

Eagle Scout Chills Out as Representative of the Antarctic Scout Program

Eagle Scout Tim Brox's career path took a little detour last year—through Antarctica.

Tim spent five months at the bottom of the world as a representative of the BSA Antarctic Scientific Program sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America and the National Science Foundation. The Eagle Scout from Sequoia Council, Fresno, California, came home with a new direction for his life.

"I had never thought about going to Antarctica," Tim said, until he read an article about the adventures of another Scout chosen for the program. "The minute I read it and saw the pictures with it, I just knew I had to do it. So, I just applied."

"I was surprised when I was called to be in the final three," Tim said. "I would have been the third pick if I had been picking. I was shocked when they called my name. I started out thinking I would not get very far [in the selection process], but somehow I did."

Tim is a native Canadian who has lived most of his life in Fresno, California, and was a senior in high school when he was selected. He put his college plans on hold to take the trip to Antarctica. Leaving sunny California behind on October 18, 2001, Tim did not return to the United States until March 24, 2002.

While in Antarctica, Tim got a firsthand look at the scientific experiments that take place there.

"I actually got out and tagged pup seals and examined hundreds of animals," he said. "I wasn't looking over someone's shoulder learning about science, I was learning by doing, which was a fabulous teaching tool. That first survey day, I personally read more than 100 tags."

Tim worked as a tender for divers studying one-celled animals called foraminifera, and he worked with another team studying glacier runoff in the "dry valleys" of Antarctica where there is little ice and snow covering the ground. But the best part of the trip, Tim says, was visiting the South Pole.

"It's something being at that little pole that says this is the bottom of the world," he said. "There are few buildings there. Everywhere else is just white snow for a thousand miles in any direction."

Being a Scout helped prepare Tim for the trip—everything from outdoor skills to people skills and teamwork. "All the food we cooked in field camps was on the same green briefcase stoves that you see at Scout camp," he said. "We used GPS [satellite-based global positioning system] units just like I used with my Venturing crew."

Now a student at the University of California, San Diego, Tim's life definitely has warmed up—at least the climate has. He has fond memories to share and encourages other Scouts to apply for the experience. "It's the chance of a lifetime, definitely," Tim said. "No matter what your interests are, you're going to find something."

