federation and expert on landmines in the area, is our adviser, approving our routes in the region.

The main goal of the expedition, organised by Bristol-based company Secret Compass, is a winter ascent of Mt. Halgurd, at 3607m the second highest mountain in Iraq, after its neighbour Cheekha Dar (3611m). The latter is right on the border with Iran, and being mistaken for an MI6 spy is probably not what everyone is after. So Cheekha Dar is for that reason off-limits. On departure from Choman, our 4x4s move slowly up the slippery, muddy tracks in the foothills of the Zagros range. In April the snowline is still pretty low and at an altitude of around 2200m, we have to abandon the vehicles. A big patch of snow forces us to get our 20kg+ packs and haul the kit and food up for 800 vertical metres. On the foot of Halgurd, at around 3000m, the team sets up camp. Across from us to the east we can see Cheekha Dar. Two vertical kilometres lower we catch a glimpse of Choman. And on the horizon, a formidable knife-edge ridgeline fills the sky – a possible next objective.

Surrounded by climbing temptations, it's hard to put first things first, and the first thing is certainly: Halgurd. The day before, the peak had been covered in clouds. Just last night I had heard snow falling on the tent sheet,



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and presumed that a summit attempt would be out of the question. While it is still dark, I peek outside the tent to see if the weather conditions have improved, and I am met with a clear sky and no wind. It is game on! At first light we are to be found ploughing our way up the steep slopes of Halgurd. The snow is still solid enough at this hour and we take turns to kick steps. After a small traverse through mixed terrain we notice an entry through the cornices that guard the summit plateau. The team is strong and after three hours of hard work we step up to the broad saddle between the south summit and the north summit. The wind blows at full force now, and for a moment the mountain and its weather conditions remind me of the Scottish hills. In the east, views extend deep into the Iranian hinterland. In the northwest, the Zagros mountains continue into Turkish Kurdistan. After a small refuelling and view appreciation stop, the team regroups and half an hour later we manage to stand on the roof of Iraq.

The expedition anticipates using a five-day window to climb Halgurd. With the weather on our side and the team moving well, we managed to barge up in two days, so there is plenty of time for some mountain exploration amongst Halgurd's immediate neighbours. Our Soviet-era map shows a beautiful ridgeline just

northwest of our Halgurd high camp, which sits at 3000m. On our approach we hadn't been able to see the mountain. The next day we're off, finding a safe passage to the high camp of the 3365m mountain of which we don't yet know the name, and which may not have a name at all, such is the unexplored nature of the region. Upon return, we discover that the mountain is called Mamur, with no written history of any ascents. It is from here that we'll attempt an ascent via the ridgeline we spotted on the map.

At 4am the following day, I'm awake instantly, knowing that today will be an epic one, as we attempt one more ascent. The 900m climb up a ridge of snow and rock will be well within the physical capacities of the team; it looks climbable. But entering uncharted, mined territory will be nerve-draining. Dr. Dolemeri assures us our chosen route is free of mines. The fact that he doesn't add "Insha'Allah" at the end of the sentence gives me the confidence he believes what he says, but we still walk on eggshells as seven of us move off at first light. Most expedition members look somewhat absent-minded; scenarios of what may lie ahead race like pinballs through our minds.



We start following an awkward line up, because in the words of expedition leader and ex-soldier Dave Luke “soldiers are generally lazy and would only place mines in the most obvious places”; it’s therefore our job to pick unusual routes. “What if they happen to be mountaineers themselves, and extremely motivated to place the explosives in challenging locations?” we wonder, but don’t say. Despite my determination to go beyond the stereotypes of a country associated with recent warfare, I start to see some of the psychological drawbacks of travel in post-conflict regions. Quickly the steep rocky slope makes way for a solid 40-degree snowfield. Here, digging our crampons into the snow crust, we feel much more at ease. Perhaps it’s an illusion to think on snow we’re safer. “Do you see that saddle between Halgurd and Mamur? Apparently that’s a minefield, so we’ll stick to this ridge.” As alarming as Dave’s snippet of information may sound, we feel we’re in good hands. Having served in Southern Iraq and Afghanistan, Dave has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to the tactics of warfare and, therefore, the tactics of mountaineering in a minefield (or avoiding such a fate).



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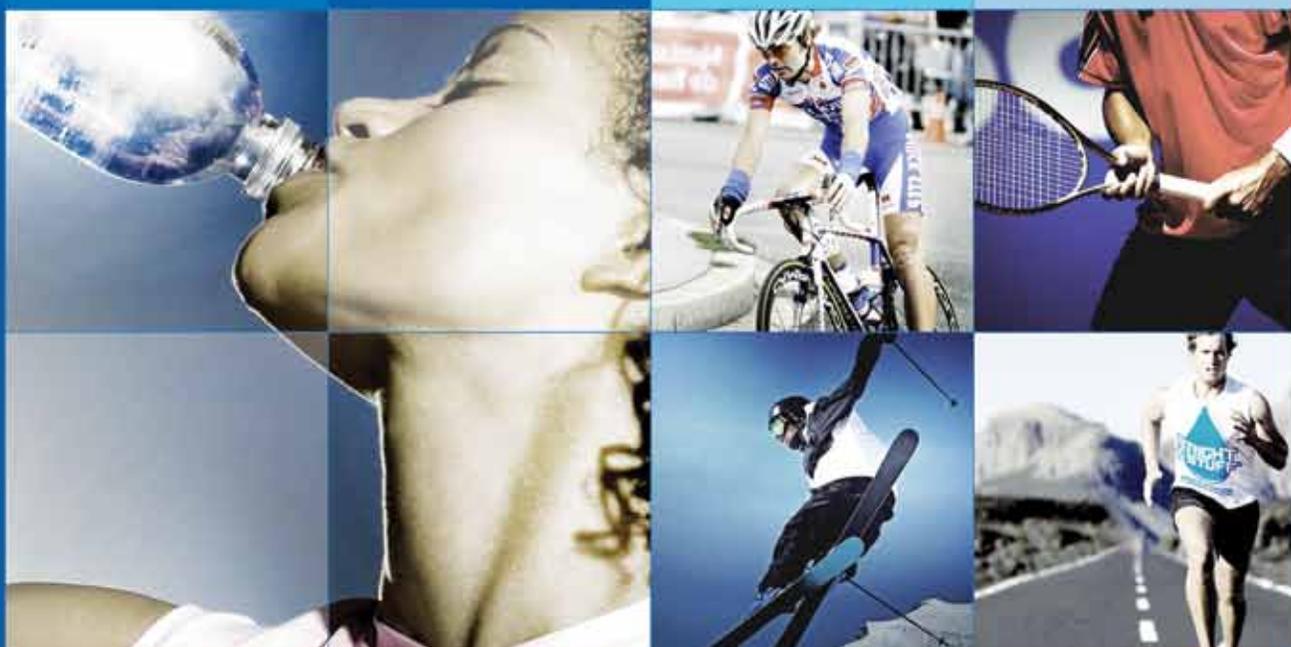
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The summit ridge looks phenomenal. The weather conditions are perfect. A beautiful mixed line of snow and rock awaits us. We zigzag across the rock band just below the actual ridge. At times, the exposure on this Scottish grade 1 route is mind-boggling. I look up and know the corniced summit is nearly in the bag. The sun is gaining strength, so we need to move fast to beat the heat and the risk of avalanches. At 8:54 in the morning we stand on our second summit in 48 hours. Because of the awkward mine-minding approach and the exploratory character of the climb, this feels like a big mountaineering achievement.

