

IceTent.com

South Pole Trek Page



The Last Place on Earth

A Day on the Ice

I wake at 7AM to the sound of my alarm. I have a sleeping mask and neck gaiter over my eyes to block out the intense 24-hour daylight, so finding the alarm is by feel. Taking off the mask is a slow, blinding process. Unzip the 40-below-rated sleeping bag which, depending on the temperature, has been closed to allow only a small breathing hole. If the sun is out, my daily clothing is hanging from inside the top of the tent. The tent is 87" long by 56" wide by 38" high, an interior that does not allow much room for this. If the weather is bad, my things are in the bag with me trying to dry out, they do not succeed.

Over in the tent of David, our guide, and Jin from China, the gasoline burners are being lit in the tent's vestibule to start the two-hour process of turning snow into hot water. A shovel is pushed out the tent's door and is returned with snow that is carefully added to large pots for melting. This process is repeated every few minutes.

I bring my laptop computer into the bag to warm; its battery and the satellite phone have been in the sleeping bag all night. My MP3 player is also in the bag because I probably fell asleep last night listening to "The Worst Journey in the World," an audio book about Scott's ill-fated South Pole trek in 1912. I prepare lunch by breaking off frozen chunks of cheese and salami and putting them into a plastic bag. I add dried fruit, nuts and candy from my snack supply. This bag is placed in a pocket of my base layer (underwear) so it can defrost by lunchtime.

I unzip the tent door a little so I can see where on the scale of difficult to impossible the day's trek will be. I close the zipper on a mercury thermometer stuck outside, noting its temperature so I will be able to report the reading at breakfast. The computer is now cabled to the satellite phone, my jacket goes over my head to reduce light in order for me to see the screen, and I connect to a special Internet service to download my emails. I read my messages, write responses and reconnect to upload my outgoing emails. I am still mostly inside my sleeping bag.

Around 8 AM, David calls us to breakfast. I wear my down-filled tent booties which I have worn all night. My bowl, spoon and mug come with me along with thermoses to be filled for the day's drink. A juice flavor packet is added to the hot water. I also wear anything that is wet but which I will need to use that day nevertheless. David and Jin's tent is warm from the burners and is the last chance to dry things out.

Breakfast is oatmeal or porridge with tea, hot chocolate (Milo) or instant coffee. There may also be some leftover cookies or brownies from the night before. The five of us are in a tent about the size of a double bed and four feet high. We sit on the floor with legs folded except when we take turns stretching them out. This and dinner are the social events of the day, our chance to talk, plan and laugh. David answers questions and gives us tips on Antarctic trekking. We are from five countries and have four native languages. Lucky for me, we have English in common. Jin is not fluent and often gets left behind in conversation. However he is a very experienced climber and does not require much instruction.

In the tent after breakfast, we spend the most important time of the day. Final decisions on the day's clothing and equipment must be made. There is no chance to change anything during the day. A mistake now will be regretted all day, or even longer if it means frostbite. I wear three pairs of socks that are taped to my legs so they can't ride down. My boots have been taken apart the night before to dry, I reassemble them and add a chemical heat pack to the toes. My feet and toes are covered in paper tape, a sheer sock and powder to prevent blisters. This combination works very well. A heat pack is also placed inside my mitts; I wear three layers of gloves during the trek and never remove the inner pair, even to eat. A balaclava, face mask and ski goggles are critical. Camera and GPS go in an outside pocket so that they can be easily reached.

The sleeping bag is compressed into a stuff bag, air mattress deflated and ground mat rolled up around the mattress. The tent comes down and the sled is loaded. A down jacket, thermos, spare goggles, mask and mitts are placed inside on top so they can be quickly accessed if needed. The hauling harness goes on and is clipped to the sled. I step into my skis and gather my poles. Hopefully everyone else is ready at the same time or somebody is going to get very cold while waiting.

While trekking, we wear surprisingly little clothing. This is to prevent sweating. A base layer, fleece pullover and un-insulated windproof jacket are all that are worn on the upper body, even during the coldest days. This is about equal to what would be worn on a cool fall day back home. Long zippers in the jacket and pants are usually opened after we warm up, to let some cold air in and keep us cool. The downside is that when we are not hauling, we get cold very quickly.

The group will ski for an hour and rest for ten minutes. We do this four times and then take 20 to 30 minutes for lunch. David leads using a compass in the morning, and Alex, from Moscow, leads in the afternoon. This is not easy, especially during a whiteout. David was able to keep us on course for the Pole while I was having a hard time just staying vertical. Lunch is eaten standing, or sitting on our sleds, skis on. There is not much talking during these breaks, we make needed adjustments, drink warm juice from the thermos and face away from the wind. We usually ski for 9 hours a day and gain about 10 miles. By the end of lunch or a break, people are saying, "Let's go!" because they are getting cold.

