

hundreds of square miles of ice and snow, the ice age's last stand. The
TORBAY*-GOOSEBAY-SONDRESTROM-THULE AND RETURN:

We left Torbay on the morning of 29 June loaded down with Arctic survival gear and plenty of film for cameras. The weather was stinking and we were on instruments most of the way to Goosebay. I acted as combination co-pilot and navigator on this first leg. The purpose of our first stop, Goosebay, was to pick up a polar navigator. On landing, we grabbed a bite to eat; met our navigator, 1/Lt. Sidall of San Diego; picked up nine in-flight lunches and roared off into the blue. I was to be strickly co-pilot on this leg; Sidall, the pathfinder, was in the nose. The Colonel, R. R. Dyke, from Los Angeles, rode in the back to get some sleep; and the pilot, George Jacobi, Major from Atlantic City and I had the flight deck to ourselves except for the very able Sgt. Cox, our engineer. Our destination was the airstrip at Sondrestrom Fjord in Greenland. At night we were indeed treated to a rare privilege. We took off. Aside from a little icing that we encountered just out of Goose, this leg of the journey was without incident. That was a great thrill for me. Greenland Revisited: We saw the West shore of Greenland about two hundred miles out from Sondrestrom. It was the first time for me since that time in 1943 when we took our B-26 to war. Greenland with its mountains and ice defies description. I found it quite hard to breathe as we approached the mouth of the Fjord. Ice and snow as white as you can imagine spread over rocky cliffs; vallies green with mosses, lichens and grasses. Beyond the mountains, which line the coast, the ice caps down rolling out there alone. I was glad to get back to the camp and the people.

hundreds of square miles of ice and snow; the ice age's last stand.

We were to photograph the aerodrome at Sondrestrom but clouds prevented this. We landed and checked in at the BOQ. We were tired and the meal served with good Danish beer hit the spot. That night there was talk then to bed.

The next morning we had a complete tour of the base. The Colonel kept me busy looking at installations but out of the corner of my eyes I caught glimpses of the flora. Here halfway up the West Coast of Greenland I found a garden. Of course there was no time for collecting but I tried to get some of it on Kodachrome. Sondrestrom this time of year is a good bit like Arizona or west Texas in the Fall or Spring except for water -- there are many lakes around the area and of course the ice cap always looms in the distance. I did have time in the late afternoon to collect a few fossils on the marine terrace near the cold waters of the Fjord. I would like to spend a few weeks there.

That night we were indeed treated to a rare privilege. We took off in a ski-equipped C-47 for a landing on the ice cap at a site where some scientific investigations are in progress. That was a great thrill for me -- a ski landing on the snow and visiting with the men that are engaged in the investigations. They held a little seminar while we were there and each man explained the nature of his work-- what he was doing and what he hoped to learn. It made me very homesick for school again. Their camp was at the end of all creation. I walked away from the camp for awhile and looked out over the vast expanse of Arctic waste and tried to imagine how a pilot would feel if forced down out there alone. I was glad to get back to the camp and the people.

We stayed there until after midnight talking and asking questions. The sun was still on the horizon when we took off to fly back to BWg. It made me feel real good inside to once again meet people whose only purpose in life is to add some little bit to the total knowledge of mankind.

The next day we ^{LEFT} ~~left~~ Sondrestrom for Thule. On this trip we past over the most fantastic scenes of arctic desolation. Actually along the West coast of Greenland there are many villages and outposts but they are very small and from 10,000 feet they don't exist. Up the the west coast of Greenland along the Davis Straights and over Baffin Bay and just before Thule, Melville Bay the birthplace of icebergs. Here we saw icebergs the size of the City Auditorium or larger. Then Thule and more visits and conversations.

We were treated royally there -- part of the benifits one enjoys when in party of a full Colonel. We all were given rooms in the VIP quarters, The Ritz Thule. Thule is really unbelievable; it is a large & thriving city without women.

There I met some fighter pilot friends and also a former student of mine from Reese. He (Lt. Humphrey) flies a C-119 and he made it possible for me to go along on an airlift mission out over the cap to deliver supplies. I took many pictures on the mission. I hope they are good ones.

Incident: The night before we arrived, a 119 was airdropping supplies over the cap when a young airman was momentarily caught in the sliding cargo and pulled over the edge. He grabbed once for the railing inside the plane and missed -- he then grabbed for the ring of his shute, it opened. He fell the 600 feet and was not injured. The

bewildered airman's only comment:

"Jesus Christ, I fell out" Probably the understatement of the year.

The food was very good at Thule and it was fun meeting and talking to the people. By 10:00 Pm of the second day we were beat.

Incident: It so happened that the navigator and I had the only room in VIP quarters with an attached ladies ' latrine. We were told the second nite that we would have to move to make room for Mrs. Talbott, wife of the Secretary for Air Force who was due in with the Secretary in General Twinning's party. When we told them that we were leaving early the next morning, they felt that it would be alright for us to stay put since we would be out before the party arrived.

At one ^{a.m.} ~~am~~ we were awakened and told that we would have to move immediately since the General and party were arriving three hours early. In the process of moving, I failed to retrieve my tie and went strickly non reg the rest of the trip.

The Day the Ships Came to Thule: While at Thule the question on everyone's lips was how far out are the ships? The ships loaded with the luxuries of life that the men had done without for some time. There had been no ships in since Baffin Bay had frozen over early last winter.

On the morning of 3 July we took off for the trip back to St John's. As we circled to on course we saw the ships about ten miles out being led in by an icebreaker. Thule tower called us for an estimate of how far out the ships were. We told ^{them} that they (the ships) would make it that day. There was a happy fourth at Thule.

Back across Baffin Bay to River Clyde and Frobrisher Bay -- then to Goosebay once again and a night at the Hotel DeGink. By the evening of the fourth we were at Pepperrell.

I don't know when I've seen so much or learned so much in such a short time.

Learning to live in the Arctic and to operate from Arctic bases is a job entirely foreign to Americans or at least it was once. We are still amateurs but we're learning. Not too far from where I stood at Thule were other Arctic bases operated by professionals. The competition is keen.

21 July

I hope that all of this makes sense. I waited too long to finish writing it.

Bill