

APRIL 15TH - CAMP 2 - BASECAMP

ANOTHER FRIGID NIGHT, BUT MUCH LESS WINDY THAN CAMP 1 DUE TO OUR ABC BEING SOMEWHAT SHELTERED NESTLED UP AGAINST THE ROCKFACE. ALTHOUGH SAYING THAT, YOU CAN HEAR THE WINDS UP HIGH ON EVEREST CONSTANTLY AND IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE THE ROAR OF THE SEA. WE WOKE AT 6.00AM AND EVENTUALLY LEFT CAMP AT 7.30AM, LEAVING THE WONDERFUL PALDE UP AT CAMP 2 TO LOOK AFTER OUR CAMPSITE, NOT THAT PEOPLE REALLY HAVE THE ENERGY TO GO BREAKING INTO OTHER PEOPLES TENTS AT THAT ALTITUDE!!!

WE HEADED DOWN TO CAMP 1 MEETING ALL OUR SHERPAS FERRYING LOADS UP TO CAMP 2, I LOVE OUR GUYS THEY ARE SO STRONG, SO NICE AND ALWAYS SMILING DESPITE SOME OF THE WEIGHTS THEY CARRY AT THAT ALTITUDE...

IT WAS BUSY TODAY BETWEEN CAMP 1 AND 2 AND THERE WERE A LOT OF QUEUES AT THE LADDER CROSSINGS, NOT A GOOD INDICATOR OF WHAT WE MAY EXPECT HIGHER ON THE MOUNTAIN. I MIGHT ADD THAT AS IM CRAWLING ON MOST OF THESE LADDER CROSSINGS I GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE ROPES THAT TIE THE LADDERS TO THE ICE SCREWS AND THEY ARE DEFINITELY SHOWING SOME SIGNS OF WEAR AND TEAR, NOT GOOD AT ALL IN MY MIND!

WE GOT TO CAMP 1 IN AN HOUR AND WENT STRAIGHT INTO THE ICEFALL. IN THE 4 DAYS THAT I'VE BEEN ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE ICEFALL HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED DUE TO AN AVALANCHE THAT I HEARD WHILST AT CAMP 1. IT IS UNRECOGNIZABLE FROM THE ICEFALL I ASCENDED A FEW DAYS PREVIOUSLY. THERE ARE A LOT MORE CREVASSES AND THE ICEFALL DOCTORS (THESE ARE THE AMAZING SHERPAS THAT FIX THE ROPES, LADDERS AND DECIDE THE ROUTE IN THE ICEFALL) ARE BUSY ADDING A LOT MORE LADDERS... (MY POOR KNEES!!)

IT WAS SO AWFUL, I WAS ON A LADDER THAT A SHERPA HAD JUST SECURED ON A NEWLY OPENED CREVASSE, WHEN HE DECIDED TO JUMP ONTO A BLOCK OF ICE THAT WAS WEDGED BETWEEN THE CREVASSE. THE NEXT THING I KNEW WAS THE WHOLE THING HAD COLLAPSED, I THOUGHT WE HAD LOST THE SHERPA, NOT TO MENTION MY LADDER THAT I WAS CLINGING TO FOR DEAR LIFE...LUCKILY ERNESTO HAD THE LIGHTENING REACTION TO GRAB HIM BEFORE HE PLUMMETED INTO OBLIVIAN. I WAS SHAKING FOR AGES AFTER THAT INCIDENT. WE THEN PROCEEDED WITH OUR DESCENT MY HEART STILL RACING AT 180 BEATS A MINUTE, AND FINALLY ARRIVED AT BASECAMP IN A TOTAL TIME OF 4 HRS 30 MINS FROM CAMP 2.. THE ELATION I FEEL WHEN IM OUT OF THE ICEFALL IS IMMENSE.. I KNOW I TALK ABOUT IT A LOT BUT ITS JUST THAT NO MATTER HOW GOOD OR TECHNICAL A CLIMBER YOU ARE, IF THE ICE MOVES WHILST YOU ARE UNDER A SERAC WHICH IS ALMOST ALL THE TIME, OR IF YOU ARE ON A LADDER, THAT'S IT... THE ICE IS LIKE CONCRETE YOU WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE. ITS A HORRIBLE THOUGHT BUT ONE THAT OBVIOUSLY IS ROUTED IN MY SUBCONSCIENCE CAUSING MY PANIC ATTACKS.

WE HAD A HUGE LUNCH AT BASE CAMP, I WASHED MY HAIR (FINALLY!!) AND WE GOT ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM PERTEMBA OUR BASECAMP MANAGER. THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR PEOPLE EVACUATED FROM HERE, 3 WITH ALTITUDE RELATED PROBLEMS AND ONE GIRL WAS TAKEN OUT BY HELICOPTER YESTERDAY WITH A HEAD INJURY WHICH SHE GOT WHILST HIKING A HILL ABOVE BASECAMP.

IV SPOKEN TO ALL MY FAMILY, I REALLY MISS HOME WHEN I SPEAK TO MY MOTHER, WHO KEEPS REMINDING ME TO BRING EXTRA GLOVES, I STILL HAVE MILDLY FROSTBITTEN FINGERS SO I HAVE TO BE REALLY CAREFUL.

TOMORROW IS ANDRONICOS 50TH BIRTHDAY WHICH WE ARE ALL REALLY EXCITED ABOUT...

IM NOW IN MY TENT AND ABOUT TO WATCH FORREST GUMP, THE LUXURY OF BEING BACK AT BASECAMP!!!!