Around 7 PM we stop and make camp. If it's windy, this can be rather difficult. And having a tent blow away would be bad. Before entering the tent we take off our jackets and brush away the snow and ice that has built up between the fleece and jacket layers. The snow melting process begins again, dinner around 9PM. The freeze-dried meals are pretty good, and a cup of soup on entering a warm tent is very welcome. We review our progress and plan the next day. David fills up the thermoses again. I bring the GPS or computer so we can view a graphic plot of our progress and see how well the leader has been doing using the compass to keep us on course. David and Alex do an excellent job and any errors are minor. David calls Adam back at Patriot Hills and details our position, progress and conditions. We find out the progress of other teams headed for the Pole. Norbert uses my satellite phone to wake up his wife at 3 AM in Frankfurt. We finish with cookies, coffee or tea.

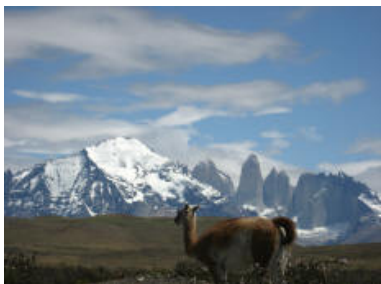
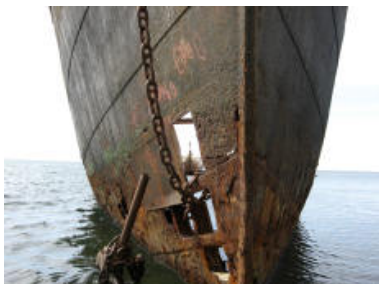
Back at my tent, inside my bag, I remove ice from clothing and equipment and try and dry out wet things, set up the computer, check emails and write a daily progress report. The GPS is connected to the computer and the day's progress is plotted.

Pictures are loaded from camera to computer and compressed so an image can be sent in 4 minutes instead of 30. I place a few phone calls to people back home. I love hearing the reaction when they realize it's a call from Antarctica. I zip up the sleeping bag and think how it will be to stand at the Pole, and how great it will be when I am home again to take the family to dinner and order anything I want in a warm restaurant that has indoor plumbing.

Click on images to enlarge



Kissing the natives foot for luck



Norbert at Terra Del Paine



Norbert, Richard





Cable Bridge in
the Andes



John



Patriot Hills from
the air



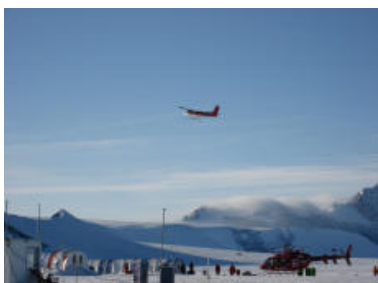
Mess Tent at
Patriot Hills



Patriot Hills Camp



Helicopter
attempting to fly
from pole to pole



Patriot Hills



Refueling at the
Thiel Mountains



Our Pilots



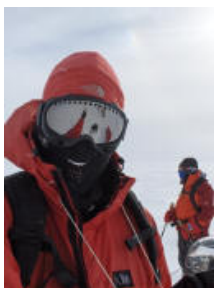
At the Thiel Mountains



Leaving us in the "Middle of Nowhere" 89°



Jin, Norbert, Richard



David, Alex



My tent



Norbert



Alex, Jin



Richard, Norbert



How does this go together?



Alex with the Hannah compass





A blow on the
Antarctic Plateau



Drying things in
the tent



I sent a copy of
this to the Cordon
Bleu school in
Paris - They want
David



Cooking = melting
water on gasoline
burners



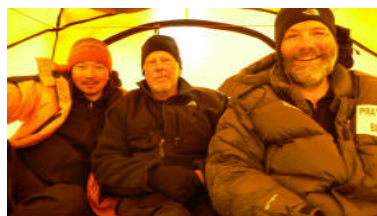
Resting



Major Resting



Two months until
Sunset!



I hope this is the
right direction

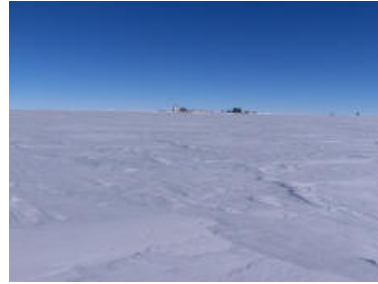
Jin took my
picture just as I
was touching the
pole



Setting up camp
at the South Pole



Tired people in a
warm room



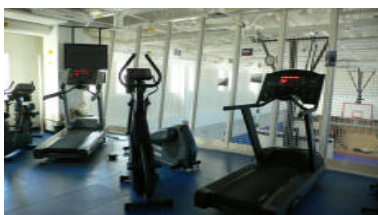
Galley



Inspecting the
Neutrino
Detectors



The previous
visitor was the
Prime Minister of
New Zealand,
Helen Clark. My
name will be with
the Prime
Ministers for the
next million years.



