

28th NOVEMBER....

We had a fairly stressful afternoon yesterday as we had been on standby for the call to go to the airport all day, and given that Luis had been telling me it is very common to be stuck here a week, in my mind we were basically not going. I was also still feeling ill with flu and felt really lethargic. The phone call came in at 6.00pm and when i saw Luis stick his thumb in the air and say it was a "go" i was panic stricken. How could i fly to the ice feeling like this and i was so not mentally prepared. I rushed around like a headless chicken cramming all my excess stuff into bags to be left behind in this hotel and squeezing clothes into my backpack until it was almost the same size as me. I almost collapsed under its weight when i tried to hoist it onto my shoulders and the way id packed and distributed the weight was such that all the weight was on the top ( a big no no) and everytime i lent forwards i was sent flying forwards by my pack. I squeezed in a couple of phone calls to let people know i was now pretty much not going to be contactable and everyone screamed at me to get off the phone as the bus pulled up to our hotel to take us to the airport.

On the bus i was reunited with Andronico, Misail, Ernesto and Andronico's sister Gabriella. I hadnt seen my team since everest, so it was really nice to catch up with them all. We arrived at the airport, thank goodness for John Rost who took my communications box that i had been told to carry by Luis and already mislaid, i was really quite stressed out! We all went through security and there was the illusion jet sitting ominously on the tarmac waiting, it looks so imposing and out of context flying us climbers to the ice. It was a fairly short stint at the airport when we got the word that the winds in patriot hills had picked up and it was a no go! Its so stressful getting yourself mentally prepared to go and do it, and then you have the anti climax of not being able to go! Ive been told to get used to it. We then all came back to our hotel, i almost broke my back lugging my bag out of storage and we all headed out to dinner at a seafood restaurant on the water. We had dinner, a big group comprising of nearly everyone going to Vinson. After dinner, kat and i headed back to the hotel whilst the boys decided to all go out, which is why i imagine that im the only person up this morning! We are still on standby every 3 hours for weather reports from patriot hills. Its a sunny day here in Punta arenas but its not remotely indicative of the weather down in antarctica and ALE have to factor in our detour via Argentina to refuel the plane too before they can give us the green light to go.

People are slowly surfacing here now, and iv just heard that our next check in time is noon, so i have a few hours to kill before then! Its definately better to wait here in Punta Arenas than down on the ice, so im not going to complain too much yet, i mean we are only one day behind schedule right now lets hope its not too many more!!