

Webb does not believe skydiving is as frightening or as dangerous as some people think.

"I was scared to death on my first jump, probably on my first 100 jumps," said Webb. "But, I have never seen anybody hurt and I've never seen anybody killed. I have been in airplanes with problems, though -- times when we were too close to the ground and it looked like we were going to crash. I don't view skydiving as unreasonably dangerous. If you are cautious, it is relatively safe. I used to ride motorcycles, until I realized that was unreasonably dangerous."

Webb skydives at Spaceland in League City, and he goes up about once a week, if the weather is good. He also taught skydiving on weekends for about four years, and he is now involved in skydiving photography -- he takes pictures of people freefalling while he sits above them in the airplane.

"Skydiving has improved my self worth and self esteem," said Webb. "It takes guts to do this, and it makes you more confident."

## Ted D. Lee Mountain Climber

Ted D. Lee, a partner in the San Antonio firm of Gunn, Lee & Jackson, climbed his first mountain in 1985 while on a Boy Scout trip with one of his sons.

"We were on a 10-day backpacking trip at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico," said Lee, "and we climbed Baldy Peak, which is 12,500 feet high."

Lee then climbed several other mountains, including Windham Peak in Colorado's San Juan mountains and Wheeler Peak in New Mexico. After these trips, he read a book titled "The Seven Summits." The book was written by two men over the age of 50 who had climbed the seven highest mountains in the world. Lee decided that "if they could do it at 50, I could certainly climb at least one major mountain at 44." Thus began his journey to the peak of Mount McKinley, which he chose to climb because its location in Alaska made it the closet major mountain to San Antonio.

Lee tackled Mount McKinley in June 1988, when the sun was up virtually round the clock. He made the trek with an experienced guide and several other climbers.

The summit of Mount McKinley is 20,320 feet above sea level, and at the time Lee decided to climb it, he did not realize that the mountain, although not the tallest in the world, is one of the most dangerous to climb.

"The weather on McKinley can be very severe," said Lee, "but fortunately the



San Antonio attorney Ted D. Lee and expedition leader Eric Simonson celebrate their arrival at the summit of Alaska's Mount McKinley. The climbers braved physical exhaustion and treacherous weather to scale the 20,320-foot mountain.

weather was with us when we made the climb."

Nonetheless, snowstorms periodically blasted the climbers, and temperatures shifted dramatically depending upon whether a climber was standing in the sunshine or in the shade.

"We were constantly taking off and putting on clothes," said Lee. "It could easily be 100 degrees in the sun, and then when the sun went behind the mountain it would drop to negative 20 degrees in a matter of moments."

The trip to McKinley's summit began May 31, when Lee went to the San Antonio airport to board a plane bound for Anchorage, and ended on June 21 when the climbers were picked up by a small plane at the base of the mountain and transported back to civilization.

The climbers endured numerous delays due to sickness among themselves (sore throats and the like) and weather conditions on the mountain, but finally reached the peak's summit on June 17.

When the weather was clear, the climbers spent their days inching up the mountain, then, exhausted, they fell into their sleeping bags at night. When it was snowing, expedition members struggled with the boredom of staying in their tents for one or two days at a time. At one point they even created a deck of playing cards out of scrap paper and used aspirins for poker chips.

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Although the climbers were tethered together by ropes, Lee did have one very frightening experience.

"We were coming down the mountain and going across the glacier to the airstrip," he said, "and my snowshoe punched through a crevasse. I couldn't even see the bottom of the crevasse. It was just black. Fortunately, because I was roped to the other climbers, I didn't fall through."

Lee said the most exhilarating experience he has had while mountain climbing was standing on the summit of Mount McKinley. He also noted that the danger of it all is part of the sport's attraction. However, the primary reason Lee climbs mountains is for the relaxation it provides.

"As an attorney, you are constantly solving other people's problems," he said. "Stress can be very high and the telephone is always ringing. But nobody can call you on a mountain. It's relaxing."

After achieving the goal of climbing Mount McKinley, one might think Lee would have had enough. Not so.

"Next summer my wife and I are going to Africa," he said. "We're going to climb Mount Kilimanjaro."

## Jon Ker Army Green Beret

Jon Ker, a solo practitioner in Hewitt (just south of Waco), is a captain in the U.S. Army Reserve's 12th Special Forces Group (Airborne), more commonly known as the Green Berets.

"In order to be a member of the special forces, you must volunteer three times," said Ker, "once for army service, once for jump school, and once for special forces training. Officer training is broader. You learn a little bit of everything — weapons, demolitions, medicine, communications — because a special forces team must be capable of working in all these areas."

Ker joined the special forces in 1968, prior to service in Viet Nam, and he now devotes 72 to 96 hours a month to the forces. He also spends one month per year on active duty.

Ker's special forces duties include military skydiving and scuba diving as well as work with special operations, intelligence, demolitions, and explosives.

Military skydiving is quite different from the recreational skydiving some civilians enjoy.

"Our skydiving is oriented to inserting soldiers into a combat situation," said Ker. "We jump with survival equipment and sometimes rifles, so we might weigh

300 to 500 pounds when we drop. We mostly use the static line method of jumping, in which our parachutes open as soon as we jump, and we often jump from low altitudes. The goal is to be able to be self sustaining and arrive undetected in a hostile area."

Ker noted that one of his best experiences as a special forces member came while skydiving.

"We were conducting a jump school in Wisconsin two years ago," said Ker, "and we opened our chutes at 10,000 feet and enjoyed a 15-minute ride down."

Scuba diving is another method used by the special forces to enter hostile areas without being detected.

"We also scuba dive to train for disrupting enemy supply lines and interdicting channels of communication," said Ker. "For instance, our team recently went to Galveston and jumped from a helicopter into the bay. We scuba dived to place imaginary charges under the ferry boat in the ship channel, and then the Coast Guard had to find us."

Had Ker's mission been real, explosion of the charges would have effectively blocked off the channel.

Ker's special operations and intelligence duties employ three types of action. Direct action is a method in which the forces enter an area, complete

their mission, and then get out. In strategic reconnaissance, the special forces go in to an area and gather information by observing happenings therein. The insurgency counter is used to counter, prevent, or stop guerilla warfare.

"We also have the capability of training other countries in guerilla warfare," Ker said, "and in this sense, we're really educators. The special forces assisted the South Vietnamese in guerilla warfare during the war."

In their work with demolitions and explosives, Ker's special forces group assists the Oklahoma Highway Department in using explosives.

"When they need demolitions done we go in and do it," said Ker. "We've tried to work with Texas, but haven't so far."

Ker's group also practices setting charges at Fort Sill. They use a number of sophisticated explosives including C-4, which is plastic, and det-cord, a rope-like material that explodes.

Ker noted that his military service makes him a better attorney because it gives him another dimension to draw from in negotiations. He said love of his country motivates him to serve in the Army special forces.

"I am a flag-waving patriot," said Ker. "This is a job that has to be done, someone's got to do it, so why not me?"



Jon Ker, a captain in the U.S. Army Special Forces and an attorney in solo practice, prepares to skydive via the static line method from a military airplane. Ker spends 72 to 96 hours per month training with the special forces. He has been a member of the forces since 1968.