South Pole
Station is more
than we imagined





Inside the old South Pole Dome



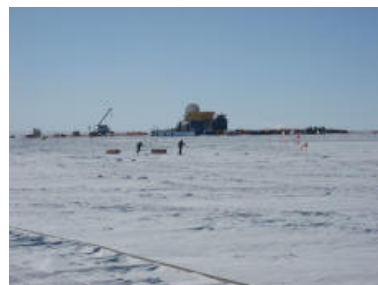
My GPS on the actual South Pole reading 90° 00.000'



Our camp from the South Pole Station Galley



Inside the South Pole Station



Pole Dancing



South Pole
Station Galley



In the cabin of the
Twin Otter



Denise First
woman to ski to
the North Pole

Correne First
South African
woman to ski to
the South Pole

Beth Shortest
person to ski to
the South Pole



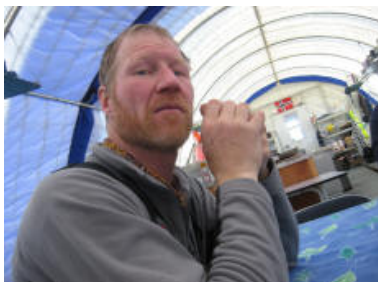
Mike - Camp
Director at Patriot
Hills



Celebrating back
at Patriot Hills



Figuring out the
story on the
Russian dolls



David



Sleeping on the
Ilyushin as we
head home

Eating Lamb in
Punta Arenas

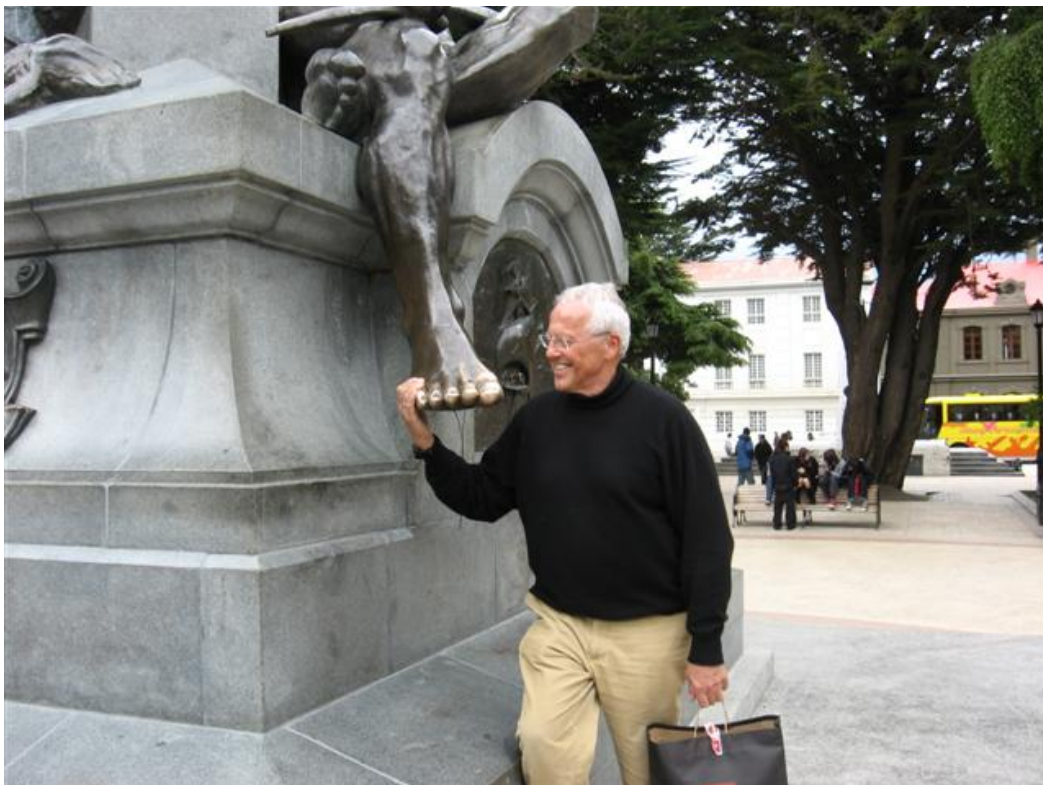


Below are daily dispatches from the South Pole Trek

12/27/2006 - I just met former Deutsche Bahn President, Norbert Kern from Frankfurt, Germany. We will be skiing to the pole together. Dr. John Lohr is taking time off from designing the first Fusion Reactor to climb Mount Vinson. The three of us went to dinner after we kissed the foot of the native at the Magellan Monument. Folklore declares that if you kiss the foot, you will return from Antarctica.



John Lohr



Norbert Kern

Special Note for Niklas Kern - Happy Birthday to you - Opa



Richard Laronde

12/29/2006 - We can not fly today, to much wind in Antarctica. Next chance is 6:30 AM Saturday.



