



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall into Crevasse – Climbing Alone**

Mexico, Veracruz, Pico de Orizaba, Jamapa Glacier

**On the morning of February 8, Jacob “Jake” Lloyd, an experienced mountaineer from Utah, was climbing alone on the Jamapa Glacier, the normal route up the 18,491-foot mountain.**

At approximately 18,200 feet, a snow bridge collapsed and Jake fell about 25 feet into a crevasse. Landing on his back, he suffered only a few scrapes but was unable to climb out. Using his cell phone, Jake was able to reach an emergency number, but the message was poorly translated and responding rescuers were directed to the base of the glacier rather than his actual location. He was forced to spend a cold and sleepless night in the crevasse, warding off frostbite and cold injury by continually moving his fingers and toes.

On the morning of February 9, Carlos Romy, a Mexican guide, came upon the collapsed snow bridge and located Jake. After confirming that he was uninjured, Romy continued to the summit with his clients and returned with four additional climbers. The guide and climbers lowered a rope and an additional ice axe and were able to extricate Jake from the crevasse. He was given food and water, and the climbing team escorted him down the mountain.

Jake stated: "I had seen small crevasses, a couple of inches wide, lower on the mountain, but in this area the surface looked like solid snow and ice. I broke through a thin roof and fell 25 feet to the floor of the crevasse, landing on my back. The next 26 hours were cold and complicated, and the image of the distant sky occupied all my thoughts. In the end I was rescued by five brave mountaineers who lowered me a rope and a second axe and helped me climb out while they tugged fiercely." (Source: Scott Larson.)

### **ANALYSIS**

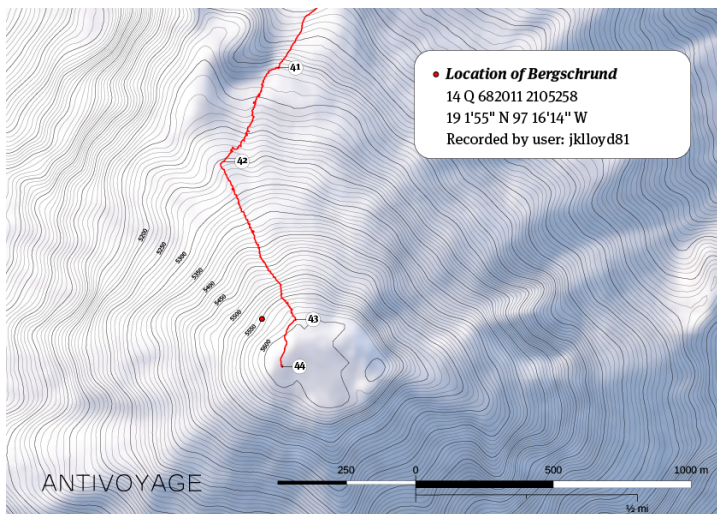
Climbing alone was the major contributing factor in this incident. The climber was very lucky that a guide encountered his tracks and was able to gather a team to extricate him relatively quickly. Jake also was lucky to avoid injury in his fall or frostbite or another cold injury during the night. The crevasse walls prevented wind chill from being much of a factor, though Jake's actions to stay awake and continue moving were the primary reason he did not suffer a cold injury.

Though many guidebooks, trip reports, and guides state there are no large crevasses on Pico de Orizaba, climbers should always be prepared for crevasses on glacial terrain, including the Jamapa Glacier. Cell phones should never be relied upon as one's sole source of communication in the mountains, because signal strength varies widely. Climbers should inform others of their objectives and expected duration of a trip and should be familiar with the contact information and capabilities of local rescue organizations. (Sources: Scott Larson and the Editors.)

## Images



Looking into the crevasse in which Jake Lloyd spent a night on Orizaba.



Red box marks approximate location of the crevasse in which Jake Lloyd spent more than 24 hours on Pico de Orizaba.



Jake Lloyd's view from inside the crevasse on Pico de Orizaba.



Orizaba Crevasse Fall



Jake Lloyd relaxes with his rescuers after more than 24 hours inside a crevasse on Pico de Orizaba.

Carlos Romay (green helmet) found Lloyd in the crevasse and led the rescue.

Article Details

Author	Scott Larson
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	70
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Accident reports