

## Trail Party Departs

While McMurdo marked time for subsequent polar landings, the 11-man Army and Navy trail reconnaissance party put out from Little America for Marie Byrd Land on November 6 in two weasels, a SnoCat, and two Caterpillar D-8 tractors.

Planes had flown more than 200,000 miles of visual reconnaissance and had taken aerial photographs of the intended route. Every crevasse and crevasse symptom visible from 500-foot altitude had been carefully plotted at Little America and a tentative trail had been blazed on paper before the advance party even boarded its vehicles.

The lead weasel carried an electronic crevasse detector, the second weasel carried navigational equipment, the SnoCat towed four small sleds containing bunks, the first D-8 pulled two sledloads of fuel, and the last D-8 hauled one sledload of fuel and a messing wagon.

The advance party made steady progress to a point 160 miles southeast of Little America. Air recon showed crevasses ahead.

The surface party turned southeastward and reached the 200-mile point before running into impassable crevasses. Air recon had ruled out a westward route.

So the surface team backtracked to the 160-mile point, then cut in toward where the Ross Ice Shelf meets the Rockefeller Plateau at 79-34 South, 151-40 West, about 183 miles from Little America. There were some 90 to 75 crevasses to heidge in the ramp area but even this obstacle seemed the line of least resistance.

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ADVANCE trail party makes last-minute preparations of sleds and weasigans (top). Coffee break on the trail (center). Lower, USA Majors Pelle Morgensen and Merle B. Dawson (CO of trail party) discuss aerial recon plans.

CREVASSE DETECTOR ON THE PROWL FOR HIDDEN HAZARDS LEADS THE WAY FOR TRAIL PARTY DEEP INTO BYRD LAND.