Even in a time of relative stability, we were a self-selecting group who were determined to see beyond the perceived implications of the word "Iraq." Our experiences in the minefields were frightening at times, even with an ex-military expedition leader and mine-expert Dr. Dolemeri at our disposal. We learned that, as travellers determined to "see beyond," there were challenges particular to exploration in post-conflict zones.

Now that Northern Iraq is in turmoil, climbers might be reluctant to visit the region. Within a window of stability, we were able to see the enormous potential of this area for climbers hungry for new experiences. It is our hope that in the not-too-distant future the region becomes calm enough again for others to share our experiences on the slopes of Mount Halgurd and its neighbours. The people, and the mountains, await. **AW**

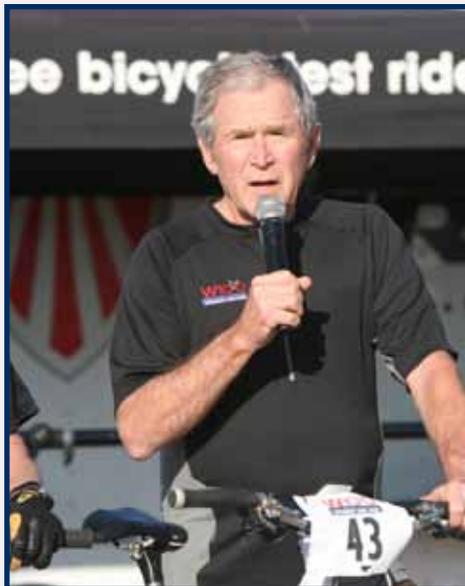




# The W100

by Troy Farrar

I just returned from the W100, which is held on President George W Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas. The W100 is a part of the Bush Center's Military Service Initiative and highlights the bravery and sacrifice of American warriors as well as recognizing the military service organizations that support America's veterans. The W100 chooses 20 warriors who were wounded in service to ride 100K on mountain bikes, all led by President Bush. This is an amazing event that gets the warriors together riding, hanging out, and even having a special dinner at President Bush's ranch house. It is awesome to see the warriors bond over the 3 days as they bike their way through 100 kilometers of mountain biking trails. President Bush summed up the W100 well before one of the morning rides. "Today I get to ride with some extraordinary citizens who have served something greater than themselves. I hope people recognize that they need to help our vets and their families. I am proud to be their friend, I was proud to be their commander & chief and now I am proud to ride mountain bikes with them. I don't miss much about being president, but I miss saluting the men & women in uniform. It is extraordinary to look into the eyes of people who volunteer in the face of danger. It is a high honor. When you are the president, you get to salute the military all of the time and I did so willingly & joyfully. I miss that."





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## Colonel Howe

What is spectacular about the W100 is how it showcases leadership. Starting with the President & Mrs. Bush by giving continued love, support & care for these men & women who



wore the uniform and their families. There are great community leaders such as Robert Agostinelli. We have tons of volunteers from influential CEO's to average folks who want to support & embrace these warriors. You can't get excited about our country if you can't get excited about the W100 – it embodies the best of America.

The W100 all starts with President & Mrs. Bush – it predates the Military Service Initiative and the Bush Institute. The President knew he was going to continue to serve & support our vets, so before we could even get the institute started, he said let's start now; I want to lead by example. I want to honor their service, their sacrifice, their leadership and the resilience of these men & women. So he combined it with something he loves to do – mountain biking. President Bush is passionate about mountain biking and he learned that mountain biking is a tool that helps many soldiers with their transition. Something as simple as mountain biking: just being outside with your brothers and sisters who



have worn the uniform. The W100 has been in a few locations, with the last 3 years being right here on President Bush's ranch. Mrs. Bush opens her home to the warriors, how awesome is that? Once they make it through certain hurdles, so many of these warriors realize they want to continue to serve. It is reaffirming for our country to see that through events like the W100 that these warriors are continuing to lead & serve by helping other warriors connect.



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**Scott Neil**

We had dinner with President Bush last night and you could tell that he is a truly genuine soul, it was obvious that he really cares for the vets.



**Leslie Zimmerman**

This weekend has been amazing & kind of surreal. We are getting to ride mountain bikes with others who have served their country & President Bush – it's awesome!



