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Lyle Tuttle Tattoos on All 7 Continents
Becomes First Person to Accomplish This Feat

On January 21, 2014, 82-year-old tattoo legend Lyle Tuttle became the first person to tattoo on all 7 continents. A long-standing “bucket list” item of his, this accomplishment fulfilled a personal mission for Mr. Tuttle. He said of the endeavor: “Because I was lucky to have the greatest time slot that any tattoo artist ever had in tattooing, it wound up that I had tattooed on six continents. So I had an opportunity to tattoo on seven continents. Well, I’m not out to break any records but why not do it, it’s there! Edmund Hillary, they asked him why he climbed Mount Everest, and he said ‘because it was there’.”

After a long trip to the tip of South America, he and project assistant/tattoo historian Dr. Anna Felicity Friedman, flew across the Drake Passage on a 6-seat charter flight. Still plagued by after-effects from a bout of frostbite acquired while serving in the Marines in the Korean War, the trip posed a particular challenge for Mr. Tuttle. The two travelers spent a full day touring, seeing—among the many wonders of the icy southern world—glaciers, icebergs, penguins, seals, and whales—and experiencing what life is like for those who live in Antarctica for extended periods of time. Then, late at night, Mr. Tuttle set up his tattoo station in a scientist’s guesthouse at the Russian Bellingshausen Station and tattooed his signature tattoo—his autograph—on Dr. Friedman’s leg, later adding “ANTARCTICA 2014” when back in Punta Arenas, Chile. They were among only a handful of tourists who have the privilege of sleeping on the continent each year.

Along the way, Mr. Tuttle acquired two new tattoos (he calls them “stickers on your luggage”), the word “LIMA” during a stopover in Lima, Peru, and “ANTARCTICA 2014” with a small penguin after returning to Patagonia. A natural prankster, he delighted in surprising local tattoo artists along the way with his completely unexpected visits.

Mr. Tuttle, noted for his role in helping bring tattooing to a wider clientele in the 1960s and 70s, began his career in 1949. He has tattooed such prominent clients as Janis Joplin, Joan Baez, and the Allman Brothers and was featured on the cover of Rolling Stone Magazine in 1970. Mostly retired from tattooing, Mr. Tuttle hosts an annual tattoo convention every fall in St. Louis, travels widely educating about tattoo machines and other topics, and maintains one of the world’s largest collections of tattoo-history artifacts and ephemera.

You can read more about the project and view some images at: <http://bit.ly/ltaproject>

Media inquires: Please contact Lyle’s assistant on this project, Dr. Anna Felicity Friedman, at tattoohistorian@gmail.com or +1 773 307-2753. High-resolution images and video are available. Thumbnails on request.

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