

Frostbite ends Fiennes winter Antarctic expedition bid

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Explorers Sir Ranulph Fiennes (L) and Anton Bowring meet journalists on January 6, 2013, in Cape Town. Fiennes has pulled out of an attempt at the world's first Antarctic winter crossing due to frostbite, the expedition said Monday.

Veteran British explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes has pulled out of an attempt at the world's first Antarctic winter crossing due to frostbite, the expedition said Monday.

"This decision has not been taken lightly and it is, naturally, a huge disappointment to Fiennes and his colleagues," the mission, known as The Coldest Journey, said on its website.

The 68-year-old adventurer was injured after falling during a ski training session in temperatures of around minus 30 Celsius (minus 22 Fahrenheit), the BBC reported.

"In seeking to re-attach his binding he felt that he couldn't get it on and had to take his glove off in very cold conditions and exposed his hand to snow and as a consequence he has contracted frostbite," said the [expedition](#)'s Tony Medniuk.

According to the website, Fiennes had "very reluctantly decided" to leave his five fellow explorers while an evacuation was still possible before the start of the [Antarctic winter](#).

However, a blizzard has put on hold plans to transport him by snowmobile to Princess Elisabeth Station, which lies around 70 kilometres (43 miles) away from the team's current location.

"Until there is a let up in the [weather conditions](#), Fiennes will be unable to leave," said the statement.



A South African ice-strengthened polar research/supply vessel leaves Cape Town on January 7, 2013, at the start of an expedition to complete the last great polar challenge - crossing Antarctica in winter - with explorers Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Anton Bowring leading the team.

The plan is then to fly him to Novo for a connecting flight to Cape Town, from where the expedition ship sailed in early January.

The decision to leave was made with the team doctor and in the interests of the success of the journey. The campaign aims to raise \$10 million (7,6 million euros) for the Seeing is Believing blindness charity.

The remaining five expedition members will press on with the journey and are "in an excellent position" to start the crossing on March 21.

"Sir Ran is leaving but we will carry on," tweeted Ian Prickett who is part of the team.

They hope to be the first to make the over-3,200 kilometre (2,000 mile) crossing in winter.

The furthest winter journey in Antarctica so far covered 60 miles in the early 20th century.

Fiennes has multiple records under his belt. He was the oldest Briton to summit Mount Everest, has crossed both polar ice caps, and has crossed the Antarctic unsupported.

In 2000, he suffered severe [frostbite](#) on his left hand while on expedition and later sawed off the dead parts of the fingers himself.

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