



CONTINUING 60 AIRDROP MISSIONS TO POLE BACKED UP BY GLOBEMASTERS OVER 1,500-MILE ROUND TRIP.

The Big Planes Return

As the big planes loaded cargo for the pole, Lieutenant Harvey Speed and Lieutenant Robert G. Anderson flew B-40 planes to McMurdo from Little America to transport the remainder of the wintering-over scientists to the pole.

From February 9 to February 19 the Globemasters averaged three or more drops per day, then flew sporadic flights with items required at the last minute for safety and comfort at the isolated outposts. They made 37 flights between February 9 and February 24. Pole drops were given first priority, then the remaining materials were delivered to Byrd Station.

Completing the season's last B-40 landing at the pole, Lieutenant Speed's plane developed an oil leak. The terrain below was too rough for a landing and his plane was losing altitude. He finally found a safe spot on the Ross Ice Shelf and landed where crew chief William Miles worked in the sub-zero cold for more than three hours until he repaired the leak.

This landing was almost "routine" for "Speedy" as he had made previous unscheduled landings while supporting the tractor train. Having expended all his JATO bottles taking off from the pole, "Speedy" probably set the longest taxi-distance record in history before he had his wheels in the snow and was headed safely back to McMurdo.

And there was another close one. A Globemaster was en route to Byrd Station with its last load February 22 when one of its engines caught fire.

Extinguishing the blaze and losing the engine taxed the plane's ability to stay in flight. When it began to lose altitude the pilot decided to drop his load on the Ross Ice barrier. The plane returned to McMurdo safely and a replacement engine was flown in from New Zealand. The plane was reloaded and the last airdrop mission was completed February 24, 1957.

While Big Brothers flew cargo to Pole and Byrd Stations, CURTIS and AYRA took final cargo to Cape Hallett. They left McMurdo February 10. When the cargo was delivered, CURTIS sailed February 12 for New Zealand and AYRA returned to McMurdo where she would remain until the 24th, then take station for the fly-out of the last planes.

McMURDO CRASH CREW HELPED KEEP DAMAGE LOW.

