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HELLO!  
FROM

30 OCT 11

MATTHEW JANKOWICZ

ADAK, ALASKA

I WANT TO TELL YOU SOME STORIES ABOUT MY HIKING ADVENTURES ON ADAK. SOME OF THEM WERE ALMOST DEATH ADVENTURES. HIKING ON ADAK WAS VERY CHALLENGING & DIVERGENT,

THE NAVY HAD US TAKE A MANDATORY SURVIVAL COURSE BEFORE WE COULD HIKE ON THE ISLAND. HYPOTHERMIA WAS VERY COMMON IN ALASKA, ESPECIALLY ON ADAK WHERE THE AVERAGE TEMPERATURE YEAR ROUND WAS IN THE 50'S & ALMOST EVERYDAY IT WAS WET IN THE FORM OF RAIN, SNOW & FOG. THEY EVEN TOLD US TO ALWAYS HIKE WITH A BUDDY-NEVER ALONE. THEY TOLD US IF WE WERE WET & FREEZING & SEEM TO HAVE HYPOTHERMIA TO STRIP DOWN NAKED & TO HUG OUR BODIES TOGETHER TO KEEP WARM.

BEFORE I KNEW I HAD TO TAKE THAT SURVIVAL COURSE - I WENT ON A HIKING ADVENTURE BY MYSELF. I DECIDED TO CLIMB THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN ON ADAK, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WINTER. THE MOUNTAIN WAS CALLED MT. MORFETT & IT WAS COMPLETELY COVERED IN A LOT OF SNOW. AS I CLIMBED UP THE MOUNTAIN THE SNOW TURNED TO SOLID ICE. I ONLY WORE HIKING BOOTS & HAD NO ROPES OR CRAMPONS. AS I NEARED THE TOP, I SAW LARGE Boulders OF ICE AS LARGE AS CARS. MOST OF THEM WERE VERY ROUND IN SHAPE. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SCENE & I WAS THE ONLY PERSON ON THE MOUNTAIN. IT WAS VERY PEACEFUL BUT MY CLIMB DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WAS JUST THE OPPOSITE & VERY SCARY. AS I CLIMBED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN - I WAS ON ALL FOURS (USED BOTH MY HANDS & FEET) BECAUSE IT WAS VERY STEEP. I VEERED OFF THE PATH THAT I CLIMBED UP ON. AS I WAS CLIMBING DOWN MY FOOT & HAND HOLES WERE GETTING SMALLER & SMALLER UNTIL I WAS STRUGGLING TO HOLD ON WITH JUST SINGLE FINGERS & THE TIP OF MY TOES. I THEN LOOKED BELOW ME & I WAS JUST FEET AWAY FROM FALLING INTO A MASSIVE CREVASSE THAT WAS THOUSANDS OF FEET DEEP - TO MY DEATH. I GOT REAL SCARED & THOUGHT I WOULD SLIP & DIE SO I QUICKLY CALMED MYSELF →

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ADAK, ALASKA

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DOWN. I THEN STARTED CLIMBING SIDEWAYS LIKE A CRAB, TO MAKE IT TO MY ORIGINAL PATH. FINALLY AS I KEPT CLIMBING SIDEWAYS MY HANDS GOT LARGER & I FOUND MY ORIGINAL PATH & FEEL RELIEF. I SAID MANY PRAYERS THAT DAY DURING MY ORGASM. I SWORE TO MYSELF I WOULD NEVER HIKER ALONE ON ADAK AGAIN. OVERALL IT WAS A FUN HIKE BUT VERY SCARY.

ONE THING I LOVE ABOUT HIKING ON ADAK BECAUSE THE SUN STAYS OUT A LONG TIME IN THE SUMMER MONTHS - YOU CAN HIKER FOR A LONG TIME DURING THE DAY. ON ONE OF MY HIKES ME & MY BUDDY MADE CAMP & SET UP OUR TENTS AROUND MIDNIGHT (IT WAS JUST GETTING DARK) & WE HAD STARVED OUR HIKES AROUND 4-5AM IN THE LIGHT. IT WAS PRETTY COOL.