John, Richard, Norbert and Doc search for the best coffee in town



Punta Arenas on the Straits of Magellan with Tierra Del Fuego in the distance

12/30/2006 - We did not fly today, bad weather in Antarctica. We did get a chance to get out of town and see a little of Chile. I have been telling people for months that I will not be seeing any penguins on this trip. So today we saw hundreds of penguins at Turis Otway, about two hours outside of town. We also saw genuine "gauchos" driving cattle and paid a visit to the Punta Arenas waterfront.



OK, I was wrong, I did see penguins on this trip (but not in Antarctica)



Gauchos (cowboys)



Touching the Straits of Magellan

1/1/2007 - Feliz Ano Nuevo!

Last night we celebrated the New Year at a Chinese Restaurant on the hill overlooking Punta Arenas. At midnight the many local churches rang their bells. Ships at dock, and in the Straits, blew their horns and launched flares. A very enjoyable evening.

The news from Patriot Hills in Antarctica is bad. In order for us to land there must be less than a 20 knot crosswind. That is the same as 23 MPH. When we started waiting last Friday the winds were 22 knots. The winds have been increasing since then and are now gusting at 47 knots or 54 MPH.

There are 50 of us waiting to fly out including a team of Korean Scientists looking for meteorites. There must be about that same number in windblown tents at Patriot Hills waiting to fly back. This waiting is starting to get old, and unless the winds drop there will be a lot more of it.

All of our gear has been packed in the plane since Thursday. I only have a few things that will be "carry on", good thing I didn't pack my computer. When we get the word to go we will dress in our full Antarctic clothing for the trip to the airport. Our street clothing and unnecessary items are left at the hotel.

Happy 2007



Dr. John Lohr proving that Plasma Physicists know how to really have fun!

1/2/2007 - Waiting - The winds at Patriot Hills are 36 knots. They need to be under 20 knots before we can fly. We are impatient to get to "The Ice" as Antarctica is called by those that venture there. One consolation is that the people waiting at Patriot Hills to fly back here, are living in small windblown tents wishing they were in Punta Arenas. They can't wander around town trying out the espresso at various cafes. But then, they are on The Ice, and we are not!



The Shackleton Bar at the very club where Shackleton came to request help in rescuing his men on Elephant Island

1/3/2007 - Good News - Bad News

The good news is that the winds are down to 28 knots. Not good enough to fly, but we love the trend. The bad news is there is no room at the Inn. We must check out and wait to see if we will fly this afternoon. If we can not go we will check into another

hotel this evening. The weather here is like Boston in April. Mostly cool with an occasional warm day. Light rain showers are common.

Cross your fingers!



Winds are 52 gusting to 75 MPH in Punta Arenas today - More windy than Antarctica

1/4/2007 - ALLES KAPUTT! - Guess what..... our plane is broken!

We experienced hurricane force winds in Punta Arenas yesterday. There are utility wires down, fires, sirens etc. We don't know the details yet but our huge Russian Ilyushin cargo jet is damaged. This plane has been waiting for 5 days to fly us to Antarctica, now we must wait for it to be fixed. The first estimate is 5 days. We are looking into traveling around Patagonia and experiencing this beautiful, isolated part of the world. I have not been informed yet, but I suspect the clock may be running out on my chances to get to the South Pole and Climb Mount Vinson this season. I assume I will still be able to do the pole. There is a meeting tomorrow to talk it all over.

The people waiting at Patriot Hills to fly back are quite literally stranded at this time. Leftover food and supplies from previous seasons are stored in an ice cave, so they are in no danger, they could live there for months.



Ilyushin at Patriot Hills

1/4/2007 - (update) - HOLA! - They are trying to have the plane fixed by 4 PM Sunday, parts and engineer coming in from Dubai. The problem is the elevator ground lock. My trip to the South Pole is no problem. The Vinson climb is still possible if the weather and schedule work out right, otherwise I have a rain check for next season.

Early Friday morning we are leaving for a couple of days up north. We have rented a car and will drive to "Torres Del Paine". The name has me worried but they swear to me it does not translate as "Tours of Pain". - Adios Amigos

1/6/2007 - Torres Del Paine - Just back from two days at one of the most beautiful places on earth. At Torres Del Paine we saw herds of wild Guanaco (like a Llama), Pink Flamingos, Ostriches, Swans, and many birds of prey. We hiked in the Andes Mountains and spent a night at an island hotel www.pehoe.com As it turns out, the plane needing repairs has been a bonus for us. The winds at Patriot Hills have been unflyable for over a week, so the repairs have not delayed our getting to Antarctica. However had we been under the standard 4 to 6 hour notice to fly, we could not have gotten up to this incredible place. ALE has done a great job of keeping us in the loop about developments. We are all hoping the winds will moderate and we can get to the ice soon!



