

27TH APRIL 2005

Im finally in Anchorage getting ready to attempt the last of my Seven Summits which i really hope to try and complete within a year. I have not been on a mountain now since i reached the summit of Aconcagua on 19th December. I have been taking a much needed rest since that climb which as you will have read in my diaries almost finished me off altogether climbing it in just 4 days. It was a bit of an aggressive plan to climb Aconcagua in such a short period of time having been on a mountain every month for 5 months and coming off a 3 week Vinson Trip in Antarctica, i can honestly say I have never been so exhausted!!

This is the earliest date that worked for me to come to ALaska to climb Denali. Not wanting to do a winter ascent on this mountain as it is almost as far North as the North Pole and can be as cold as minus 60, i was not wanting to climb in those frigid conditions having almost lost my toes to frostbite on Aconcagua. This ended up being the timing that worked for us once we got through all our permit issues!! I am climbing with my usual guide and friend Guy Cotter who has brought with him Mark Seddon from Adventure Consultants in New Zealand and we have two guides from Mountain Trip, Clark and Brent. Mountain Trip are one of the companies that have the concession to guide Denali so they have made this happen for me. I also have Greg here with me so its me and 5 guys the kind of ratio that ive been getting used to whilst mountain climbing!! That is with the exception of my Kosciusko trip where i took my sister and 3 blonde girlfriends of mine!!

The weather in Anchorage is at a record high of 66 degrees which makes me nervous as to what might happen over the next 17 days whilst on the mountain. I always anticipate that it could suddenly go to record lows, given the coastal weather this mountain is subjected to, so im a little apprehensive about this heat rather than enjoying it!! We have had our gear reduced in half by Clark whom cannot re iterate enough how important it is to travel light on this climb. Personal gear aside, We are carrying fuel, food and tents enough for 5 people for 21 days on the mountain.. I lifted up one of the food bags in the car yesterday and could hardly get it off the ground it was so heavy!! Tomorrow if the plane can land on the glacier, we have to carry our packs which will weigh between 40llbs and 75llbs and tow 100llb sleds for 10 miles which we are anticipating will take us around 8 hours. We do not want to do a carry whereby we take half the weight initially and return the next day for the rest of the gear. Instead we have opted to travel really heavy for the first day..ill let u know how this plan works out from my first dispatch!!

Even i have scaled back on all personal creams and cosmetics - although saying that i have not cut off the end of my tooth brush like Clark advised me to!! We are even on loo roll rations so im hoping i dont get a cold!! I know this mountain is going to be really really tough with the weight we are carrying and the sheer length of the expedition. I am really nervous about the climb as always prior to a big event that i am undertaking and i think this will be a shock to the system having not been on a mountain for 3 months!! Im not even thinking about how scared i will be on the single propellar plane tomorrow and at the moment im just focusing on being in

ALaska for the first time, its a stunningly beautiful place and its so great just to be here..

If i can get my PDA system up and running ( mark seddon is being amazing helping me to get it sorted out!) and my girlfriend Kat can get my Satellite phone that iv borrowed from her up and running tomorrow then i will be sending out daily dispatches from the mountain about how we are all getting on... Im not stressing at this stage about my lack of communications set up as im just praying it all works tomorrow, if not i guess ill have a lighter load to carry!!

We need all the luck we can get with our health and the weather for the next few weeks..Greg is recovering from flu so hope he stays healthy and we dont get it!! From now on ill be sending dispatches but will post my lengthier journals at a later date... Over and out from a sunny and warm ALaska!!