IN WINTER HIKES I WOULD SOMETIMES WALK SNOWSHOES &/OR CROSS-COUNTRY SKIS, WE WOULD MARK TRAILS WITH WOODEN STAKES PAINTED ORANGE ABOUT 4-5' HIGH BECAUSE THE SNOW COVERED ALL THE TUNDRA & THERE WERE NO TREES OR BUSHES TO USE AS LANDMARKS. WE ALSO HAD "SAR ORANGE BARRELS" SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND. THEY WERE USED FOR SLEDGE & CONTAIN ROAD & WATER. ONCE I WAS LEADING A BUNCH OF RESCUERS THROUGH ADAK'S MOUNTAINS IN BLIZZARD LIKE CONDITIONS (WHERE OURS), THEY GOT REAL SCARED BUT I HIKED ADAK A LOT & KNEW ALWAYS WHERE I WAS GOING. I HAD TO KEEP THEM CALM BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO DIE.

HAVE ANY OF YOU BEEN IN THUNDER SNOW? IT'S REALLY COOL. ON ADAK I EXPERIENCED A FEW TIMES. IT WOULD BE SNOWING VERY HEAVILY & ALL OF A SUDDEN THE WHOLE SKY & SURROUNDING AIR WOULD LIGHT UP LIKE A BIG FLASHING LIGHT BOMB & YOU WOULD HEAR THE THUNDER! IT WAS PRETTY WILD FEELING!

ONCE MY 4X4 TRUCK GOT STUCK NEAR MY CABIN. I CALLED THE CB'S FOR HELP. IT WAS AT NIGHT & WINDY OUT CONDITIONS & THE SNOW WAS VERY DEEP. THEY RESPONDED TO MY CALL BUT THEIR RESCUE VEHICLE GOT STUCK TRYING TO PULL ME OUT - SO THEY GAVE UP & TOOK ME HOME. THE NEXT DAY I WENT →

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## ADAK, ALASKA

2000/11

BACK TO GET MY TRUCK, I BROUGHT A COUPLE OF FRIENDS & SOME SHOVELS. IT WOULD BE DEAD BECAUSE MY TRUCK WAS BURIED IN ABOUT 6 FEET OF SNOW. WE FINALLY GOT IT FREE AFTER A FEW HOURS OF EFFORT. THE HARDEST PART ABOUT DRIVING IN THE SNOW THERE WAS WHEN YOUR TRUCK WOULD BOTTOM OUT & THE SNOW WOULD LIKE LIFT THE TRUCK OFF THE GROUND SO THE TIRES COULDN'T GET ANY TRACTION. MOST OF OUR ROADS IN ADAK WERE DIRT & GRAVEL, ONLY A FEW PAVED ROADS.

THE SNOW WAS SO DEEP ON THE ROADS W TO MY MORFETT TRANSMITTER SITE (WHERE I WORKED AS A BUS/POWER TECHNICIAN) THAT THE LARGE GRADER TRUCKS WOULD STOP TRYING TO CLEAR THE ROAD OF SNOW BECAUSE THERE WAS NO WHERE TO PUT IT - THE WALLS OF SNOW ON EACH SIDE OF THE ROAD WERE TOO TALL (20' OR MORE), SO WE WOULD USE A TRACKDRIVER (SNOWCAT) TO TAKE US UP MOUNTAINS - I USE TO DRIVE IT DURING THE MONTHS IT WAS VERY TRECKY & SCARY TO DRIVE THE SNOWCAT UP THE MOUNTAIN, SOMETIMES WE WOULD TOP IT OVER, DURING WINTER OUT OR HEAVY SNOW IT WAS HARD TO SEE THE TRANSMITTER SITE? ONLY. THE SNOW WAS SO DEEP AT THE TRANSMITTER SITE WE WOULD HAVE TO DIG OUR WAY INTO THE BUILDINGS FROM ABOVE ROOF HEIGHT. YOU COULD WALK OFF THE TOP OF THE SNOW DOWN ONTO THE ROOF OF THE BUILDINGS WHICH WERE AROUND 30' TALL! I ACTUALLY LOVE ALL THE SNOW & THOUGHT IT WAS COOL, SOME OF MY CO-WORKERS THOUGHT DON'T FEEL THE SAME WAY. I WOULD ALWAYS WANT TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW & DOOR WHEN THEY WEREN'T COVERED WITH SNOW & WATCH IT SNOW. MY CO-WORKERS WANTED TO THROW ME INTO THE SNOW & BURY ME, BUT I DON'T CARE BECAUSE I LOVE SNOW ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE ALL ALONE OUTSIDE & IT'S SNOWING WITH LARGE FLUFFY FLAKES & IT'S SO QUIET YOU CAN HEAR THE SNOWFLAKES HIT THE GROUND. I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR ALL FOR NOW. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO MAKE COMMENTS OR WRITE ME.