Here are a few pictures from my current deployment aboard an anchor handling and tow vessel heading towards the Kara Sea. Our vessel’s primary role is to tow a drilling rig from Southern Norway to a site offshore Russia. Once we arrive in the area we help anchor the rig and then act as a standby, medevac and ice defense vessel.

This is a very remote site, about 500km offshore mainland Russia. As there is no helicopter support here, this equates to a 3-4 day transit to the nearest medical facility. The sea in this area is ice-bound for over 250 days of the year with temperatures dropping to minus 46°C in the winter. On-board is a crew of approximately 25 persons, primarily Norwegians with a couple Russians, a Canadian and a few Americans.

We have a full stock of ALS medicines and OTC and prescription medicines to treat any potential issues. As part of our kit, we are utilizing a Zoll monitor/defibrillator, a LTV ventilator and B-Braun infusion pumps. We also have access to portable ultrasound and x-ray capabilities as well as an i-STAT for blood chemistry analyzing. Other responsibilities for the medic include weekly health and hygiene inspections of the kitchen, weekly first aid training for the crew and monthly potable water testing.

Due to the potentially extreme environmental conditions and isolation from definitive medical care it is paramount that the Remote Paramedic have the skills, training and experience to handle a wide range of medical and trauma issues that might be encountered. The RIAMP program provides these skills unlike any other program available Stateside. The combination of distance learning and practical sessions allows the student to become knowledgeable in a multitude of advanced medical skills needed including enhanced patient assessment, dental emergencies, extended medical and trauma care, health and hygiene issues and evacuation considerations. Adding to this the unique clinical internship which provides real world experience means that the RIAMP graduate will be ready to be deployed to any location world wide and provide top-notch medical care to the workforce.