Guanaco at Torres Del Paine - Not a stock photo, I snuck up on him myself



Our rental vehicle crossing a cable bridge over a river gorge in the Andes Mountains

1/7/2007 - HELLO - WINDS DOWN - PLANE FIXED - CLOUDS QUESTIONABLE - WE ARE ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT! - RICHARD

1/7/2007 - I have arrived in Antarctica. This afternoon I was watching the Patriots game in Punta Arenas. I was using Slingbox which allows me to view whatever is on or den TV in Walpole, provided the internet connection is good enough. We received a call to dress and wait for transport. At the airport we boarded the Ilushin for the 5 hour flight to Patriot Hills. The landing on a blue ice runway was very interesting, it took us a long time to stop since brakes are useless. The weather here is sunny and warm, about 5 below. We had a meal and then to bed in our tents. We have a big day tomorrow.

Richard



1/8/2007 - Today we skied about 5 miles out from Patriot Hills, not headed for the South Pole yet, just testing our equipment and seeing how we work as a group. There are five of us. David our guide is from Scotland and the other four are from Germany, Russia, China and the United States (me).

Richard



1/9/2007 - I am backtracking a little. This is the inside of the cargo jet that flew us to Patriot Hills. Equipment in the middle, people on the sides. The big problem with using the computer here is one I didn't expect. It is so bright I have to put my sleeping bag over my head to see the monitor. And it is daylight 24 hours a day.

Richard



1/9/2007 - Sorry, I sent the wrong picture, this should be the correct one. We are having oatmeal for breakfast, I can't wait! It

seems like everything tastes great here. It must be that adventure makes a great sauce. We skied well together yesterday, everyone at the same pace. Five minute rests every hour.

Richard

1/9/2007 - Back at Patriot Hills.

We skied out 5 miles yesterday and back today. Things went well but we are making a few equipment changes. I am going to bring my own tent; we were a little cramped with just the two tents. It's only another 5 pounds.

The important discovery is that we didn't have any Milo. When I read *Icetrek*, a book written by my North Pole guide Eric Philips, he talked about Milo. When we traveled to the pole together my first question was "What is Milo?" Turns out it's Ovalteen, a favorite of mine. So back at Patriot Hills we have stocked up.

I am including pictures of last night's camp and of Jin Fei Bao, my new friend from Kuming, China. Jin is skiing with us to the South Pole, he does not speak a great deal of English, but he is strong, tough and very experienced. He is well known in his country and has climbed Mount Everest. Last night he was on the satellite phone late, giving interviews to reporters in China.

The weather has been bad at the Thiel Mountains. That is where we need to refuel when we fly out of here. So we have been delayed a little more. Tomorrow we are going to climb one of the local peaks to help with a radio repeater setup. Should be interesting.

Richard





1/10/2007 - This morning we climbed the Patriot Hills, the part of the Ellsworth Mountains that our Base is named after. The included picture is taken from the hills looking back at our base. If you can see some small black dots just to the left of the center of the image, that is Patriot Hills Base camp. The next nearest base is about 600 miles away, we are isolated!

We are taking the afternoon to rest up and are scheduled to fly out of here on a Twin Otter at 8 PM (6 PM in Massachusetts) We use Chile time since that is where we fly here from. Time is academic here because the Sun does not rise or fall, it rotates counterclockwise around the horizon. It is daylight for 6 months then dark for six months.

We will fly about 400 miles to the Thiel Mountains fuel cache, land and refuel from drums left by a Snow Cat expedition last month, then fly another 200 miles to 89 degrees south latitude where the five of us will be landed in the middle of nowhere to begin skiing to the pole.

To answer your question, the picture of Jin was taken in the ice caves at Patriot Hills. There are extensive tunnels dug out below the snow for cold storage, a constant temperature of 20 below. We were down there looking for some Milo.

Richard



1/11/2007 - 3AM - On the Polar Plateau

Everything went according to plan. Refueled at Thiel Mountains then arrived at 88 degrees 59 minutes south by 85 degrees 34 minutes west, elevation 9,072 feet. Also know as the middle of nowhere. The South Pole base is 70 miles away, we start skiing there tomorrow morning.

It is 14 degrees below zero in my tent. It was colder outside but I forgot to check the thermometer.

The attached photo is of the refueling process.

Feel free to send me an email.

Richard



1/11/2007 11:30 pm - A Hard Day

A late start today because we got in late last night. Skied 6 hours and only advance 7.3 miles. 25 mph wind in our face, temp 27 below. That gives a wind chill of 51 below. Two others and myself picked up wind burn on our faces.

The attached picture shows images of Carter and Barbara I have attached to my ski tips so I can see them as I ski. They are the inspiration that keeps me going on a day like this. The picture of Barb is from her college ID.

It felt good to get into my sleeping bag tonight.

62.7 miles to the pole.

Richard



Son Carter

Wife Barbara

1/12/07 HELLO - WINDS 40 - STUCK IN OUR TENTS TODAY - HAVE FOOD, WATER, AUDIO BOOKS, WARM SLEEPING BAG - ALL IS WELL -
HEY, THIS IS WHAT I CAME FOR

RICHARD

1/12/2007 10PM - Tentbound in Antarctica

I should write a book and use that as the title. But it would be a very boring book. We all got together in one tent for dinner, oriental chicken and brownies. At one time the wind speed was measured at 46 mph, it had been higher before that. Temp was down to 27 below but is now a balmy 19 below.

