

**19 December 2017**

## **Off-road expedition makes the world's tallest active volcano safer for climbers; attempt to set new world record temporarily thwarted**

By constructing the world's highest mountain refuge hut at an altitude of 6,100 metres and another at 5,200 metres, the Rheinmetall MAN High Altitude Truck Expedition has made it significantly safer for climbers on Ojos del Salado. From now on, the two shelters will make an important contribution to the safe ascent and descent of expeditions operating on the world's tallest active volcano. Even during the ascent, the HX 6x6 truck rescued two groups of climbers at a height of around 6,000 metres.

In their first attempt, the team led by extreme sportsman and off-road expert Matthias Jeschke fell short of their final ambitious goal of also setting a new world record for high-altitude driving. Due to an insurmountable rock barrier and adverse weather conditions that pushed the HX 6x6 to the limit, the expedition on Ojos del Salado in the Chilean cordillera had to turn back to base after reaching a height of 6,150 metres.

As Matthias Jeschke explains, "We fought our way up to a respectable altitude. But the conditions were extremely difficult, making a further ascent impossible. Trying to continue would have been irresponsible. We made the right decision. For a project like this to succeed, a multitude of factors have to coincide perfectly. The one thing we were missing was that last little bit of luck. We're currently exploring a range of possibilities for mounting a second attempt very soon."

For now, this means that the previous high-altitude world record for trucks, 6,675 metres above sea level which Matthias Jeschke set in 2014, still stands. "Though we're now considering having another go at this, on behalf of the entire team, I'd already like to express my sincere thanks for the terrific support from the sponsors and to everyone involved in this ambitious project for making this possible", adds Jeschke.

The expedition set out on 6 November 2017. Equipped with two Rheinmetall MAN HX trucks, the plan was to drive to the highest point on Earth accessible to motor vehicles. On Ojos del Salado – at around 6,890 metres considered the world's tallest active volcano – the team wanted to reach a height of at least 6,690 metres.

The expedition team included two military veterans, Paul Warren of Australia and Chris Bailey of the UK, whose participation was designed to drum up support for veterans' organizations in their respective countries. They set out to prove that veterans and wounded warriors play an important and valuable part in society.

In Paul Warren's words, "The expedition is all about performance – the performance of the vehicles, the team, and of Chris and myself as veterans. Our wounds never stopped us from going for this ambitious goal. What's important to me is that our achievements are what matter most here, not our limitations. I'm very proud of having been able to take part in this expedition."

The expedition made quite an impression on Chris Bailey, too: "By taking part, we demonstrated our ambition and our ability to perform, traits which by the way characterize the great majority of our comrades, men and women alike. We're also grateful to have been able to raise so much money for organizations that look after the needs of veterans and give them a voice in society."

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