

## IN THE ARCTIC WITH PEARY

By GEORGE BORUP

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DEAR DAD

Gee, whiz! I've had a wonderful trip, and wish in many ways we had been stuck up here for another year. The Commander has been just great to me from start to finish. He is kindness and consideration personified, and we fellows would do anything for him. After we got to Cape Sheridan last fall, as soon as the ice got strong enough to hold, the fall sledging of supplies began. I was out in the field for about a month, sledging about 500 miles, but after one trip of two weeks came in with two heels, two big toes, and the ball of one foot frostbitten, which was extremely annoying, as it laid me up for a month. Cause, inexperience. Was all right by the December moon when I sledged some 225 miles in ten days, taking provisions towards Cape Columbia. In the January moon I went with four Eskimos to a large glacier about 100 miles from us, in the interior of the country. We went after deer, but didn't get any. However, hares were so thick you'd fall over them, and one day we struck a herd of a few millions, and annexed sixty. Not bad for one rifle and one shotgun with twenty shells. We cached them in an igloo till the next day, when we could come after them with the dogs and sledges.

Now about this time of the year cold was no name for it, for on the bed platform of my igloo in the mountain one night it was minus 17° F., with two two-burner, 4-inch wick stoves going, and you can guess what it was like outside-nearly minus 50°. Well, the next day we went after them, I mean the hares, with the sledges and dogs, but on the way back, a terrific wind with a blinding drift came up so we could

not see ten yards. The Eskimos and I, after fighting for a couple of hours to find our igloo, gave up and sought shelter behind our sledges. They had forgotten our snow knives and could not build an igloo, and for twenty-four hours we were hung up there. I didn't dare do as they did, lie down and let the snow cover me up and go to sleep, for fear I'd freeze, so I had an unpleasant time until the wind died down

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enough for us to find our way back to our igloo, not half a mile away, which we did some twenty-four hours afterward. The way we then proceeded to pile in the grub would have made you sit up and take notice. We each ate a ten-pound hare, tea, pemmican, and biscuit. Luckily we came through uninjured, though I froze the ends of four or more fingers. We killed eighty-three hares this trip, average weight nine to ten pounds. In the February moon two Eskimos and I went hunting in Clement Markham Inlet for an eight-day trip, but saw nothing.

I left the boat for the Northern trip February 19. There was enough twilight to see to travel eight hours a day though the sun did not come back till March 6, the last time I saw it in the fall being October 8. I left Cape Columbia in command of the advanced supporting party on February 28, with the thermometer at minus 50°. At that temperature whiskey is frozen stiff, alcohol so cold you can drop a match in it and it will not light, your nose freezes every ten minutes unless you warm it up, and the ends of your fingers by this time are all excoriated from being repeatedly frostbitten, &c.

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I went with Captain, who with three men, was the trail picker. Three marches out I dumped off the load of all my party, and we headed for the land according to orders, some twenty-five miles distant in an air line. The Commander was to leave March 1, and was to give me instructions on meeting the returning party what to bring back. Marvin also was to come back with me. A heavy wind from the east had gotten in the game the second day out, and faulted the trail, blowing the outside ice way to the west of the inside ice. The result was I missed Peary on my way to the land. After a good deal of lost time the original trail was finally found, and after doubling back some four miles in an unsuccessful attempt to overhaul him I lit out for Columbia because if I went away further after him I'd be unable to make land the same day and so lose valuable time. The march was a "heller" about eighteen hours long, with no time to eat; the sea ice had drifted from ten to fifteen miles west of where I had left the land ice, and the total distance we covered was not far from forty miles, fully one-half of which I ran.

The next day a heavy wind prevented our starting, as we couldn't see the trail. This wind was only in evidence about five miles out to sea, so Marvin, who had been sent back as soon as the Commander had found I'd gone by, managed to reach Columbia late that day. The next day, March 5, after being held up by a wind for five hours, we got under way, but where the sea ice and the land ice meet there was a stretch of water about 100 yards wide, extending in either direction as far as the eye could reach. Being shy both of airships, boats and submarines, and as it was a bit too cold for swimming, there was nothing to do but wait for it to freeze over or to be jammed together. This took place six days later. These six days were the longest and most hellish I ever want to see. It isn't the physical side of the game which is bad; it's the mental strain. We knew how vital it was to get out to Peary with our

loads and with a lot of alcohol. The tins of fuel he had with him went to the bad, or threatened to, the second day out, and without hot tea twice a day, with these temperatures, I doubt if man could live. I know I couldn't. Besides, the Eskimos were losing their "sand," wanted to put for the boat, said we'd all die out at sea, &c., and we were afraid of a wholesale desertion.

