

# To The Rescue

At Global Rescue, former **ski racer** Rusty Heise is now in the business of **saving lives** BY BRYCE HUBNER

## Guns are trained on you at every corner



A Global Rescue helicopter evacuation mission in the Himalayas.

in a far-off nation, where you were working to ameliorate poverty and hunger before a military coup overthrew the democratic government. The border's closed and there's no escaping the country — at least, not without help.

Or maybe you're in the Andes on an expedition to summit a 20,000-foot peak. Unexpected snow hammers your team and four of you — tethered to the same rope — tumble hundreds of feet from the ridge you were traversing. You're badly injured and need to be evacuated.

The world can be a crazy, inhospitable place, and if you find yourself in a crisis far from home, it's nice to have Rusty Heise and Global Rescue working on your behalf.

Heise was an alpine standout on the NCAA circuit before graduating from Dartmouth College in 2009. He's now among the youngest business administrators at Boston-based Global Rescue LLC, a company that provides medical security evacuation and crisis response services for those in need — they might pluck you from that dicey, third-world country after a government coup, or rescue you from that Andean summit gone awry.

Global Rescue is essentially extreme medical transport and rescue insurance for government agencies, companies, individual families and athletes — including the U.S. Ski Team.

"We're the official provider of aeromedical services for the U.S. Ski and

# Role Model

**T.J. Lanning being evacuated from Lake Louise shortly after his accident.**



Snowboard Team," says the 23-year-old Heise, who's in charge of the company's ski industry accounts. "Even though ski racing is only a small part of what we do, it's been great to come into a job and maintain contact with old coaches and friends. I already had a good understanding of at least one market we are serving when I arrived."

In addition to handling the U.S. Ski Team, Heise works in sales and member services with ski academies and clubs across the country. To some degree, he says, it's an easy sell because there are so many tangible examples that show the value of Global Rescue's services.

"We recently had an athlete who was training down in Chile," Heise says. "He broke his leg in three spots and we immediately got a call from his coach on the hill. From there we coordinated a helicopter ride to a hospital in Santiago where our in-house physicians reviewed X-rays, and the next day the athlete was met by a Global Rescue paramedic who accompanied him to the U.S. He was flown all the way [to the hospital of his choice] so that he could have surgery and recover at home."

In 2010 alone, Heise says Global Rescue has extricated injured clients from earthquake-devastated Haiti, rescued a climber at 18,000 feet from a mountainside in Nepal, and dispatched medically equipped aircraft to a remote corner of South Africa to save a client who'd incurred severe injuries from a leopard attack.

## The Global Reach

Global Rescue is just seven years young. Its founder and CEO, Dan Richards — a Middlebury graduate who grew up ski racing in New Hampshire — started the company in partnership with Johns Hopkins Medicine to provide a best-in-class service. Richards says the industry was in dire need of an upgrade when he recognized the potential for a new business.

"I was actually working on Wall Street and looking at investing in [the medical, security and evacu-

## T.J. Lanning's Global Rescue

**Lanning training at Lake Louise days before his accident.**



**At a World Cup downhill in Lake Louise on November 28, 2009, U.S. Ski Teamer T.J. Lanning endured a horrific crash at almost 90 miles per hour. Global Rescue provided a critical part of his care and recovery. Here, he recounts the experience for *Ski Racing*:**

**"As soon as I crashed, the whole left side of my shoulder and upper body went numb. I was most worried about my leg, though, which was in excruciating pain. I remember my coach, the U.S. Ski Team doctor and on-hill medics around, and then I remember our doctor pulling on my leg to provide traction [as he reduced and reset my dislocated knee].**

I was in a lot of pain, so I don't remember all the shenanigans. But eventually I was in a hospital in Calgary that had completely missed the fact that, in addition to being fractured, my neck was seriously displaced.

**Then Global Rescue arrived, rounded up all of the information — MRIs, x-rays, etc. — and put me on a special backboard and then on a Lear 25 jet all the way to the Steadman clinic in Vail. If I'd had to fly commercial, who knows what would've happened. As soon as I got to Vail they rushed me into surgery because they thought I was a fraction away from becoming paralyzed.**

**The hospital in Calgary missed an important part of the equation — so having Global Rescue was a pretty lucky deal." — Bryce Hubner**

Rusty Heise outside  
Global Rescue's Boston  
headquarters.



ation] sector," Richards says. "It was at that time that I realized there were a bunch of companies promising a lot but, when the chips were down, really didn't deliver. The model was to outsource everything, and there tends to be quality problems with that kind of model."

So Richards decided to create a company that made full-time employees of the rescue and evacuation team leaders. He partnered with world-class medical provider Johns Hopkins, and then went about employing exceptional people. On the operations side, that meant hiring former Navy SEALS and Army Rangers as security personnel, not to mention top-tier critical care paramedics. On the business side, it meant hiring folks like Rusty Heise.

"We're always looking for people who excel as multidisciplinary achievers," Richards says. "We also have a bias toward recruiting smart athletes, and that's Rusty. He did very well at Dartmouth academically and he performed well as an athlete, too."

Richards says that he's been impressed by Heise's abilities after 18 months on the job, adding that he's been equally inspired by Heise's humility and maturity.

"Rusty is a quiet professional and it's easy to forget how young he is," Richards says. "He's not one of those guys beating his chest — he quietly goes about doing his job very, very well."

### Adapting to Variables

Heise grew up in central Connecticut. On weekends his family commuted to Vermont, where he and his brother, Skip, fell in love with ski racing at Okemo. From there, he attended Green Mountain Valley School and parlayed early racing and academic successes into an Ivy League education at Dartmouth.

After graduating from Dartmouth, Heise attended the Tuck Bridge Program, a four-week intensive business program run out of Dartmouth's esteemed business school. Halfway through, there was a job fair with four companies seeking to fill six positions. Global Rescue was one of them.

"I had never heard of the company," Heise says. "But as soon as I arrived at the interview site I saw the U.S. Ski Team logo attached to their materials, and it obviously [piqued my interest]."

Of the 120 kids in the Tuck Bridge Program that summer, Heise was among a select few given a crack at interviewing for the positions. When he and Richards sat down to talk, they connected immediately.

While ski racing has helped prepare him for his current job, Heise says that the sport provided excellent preparation for his life beyond.

"One of the most important things about skiing is that it changes day-to-day," Heise says. "It's a lot like life: you never have one day that's identical to the next. Course conditions change, weather changes, locations change. Everything is so variable that you need to be able to adapt and be prepared for whatever's in store. That adaptability is something that you learn and [it becomes an ability that pervades the other areas of your life, too]."

Further reflecting on how his past informs his present, Heise is equal parts philosophical and pragmatic.

"Certainly not every day is going to be considered a success," Heise says. "So it's about appreciating little successes, the little checkmarks that you keep along the way — like a good, fast run or securing a new client. It's those types of things that you build off as you work through challenges."

In the meantime, Heise says that the fact that he's "able to deliver a product that can save lives makes it very easy to go to work everyday." **SR**