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RESOLUTE - HUB OF THE ARCTIC

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RESOLUTE BAY BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT AS SUPPLY.
RADIO AND WEATHER STATION IN THE HIGH ARCTIC

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Resolute Bay, High Arctic,
July, 1961

Resolute -- a rough-and-ready town on Cornwallis Island in the High Arctic -- is a men only establishment. Recreation is non-existent, the beer hall is the only place to go, growing beards the only sport, but the food is good and well prepared. The interesting sign shown in our story covers all that the residents feel can be said about this centre but it is a vital spot in development of the Arctic. As oil explorations and scientific surveys continue to be carried out plus the increased air travel over the Pole, this supply, radio and weather centre becomes increasingly important.

In 1947, the U.S. Icebreaker "EDISTO" escorted the cargo ship "WYANDOT" to establish a joint U.S.-Canadian weather station at Winter Harbour on Melville Island. Heavy ice made it impossible to reach Melville Island and Resolute Bay was selected as an alternative site. The name of the weather station has been shortened officially to Resolute.

In 1949, the Royal Canadian Air Force established a base at Resolute, and the weather station is now at this base. It is jointly operated by the Canadian Department of Transport and the U.S. Weather Bureau. Surface weather and upper air observations are taken and a 24-hour watch maintained on the radio. Weather observations are passed to Edmonton, Alberta by teletype at regular intervals, with a forecaster being stationed at Resolute to issue aviation weather forecasts for aircraft using the base.

During the brief summer months heavy goods are brought to Resolute by ship under charter to the Canadian Department of Transport and these ships are assisted by icebreakers of the Department of Transport, if necessary. However, large freighter aircraft operate year round to this R.C.A.F. Station which has an airstrip suitable for year-round use. There are scheduled flights from Edmonton, Alberta via Churchill, Man., by C130 Hercules, C119's, Lancasters; and civilian aircrafts such as DC3's, Otters, Beavers, Super Cubs, Beech 18's and helicopters of various capacities. Six civilian aircraft companies operate to Resolute, with the civilian operations being carried on during the spring and summer. The civilian trans-polar flights make use of the radio facilities only.

This summer the Canadian Government carried out a number of surveys in the High Arctic including geological, wildlife, topographical, glaciological and one from the National Museum. In addition, private surveys were carried out by the McGill Jacobsen Expedition to Axel Heiberg Island, the Arctic Institute of North America Expedition to Devon Island; and a number of oil exploration and mining company surveys. The flying support for these groups used Resolute as the main base for operations. The oil explorations and drilling will be carried out throughout the winter this year and the companies are, therefore, entirely dependent on this base for supplies.

One of the major boosts to air travel out of Resolute into the Arctic Islands came with the introduction of the oversize tires for small single engine aircraft. Super Cubs and Beavers operate from Resolute throughout the islands landing on completely unprepared ground using low pressure oversize tires. Floats would be almost useless in the islands in summer as there is not enough water in most of the areas and in almost all the island areas there are gravel ridges and sandy beaches on which the planes with big wheels can get down safely. The cost of operation of these small crafts with oversize tires is many times less than that of helicopters but, of course, these are used as will be seen in our story.

The new type of bush-pilot in the High Arctic is seen in our story -- Terry Rattigan, a carefree, happy-go-lucky Irishman, who looks like a sea pirate in his red beard; but who pilots an aircraft under conditions due to weather or lack of radio contact when the usual pilot would not take off the ground.

1. 1. LS Resolute airfield, line of light planes parked on strip
pan with truck

2. 2. LS C119 (flying box car) coming in for landing in fog, pan
right to left

2. 3. MLS C130 (Hercules) taxiing right to left past planes in
foreground

3. 4. MS airman directing C130 towards camera

4. 5. LS ground crew moving towards plane

5. 6. MS passengers emerging from door

7. 7. CU Terry Rattigan, pilot

8. 8. MS pan left to right with bearded pilot walking to messhall

9. 9. CU interesting sign on door

10. 10. CU man reading sign

11. 11. MS pan with airman bringing mail bag, left to right

12. 12. MS tilt up men unloading beer

6. 13. MS three bearded men watching above

14. 14. MS taking parcels out of plane

15. 15. LS pan left to right from plane to pile of assorted cargo

7. 16. MS unloading large crate

17. 17. MS man handing building materials out of plane

8. 18. MS bearded man unloading

19. 19. MS another doing same

20. 20. LS pan left to right, Eskimo handling lumber

21. 21. CS eskimo

22. 22. CS another eskimo

23. 23. CS same as above

24. 24. MS eskimo entering truck

25. 25. MCU eskimo driver driving off

26. 26. MS unloading Bell helicopter from nose of Bristol freighter

27. 27. MLS unloading tail of helicopter

28. 28. CS workman handling tail

9. 29. LS truck taking helicopter out of plane

10. 30. MS men working on pontoons

11. 31. CS man pumping up pontoon gear

32. 32. LS positioning rotor on helicopter

33. 33. MS crane operator

34. MS mounting rotor assembly

12 13 35. MS tilt up, mechanic attaching rotor blade, pan left to right to man on fork lift supporting blade

14 36. MCU man pinning rotor blade

15 37. LS helicopter taking off

16 38. CS man watching

17 39. LS helicopter flying away at low level, pan left to right

40. MS refueling aircraft

41. CU ditto

42. LS pan, two men with gear walking to Cub plane, Terry Rattigan in foreground

43. CS pilot, handling gear and mailbag

44. MS pilot squeezing into plane

45. CU pilot closing cabin window

46. MS Cub with SuperCub tires (oversize) taxying, pan left to right

47. MS airport controller with microphone

48. LS Cub with oversize tires taking off, left to right

18 49. CS to MS - two men taking out radiosonde balloon

19 50. reverse MLS - carrying balloon in stiff wind

20 51. CU man handling balloon

21 52. LS man running, launching balloon

22 53. LS balloon over dome of airport tower

23 54. LS interior airport tower - weatherman briefing pilot

55. CU hand pointing to weather map

56. CS pan from weatherman to pilot

57. MS airport controller with microphone, runway in background

58. LS pan, Hercules taking off as seen through tower window "

59. MS sign "R.C.A.F. Detachment, etc.

60. LS pan left to right with Hercules buzzing airport