**Matt Ayers**

I got to eat dinner at the president's house and was really impressed at how he was just one of the guys. President Bush was not standoffish; he was very engaging and very comfortable around the warriors. He was so sincere & genuine; it was obvious that is who he really is. The whole weekend has been an incredible experience; it has been overwhelming in a very, very, good way.





## **Team 43 Alumni**

We also spoke with some of the Alumni warriors “Team 43” who were in attendance and now have a little different take on the W100.

### **John Rego**

The W100 at the George Bush Ranch is an awesome experience that really can’t be put into words. Being in the company of other warriors, President Bush and the volunteers who are so genuine about providing a great experience, there is just no way to describe the W100 without experiencing it – it is amazing!

### **Josh Hansen**

Coming back to the ranch to ride with the warriors and the President is fantastic. I’m looking forward to riding with the new class and to seeing some of the alumni that I rode with last year. It has been really neat to reunite with the alum – it’s fantastic and I can’t wait to start peddling!

### **Patti Collins**

I rode in the first W100, so coming back and seeing old friends plus meeting the new warriors is awesome. There is a lot of energy at the ranch this morning. It’s great!

### **Josh Michaels**

Coming back to the W100 is an awesome experience. It’s funny that we talk about the W100 as a once in a lifetime experience but through Col Howe’s Team 43 alumni

initiative, we can come back and reconnect with everyone who experienced something so special like this. The weekend is similar to the camaraderie of combat with battle buddies and a rare opportunity to be around President Bush, it's a great feeling!

**Manny Colon**

Coming back as an alumni is a great opportunity. To be able to ride with the new warriors and my fellow alumni is awesome – it's going to be a great one!

**Bryce Cole**

The Bush center has really embraced and realized the value of bringing back the alumni. They have even created Team 43 which is awesome as I love interacting with the current warriors. They are in the same boat I was in, so I can identify with how awesome it is for them and the rush of feelings they have by being able to come out to the ranch and the W100. (Bryce is a warrior that participated in the W100 the first 2 years and has come back as a volunteer for the past 3 years)

**Robert Ferrara**

The W100 just gets better every year. Coming back as alumni, seeing the new class of warriors and being here to help them is great. Seeing the looks on their faces, hearing their comments about the weekend and experiencing their excitement is just awesome!





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# Families that Serve Together

This year I was able to meet some of the warriors' spouses at the W100 and what a blessing it was to hear their stories of sacrifice, support and service. I have often thought about the sacrifices military families make, but never really thought of it as a service to the country until Michael Rodriguez mentioned that fact. Boy, Michael really hit the nail on the head and we all need to realize that it is not just the soldier, but the whole family who is serving the country. These family members go through all sorts of stresses and sacrifices during this service, and the rest of us need to do whatever we can to support them both during times of deployment and during times of recovery. President Bush recognized the importance of the military families one morning before the warriors left on their ride, "I want to stress the importance of family, a happy family means a happy soldier. It is important to recognize the role of the family in the recovery process. The spouse is just as important part of the defense of our country as the soldier."

## Challenges of a Dual Military Family at War

I served 21 years in the US Army as a Special Forces Green Beret and my wife currently has 19 years of service as a Combat Medic. Before I was medically retired for wounds I sustained in combat, I was asked "How do you guys do it?" It's a simple question that does not have a simple answer. I believe what has allowed us to get through some of our obstacles was the fact we both were serving and fully understood our "Oath of Enlistment". This left little to



explain to one another when we had to either deploy, or were conducting pre mission training to deploy again. Our children's socialization into this environment forced them to build coping mechanisms and skills at a very young age. I was unaware of how prepared my sons were until my last deployment to Afghanistan when a new guy showed up on the Special Forces ODA I was serving on. He had two sons the same age as my two oldest sons. When we were saying goodbye to our families before we left, my sons gave me a hug, said they loved me and walked away. The new guy's sons, who were experiencing their first deployment, were crying their eyes out and would not let go of their father. It was that moment I realized how much my sons had sacrificed for this country. The military child does not enlist, it's a decision made by their parents, yet they serve and sacrifice more for this country than most will ever know. In a dual military family the challenges are even greater, because both their parents wear the uniform. Yet the children serve the same, always with a patient smile when we leave. So when some of us come home changed by war, they don't judge or treat us differently, their love never changes for us or the country they too serve. I don't believe that mine or my wife's service makes us special, we do not need validation for our service and sacrifices, no service member should. What it does say though, is that our entire family took the greater responsibility and honor of protecting and defending Americans we will never meet as well as others who are in need abroad. Our grandfathers fought in World War II, my father served in Vietnam, my wife and I are proud to be part of a Warrior Family.

- Michael Rodriguez



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## Spencer & Sarah Milo

My name is Sarah Milo and I am married to Retired SSG Spencer Milo of the US Army. He was medically retired in 2013 from injuries he received overseas in both Iraq and Afghanistan; he has been diagnosed with both TBI and PTS. Our long journey started back in 2009 when I was just 19 years old. I packed up my belongings and decided to make the move from California to North Carolina to live with Spencer. He was just diagnosed with a brain tumor, given 6 months to live, given way too much medication, and was bed-ridden almost into a medical coma. I had no idea what I was getting into, but I knew that I wanted to help, and had to be there to support him. I was not only thrown into the military world at this young age, but also thrown into the caregiver role. I had just finished my first two years of college, achieved my associates degree, and had to make the decision to put my life on hold in order to care for Spencer, and make sure that he was receiving the proper treatment.

