

4May59 Discover II

From Time Magazine

Called off last week by the U.S. Air Force was the great capsule hunt in the icy wilds of Spitzbergen. There—somewhere—the telltale orange parachute with the instrumented nose capsule of Discoverer II was seen to drop into the mountains after it was ejected from orbit. And there Norwegian coal miners, U.S. air-rescue squadrons and helpful Norwegian helicopter pilots scoured the bleak, white mountains for eight days (TIME, April 27). The search—in which residents of a local Russian mining community participated on their own—was halted after the arrival of Colonel Theodore Tatum, air-rescue boss for the Air Force in Europe, and Lieut. Colonel Charles Mathison, member of the Discoverer II launching team. The two discussed the hunt with local authorities in Spitzbergen's tiny capital of Longyearbyen, questioned the three men who had seen the chute, took a quick whirlybird look for themselves, and flew on home.

The end of the search disappointed many Norwegians, who felt that the U.S. had not given it a proper try. "I don't understand it," said a Norwegian helicopter pilot. "We could have continued the search for days. I told the Americans that it is naturally difficult to find an object like that, but that I was not pessimistic." Around Longyearbyen, many miners refused to give up. Their optimism was kept alive partly by a \$500 reward offered by Lockheed Aircraft Corp., one of the builders of the Discoverer II, partly by the fervent hope that they could beat Russian search parties to the discovery. Besides, said one man from Longyearbyen : "There's not much to do here, so this search is pretty popular."