



# *Operation* **CANON**

Rescuing Canon John Turner  
in the Canadian Arctic, 1947

Compiled and Introduced by  
P. Whitney Lackenbauer

**Arctic Operational Histories, no.11**

# Operation CANON

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BRIAN  
MULRONEY  
INSTITUTE OF  
GOVERNMENT

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*A joint force composed of members of the Royal Canadian Air Force and paratroopers of the Canadian Army were to undertake a dangerous mission. Some unknown northern missionary had been accidentally shot and the bullet was lodged in his brain. His mission station lay well within the Arctic circle, far from civilization with its hospitals and medical care. The only earthly hope for this man, his young wife and two little daughters, rested in the resourcefulness of the armed forces.*

- Maurice Flint (1949)

## **The Arctic Operational History Series**

The Arctic Operational History Series seeks to provide context and background to Canada's defence operations and responsibilities in the North by resuscitating important, but forgotten, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) reports, histories, and defence material from previous generations of Arctic operations.

Since the CAF's reengagement with the Arctic in the early 2000s, experience has demonstrated the continuity of many of the challenges and frictions that dominated operations in decades past. While the platforms and technologies used in previous eras of Arctic operations were very different, the underlying challenges – such as logistics, communications, movement, and sustainment – remain largely the same. Unfortunately, few of the lessons learned by previous generations are available to today's operators. To preserve these lessons and strengthen the CAF's ties to its northern history, this series is reproducing key reports and histories with direct relevance to CAF operations today.

Adam Lajeunesse  
Series Editor

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## List of Acronyms

CAF	Canadian Armed Forces	LCol	Lieutenant Colonel
CASARA	Civil Air Search and Rescue Association	LORAN	long-range navigation
CHARS	Canadian High Arctic Research Station	MBE	Member, Order of the British Empire
DCASS	Documents on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security	NWT	Northwest Territories
DND	Department of National Defence	RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
doc.	document	RCC	Rescue Coordination Centre
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization	RCCS	Royal Canadian Corps of Signals
JRCC	Joint Rescue Coordination Centre	Rev.	Reverend
		SAR	search and rescue
		SAR Tech	SAR Technician
		U.S.	United States of America

## INTRODUCTION

### **John Hudspith Turner, Operation CANON, and Search and Rescue in the Canadian Arctic**

*P. Whitney Lackenbauer*

The immense size of Canada's Arctic, as well as its diverse terrain, extreme weather, and lack of infrastructure in Canada's Arctic make search and rescue (SAR) in the region a challenging enterprise. For the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), which has the main responsibility for providing SAR from the air (and which coordinates the national response for air and maritime SAR),<sup>1</sup> this means a careful weighing of risk, resources, and preparedness to respond successfully to incidents in sparsely populated northern areas with assets based in the south.<sup>2</sup> "SAR missions have resulted in numerous displays of incredible courage and perseverance," historian Sandy Babcock observes. For example, the famous Boxtop 22 rescue mission in response to a downed Hercules aircraft at Canadian Forces Station Alert on northern Ellesmere Island in 1992 "was the most decorated peacetime event in Canadian military history, resulting in one Meritorious Service Cross, 18 Meritorious Service Medals and 14 Chief of Defence Staff Commendations."<sup>3</sup> Looking further back in history also yields salient insights.

Seventy-five years ago, Canadian service personnel completed a heroic mercy mission in the Canadian High Arctic. Operation CANON involved forty-two-year-old Anglican missionary John Hudspith (Jack) Turner, who had been ministering to the Inuit of Baffin Island from an outpost at Moffet Inlet, 150 kilometres south of Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), since 1937. Turner was comfortable on the land, his sledge journeys by dogsled having taken him on journeys across the tundra and sea ice for months at a time. His wife, Joan, an English nurse, and their two young daughters joined him as the only full-time residents of the mission, and in their two-room, 11 x 14-foot (3.4 x 7.3-metre) house they regularly welcomed Inuit visitors passing through the area.

On 24 September 1947, Canon Turner suffered a grievous accident when returning to his mission after a day of seal hunting. When he paused to help a young Inuk girl with a pail of water, the trigger of the .22 rifle that he had slung over his shoulder got caught in his clothing. The gun discharged and a bullet passed through his lip, passed behind his nasal cavity, and became lodged near his brain. He injured his spine when he fell. Joan (who was entering the third trimester of another pregnancy) dragged her unconscious

husband into the house using a blanket and tended as best as she could to his head wound. John regained consciousness and, suffering from oscillating cycles of pain and paralysis over the next few weeks, clung to life. Everyone knew, however, that he could not survive without professional medical attention beyond that which his wife could provide. None was locally available, given that the nearest settlement was more than 100 kilometres away.

