HEADING HOME!



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On the morning of February 12th, with all final checks done and the station switched to winter mode and fully secured, the last members of the BELARE team made their way to the airstrip 2 km from the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica to meet the Basler DC-3 that would fly them to Ultima Antarctic Logistics air base about 450km north-east of PEA. Taking a last team photo before boarding the plane, everyone watched their home for the last three months fade into the distance as the plane took off on this cold and bright sunny day.

They reached Ultima air base in about an hour and a half. Thankfully the weather cooperated and they had little layover time this year. They quickly boarded the large Illyushin transport plane they had become all too familiar with over the years and strapped themselves in for the return journey. Soon they were in the air, settled in for the six-hour flight due north to Cape Town with about 60 other passengers from many nations finishing their Antarctic expedition at the same time.

By the afternoon, the team had landed in Cape Town International Airport. What a difference a few hours can make! The balmy South African summer with temperatures in the mid 20s was a drastic change from the -15°C they had left behind in Antarctica just a few hours earlier.

After unloading the remaining cargo and personal items, the team made their way to the hotel. It was time for some rest and relaxation, not to mention showers for the first time in a few days!

While most of the team is eager to return home as quickly as possible, other team members decided to stay in South Africa and take some personal holidays after the season, taking advantage of the summer weather

there. It’s certainly nice to be able to go to the beach or climb some of the stunning mountains South Africa has to offer after several months living below zero degrees on the ice and snow!