On the morning of the sixth day the lead closed, and two Eskimos, both afflicted with cold feet, came to land and said Peary had been held up four days by open water four marches out. We got under way at once, and, following their trail, found the original trail made by the Captain and me eleven days, before, over which the Commander had gone. A storm and the darkness forced us to halt at the first encampment. Here one of my Eskimos went temporarily "bughouse," and, stripped to waist, began running around outside, looking for trouble. We managed to get his clothes on after a while and prevented him from getting frostbitten. That day we made a forced march of twelve hours or more, and got to the third encampment. The next day we marched about eighteen hours and slept at the fifth encampment. It was very cold, minus 53°, and I froze my left heel, where I had done it last fall. The husky who was bughouse the night before thawed it out on his stomach. At the fourth encampment we got a note from the Commander, saying he had left that camp the previous morning, March 11, after waiting six days. It said: "It is vital that you overtake and give us fuel."

We were now only one march behind him. Marvin called for a volunteer to go ahead and tell the Commander we were behind. The best man, named Sigloo, who afterwards went to the Pole with Peary, responded, and after four hours sleep went on. That was going some. After forty miles or so he went with only five gallons of

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alcohol, dumping off his loads. The rest of us were dead tired after the march the day before, and so were the dogs. The result was we merely held our own and did not gain on the flying leader. A good rest, and the next day we decided to catch him or "croak," and we did without trouble, as he waited. I guess the finish of that Marathon race of four and a half days to catch the main party, which had a head start of more than forty miles, when the Commander came out to shake me by the hand, was the best day of my life.

MacMillan, my roommate, went back from here with a badly frozen heel; the doctor, too. I went on five more marches to about 85° 23', or about 136 knots from the land, when I was sent back in command of the second supporting party. On reaching the shore, in spite of two cripples, I went 100 miles west to lay down a cache, in the eventuality of the Commander being driven to the west. Then I headed for the ship, fair heel-and-toe walking every bit of the way, covering about eight hundred miles. I stayed on board seven days, when the remnants of the ill-fated third supporting party came in. As a rule the sledges come in at full speed, but these came in at a funeral gait, and Marvin nowhere to be seen. The first words of his two Eskimos were enough: "Marvin gone-young ice." The poor fellow was dead. The shock was pretty fierce, you bet. He was a dandy man, a fine leader, and devilish sandy. They came in Saturday night at midnight.

Now, MacMillan and Marvin were to have gone to the most northern point of Greenland to lay down a line of supplies in case the Commander hit that coast like

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he did last time. Well, Marvin being gone, I took his place, and after hurrying preparations, MacMillan, as cool, nervy, sandy and strong as they make 'em, and I, left the Roosevelt in thirty-six hours and reached Cape Morris Jesup, past Lockwood's furthest of 83 degrees 24 minutes, with ease. Here we stayed two weeks, "Mac" going out to 84 degrees 15 minutes, and I taking tidal observations, according to orders. Here we lived high, killing forty-seven musk oxen in four hunts, and dogs and men had sirloin and tenderloin all the time. As none of us had had any fresh meat in three months, it was more than good. I got mixed up in one herd of sixteen and took some good photos of them. Then we killed them all by gun. I beat all records, Duffy's included, when I got within ten feet of a big bull, held at bay by two dogs, to take his photo, and he charged the dogs which happened to be on a line between us. I only hit the high spots for a hundred yards or so.

Coming back we made what I believe is a world's record in sledge traveling. The last two days or so we were all more or less snow blind. Rested up one week, then went off on a hunting trip. Killed four musk oxen, 200 miles away, and brought back a calf on the sledge alive to the boat, only to have it die the next day.

When we got down to Eskimo land we put in about four days walrus hunting. In all, about seventy-two were secured. Some very exciting scenes occurred. Once a bull walrus, when we had engaged a herd of fifty, came up alongside of me, got his tusks on the gunwale of the boat so close to me that to hit him with my rifle, I had to let her go off at port arm, as, if I fired it from my shoulder the muzzle would have been beyond his head. It was exciting, all right, to have his great, ugly face right

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alongside of me, when it would have been easier to smash him with my fist than gun. On another occasion a big bull dived and put a large hole in the bottom, which, owing to its being double, we couldn't repair, and one man had to be kept bailing. The walrus came up again and I hit him in the head, wounding him badly but not killing him. He stayed down twenty minutes, and while we were all looking for him, smash! rip! bang! he came up under the stern, nearly knocked the bo's'un overboard, put a hole you could put your two fists through just above the water line, dived, came up fifteen yards off, gave his fierce battle cry of "Huk! Huk! Huk!" and charged us. I got my artillery in action, and sunk him for keeps before he could do any more. When we reached the Roosevelt we were half full of water. He was a scrapper, and don't you forget it.