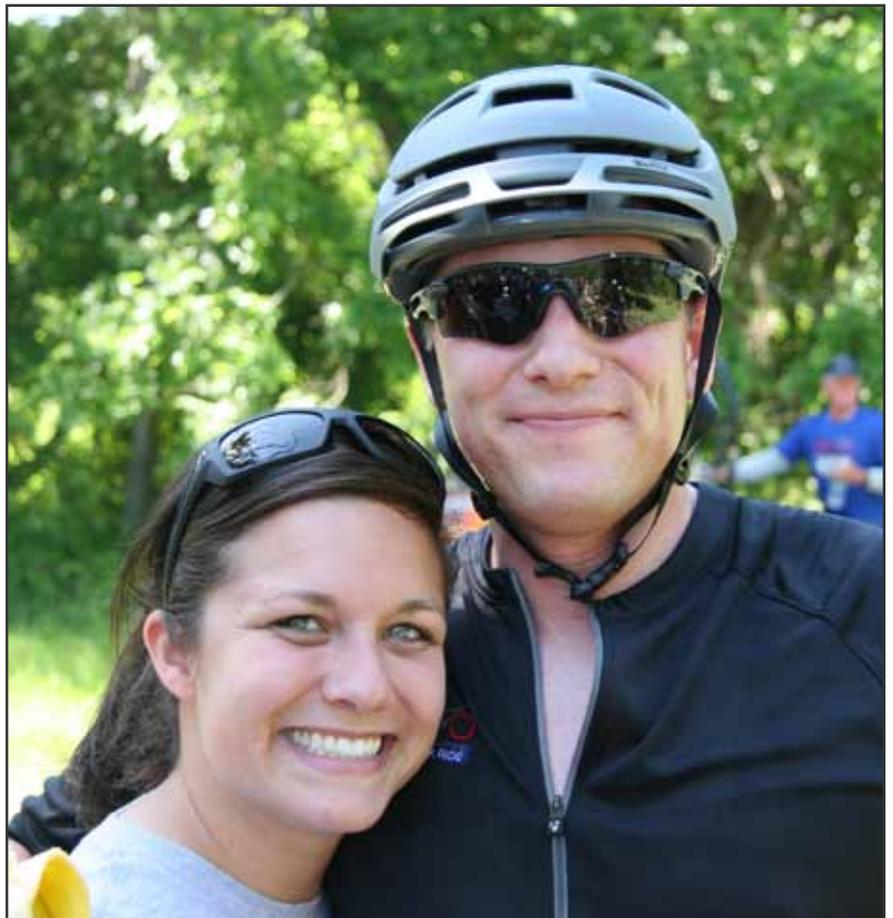
After several incidents where Spencer was heavily medicated and continuously argued with me over little things, such as wanting to drive to get himself ice cream, when he was prohibited to. Spencer ended up getting so angry that he threatened to escalate the situation by grabbing his gun and pointed it at himself until I handed the keys over to him. I knew that this was the last straw. This was not the man I first fell in love with. I reached out to our families, and we rallied together to get Spencer approved to receive a second opinion. I packed up our bags and we moved to San Francisco for 3 months to receive treatment from The University of San Francisco Medical Center. Throughout those 3 months, I slowly saw the man I fell in love with come back to life. He was taken off some of his meds, and I actually saw life in his eyes for the first time in a year. Once he finished treatment and was cleared to head back to North Carolina, he told me in January of 2010 that he really wanted to deploy again. I was hesitant at first after everything we had just gone through, but I could see in his eyes how much it meant to him. Military spouses understand how much they truly love what they do for this country and being over there protecting our freedom. So I told him I supported him no matter what, and Spencer deployed to Afghanistan in July of 2010. In January of 2011 I received the phone call that Spencer was involved in a suicide bombing incident; he was only a couple feet away when detonated and received multiple injuries. He was sent home in April for R&R and was told to not return to duty; instead he was forced to medically retire.

It has been a struggle throughout our crazy journey and there were plenty of things I had to give up in my life in order to ensure that Spencer was taken care of. I am just now finishing my Bachelor's degree, and have yet to get back into the workplace. No matter what decisions I have had to make and what situations had to be put on hold, I would have not changed my decisions for anything. I know that without my support, Spencer's situation could have turned fatal. I know that I would not have wanted to be anywhere else other than by his side; caring for him and helping him get back to the man he is today. I do look back and wish that I would have become knowledgeable of the entire situation and more about the medications. I was naïve, young, and thrown into this surreal life that I never thought could happen to us. Ultimately, it did and we have only grown from it and become stronger not only as individuals, but as a couple.

*-Sarah Milo*

Without Sarah's support throughout my injuries & recovery I probably would not be here today. On those days when I didn't have it, I had no more energy & no more fight, she was there to remind me to get back in it and keep pushing. The military spouse in general is under- appreciated and without their support none of us would be who we are today.

*-Spencer Milo*



## Kevin & Genia Rosenblum

Most people have an image of veterans as older men living out their days with the memories of war long behind them. The reality is that we have a whole young generation of veterans that are at the beginning of their lives carrying scars from war that run deeper than any gash or bullet hole. I was no different than the rest of America in my preconceptions of a war vet, until I met my future husband Kevin. I consider myself lucky that I met him after he'd returned from his second tour in Iraq and had just left the army. I can't imagine the hardship of waiting up at night wondering if the person you love is okay.



Our first date was one of those where you know, really know, that the person you just met is going to be someone special in your life. He later told me that he'd had exactly the same feeling - I guess we were just meant to be. At the beginning of our relationship the stories of war he told were purely narrative. He would seemingly disassociate himself with the people he was talking about and usually leave the story in the middle of telling it with a comment like, "You know, it was crazy." No, actually I didn't know and in my naivety began to play pranks like my family had always done when we were joking around. My favorite prank would be to hide behind a door or around a corner and jump out and startle him; until one day he sat me down and we had a talk. He told me in the best way that he could that he was struggling with PTS (Post Traumatic Stress). I win the best girlfriend in the world award, right? After our conversation his wounds started to become clearer to me. I noticed how he'd scan the tops of buildings and peak around a corner before he walked around it. Trash on the side of the road made him lean in towards the center of the car as if he was scared that the horrors of war had somehow followed him home. I didn't know how to react; I hadn't lived through multiple deployments by his side. I didn't know his stories first hand and I hadn't held our child every night and prayed/begged for his safety like so many other military spouses. The only thing I was certain of was that he was important to me and helping him through this was the only option.

