

FROM: INFORMATION DIVISION,  
AIR MINISTRY,  
PARLIAMENT SQUARE HOUSE,  
3/7, PARLIAMENT STREET, S.W. 1.

TEL: NO: WHITEHALL 7501.

13th August, 1951. /2017

Inf. 2(b)

Dear Mr. Cummins,

Further to our telephone conversation, this is to confirm that we are prepared to offer your film representative a position in the Sunderland aircraft of R. A. F. Coastal Command, which will be leaving Pembroke Dock on approximately August 25th to fly to Seal Lake (Greenland) via Reykjavik (Iceland) and Ella Island (Greenland) to pick up and return to the U.K. a privately sponsored scientific expedition, consisting of four officers of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines who were taken by the Sunderland to explore Greenland's mountainous areas a few weeks ago.

I think you are aware of the main details of this expedition which has already received some press publicity, but you might be interested to know that from the R. A. F. point of view the participation of the Sunderland has been undertaken as a training flight, and incidentally, represents the farthest north operations of the R. A. F., as distinct from flights over the Pole which have started from bases further south.

Geographical information, which will enable you to pin-point the area concerned, is that Ella Island is  $72^{\circ} 52' N$ ,  $25^{\circ} 09' W$  and Seal Lake is  $77^{\circ} 04' N$ ,  $21^{\circ} 56' W$ . Distance from Reykjavik to Ella Island is 610 statute miles and from Ella Island to Seal Lake 290 statute miles.

The object, we understand, of the scientific expedition is a preliminary survey for a more ambitious expedition planned for next year, when geological, glaciology, meteorology and biological work will be carried out. The scientific expedition is lead by Commander (L) C. J. W. Simpson, D. S. C., R. N. and the Captain of the Sunderland flying boat is Wing Commander G. G. N. Barrett, A. F. C., R. A. F.

For the information of your representative, there are practically no domestic facilities at Ella Island and none at Seal Lake, and it will therefore be necessary on the journey to Seal Lake for him to live and sleep aboard the Sunderland aircraft, and on the return, when the aircraft will be fully loaded, it may be necessary for at least one night at Ella Island for your representative to sleep in a sleeping bag in a tent. Food will be prepared on the Sunderland beyond Reykjavik.

The R. A. F. will provide your representative with the necessary flying kit, and in view of the weight being carried, he is requested to limit his personal kit to the minimum, and his operational film equipment to 70 lbs.

-/-

We understand from the Captain of the aircraft that in addition to picking up the scientific expedition, he will have to fly a team of husky dogs from one end of Seal Lake to the other, and will also return to Reykjavik a Danish trapper who has been in the region for two years.

The conditions under which this place is offered you are:-

- a) that your representative signs, and you witness, the attached form of indemnity,
- b) that your representative notifies the Danish Embassy of his intention to fly to Greenland, and we understand he will be asked to complete a special questionnaire applicable to visits to Greenland. When reporting to the Danish Embassy he should take his passport which may require endorsement. He should also check with the Icelandic Consulate that his passport is in order for entry into Iceland. The questionnaire which he will complete at the Danish Embassy will undoubtedly ask the purpose of his visit. It is suggested that the answer should be that at the invitation of the Air Ministry he is accompanying the R.A.F. Sunderland aircraft which is flying to Seal Lake to pick up and return to the U.K. the scientific expedition.
- d) We have been requested by the Admiralty to ask if your representative will contact Mr. Jerome of the Naval Information, who has one small point of security to mention to him.
- e) Will you please provide us with the full name and nationality of your representative, and next of kin as soon as possible as we are clearing direct his visit to Reykjavik with the Icelandic authorities.

If the aircraft leaves as scheduled on the 25th August, it should be back at Pembroke Dock on approximately the 28th August. Also, if the departure is the 25th August, your representative will be required to report to Pembroke Dock on the 24th August.

Any further information that is required will be passed to you in due course, and I shall be grateful if you will acknowledge this letter as accepting the conditions under which this place is offered.

From the discussions I have had with Wing Commander Barrett, I am confident that this flight will provide most interesting film material.

Yours sincerely,

(SGD) R. G. MOODY.

10.53 PM. GREENLAND EXPEDITION SAFE.

THE ADMIRALTY STATED TONIGHT THAT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE COASTAL COMMAND SUNDERLAND FLYING BOAT WHICH ALIGHTED ON SEAL LAKE, GREENLAND ON MONDAY: '!' MISSION COMPLETED. EN ROUTE TO ELLA ISLE. ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL PEMBROKE DOCK 1300 HOURS GMT AUGUST 31 ST.!!

FROM THIS MESSAGE THE ADMIRALTY ASSUME THAT THE EXPEDITION HAS BEEN SAFELY EMBARKED AND IS ON ITS WAY HOME.

*2 pm BST.*

*30/8/51*

11.5 PM. ADD EXPEDITION

THE EXPEDITION WHICH WAS SURVEYING REMOTE AREAS OF GREENLAND HAD FAILED TO CONTACT THE SUNDERLAND ON THE APPOINTED DAY.

THE LEADER OF THE EXPEDITION IS COMMANDER C.J.W. SIMPSON D.F.C., AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE CAPTAIN M.E.B. BANKS, ROYAL MARINES, LEIUT. F.R. BROOKE, R.N. AND LIEUT. ANGUS ERSKINE R.N.