

CHAPTER IV -- EAST BASE
MARCH 16, 1940 - SEPTEMBER 30, 1940

SATURDAY MARCH 16, 1940

baro. 28.61 {no other entries}

FRIDAY MARCH 22, 1940

EAST BASE CAMP

{WRITTEN IN PENCIL} fair and cool

LO 4° HI 8°

Almost a week ago I started to begin this next chapter, but the ink had frozen in my pen and it was the only tool available. At that time I had just come ashore from the "Bear". The two ships were at anchor in the bay, but I was to be one of the five on the shore party. Two trail tents were up but were occupied, leaving a floppy and draughting army tent. Harry Darlington elected to try the airplane and I seconded him.

The plane (minus wings) had been successfully unloaded from the "North Star" by means of a makeshift catamaran made up of a small scow and three lifeboats. (The catamaran has been used since to assist the big scow in unloading and has been termed "Saratoga" because of its airplane carrying capacity.) She {the Condor plane} had her wheels mounted and was easily hauled over near the campsite by the "jitterbug", the light and speedy army tank tractor. The fuselage is very roomy and could sleep a half dozen in a pinch. It is ordinarily equipped to carry up to twenty persons, but now all seats are out and space taken up with extra fuel tanks and radio equipment. I squeezed my sleeping bag down between two large tanks and spent a pretty comfortable night.

A boat from the "Star" came over and picked us up for a six o'clock breakfast aboard. From then on the work really started. A working party from the "Bear's" crew aided the "North Star's" crew in unloading cargo from the holds to the waiting scow, which was towed to the treacherous shore. Moored to an ice foot, another crew unloaded it onto waiting sleds or just piled it on the ice. The jitterbug jitneyed hurriedly back and forth from the main cache at the campsite towing the loaded sleds up to be unloaded by another crew - and bringing the empties back. Still another crew was kept at work starting the foundation for the house.

The food was the easiest stuff to handle. It is all in handy wooden boxes weighing from 30 to 100 pounds apiece. It traveled fast when a "bucket brigade" line was formed from boat to sled. The miscellaneous lumber also went easily by the same method. It was quite a job however, unloading the prefabricated house panels weighing from 300 to 600 pounds apiece and being very awkward to handle. Six to eight men to a panel would handle it, but not without strain. There are upwards of a hundred of these panels and they seemed to come endlessly. Heavy machinery was difficult to handle, but the jitterbug usually came to our rescue and dragged it off with a cable. The hundreds of gas and diesel oil drums weren't quite so bad. We laid plank tracks and rolled them off the scow and then we'd lash five of them one after the other on a long line and let the jitterbug snake them out of the way. I really became quite proficient at handling the 550 pound drums, but handling 2,000 sacks of coal was sure a dirty job. We all strained