I've been an avid trail runner for years so I suggested that he give it a try. We began trail running on the weekends in some of the nearby parks and his healing began almost instantly. I could see a visible difference in the way he carried himself. Nature was our therapy; our healing tool. Anything we could do to spend more time enjoying the beauty and serenity of the outdoors is what we did. Running quickly became mountain biking, which turned into multisport activities. Our first adventure type race was in Fredericksburg, VA. Our crowning achievement was going down the river backwards in a canoe because we didn't work out our strategy beforehand, it was a pretty epic fail. We've since refined our skills and know each other's strengths so we can compete as a team and not end up screaming at each other in a backwards canoe.

Competing and training has been so much more to us than just exercising to stay fit. It's our lifeline; a way to connect with each other and a way to handle the stresses of life. Some people think what we do is crazy, and yeah maybe it is a little bit, but I've seen Kevin's wounds from war fade with every mile of trail we've covered. So much of life is uncontrollable and doing what we do together seems to push all that stuff aside even if it is for just a little while. Whether it's the ghosts of war or the unpaid bills, they seem to disappear within the first mile of a ride. Kevin's PTS will resurface occasionally but now we know how to handle the issues together, and I'm so thankful that I've been a part of this journey with him.

- Genia Rosenblum

What does it take for a person to recover from trauma? For some, time heals the wounds they carry with them. Others need medicine to see them through. Me, I needed to meet the right person - the type of person that could pull me out of my own head and back out into the world. I met her five years ago and not a day goes by that I'm not thankful we met. She's my best friend, my better half and my soulmate. She's my wife, Genia, and she changed my life.

I drove away from Fort Drum, NY for the last time in January of 2009 headed south for my parents' home in Charleston, South Carolina. I'd spent almost five years in the Army and half of it was in Iraq fighting a war I didn't totally understand or believe in. I'd been wounded by mortar shrapnel, caught in IED explosions, involved in gun battles and had to bid farewell to friends for the last time. I left the Army a much different person than the one I'd been five years previously. Don't get me wrong, some of my fondest memories and closest friends came from my time in service, but the experience of war changes you. It hardens you; a necessary coping mechanism when faced with the reality of war. Men die in war. Women and children die in war. Not everyone gets to make it home.

Thankfully I did, but like I said, I was not the same. I found a job and moved to Washington, DC. I even made a few friends. On the outside everything looked great, but on the inside I just wasn't engaged. I'd go to work, come home, eat dinner and go to bed. Left, right, repeat - old habits die hard. I'd scan rooftops and peek around corners at intersections. I'd instinctively lean into the center of a car when I passed a bag of trash on the side of the road as if I was waiting for it to explode. Crowds made me immensely nervous and I just really didn't want to be around people. I wanted to withdraw into my own head; the place that felt safest and most comfortable. I spoke to a doctor and was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress or PTS.

So what happened? Why am I now able to write this article? Two things, well one thing really, which led to the other - Genia. I met Genia and my life changed. Even today it's hard to pinpoint what it is about her that does it, but she's able to pull me out of the cloud of my own thoughts. What's the other thing? Endurance sports such as trail running, mountain biking, triathlon, etc., she introduced me to all of it. When we met she was getting ready to run the Marine Corps marathon and suggested that I come out and run with her. I'd never enjoyed running in the Army, but I came along and I actually began to enjoy it. For the first time in a long time I thought about nothing, the serenity was amazing. The feeling of my body moving in synch, one foot in front of the other, heart pounding, lungs burning, head...quiet. I watched her run the Marine Corps marathon and decided I had to do it too. A year later I did. What did I think about for four hours - Nothing, it was beautiful.

Little did I know that was just the gateway drug? Genia was also an avid trail runner and mountain biker and suggested we hit the trails. My first time on a mountain bike was one of the most humbling experiences of my life. I sucked, I was slow, but I loved it. Most of all I loved the serenity of being in nature. Our adventures have taken us across the finish lines of an Ironman, multiple Xterra off road triathlons and adventure races, but as clichéd as it sounds, it's the journey that has mattered the most. The one thing that ties all of these experiences together for me is the healing power they have for me. Now when things get tough, I don't retreat into my own head, I go for a run or ride in the woods and everything comes back into perspective. I'm beyond thankful to Genia for giving me this gift. She didn't just introduce me to trail running or teach me how to mountain bike. She gave me my life back.

- Kevin Rosenblum



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## The Military Service Organizations

The W100 also celebrates some of the Military Service Organizations that have been developed to aid the vets in transitioning back into civilian life.

President Bush spoke on the MSO's. "How do we help our vets? At the Bush Center we applaud the organizations that have been set up to help our vets. We admire the programs that work well and we want to encourage the programs that are not getting the desired results to make changes. The successful organizations are a brotherhood & sisterhood who share the same experience and to a person they want every single vet to realize their potential.

### Continue Mission - Leslie Zimmerman

We want to get them outside mountain biking, skiing & snowboarding with other vets who understand what they are going through.

Being a woman vet I wanted to say that it is very important that we as women vets support each other. The male population of vets is much larger and they have a ton of support groups and although a lot of the groups are for women as well, not a lot of women vets are participating in the groups. Most of the time I am the only woman vet at these types of events. I am proud to be that example of a woman who is getting out there and still living life. I live outside, it is my passion and I have seen how being outside and participating in activities such as camping, hiking & mountain biking can play a big part in the healing process – especially for women. I would like to put that out there and make an appeal for more women to get involved.



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### **Team Red, White & Blue – Kevin Rosenblum**

Team Red, White & Blue uses sports & social activities to help service members reintegrate with the community after they leave the service. Soldiers have a built in community in the service, but once they leave they may end up in a place where they don't know anyone. Not having a support system can contribute to a downhill spiral. It is important to get the vets out, active & engaged in the community.

