

We cannot wait for days and I ordered the boats lowered so as to take the plane on four of our boats rigged together by planking.

I then called on Smithmeyer, the director of the coal mine. He told us that we would have to move from alongside the gunboat to allow a Norwegian whaler to get alongside and coal. We anchored out about 300 yards at midnight. Got our pontoon made and at this writing have the small plane's [the *Oriole's*] wing put aboard.

Got radio that Wilkins is OK at Point Barrow. Hurrah! Smithmeyer told us to go alongside dock. Small space other side [of] gunboat. We would surely have gone aground. I cannot understand.

*Friday, April 30, 1926*

Got Oriole (which the boys have named after my boy Richard III) to beach about 4 a.m. Two hunks of ice wedged ahead of it and prevented our getting the plane ashore. All the deck force and volunteers have been up all night. So turned in about 8 AM. Chief Engineer [T. B.] Mulroy, [Alton B.] Parker, [R. W.] Konter and several others went ashore and got plane ashore. Good Work. The men worked like Trojans all night. Turned to after lunch after the men had had some sleep and working in snow and cold got the fuselage aboard the one pontoon and the wing out of the hole. Great work. Just as we got the wing out large piece of field ice drifted down and just by a few seconds saved pontoon from being smashed.

Strong wind and ice prevented further operations. Our Pathe man had gone to beach where we were to put ashore our plane from our pontoon when he was approached by Amundsen's representative and informed that we could not take movies of our own operation. Great sportsmanship. They deny us dock, deny movie, make us move out in stream. The Viking valor.

Captain and I got through ice and brought back pontoon that was stuck in ice at the beach.

*Saturday, May 1, 1926*

In spite of anything the Norwegians do I intend to be a sport and be dignified and calm. They have made it very difficult for us. Didn't turn in until one thirty this morning. Got up every hour thereafter to look at ice which covered everything. When I turned in, no let up. Wind twenty knots too. Turned out about six. Relieved pontoon watch. No let up. Ice covers entire area between us and Kings Bay. At eight wind was calm and ice fairly stationary. Decided to take chance and put wing on fuselage and get ashore somehow.

We seem to have either no ice and wind or no wind and ice or both. The last of course is very dangerous. We may be licked but don't want to be licked waiting around and doing nothing. Noville, Bennett, ice pilot, all opposed to my decision [to build the pontoon bridge]. They were wise probably. Had difficult time fitting wing on fuselage that was on pontoon. Sent boat ahead to clear ice as

much as possible. Had 8 oarsmen on pontoon and dinghy placed between two leading boats of pontoon. A dozen men shoving off ice cake as we went along. Finally got ashore and had [a] lot of fun doing it. Got cheers from Norwegians, which we returned. Norwegians didn't think we would make it.

*Sunday, May 2, 1926*

Worked all night on beach to get plane ready but had bright sunlight. Built little hanger of [illegible]. Took lunch with Amundsen who professes great friendship but gave Lt. Balchen (who is a peach and wanted to help us and has helped us) orders not to come near us again.

*Monday, May 3, 1926*

Got motors started. Taxied plane up on hill towards hangar. Forward right ski split and fitting torn loose around fuselage. Very discouraging but we will not get discouraged. If no load has cracked ski what will full load do? True we made some fairly sharp turns. Treating [skis] with tar first. Very cold tonight. [S]ix degrees below zero. Several frozen feet. Amundsen got after Balchen again. The men are doing superhuman work.

[Editor's note: What follow are notes from the diary written during or about the time of the flight to the North Pole. Transcriptions are in the sequence that seems most likely. Illustrations of these pages at the end

of this chapter are in order as they appear in the diary. Navigational calculations are not included in the transcribed text but appear in the illustrations.]

[page 5 of diary, written May 9, 1926]

We are making good speed. It looks like fog over the polar sea. Send a radio back that we are making fast speed and are about to pass Amsterdam Island. We have a little drift to the left. Direction of wind from east. Now we can't see edge of ice pack.

I want to line up the mountain and Amsterdam Island. I will do it from top side. Watch me. We have drifted way over to the West. I am trying to get back on line. Please head on, I tell you.

[page 6]

You are steering too much to the right. Set compass few degrees to left.

Send a radio back that we are 85 miles due north Amsterdam Island. Got over ice pack just north of land.

I want to use a smoke bomb. Where is a match to strike with.

Send a radio that we are 240 miles due north Spitzbergen. Then pull in your wire.

You are keeping to the right 5 degrees too much.

You must [underlined three times] not persist in keeping too far to right.

Radio that we are 230 miles from the Pole.

Radio

Nothing but ice everywhere. No sign of life. Motors going fine.

[page headed "Cash Account November"]

There is a very strong wind. Please steer very carefully.

[page headed "Cash Account December"]

The starboard motor has an oil leak.

Can you get all the way back on two motors.

What has been our average air speed[?]

20 miles to go to pole.

[page 14]

We should be at the Pole now. Make a circle. I will take a picture. Then I want the sun.



Radio that we have reached the pole and are now returning with one motor with bad oil leak. But expect to be able to make Spitzbergen.

[page headed "Cash Account December," partially erased]

How long were we gone before we turned around?

8½ [This response may have been written by Bennett.]

Head the plane right at the sun.

[The following photographs are pages from Byrd's diary pertaining to the North Pole flight, May 9, 1926. The photographs on pp. 83 and 85 are blowups of the previous pages, so that the reader can see the erasures more clearly.]

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 1925

5  
Jan 5

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direction of wind from east  
Fair sea but cannot see edge of  
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