

NATURE



UPHILL CHALLENGE: Lee Peh Gee (left) doing stair-climbing training with her Everest team-mates (in descending order) assistant team leader Sim Yi Hui, Joanne Soo, Lee Li Hui, Esther Tan and team leader Jane Lee.

things she wanted to do. Some of the less ambitious aims were bungee jumping and sky-diving, which she tried when she attended a technical mountaineering course in New Zealand many years ago.

A few years ago, Lee, who is single, spent 10 days in meditation at the Suam Mokh Temple in southern Thailand — another of her must-do things in life.

But it is the Everest assignment that will prove to be the toughest challenge to date.

She will attempt the monumental task with five others — team leader Jane Lee, assistant team leader Sim Yi Hui, Joanne Soo, Lee Li Hui and Esther Tan.

Over the last two years, the team have been training rigorously for the expedition.

Some of the mountains they have climbed so far are Mera Peak (5,476m) in Nepal, Erefeng (5,454m) in Sichuan and Muztagh Ata (7,546m) along the China-Pakistan border.

Lee said: "Climbing a mountain has made me realise how fragile human life is. At the same time, it brings out the toughness in us to survive against the environment, facing our own fears and overcoming them."

Despite their busy schedules, they train up to three times a week.

On Tuesdays, they meet in Orchard Road for endurance running.

On Thursdays, they climb a 30-storey HDB block in Tiong Bahru lugging backpacks weighing 15kg. They repeat this gruelling routine eight times.

On Saturdays, they trek for up to 10 hours in Bukit Timah Nature Reserve with 25kg of weight on their backs.

But those ordeals mean nothing to this group of iron-willed women.

Lee said: "This is not only a physical and mental challenge. Financially, it has been a huge strain, too."

"We need \$1.8 million for our expedition next year, but we are sponsored only by the Singapore Sports Council and the Singapore Council of

Women's Organisations. So far, most of our expeditions have been largely self-funded."

So what's next after Everest?

She said: "I will most likely try cavern diving or cave diving. I heard it's quite fun."

"My Everest team-mates and I are planning to set up a Singapore Women's Adventure Network to gather all the adventurous women in Singapore. We will also start a Women's Alpine Club for those who are interested in climbing and mountaineering."

Any takers out there?

Lee said: "I believe in things and doing things to earn the respect of other what you say."

"Of course, there are you have to make some decisions. But as long as them, you must stand by decisions."

"Every day, I'm learning new. The road of leadership ending."

Although Lee does not Individual Physical Prof the men, she tries to lea obtaining the gold award fitness test.

She said: "I can't claim first to cross the finishing least I make sure that I'm

"I make it a point to r certain level of fitness, m afraid that I may feel inf

"It's for your own go fit and healthy."

— LIM HAN MING

GRUELLING ROUTINE

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HER TARGET: An album shot of Lee Peh Gee during her Mera Peak trek in May 2005. That's Mount Everest in the background.

picture | Joanne soo

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— Lee Peh Gee

◆ The Singapore Women's Everest Team 2008 can be contacted at womenseverest@gmail.com.

IN COMMAND: Captain Lee Peh Gee in uniform.

Lee Peh Gee is shown in a military uniform, sitting at a desk and looking at a computer screen.

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