One day in the tent during an Antarctic blow was an interesting experience and even fun. Several days in a row could get very old. Alex's sled ended up inside a sastrugi (snow drift) that formed between our tents during the day. Communication is by screaming from tent to tent. David and Jin are in a tent on the far end from me, so Norbert or Alex, in the center tent, relay the messages.

Thank you everyone for the emails, I can not answer every one because I am conserving battery power, but please keep them coming. Receiving messages takes almost no power, slowly writing a response takes a lot more.

The picture is out my tent door.

Richard



1/13/2007 A Harder Day

The wind was measured at 43 mph today, but it was not in our faces so we headed out and made 8.62 miles in 8 hours. Conditions were very bad, total white out. Like being inside of a ping pong ball, all you can see is the guy in front of you. There is no horizon, no sky, no up and down.

After the 8 hour trek you have to make camp and setup tents in high winds and zero visibility. You let go of a tent for one second and it is headed across Antarctica. Inside the tent it is 20 below and everything is covered in snow.

I can't say we are enjoying this, it was physicaly the hardest day of my life. But this is part of the experience. I came here in part to see what the early explorers experienced. I now have even more respect for them and what they did. They were better men than me.

Spirits were high at dinner, everyone is in good health and hoping for better weather.

Friends and family beware, I am going to brag about this for a long time.

Picture from left is Richard, Alex, Norbert and Jin. David took the picture.

53.5 miles to the pole.

Richard



1/14/2007 A Better Day

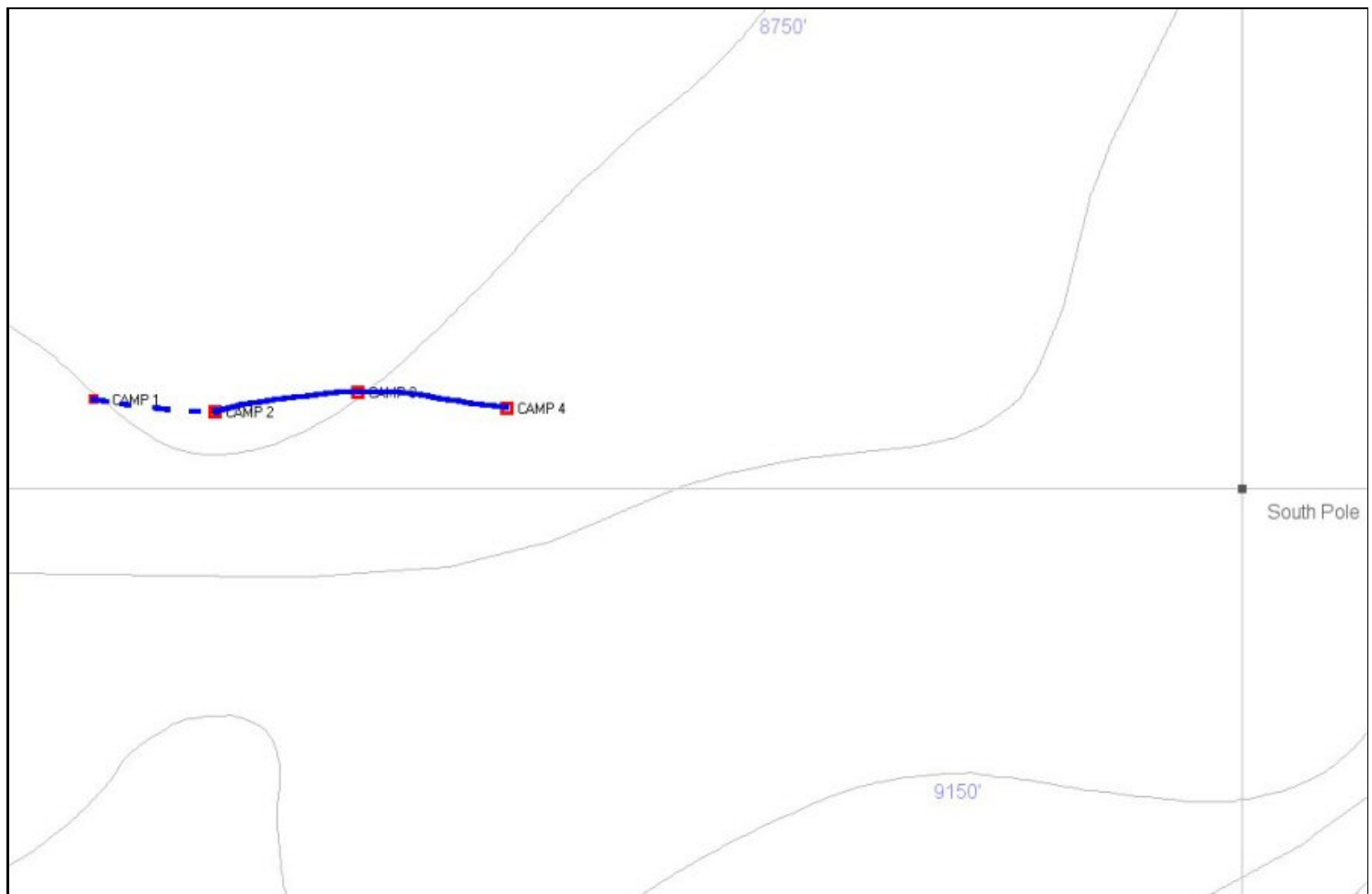
We made 9.0 miles today in better conditions. The winds were down eliminating the white out and blowing snow. We should be at the pole in

