

Super-TIGER is up! Your chance to track a stratospheric balloon in real time

December 11 2012, by Diana Lutz



The Super-TIGER cosmic-ray experiment had a perfect launch Sunday at 9:45 a.m. New Zealand Daylight Time. The enormous balloon that will carry it to the limits of Earth's atmosphere was stretched out on the ice and then partially filled. (It rounds out nicely as it rises into the stratosphere.)

As it came up off the ice, the [balloon](#) rose directly over the downstream instrument, which was held by a crane on an enormous truck named the Boss, after the polar explorer Shackleton. If the balloon isn't overhead

when it is released, it swings like a [pendulum](#) and bashes into the ice. In this case, everything went beautifully; the Boss barely moved, and the balloon lifted the two-ton instrument effortlessly into the sky.

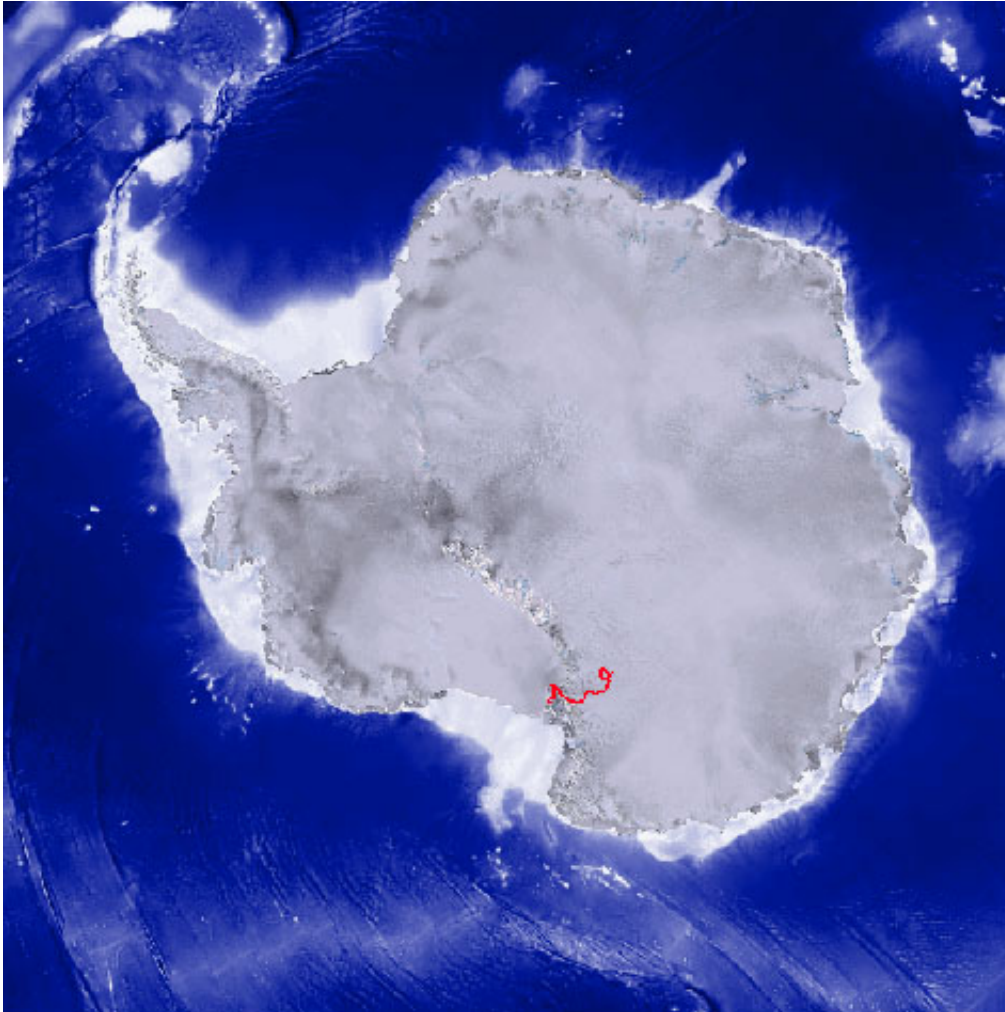
The video was shot by Richard Bose, an [electronics engineer](#) in the Department of Physics in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. At the end of the video, you can hear people congratulating Robert Binns, PhD, research professor of physics at Washington University and the principle investigator on the Super-TIGER experiment, which is the work of a team from the California Institute of Technology, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, the University of Minnesota and NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, in addition to Washington University. The flawless [launch](#) was carried out by the crew of the Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility, the world's experts in launching stratospheric balloons.

To learn more about the experiment, see [Rough Guide to Super-TIGER Watching](#).



After an initial bobble, the balloon headed straight west. To go round the South Pole counter-clockwise, it needs simply to continue to travel due west. This is a Google map version of the balloon track.

The scientists are hoping the balloon will circumnavigate the pole at least twice before it must be brought down. Here is its track as of 10:30 a.m. CST Monday Dec. 10.



To keep an eye on Super-TIGER's progress yourself, bookmark the tracking page for NASA's [Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility](#).

Provided by Washington University in St. Louis

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