

ALIVE! 2018



Trip Report



Introduction

Dates: January 15 – 20, 2018

Location: In the Andes, on the Chilean/Argentinian border

On Friday, October 13, 1972, 45 passengers and staff boarded Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 and disappeared somewhere in the Andes. 72 days later, the world would learn that there were 16 survivors, finally rescued when Nando Parrado and Roberto Canessa walked out of the wilderness and found help. Their survival story, as told in the *Alive!* book and movie, is one of the greatest of all time. Science in the Wild had the opportunity to visit the site in the company of one of the survivors, Eduardo Strauch, thanks to a trip run by Alpine Expeditions (owned by Ricardo Pena). If you have been fascinated by this story, take a look at the photos in the next few pages, read about the experience, and consider joining the annual trip! Guaranteed, it will move you emotionally when you stand at the memorial and the exact spot where 16 people lived out what they believed to be their last days.



The 2018 group at the memorial site in the remote Andes with Eduardo Strauch (third from the left, standing).



The Impact



These images (view is looking west) show what we saw while approaching the crash site this January (2018). In the first image, the "P" shows where the plane impacted - the tail and back part of the plane broke off. The arrow shows the path that the fuselage took until it came to a rest at 12,000 ft. (3658 m) on the Lagrimas glacier.

For 72 days, the survivors of the crash lived out their days at this location. It is on December 12, 1972 that two survivors, Nando Parrado and Roberto Canessa, set off on a daring mission, hiking for 10 days to try to find help. The "C" shows the headwall that they climbed and the saddle they crossed into Chile. On December 21, they were finally rescued after they encountered Sergio Catalán, a livestock herder in the foothills of the Chilean Andes. Then on December 22/23, the rest of the 14 survivors on the Lagrimas glacier were rescued by helicopter.

In the inset image, the "X" marks where the plane impacted, with the red arrow showing the path of the fuselage down the gully. Back in October 1972, this gully was filled with snow. The blue dot marks the spot where survivor Eduardo Strauch's coat (with wallet and documents inside) was found by Ricardo Pena on February 12, 2005! These days, the coat resides at a museum in Uruguay, dedicated to the victims and survivors of this tragedy (<http://www.mandes.uy>).

Glacier Comparisons – 1973 and 2018



The cross memorial and glacier in January 1973.



The cross memorial and glacier in January 2018. There is significant ice mass loss.

The Fuselage – 1972 and 2018



The fuselage and glacier in 1972.



The fuselage and glacier in 2018. Note the bareness of the mountains in the background as well as on the surface of the glacier. It is believed the fuselage is currently embedded in the debris-covered ice, after falling into a crevasse.

The Wreckage – 2018

Avalanches and the melting Lagrimas glacier are revealing more and more wreckage from the crash.



A wing sticks out of the heavily debris-covered glacier.

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A mangled tray table.

The Wreckage – 2018

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A shoe and pieces from the plane.

The Wreckage – 2018



The front wheel of the Fairchild 571, as seen in 2018.

The Wreckage – 2018



The front wheel of the Fairchild 571, back in 1972.

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