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MOUNT SHARP. MARS

After four attempts over three years, NASA's Curiosity rover has finally made it to the Gediz Vallis Ridge on Mars, seen here on the right of the image.

Although a ridge doesn't sound all that exciting, this one contains information from a remarkable period in the Red Planet's history.

Up until around three billion years ago, Mars was wet: vast oceans, rivers and lakes covered its surface, much like Earth today. During this time, torrents of water carried rocks and debris down Mount Sharp (Aeolis Mons), seen here on the far left. This huge muddy landslide solidified, before being chiselled away by Martian winds to form the Gediz Valley Ridge we see today. In other words, it's a record of one of the last wet periods seen on Mars.

Getting here was so hard because the knife-sharp rocks and steep slopes have previously forced the rover to turn back. This image is made from 136 photos stitched together, and the colours adjusted to match how human eyes would see the landscape.

NASA/JPL

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