The worst jar I ever had was when "Mac" was shot. The bullet smashed through two partitions, missed one man's head by two feet, passed two feet over the mate, who was lying on his side on the partition, two feet over my head on the other side, and smashed poor "Mac." I heard the report in my sleep. Poor "Mac" saying: "My God, he has got me," jumped out of bed, too. I saw him hanging onto one arm while blood was everywhere. Quoth he: Gee! this is worse than being wakened by an alarm clock." Maybe he isn't sandy. He is nearly well now.

Your letters, clippings, and rifle received from the Jeanie August 23. Many thanks.

“Peary has been just great. This expedition from start to finish is a picnic compared to what sufferings most Arctic expeditions go through. We went in parlor cars, thanks to the Commander, who has worked the Arctic ice problem out and down to a science.”

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They were great. Also whaler's mail left by Adams of the Morning Star two days later. It was bully of you to think of getting so much up to me, especially Mickleson and Amundsen, also letters from my friends.

I did most of the photograph work. The big camera was great, especially the finder, which, in taking photos of musk ox, etc., enables you to keep an eye on the brute, so as to be ready to make a quick getaway when he charges. A few yards start gained in this way is very useful in avoiding being caught in close contact with his horns.

I broke through young ice several times, but got out all right. It wasn't very cold when I went in.

Peary has been just great. This expedition from start to finish is a picnic compared to what sufferings most Arctic expeditions go through. We went in parlor cars, thanks to the Commander, who has worked the Arctic ice problem out and down to a science. Instead of the inactivity of previous expeditions in the winter, we were all out, most of us going five hundred to six hundred miles. Thirty years ago a man venturing on an extended journey of several hundred miles would have been committing suicide. Nares, the leader of the English expedition of 1875-6, says the men can't face a wind in a temperature of minus 30 degrees, but we did that and a darn sight lower, in the wind. He also says, "Only for life or death must a man go out in the fearful cold of March." We went out all winter, and the English didn't start

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from the boat till April 2.

Just one example of the advantage of dog power instead of man power. Beaumont, a man of indomitable energy, of the English expedition, went to his furthest on the Greenland coast at thirty marches, which "Mac" and I covered in spite of two short ones on account of smashed sledges. He and his men were dead at the end, but we were going at a canter.

Greely, speaking of Lockwood and Brainard's work, says about as follows concerning an attempt to beat their mark furthest north, obtained on the Greenland coast, "that only perfect ice conditions, indomitable energy of leader and men, would enable their record to be smashed." They took a whole season to do it. We did it, coming back from the northern expedition, with ridiculous ease. Just a picnic from start to finish. This is not blowing my horn, but simply to state a few facts that will speak for themselves.

These performances were due to the great system Peary has developed, to his breaking us in in the best way so that when we started north in February Dr., "Mac" and I, who had never been in the Arctic before, had stacked up against conditions many other expeditions would never dare face, and had sledged enough to make us

veterans. Result, confidence in ourselves and equipment, and, what's more, knowledge as to the conditions likely to be met with.

Another point, in a country where the English found no game, they died of scurvy. Where Greely, Brainard and Lockwood, fine men as they were, could obtain no game, we, through the Eskimos, never were in want of fresh meat, and unlike what you will find in most books, I don't imagine you will find in my diary, or in those of the others which are fairly voluminous, any evidence that I was conducting a clinic or a continual squeal on the cold.

I can tell you this member of the Class of 1907 has been up against some queer conditions, and I have learned many things since I saw you last. Possibly the queerest, but not the most uncomfortable, was when my Eskimo and I had run out of fuel after being hung up at Cape Fanshaw Martin for four days by heavy winds. We had to beat in the teeth of a howling gale and drifts so bad the dogs could hardly be induced to face them, which nipped and froze our faces for twenty-five miles, when it was so cold we had to run practically the whole way to keep warm, but I could appreciate the humorous side of it.

One thing is sure, this Arctic shows, as you have often told me when up against it good, and you are here, a good deal of the time, there is nothing like going at everything with a grin and good-naturedly, like the Esquimos; and no matter how scared, as when I had an angry Eskimo whom I had thrown, point his rifle at me and look as though he meant business, or when crossing ice which bends beneath you and the thermometer in the minus fifties, so if you break through, c'est fini-no matter how worried or put out, to keep that grin that won't come off there, and don't show a sign of fear, as the Eskimos are none too sandy anyhow, and it's up to you to furnish the ginger, steam and sand to keep them jollied and care-free no matter how you feel.

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