

Mark “Squiz” Squirrell

OAM

Commando, Humanitarian Aid Worker & Everest Summiteer

From car bombings to meeting Yasser Arafat and climbing big mountains in the Himalayas, Mark “Squiz” Squirrell is a man who has experienced more than many of us can dream about.

Awarded the coveted Green Beret in his role as a Commando with the Australian Special Forces he burned with a passion to put his skills to good use.

Mark has worked across the globe as a Humanitarian Aid Worker in war zones such as Sudan, Somalia and Afghanistan. His emergency work has also taken him head-first into natural disasters such as the Nepal Earthquake and the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa. In 2006, whilst posted to Nepal during the Maoist Insurgency, Mark took leave and summited Mount Everest to raise awareness of global hunger. Fasten your seatbelts, as this will be a ride to remember!

When Mark headed to the East Timor Crisis in 1999 he was setting out on the adventure of a lifetime. It was a journey that would see him navigate some of the world’s most brutal war zones to deliver emergency aid and conquer the world’s tallest mountain.

Mark was awarded the coveted “Green Beret” whilst serving with the Australian Commando. His tenure with the military provided him with the skills and courage to succeed amidst adversity and turmoil. It was the perfect grounding for a career as a Humanitarian Aid Worker.

Mark escorted food convoys through the Gaza Strip, negotiated with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) and brokered deals with Somali Clansmen to ensure the safe delivery of United Nations food aid. In doing so, he has mastered the challenges of performing under pressure, communicating effectively and building relationships.

Mark uses anecdotes and presents real-time scenarios that demand lateral thinking to deliver relevant and practical tips for those working in today’s complex and fluid global market. The real-time conundrums are presented via authentic video, Virtual Reality goggles and photos that have the audience embroiled in the critical decision-making that led to his eventual success.

In addition to this, Mark has taken the concept of being motivated at work to an all-new high. He was inspired by his organisation, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the



impoverished people that it feeds, to climb to the top of the world to help raise awareness of the global hunger crisis. After a gruelling six week ordeal, Mark raised the WFP flag on the summit of Mount Everest. The inspiring and thrilling recount across glaciers and up exposed cliffs reveals the motivation, habits and adversity skills that facilitated his success.

Mark has a Bachelor of Business (HRM) and has published a memoir titled From Arafat to Everest. In 2019 Mark was recognised in the Australia Day Honours List with an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for “service to the international community through humanitarian aid”. He continues to deploy on short-term assignments to emergency zones with the United Nations.

Mark provides keynotes, workshops and team-building activities to develop workplace performance. Unique footage played through Virtual Reality goggles guarantees that your staff will have a life-like, high impact and unforgettable experience!

Mark “Squiz” Squirrell talks about:

Extreme Leadership

This session focuses on the importance of making informed and early decisions in order to take control of high pressure and fluid circumstances. There are also tips and ideas that frontline and strategic leaders can take back to the workplace to build the teams they lead and motivate them to reach new heights.

Key Takeaways:

- Decision making under pressure
- The importance of the team
- Building relationships in advance of a crisis

Strategic Thinking

This session reveals how Squiz was motivated to step outside of his “Job Description” to climb Everest in order to raise awareness of global hunger. By doing so he was helping his organisation, the United Nations World Food Programme, achieve one of its strategic goals; to obtain global awareness on behalf of those that endure hunger and poverty.

Key Takeaways:

- The importance of shifting from tactical/operational goals to strategic focus
- Inspiring your team to think big and tackle big goals with confidence
- Creating the right mindset for adversity

Virtual Reality Experience

Experience first-hand the challenges and rewards of working in war zones and climbing Everest with this unique visual stimulation. Your team will literally be taken on a humanitarian mission

into the Gaza Strip to experience first-hand an authentic, high-pressure situation that demands excellence in decision making, teamwork and leadership. They will also experience the joys of climbing to the summit of Mount Everest, inspiring them to go to new heights.

Key Takeaways:

- Decision making under pressure
- Maximising the strength of your team and wider network
- Inspiration to strive hard to achieve big goals

Building Resilience and Decision Making Under Pressure

This session reveals the proven strategies that enable success when dealing with adversity, high pressure and complex work environments. It will motivate your team to dive in when things begin to get challenging and allow your organisation to succeed when others are pulling back.

Key Takeaways:

- Challenge/Change/Difficulty are opportunities to be exploited
- Early and informed decisions allow you take charge of the crisis
- No one ever loses as long as the experience is framed as a learning experience

Safety and Risk Management

Squiz has managed the safety of personnel and operations in some of the world's most high risk and fluid work environments, the battlefield! The mindset and mitigation strategies that he has employed have given him the confidence to go back into these environments over decades and face up to the inevitable obstacles found on Mt Everest. This storyline provides a perfect example of how high-risk environments can be successfully navigated.

Key Takeaways:

- Maintaining a focus on safety and risk management for individuals and/or leaders
- Managing fatigue and complacency
- The importance of the team, communication and clear thinking in crisis

Testimonials

“ Oh my goodness! He was amazing. You were absolutely right....he was inspiring, funny and truly had the audience captivated! I actually have one of our franchisees in Melbourne thinking about booking him for another event!

- **Kip McGrath**

“ Feedback from staff has been very positive. Mark was excellent and was able to link key messages to our training and PD day. Very informative session.

- Mentone Grammar School

“ Amazing presenter, kept the audience intrigued!

- Ambulance Australia

“ ...it was a pleasure to have you take us all on a journey to some places far removed from our daily work lives, but none the less relevant. The scenario exercise in particular provided our staff with a great opportunity to problem solve using some basic tools that operate at a very human level, something I know the team valued and made for great discussion the next day as we continued to work with these principles.

- John Holland

“ Mark has an uncanny presentation style that had the audience move from the serious realities of global poverty to a series of light hearted and at times humorous anecdotes. The audience came away with knowledge but at the same time were entertained and inspired by marks remarkable journey with the United Nations. Our committee was most impressed and would recommend him to others who are considering his services.

- Anti Poverty Week NT

“ Our guest speaker, Mark "Squiz" Squirrel (OAM) was great. He was exceptionally engaging and wonderful to deal with. He was very generous with his time and mingled among our guests which really added to his address and the experience of the event overall.

- Committee for Greater Shepparton

“ All delegates at the Forum were impressed with his story and the relevance to what we as an industry are trying to achieve. Mark's story and the way he presented it uplifted all of us to new heights.

- Australian Egg Corporation Limited

“ The executive team at Indigo was very energized by your presentation to the group. Hearing your stories about working as a team in times of adversity, allowed us to draw some terrific parallels to how we can work closely together as a cohesive unit under difficult circumstances.

- Indigo Shire Council

[VIEW SPEAKER'S BIO ONLINE](#)

[VIDEO OF SPEAKER](#)