

Do you think you're
as **tough** as the

SWISS ARMY?



ZERMATT TO VERBIER 2024
An alpine hike and ski challenge



The Intensive Care Society would like to invite you to take on one of the most iconic mountain endurance challenges in the world, pushing you both mentally and physically beyond what you thought possible.



"The hardest mental, physical and emotional four days I've ever done. Couldn't have done it without the fantastic, amazing team."

Dr Sarah Clarke, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust Consultant

March
2024

9 months
training

Team of
6

The Patrouille des Glaciers (PDG) is an historic national and international ski mountaineering race organised by the Swiss Army. Considered to be one of the toughest courses in the world, the PDG covers a 57.5 km route at altitudes of up to 3,650 metres between Zermatt and Verbier.

Our Zermatt to Verbier challenge is not a race, instead the team will complete this famous alpine traverse at a more achievable pace. The trek will take four days, and we're looking for confident skiers to join us. Ski touring or mountaineering experience is also desirable.

We are building a team for 2024, places are limited and you will need:

- Relevant experience
- To commit to a year of regular training
- To be a valued team member, willing to meet throughout the preparation year
- To fundraise for the Intensive Care Society
- To support in sourcing corporate sponsorship (the Society will provide you with packs to help with this)

Event date: March 2024

Training period: 9 months

Team size: 6

Minimum personal fundraising target: £5,000

Registration fee: £150
Pre/post accommodation and flights not included

Team sponsorship packages are available from £5,000 – information included in the back of this booklet

Register your interest to take part

Email: richard@ics.ac.uk

Web: <https://bit.ly/ZtoV2024>



The creators of the challenge and their reasons why

Most folk would say that the Patrouille des Glaciers (PDG) Route is a little crazy, but the inspiration for bringing together the first team to take this challenge on was our daughter Harriet.



March 2020 is a date that will stay with us all for the rest of our lives, but for us, it was when we realised that Harriet, a junior doctor, was going into the eye of the Covid storm when she joined the ICU team at the Royal Free Hospital, London.

The challenge of working in an ICU in normal times is obvious, but March 2020 saw all health professionals commencing on a journey that most had no idea of how it would end. Being 150 miles away from our daughter gave us only the snatched phone calls between her commute to and from overfilled wards.

We were amazed at her resilience and her capacity to 'carry on'. Not once did she moan. There were occasional tears, particularly when her patients lost their fight against COVID. But one of the most outstanding memories were her chats where she marvelled at her colleagues - nurses, medics, Allied Health Professionals - ability to 'keep on going'. It was inevitable that the pandemic would impact on all our mental health, not least our frontline workers.

Nothing can compare to what the pandemic brought but we wanted to do something, so we began looking for an immense challenge that with enough training, strength and resilience is possible to anyone with a base level of fitness.

The PDG Route was the one; a tough trek, a high-altitude traverse in the Swiss Alps, requiring tenacity, endurance, commitment, and a battle against the worst that nature may throw at you - much like the qualities we saw in Harriet and her colleagues during the pandemic.

Stepping up to this challenge is no 'walk in the park', so if you want to throw yourself into a challenge of a lifetime, contact Richard for a chat.

Gary and Debbie Pittaway



The Intensive Care Society is the oldest charity for critical care in the world

The Intensive Care Society has been the proud home for all those working in intensive care since 1970, making us the oldest critical care organisation in the world. The Society was created by healthcare professionals to represent and support the UK's intensive care community which comprises doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists and psychologists.

We support our community with ICU standards, clinical guidance, education, research, policy and workforce, leadership, and the tools they need to thrive at work.

1 in 6 of us will need intensive care in our lifetimes and it is only with the generous support of individuals that we can continue to support for the intensive care community so they can continue to look after the sickest of patients in hospitals during our time of need.

Not sure what to expect? Here's a brief diary from the 2022 team

Day 1 Zermatt to Schonbielhutt

Full of enthusiasm with fresh legs we arrive in Zermatt in the shadow of the Matterhorn (4478m).

Marco our guide allows time to buy a cake from the local bakery even though we are on a tight timeframe to make the first hut before dark. It proves to be the tastiest thing that we will eat for the next four days!

Day 2 Schonbielhutt to Arolla

After our first night in a Swiss mountain refuge everyone looks like they are suffering from a lack of sleep.

It's an early start. A short distance on skis to the valley. We can barely hold an 'edge' on the ice, rotten snow and bare rock. 500m of probably the worst skiing conditions I've ever experienced. 10 hours on our feet later we arrive in Arolla.

All are totally exhausted, and two team members confide that they may not be able to continue...

Day 3 Arolla to Cabine de Dix

After a good night's rest in the Hotel Du Pigne we awake to a bright morning and the Team are all once again as enthusiastic as on day one!

It's a shorter day but all uphill. Apart, that is from the ice axe and crampon descent to the Dix Hutt. The Hutt is a welcome refuge.

Day 4 Cabine de Dix to Verbier

Another bright and very cold morning - our longest day.

We leave the hut on skis and spend the next four hours traversing the lake. My left leg permanently bent and right permanently extended - recovery from this position seems unlikely at this point!

Eventually we approach a col and a vertical ascent. Foolishly I assume the summit will bring us back into the ski resort. But we still have another two and a half hours of climbing to the Bec de Rosses, another near vertical ascent. But our last climb!

We summit the col above Verbier. Marco checks everyone to the ridge, Will encouraging a couple of the team to the top and Alice snapping away with the camera. "We are in Verbier"!!!!

Sponsorship and participant opportunities

£10,000 / corporate team sponsor

- One free place within a team and the option to allot three other paid for positions
- Branded Mammut kit: jacket and salopettes (choice of team colours)
- Your logo/branding on a silk banner to be photographed with the team at key locations on the trek
- Qualified mountaineering guide/leader
- Mountain photographer
- Branding and mentions across all media platforms and promotional materials delivered by the Society
- Training support from a mountaineering expert to get challenge ready in time for March 2024
- Team get togethers for training and support at preferred locations throughout the UK
- Opportunity to host a get together for your team/all teams throughout the training year

Individual registrant

£150 registration fee + minimum fundraising pledge of £5,000

- Branded Mammut kit (reliant on a corporate sponsor)
- Qualified mountaineering guide/leader
- Mountain photographer
- Training support from a mountaineering expert to get challenge ready in time for March 2024
- Team get togethers for training and support at preferred locations throughout the UK

Register your interest to take part



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