

From Antarctica - December 2009

Dear All

I'm at Halley now & have been for nearly 2 weeks. Flying has been delayed by quite a bit of bad weather, but in between we have managed to get a few things done. Longest journeys so far have been 2 trips down to "Pillow Knob" in the Pensacola mountains, which is a mere 580 nautical miles from Halley.



The task was to deliver 2 skidoos, 2 sledges, & fuel to a field party who had been put in by another aircraft from Rothera.

Tuesday 26th November.

Left Halley in OK weather, & headed south into sunshine for our first refueling depot at the Theron Mountains.



So far so good. Took off for a 3 hour sector onto Pillow Knob. Which was also a very sunny & ended with good views of the Pensacola Mountains.





This rock is "Pillow Knob". The camp is the tiny dots in the middle of the pic', & it's just possible to make out the ski trail left by a previous aircraft from Rothera the day before.



We unloaded. Stopped for a very quick cup of tea. Then headed home. Our planned route required refuel stops at *Site 5* on the Ronne Ice, & another at *Bluefields* on the coast around 140 miles short of Halley.



The sunshine was still with us at *Site 5*, & remained with us most of the way to *Bluefields*, but unfortunately not all the way. *Bluefields* is a low lying spot right by the sea, & to the south the terrain rises quite rapidly onto a 2000' plateau. By the time we arrived low cloud was rolling in from the sea & obscuring our depot. We landed on the plateau a mere 4 miles away, where the cloud & wind soon caught up with us. So we tied the aircraft down, & settled in.

This is a badly crevassed area, so it was n't possible for us to simply taxi or walk those few miles in poor visibility.





Rather nice to see were the halo & sundogs. A polar phenomena that can occur when there are lots of small ice crystals suspended in the air.

Unable to get to our fuel depot, & with the weather also bad at Halley, we stopped the night.



Niv' (Graham Niven), co-pilot & GA (mountaineer/guide).

Then the next night as well, due weather unchanged.



The drums in this pic' are n't full ones. They are empties we had collected from *Site 5*. We temporarily unloaded them at our campsite to make for more living space in the aircraft.

Thursday 28th November

The weather in the morning improved enough to allow to make the short flight down the hill to our fuel.



However the Halley weather remained poor, so we amused ourselves digging up an aircraft load of empty drums for transport to & disposal at base.

Late afternoon we finally got our chance to get back to base.

Friday 29th November

Went out & flew to Pillow Knob again with the remaining Skidoo & equipment. This time got all around in one day with fewer adventures.