5 days. We started with 10 days food and fuel, which should be plenty.

The attached image is from my GPS unit and computer software. Our position is recorded every few minutes as we go by a GPS unit in my pocket. Camp 1 is where we were brought in by skiplane. Camp 4 is where we are now.

44.5 miles to the pole

Richard



1/15/2007 Halfway!

Today we skied for 9 hours and made 10.0 miles. We are exactly halfway from our drop off point to the pole. The weather was good, 23 below and almost no wind. It was a sunny day and we could see for miles, except there is absolutely nothing to see.

The forecast is for us to get temperatures down to 41 below in a couple of days. I prefer the cold to wind and blown snow. Then again, I have never experienced 41 below!

We are all very pleased to be halfway to the pole. If the weather holds we should be there Friday.

The picture is of me after the days trek. My breath creates ice around my face. We ski wearing very little clothing. Long underwear, fleece sweater and windproof jacket. Even so after an hour of skiing we are opening vents in the jacket to cool off. It is important to limit sweating as much as possible as it will freeze when we stop our exertions.

34.5 miles to the pole

Richard



1/16/2007 Pole Fever!

Today we made 10.4 miles in 9 hours of skiing, our best yet. Still thinking we will be at the pole Friday. Sun early now cloudy and cold. The best news is almost no wind.

It does not look like there will be time for me to climb Mount Vinson this year. No problem, I came here for the pole, Vinson was an extra. Right now we all have pole fever! We talk about it at every chance.

Pictures are of Norbert Kern, who wants his family and friends to know he is well and enjoying himself. And of myself with a get well soon to Billy, a good friend.

24.3 miles to the pole

Richard





1/17/2007 Update

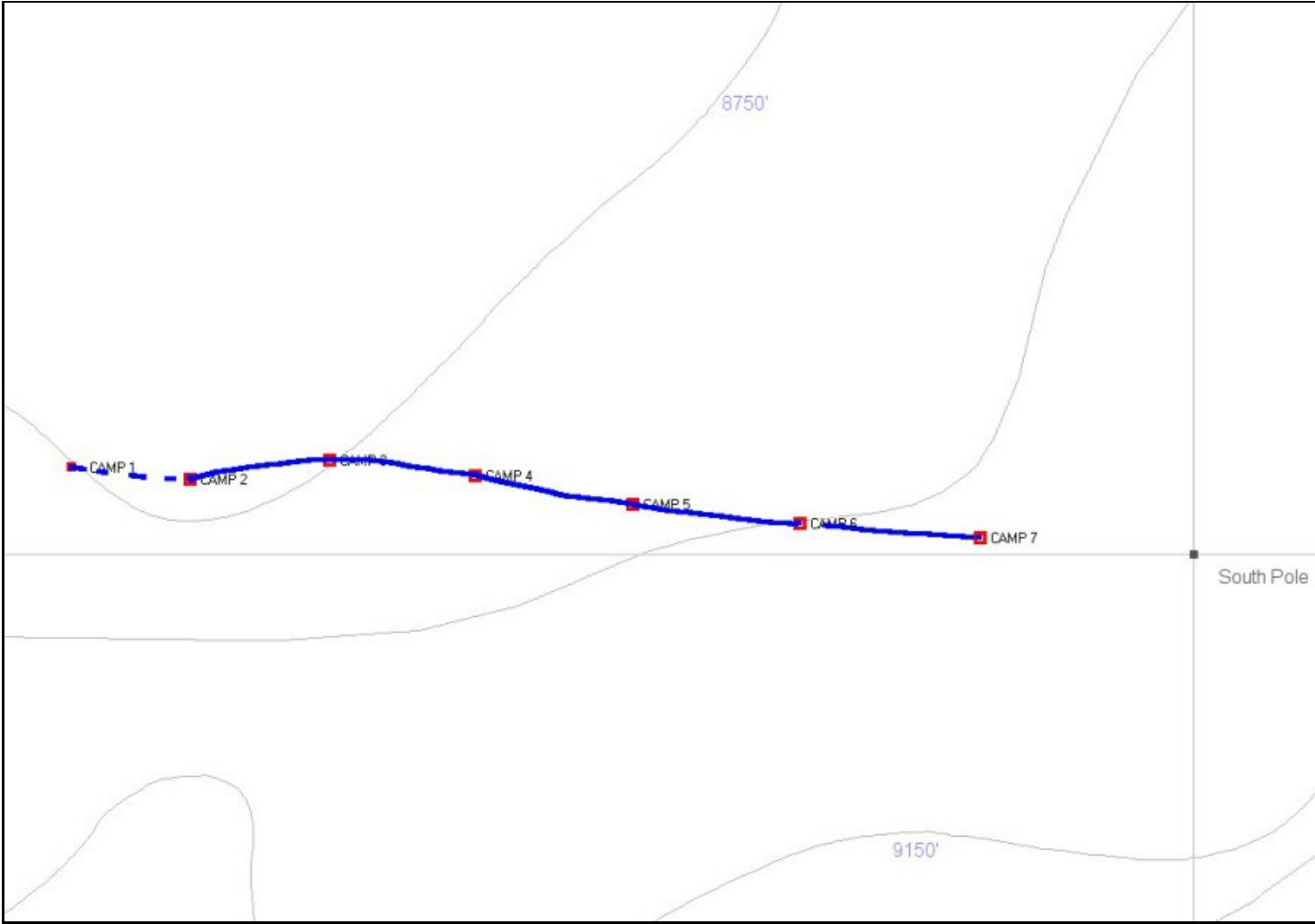
Today we traveled 11.0 miles in 8 hours, our best yet. It was a sunny day with moderate wind, 24 below. Tomorrow we should be able to see Amundsen-Scott station by mid-day. We will camp tomorrow night not far from the station and finish up Friday.