### **The Green Beret Foundation - Scott Neil**

The Green Beret Foundation focuses on supporting Green Berets and their families during recovery. The initial casualty care program provides services & support throughout the entire care process. The Next Ridgeline program is geared towards transitioning vets from military to civilian life and focuses on many aspects from helping start small businesses, entrepreneurship, finding the right job and just being active & healthy.

### **Green Beret Foundation Ambassador - Jeremy Valdez**

The Green Beret Foundation focus on special forces veterans, helping both the warrior and their families as they transition back into civilian life. They also have a great program for the wives called Steel Magnolias.

### **Hire Heroes – Spencer Milo**

The mission of Hire Heroes is to help veterans from past & present wars and their spouses' transition into the current workforce. Hire Heroes empowers the vets & their spouses to feel confident to move forward into the transition. We help with resumes, teaching vets how to interview, networking and finding the right job. We also help determine if the vets are ready to enter the workforce as well as educate employers as to the skill sets that transitioning vets & their spouses possess. Hire Heroes helps transforming military service into civilian success. **AW**



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[www.dustinmounts.com](http://www.dustinmounts.com)



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# Gun Reviews

## AR-15



### *KNS PRECISION, INC. GEN 2 MOD NON ROTATING TRIGGER/*

#### *HAMMER PINS*

The KNS Non Rotating Trigger / Hammer Pins will prevent pin creep or rotation which can wear larger holes in the lower receiver of your rifle. Great for weapons using Slidefire systems, suppressed, full auto, and semi auto weapons, the stainless steel pins are super strong and the MOD 2 side plates look great. The kit is easy to install and comes with everything you need - 2 allen wrenches and an installation tool. KNS also makes a kit specifically for the wider bodied S&W M&P 15-22.

[www.knsprecisioninc.com](http://www.knsprecisioninc.com)



### *BATTLE ARMS DEVELOPMENT AMBIDEXTRIOUS SAFETY SELECTOR*

The Battle Arms Development Ambidextrous Safety Selector breaks new ground in the ambi safety arena. These well designed levers are machined from bar stock and provide fantastic grip. The levers come in 9 different interchangeable options giving you 81 combinations to choose from when designing your perfect rifle. The BAD - ASS safety provides a positive crisp selector that never leaves any doubt about deployment. Great for lefties, ambi shooting and as an added safety measure that gives clear visual confirmation at the range. Battle Arms Development also makes the US made ambi safety to fit the S&W 15-22.

[www.battlearmsdevelopment.com](http://www.battlearmsdevelopment.com)



### *ELFTMANN DROP-IN MATCH TRIGGER*

The Elftmann Drop-In Match Trigger is the only AR-15 trigger that uses aircraft needle bearings to provide a crisp glass break and lightning fast trigger pull. The Elftmann allows the shooter to adjust the pull weight from 2.5 - 4 pounds without removing the trigger from the lower receiver and is drop safe at all pull weight settings. The speedy reset aids in quick & accurate follow up shots and makes this the perfect trigger for a Slidefire system. The US made Elftmann Match Trigger is available in a curved or straight shoe and comes with a lifetime guarantee. Elftmann also produces non-rotating, anti-walk trigger & hammer pins that can be installed in a few seconds. Unlike most companies these days, Elftmann is serious about their lifetime guarantee; Elftmann recently honored their lifetime guarantee by replacing all of the Elftmann triggers that burned up in a gun store fire - now that's service!

[www.elftmantactical.com](http://www.elftmantactical.com)

## AR-15

### *FAIL ZERO EXO NICKEL BORON FULL AUTO BOLT CARRIER GROUP*

The Fail Zero EXO Nickel Boron Full Auto Bolt Carrier Group is guaranteed to increase the performance & reliability of your weapon and makes cleaning a snap. The drop in BCG has an EXO Nickel Boron coating which provides permanent lube free lubricity and increased durability & corrosion resistance. We suggest the full auto BCG which is a beefier BCG but will work fine in a semi auto weapon. Fail Zero's EXO Technology is actually harder than the substrate that is being coated, providing a 82-85 on the Rockwell Hardness Scale. Fail Zero provides a lifetime warranty on the Nickel Boron coating making this a great BCG.

[www.failzero.com](http://www.failzero.com)



### *WMD GUNS NiB-X FULL AUTO BOLT CARRIER GROUP*

The WMD Guns NiB-X Full Auto Bolt Carrier Group is a great upgrade for your AR-15. The Nickel Boron is 40% more wear resistant than chrome and produces an easy to clean BCG that resists fouling and does not require lube. Great for users who shoot lots of rounds, suppressed weapons or weapons that are used in tough environments such as sandy areas. Available in 5.56 & 308, the NiB-X coating will allow the user to run 2-3 times the amount of rounds between cleanings. WMD Guns is so confident in their made in the United States BCG that they will guarantee the NiB-X coating forever, and that is a long time for a gun parts warranty.

[www.wmdguns.com](http://www.wmdguns.com)



### *MAGPUL M-LOK TRIPOD ADAPTER*

The Magpul M-LOK Tripod Adapter for metal M-LOK compatible hand guards or forends allows an operator to mount their weapon directly to a standard tripod which provides a stable & secure shooting platform. The rock solid adaptor is machined from aluminum and provides a minimum footprint, covering only 2 M-LOK slots. The M-LOK Tripod Adapter is another great functional solution from Magpul.

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## AR-15



### *CMMG LOWER PARTS KIT*

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## WHY USE AN ADJUSTABLE GAS BLOCK?

Most AR-15's are severely over gassed which provides a measure of reliability but also results in all sorts of performance inhibiting side effects. Adjustable gas blocks allow the shooter to tune the gas pressure on a standard direct impingement AR-15. The results are numerous such as reduced recoil, decreased sight picture movement, faster recoil recovery, heat reduction at the bolt and a cleaner gun. An adjustable gas block is a significant performance upgrade and will produce a smoother shooting rifle while improving your performance. Adjustable gas blocks are a no brainer upgrade for all AR-15's and a double no brainer if you are shooting a suppressed weapon.

