

ULTIMATE EXPEDITION

Jump out of a Perfectly Good Airplane at 30,000 Feet!

by Lyn Freeman

May not have worked out so well for DB Cooper, but these guys have perfected the longest tandem freefall in the world! Best part is you can do it with no previous experience!

The wind from the open aircraft door is about 30 degrees –below zero. Not to worry. You're wearing a flight suit, a helmet and an oxygen mask covering your nose and mouth. Besides, there's about to be enough sensory overload that the cold will be the last thing on your mind. You and an instructor are about to step out into thin air, lashed together in a freefall, heading to the ground at 100+ miles an hour from an altitude of 30,000'.

For the purveyors of tandem skydiving, the market is always in freefall, but no where like the skies over Lumberton, Mississippi. Incredible Adventures, an organization which puts together a variety of one-of-a-kind adrenalin bombs, organizes HALO (military jargon for high-altitude-low-open) skydiving for anyone ready to write a check, including first time jumpers. Customers, ages 16 to 70, come for a full day of training, then meet at the 'drop zone' the next morning to head toward the stratosphere.

Plan to arrive at the jump zone in Lumberton/Hattiesburg by noon on Saturday. You'll spend the entire afternoon getting fitted for equipment and training with our expert HALO jump team. You'll learn tandem skydiving basics and practice pre-breathing techniques. (To safely jump from 30,000 feet and avoid experiencing the sort of "bends" you can get when scuba diving, you'll spend time on board the aircraft pre-breathing 100% oxygen.) If all goes as scheduled, you'll be leaving the drop

zone with a smile on your face and your HALO jump certificate in hand, by noon Sunday.

If falling 6 miles over Mississippi doesn't empty your endorphins, then hit the reset and consider this trip from Incredible Adventures: In May of 2009, they'll lead a batch of 'floaters' out the door of an airplane orbiting the top of Mount Everest. Yes, THE Mount Everest, the 29,029' tall Mount Everest. Step into the clear, thin Himalayan air and become a speeding spec in the expanse of Nepal and Tibet and China, upstaged by the tallest mountain in the world.

If May doesn't work in your schedule, how about June? You can HALO jump over Mt. McKinley, the highest peak in the United States, inside Alaska's Denali National Park

The best part about these opportunities is that you don't have to have any skydiving experience at all. Incredible Adventures not only includes extensive training, but they're the only company in the world to offer 'tandem' HALO freefalls. That means you leave the airplane umbilically attached to a professional jumper tasked with making sure neither of you die young. Your job? Just enjoy the ride.

For more, visit Incredible-Adventures.com, or call 941.346.2603. Airport: Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport (GDP), 228.863.2570. 

