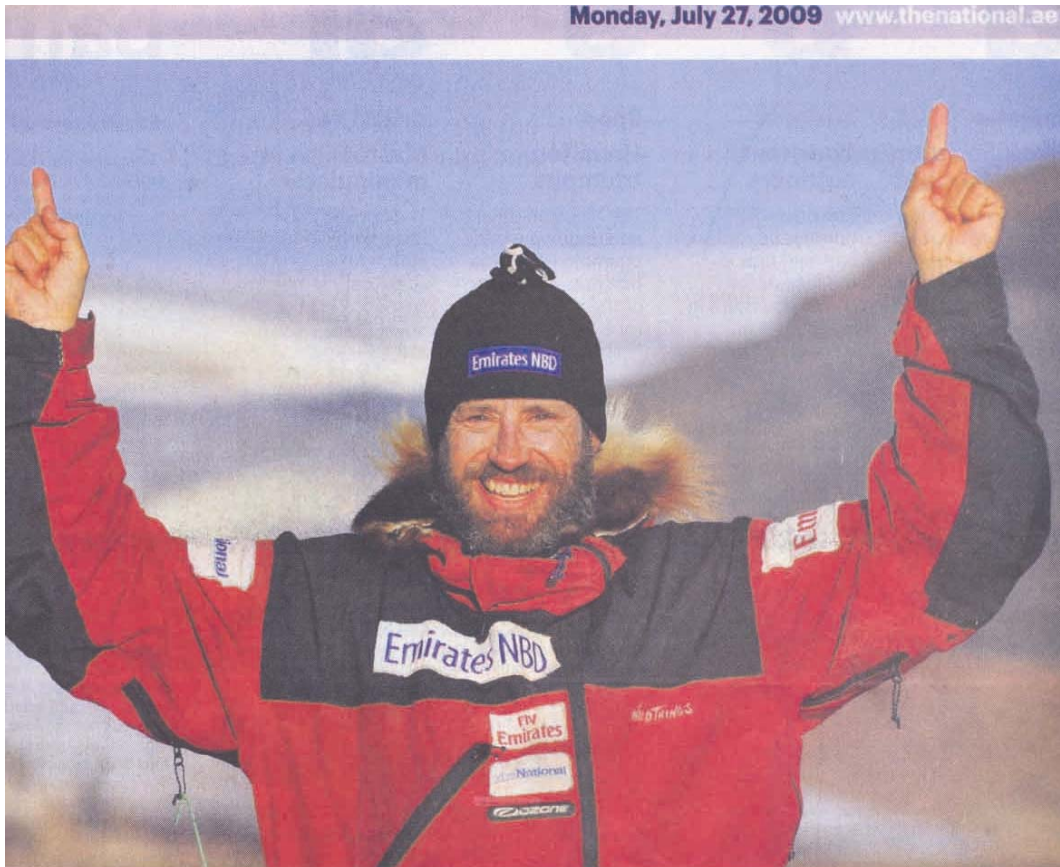


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Explorer Adrian Hayes celebrates reaching the end of his journey across Greenland. Courtesy Adrian Hayes

Hayes trio complete their epic trek

Explorers surprised
welcome after
crossing ice cap

By Gornall

As the last thing Adrian Hayes, Devon McCormick and Devon McDermott were expecting when they finally made their way to the remote shore of their epic two-month trek across Greenland's barren ice cap, a reception committee – that's what was awaiting them in the small hours of yesterday. The Dubai-based British explorer

and his Canadian companions completed their mission to highlight the perils of global warming at 4am UAE time yesterday morning, while the Emirates slept.

After 67 days spent trekking and kite-skiing across the testing terrain of the threatened Greenland ice cap, they successfully descended the rubble-strewn glacial moraine that was the last barrier between them and the lapping waters of Baffin Bay.

There, exhausted but jubilant after their journey of 4,262 kilometres, which began on May 22, they made camp for the last time and awaited pick up by boat, despatched from the town of Qaanaaq, 50km away.

That was when they saw them. "There is a little hut here and, because it is summer, a couple of Greenlanders are here hunting and fishing," said Hayes, speaking to *The National* last night by satellite telephone from six time zones away. "They saw us and came round on their boat to say 'hi'.

"They were looking at us coming down the mountain and thinking, 'Where are these guys coming from?'. When we told them we'd come from the southern tip of Greenland via the Arctic Ocean at the top, they just shook their heads. They looked at us with disbelief, but we looked at them with disbelief as well. Human beings!" The three men are due to fly out

from Qaanaaq today, but they are grateful that the boat was not due to collect them until late last night, giving them time to pause and "decompress" before being thrust back into the hurly-burly of everyday life.

"It is fine by us," said Hayes. "The worst thing would be to come down the mountain after yesterday's events and go straight into town."

The dramatic 12km descent was "one challenge we knew was coming" but "I don't think any of us was quite prepared for this being a 13-hour hike, going through massive boulders, sledges getting stuck, trying to haul them out.

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