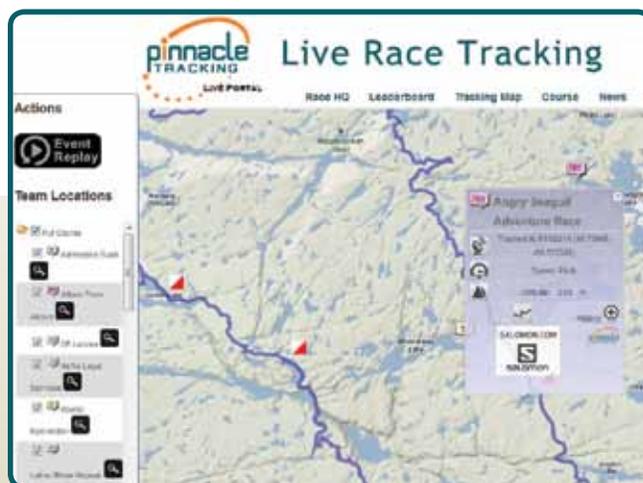


### *SLR RIFLEWORKS ADJUSTABLE GAS BLOCK*

The SLR Rifleworks Adjustable Gas Block allows the shooter to fine tune their gas pressure providing a cleaner & smoother shooting rifle. SLR Rifleworks has simplified the process to a single clicking gas metering screw that guarantees the gas block adjustment will not accidentally move. The gas block can be completely disassembled in less than 10 seconds and is available in Titanium or a Melonite finish. SLR Rifleworks makes adjustable gas blocks in 4 different sizes ranging from .625 - .936 and the adjustable gas block comes with all mounting hardware required. SLR Rifleworks also makes a handy extended length ball driver which makes adjustment a snap. Get yourself an adjustable gas block and you will be amazed at the results of this simple but effective upgrade from SLR Rifleworks.

[www.slrrifleworks.com](http://www.slrrifleworks.com)

# Pinnacle Tracking, a Maine based company that was born from the needs of Adventure Racers, is pleased to be the Official Tracking System of the USARA.



Founded by longtime adventure racer and Untamed Adventure Race Director, Grant Killian and professional guide and adventure company owner Russell Walters, Pinnacle Tracking supplies handheld inReach™ satellite trackers, manufactured by U.S. based DeLorme, along with airtime and integrated mapping capabilities for a variety of races and events ranging from 1 – 10 days duration.

Utilizing the Iridium satellite network, the lightweight DeLorme inReach™ tracking devices provide 100% global coverage and will automatically transmit regular GPS location reports to a **web based event portal**. The portal enables race organizers, supporters and friends to closely follow each team's location accurately on a map from anywhere in the world.

In addition to their sophisticated GPS tracking and location capabilities, the inReach™ devices provide the added security of **24 / 7 SOS alerts and two-way satellite messaging** to racers, enabling teams to communicate in real-time with organizers and emergency personnel without having to carry bulky and expensive satellite phones.

The tracking devices can be programmed to transmit their location at intervals ranging from 1-minute to 8-hour intervals and are delivered to event organizers fully programmed, ready to use.

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## AK-47

### MAGPUL MAGPUL ZHUKOV-S STOCK

The Magpul Zhukov-S Stock is a folding, 5 position collapsible polymer stock for the AK 47. The Zhukov-S Stock is available in 5 colors and has a rubber butt pad, QD sling mounts and optional snap on cheek risers. The weapon can still be charged and fired when the stock is folded and the positive detents prevent the stock from moving while folded. The Magpul Zhukov-S Stock is a great way to modernize your AK 47.

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### MAGPUL ZHUKOV HAND GUARD

The Magpul Zhukov Hand Guard provides a larger gripping surface and M-LOK accessory mounting slots for your AK 47. The full length aluminum chassis provides a stiff foundation and the polymer hand guard provides fantastic heat shielding. The Magpul Zhukov Hand Guard is available in 5 colors and makes a perfect companion to the Zhukov-S Stock.

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### MAGPUL MOE AK STOCK

The Magpul MOE AK Stock is a light weight polymer fixed stock for the AK47. The MOE AK stock features an internal storage compartment that is perfect for the factory AK cleaning kit, a rubber butt pad, optional snap on cheek risers and QD sling swivels. Available in 5 color choices, the MOE AK Stock is a great fixed stock upgrade for your AK 47.

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### MAGPUL MOE AK & AKM HAND GUARD

The Magpul MOE AK & AKM Hand Guard comes in 2 sizes for standard AK 47 pattern rifles with or without a front sling loop on the hand guard retainer. The polymer MOE AK Handguard provides a solid gripping surface and an efficient heat shield for the operator. The hand guard will accept a factory cleaning rod, includes a replacement polymer top cover and features M-LOK mounting capability. The Magpul MOE AK Hand Guard comes in 5 color choices and is the perfect pairing with the Magpul MOE AK Stock.

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# The American Men of the Gobi March

by Clare Morin

It was an all American scene at the front of the Gobi March this year. For the first time in history, one country dominated the podium and every day in the race was a battle among the leaders.

