



## Mount Everest 2016 - Blog No 14:

Final update

Hi everyone,

Probably my final update about Jaco's adventure... Jaco arrived safely in Base Camp last Sunday. He and his team had decided to stay one extra night in Camp 2 to recover before descending to Base Camp. Sunday at 15.00 I received an e-mail from Russell that Jaco made it safely through the Icefalls and at 15.45 he called us via Whatsapp. Of course the line was patchy again, but it was so nice to hear his voice and to know he was all safe and sound! He was quite emotional (and so were we), but he managed to tell his story: Summit Friday started as a 'real' Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. His alarm didn't go off to wake him up (they were supposed to leave at 1.00am, his inner shoe of his climbing boot broke and his head light didn't work. Quite essential if you're going to do the majority of the climb in the dark. The weather whilst going up was extreme with strong winds, snow storms and snow reaching to their hips. The Sherpas had said that they had never seen such extreme weather on a Summit Day. At some point, Jaco's eye was frozen – his eye was covered with frozen snow and therefore he could only see through one eye. His radio broke down as well. He knew he still had to do the Hillary Steps (approximately 30 cm's breadth and kilometres of depth on both sides). He said up there my voice went through his head over and over again: "Jaco, in case of doubt and when you feel it's getting too dangerous, please turn around. It's not worth the risk. We want to have you back home safely", and he was thinking of the kids as well. He decided to tell his Sherpa that he thought he had to turn around because it was getting too dangerous. His Sherpa said "come with me around the corner, we'll be sheltered from the wind, we can see if we can fix your eye and you'll see how close to the top you are". Magical words .... Jaco saw that the summit was less than an hour away and ultimately he decided to continue. The Hillary steps were so beautiful and so scary at the same time, he said. And then there was the summit! They had the summit to themselves which was a unique experience. There were still extreme strong winds on the top and he was so exhausted that he had to take the summit pictures whilst seated J. Of course he was excited, relieved, proud, emotional all at the same time, but he also realized he was only half way and had to get down safely as well. After 10 – 15 minutes on the summit they started their descent and approximately three hours later he reached Camp 4 again. He took some rest and then continued his descent all the way back to Camp 2, which is where he sent me a text that he was safe. And the rest is history!

Today, they have started their descent to Lukla (75 km in three days) and Saturday they'll fly from Lukla to Kathmandu. He will stay there for two days, on Monday he'll fly back home, arriving in Sydney Tuesday morning.

I think it's fair to say that only in the last couple of days it started to sink in with him what has actually happened and how amazing his achievement is. He got a fair bit of media coverage in the Netherlands and a newspaper here in Sydney, he had his first radio interview with a Dutch radio station over the satellite phone from Base Camp and he literally received hundreds of messages from people all over the world congratulating him. He is pretty overwhelmed and very grateful!

That was it I think. Thank you all for reading the updates so patiently and your encouragement to keep writing them!

Daan

Links:

<https://give.everydayhero.com/au/climbing-beyond-summits>

<http://www.rtlnieuws.nl/nederland/droom-jaco-ottink-komt-uit-9de-nederlander-die-seven-summits-beklimt>

<http://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/141873/Hoogvlieter-beklimt-alle-zeven-hoogste-toppen-ter-wereld> (link to the radio interview included in the article)

<http://www.nkbv.nl/home/actueel/Negende+Nederlander+voltooit+Seven+Summits/9535>