



DESOLATE—This ski-equipped SC-47 of Flight D, 10th Air Rescue Sq., landed on T-3, an ice island that moves around the North Pole, to leave three men to set up a small weather station. The island is kidney shaped, five to eight miles in size, and moves with Arctic currents through the ice pack around the North Pole. It stands 10 to 50 feet higher than the surrounding ice. When the plane landed, the temperature was 50 degrees below zero.

10th Air Rescue Squadron Has North Pole Commuter

ELMENDORF AFB, Alaska.

T-3, an ice island that drifts with Arctic Ocean currents around the North Pole, has become almost a commuter stop for Capt. Lewis Erhart, 10th Air Rescue Sq. pilot.

On March 19, Capt. Lewis and Maj. Gen. William D. Old, CG, Alaskan Air Command, left three men on the flotsam of ice to set up an AF weather station. The three who started homesteading the island were Lt. Col. Joseph O. Fletcher, veteran Arctic explorer; Capt. Marion F. Brinegar, formerly of the 10th ARS; and Dr. Kaare Rodahl of the Aero-medical Laboratory. The trio was left with 30 days' supplies, weather observation equipment and a walkie-talkie set.

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BUT THE hitherto barren 5x9-mile island rapidly developed overpopulation problems.

Two men joined the group April 2 when Capt. Lewis made his second flight from a Greenland base to T-3 in what he called a routine mission. He carried supplies that included a pot-bellied stove, fuel and weather instruments.

One of his passengers, Capt. Paul L. Green, brought along a radio set-up he had modified for the ice island duty. Before he arrived, the trio had been able to send out only two messages via the walkie-talkie to planes of the 58th Weather Recon Sq. which make regular flights in the North Pole area.

Another new member of the party was a civilian scientist, Dr. A. P. Crary, of the Cambridge, Mass. Research laboratories. He hopes to determine the origin of the strange island, which may be a remnant of the ice age.

ON CAPT. ERHART'S third call, he was met by 12 stranded Navy men from a North Pole scientific expedition. Their P2V had been forced down by engine valve failure.

After delivering supplies and a tracked snow "weasel" to be used in preparing a landing strip for heavier C-54s, Capt. Erhart took three of the Navy men aboard and told the others he'd come back for them on other routine missions.

The weather station later will be turned over to the 2107th Air Weather Gp. for meteorological

studies. Establishment of the station makes available current weather data from the almost unexplored polar area where many storms are bred.

Permanency of the T-3 station will depend on resupply problems and the subsequent movement of the drifting island. Supply paratroops are being made by the 10th ARS when the weather permits. Lt. Col. William P. Benedict, Alaskan Air Cmd. ops office, has worked out plans for new runways. Fritz Awe, an ex-bush pilot and sourdough, is scheduled to help with the runway construction.