Adam Kimble won gold, finishing with a time of 25:39:33. This was Kimble's first 4 Deserts race. The 28-year old hails from Illinois where he works with an intriguing event company called Red Frog Events,





Adam Kimble

which organizes unique and fun races. Adam says he thoroughly enjoyed the setting in this far end of the Gobi and everything the weather gods threw their way. “It’s been beautiful to see the different terrain and weather conditions,” Adam commented the end of the Long March. “For this being my first stage race, I’m really happy with the way it’s going.” He said he felt humbled

by the powerful forces of Kyle McCoy and Ralph Crowley either side of him. “It’s been really tough. Everyday a different guy has pushed the pace and for the next leg, I’m just trying to hang on.” It has also been a lesson in anthropology, seeing up close the people who live in these areas. “The most memorable part of the race for me has been the

## The Rise of Endurance Sports in China

By Clare Morin

There were 28 competitors from China in this year’s Gobi March. Anyone from China will tell you that this is a very lucky number in the Chinese culture; it is also a surprising number. This was the largest group of Chinese competitors to compete in a 4 Deserts Race to date. It is a sign of the rising trend of ultramarathons in the country. The Gobi March is a 250 kilometer rough country footrace held in Xinjiang Province and organized by the 4 Deserts Race Series. This June, it took place with the largest number of Chinese flags ever seen in the field. Victor Cheng is based in Beijing and part of the 4 Deserts Race Series’ organizing team at this year’s Gobi March. He explains that ultramarathons are becoming a very real phenomenon in the country. “Enduring racing is becoming very popular,” explains Cheng. “People in China have more money and are looking for new things to do. They have already tried regular sports, and now that they have more money to spend, they are looking for new, different and interesting things to do.”

As 163 competitors congregated at the event hotel in Hami the day before the race began, we met Hu Xiaoyan. She was with a large group of fellow racers from Hangzhou as they stood in the competitor check-in, where their bags were checked for all the necessary food and gear needed for the seven-day, six-stage race. Hu told us that she took on her first race at the Sahara Race in Jordan in 2014, taking a break from her day job as the Vice President of a papermaking company. She thoroughly enjoyed the experience and came back for more. “I really like doing ultramarathons,” she says. Part of it, she points out, is the chance to get out into the vast outdoors, away from the busy urban centers. The popularity is also growing as a result of sheer word-of-mouth that races like these bring about. “Races in China are becoming more popular because friends who do races are telling other friends about the races. We hear about the races from other competitors who were in previous races.” This is certainly the case with Hu and her friends. A whole group of them here were former university

different environments and camps we've had, the kindness of the people and the richness of the culture." He adds that he has relied upon three things to get him through: "the strategy has been to run hard, listen to my body and enjoy myself."

For second-placed Ralph Crowley, this race has seen the 30 year old enter the 4 Deserts Club, having come fresh from

his second-place win at The Last Desert (Antarctica) in 2014. He came extremely close to being champion, finishing just five minutes behind Kimble. We spoke with Crowley after the Long March. "It's been going well," he told us. "The extreme conditions have made it very exciting. The extreme weather changes have also been the most difficult



friends from Xiamen University in Fujian province. "People in China are becoming more interested in sports in general, mostly young adults, some university students, but mostly young professionals," explains Hu. "It's a way for them to socialize. That's what we did as university students at Xiamen University and we continued to do sports together after we graduated."

This collective of university buddies turned out to be real stars of the race. As the 163 competitors from 40 countries moved into a grueling yet spectacular week of racing through a course that moved from sand dunes, to mountain passes, pastures and alpine lands, they encountered an astonishing mix of weather from snow showers in the opening days, to rainfall, searing heat and even a sand storm that caused race organizers to cut the race slightly short. Yet China's Team Xiamen University put in a dazzling performance—and came out the top of their field. The former classmates consisting of Zhan Youyi, Liang Xinde, Chen Yuzeng, Wang Zhongwen and Yu Guandi were the winning team and came in 35th place overall, a high ranking considering all the teamwork needed to keep the group motivated and moving at the same pace. They were followed by a second Chinese team, called My Band.

It was certainly a reason for some national pride for the large contingency of Chinese competitors at the awards banquet at the end of the week. However, when team captain Zhan Youyi stood up to accept the prize on behalf of Team Xiamen University, it became clear that his nationality was far from his mind. It turns out that a week spent out in the harsh elements of a desert has the effect of dissolving away all sense of national borders. Out in the wild expanses of a desert, one simply becomes a human pushing through all odds to make it through to the end. "The win isn't so important," said Zhan Youyi to his large crowd of fellow racers as they cheered him on. "We are like sisters and brothers now. We made it through the race together and that's the most important part."

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thing so far, going from rain and cold to 45 degrees Celsius - the heat is challenging.”

For third placed Kyle McCoy, who was racing in his second 4 Deserts race here in China, it has been a week of steadily monitoring his body and getting his best possible performance. We found him at the end of Stage 2, in a camp in the courtyard of a Kazhak village. It was early in the evening with the sun shining and he was feeling “cautiously confident and aiming to be in the top 5”. “I’m focused on staying healthy and strong,” he told us. “I plan on sticking with Adam [Kimble] for the next stages as I have so far. The variations in temperature have been hard to prepare for, although the terrain



Kyle McCoy

here has been great. I’ve done the Atacama before and the temperatures there are more predictable, so it was easier to prepare for.” McCoy has a lot of experience being out in tough environments. He served as an officer in the US Army’s Joint Special Operations community (75th Ranger Regiment) and he was deployed four times to Afghanistan. He’s also been using this race as a fundraising vehicle, raising funds specifically for the Trust for Public Land,



which works with communities to make sure that land is protected with water. He will be making his community back home proud, as will all three Americans who conquered the Gobi this year. **AW**

# USARA Adventure Race National Championship

Pine Mountain State Resort Park, Kentucky - October 1-3, 2015

Pisgah 26.2 AR	8/8/15	NC
The Hogback	8/8/15	Ocee, TN
Calleva AR	8/9/15	Poolesville, MD
Thunder Rolls	8/22/15	Mt. Carroll, IL
BendAR	8/29/15	Bend, OR
Chesapeake Headwaters 12	8/29/15	Bear, DE
Tomahawk Challenge	9/12/15	New Harmony, IN
The Shag	9/12/15	Peekskill, NY
Howl at the Moon	9/19/15	Hobe Sound, FL
Tahoe Big Blue	9/28/15	Lake Tahoe, CA
<b>For 2016</b>		
Coosa River Challenge	10/3/15	Wetumpka, AL
Sky Island Challenge	11/7/15	Tucson, AZ
Bartram's Wildwood Epic	11/7/15	Columbia, GA
Unbridled AR- The Fig	11/7/15	Slade, KY



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