In the morning I will place frozen cheese cubes, salami slices, dried fruit and candy in a plastic bag. The bag goes in an inner pocket so the food is defrosted in time to be lunch. It is eaten standing in skis, my facemask removed for just the few seconds needed to put in another bite. Warm water comes from a stainless steel thermos. The lips stick instantly to the metal, so I tip the thermos up quickly to allow the warm water to unfreeze me. Gloves are worn at all times.

A picture of the plateau and an updated map.

13.2 miles to the pole

Richard





1/18/2007 At the South Pole

We where going to spend the night about 4 miles from the pole and stroll in Friday. But when we saw the pole ahead we could not stop. We did 13.2 miles in 11 hours and staggered to the pole.

In the picture I am holding the actual pole in my right hand. I know the light was bad, we will get better shots later.

We are very tired and very happy!

Richard



1/19/2007 South Pole Station

This place is incredible! The main building is like the set for a science fiction movie. We are allowed to hang out in the building, use the bathrooms and have coffee, juice and danish in the 24 hour canteen. They will not feed or house us, so no showers, meals or beds. We sleep in our tents about 200 feet from the pole.

We have also visited the "Summer Camp" a less formal collection of huts a short walk away. This afternoon we were invited there for a barbeque, and "pole dancing" at an impromptu disco. Tonight is the South Pole movie festival followed by another party.

I have visited the comms center and several of the scientific facilities here. The "Ice Cube" project is using 5 megawatts of hot water to drill 2-kilometer deep shafts in the polar ice cap. They then install neutrino detectors. At the 10-meter radio telescope we chatted with astronomers that are using the dry rarified air at the pole to look for what happened in the first $1/10^{35}$ to the 35th of a second after the big bang that created the universe.

While having coffee this morning a NASA astrophysicist sat down to talk about neutrinos and the continuous creation of endless universes. I'm like a kid set free in a candy store!

The station staff are very friendly and all know each other, many have been coming here for a long time. So they instantly know that we must be one of those crazy people that ski to the pole. Incredibly they think WE are cool!

My biggest problem is finding time to sleep. We can't fly out yet because of high winds at Patriot Hills. OK by me!

The attached picture shows my GPS unit sitting on the actual pole marker. The unit reads 90 degrees exactly! This means nothing to most people but for GPS enthusiasts this is the Holy Grail. I have seen pictures like this with explanations about why you can't read the numbers or why it is .999 instead of exact.

Richard



1/23/2007 Home Again!

The last 48 hours have been a full speed trip from the South Pole to Walpole! A Twin Otter flight from the pole to Patriot Hills where a Champagne dinner awaited us. We also find that an unscheduled Ilyushin fuel flight is due in and will take us back to Chile. Back to Punta Arenas for one night at the best hotel in town, guests of Norbert. Plus another celebratory dinner with all the lamb we can eat. Then on commercial flights back to Boston.

This trip was more! More difficult than I imagined. Involved more cold than I was prepared for. Was more of a challenge, physically and mentally. But it was also more beautiful, more inspirational and more rewarding than I imagined. One reservation I had about this trip was that it could not live up to my North Pole trip. I was wrong. Both adventures are very special, but Antarctica is an experience beyond my ability to describe.

I find that it is the people we meet that make the experience, and the people that make their way to The Ice are a breed apart.



Richard, Alex, Jin and Norbert