

Vinson Massif, Antarctica, November 30th, 2010 Elevation 16,067

My Journey



Vinson Massif, the highest mountain of Antarctica, lies in the Sentinel Range of the Ellsworth Mountains, which stand above the Ronne Ice Shelf near the base of the Antarctic Peninsula. The massif is located about 1,200 kilometers (750 mi) from the South Pole and is about 21 km (13 mi) long and 13 km (8.1 mi) wide. At 4,897 meters (16,067 ft) the highest point is **Mount Vinson**, which was named in 2006 after Carl Vinson, long-time member of the U.S. Congress from the state of Georgia.

Vinson Massif was first seen in 1958 and first climbed in 1966. An expedition in 2001 was the first to climb via the Eastern route, and also took GPS measurements of the height of the peak. As of February 2010, 700 climbers have attempted to reach the top of **Mount Vinson**.

Antarctica Facts

Antarctica is the Earth's 5th largest continent, measuring 14 million square kilometers (5.4 million square miles).

The ice sheet that covers almost all of Antarctica is the largest body of fresh water on earth, containing about 90% of the world's ice and 68% of the fresh water.

If Antarctica's ice sheet were to melt, it would raise the level of the world's oceans about 60 meters (200 feet).

Antarctica has the greatest average elevation of any continent at 1,860 meters (6,100 feet). The average elevation of North America is 720 meters (2,300 feet).

The highest mountain on the continent is Vinson Massif, 4,897 meters (16,067 feet), situated in the Ellsworth Mountains.

The snowfall in Antarctica is so minimal that the continent has been called "the world's coldest desert". The interior receives less than 3 cm (1 inch) of precipitation a year, making it the driest continent on Earth.

Mean temperatures in the inland during the coldest month range from -40 F to -94 F and in the warmest month from 5 F to -31 F. At the coasts, the temperature ranges between 5 F to -22 F in winter and about 32 F in summer. On July 21, 1983, the Soviet station, Vostok, reported a record-breaking 128.6 F below freezing.

The South Pole experiences a six month period of darkness in winter and a six month period of sunlight in summer.

Antarctica is the only continent in the world with no permanent or indigenous human inhabitants. Larger than the United States, the frozen land is populated by approximately 2,500 people during the summer and fewer than 1,000 in the winter.