Those around Turner rallied to action. A visiting hunter, David Tongalok, took the mission's motorboat to Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk), where Hudson's Bay Company trader John Cormack radioed the Department of National Health and Welfare in Ottawa and the offices of the Diocese of the Arctic in Toronto for assistance. Cormack then travelled to Moffet Inlet and, waiting for help to arrive, joined Joan Turner and Inuit from the local area in tending to the injured missionary.<sup>4</sup>

On 30 September, six days after the accident, officials in the Department of National Health and Welfare contacted their counterparts in the Department of National Defence (DND) for assistance. Army Headquarters immediately turned to the Canadian Joint Air Training Centre at Rivers, Manitoba, the centre of paratroop training in Canada, where the army and air force were testing equipment and tactics for Arctic defence. Planning advanced quickly, and when Operation CANON was formally authorized on 1 October, Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment Captain Lionel Guy D'Artois (whose wartime experience included parachuting into occupied France to support the resistance) was tapped to lead the mission. Captain Ross Warrington Willoughby, a medical doctor also from Rivers, joined the rescue team, as did two members of the signal corps: Sergeants William Wallace Judd and Howard Clifford Cook. Experienced pilots and flight crews would support the team from the air, making this a truly joint effort in a particularly perilous environment where a life was directly at stake.

Prior to 1946, the Canadian Army had little experience operating on the ground in Canada's Arctic Archipelago, and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) had little experience flying in the region. Squadron Leader Robert A. Logan's participation (without an aircraft) in the 1922 Eastern Arctic Expedition anticipated the opening of a northern frontier for both civil and military aviation and contained "the first suggestion that the Far North had an important strategic role to play in the defence of Canada" – but the expedition did not lead to an air force footprint in the region. Five years later, the RCAF and the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS) contributed to the Hudson Strait Expedition by providing aerial survey patrols, reports on weather and ice patterns, and charting.<sup>5</sup> During the Second World War, the American military took more persistent action, initiating a process of military modernization that culminated during the 1950s.<sup>6</sup> The Crimson Staging



Route, a series of airfields and depots that the U.S. established (with Canadian approval) to facilitate the transfer of planes and other material from North America to Europe, established footprints at Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit), Coral Harbour (Salliq) on Southampton Island, and Churchill. Although the Americans withdrew from the Canadian Arctic at war's end and the ownership of permanent facilities passed into Canadian hands, senior officials in Ottawa became increasingly sensitive to the tension between continental defence imperatives and Arctic sovereignty.<sup>7</sup>

The immediate postwar period saw increasing popular interest in the Canadian North, its future, and its residents. Professional diplomat Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, who Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King invited to succeed Charles Camsell as deputy minister and Northwest Territories (NWT) commissioner, wrote in his memoirs:

The awakening general interest in the Arctic was in part the result of political and defence considerations that marked the period of the Cold War. But additional recognition of its importance came also from a new appreciation of the economic possibilities of that region. And the more admirable aspect of humanity's split personality was illustrated by a growing appreciation of the social responsibility of those living in a more favourable environment for the welfare of others of our common destiny who had been existing in half-forgotten isolation beyond the horizon of the North.<sup>8</sup>

Senior defence officials also sought to define the Canadian military's role in balancing the growing American security interests in the northern approaches to North America with the exercising of Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic. In 1946, soldiers involved in Operation MUSK OX traversed the tundra from Churchill to southern Victoria Island before heading back to the mainland and down to Edmonton, but army exercises did not venture into the more northern extremities of Canada's Arctic.<sup>9</sup> The RCAF's activities, by contrast, extended increasingly northward. Air force historian Edward Wood, who documented the RCAF's pioneering activities in the Arctic, highlighted the importance of early postwar photo survey work, which helped "to push Canada's frontiers back and to develop areas already settled. Approximately 700,000 square miles of the Dominion were photographed in 1947 and some radical discrepancies were noted with already existing charts of the Arctic Islands." He also highlighted how the RCAF maintained scheduled flights to Churchill, as well as special flights to isolated posts including the American-built airfield at Coral Harbour.<sup>10</sup> The mapping of the expansive Canadian Arctic remained incomplete, however, and maps contained little detail about northern Baffin Island.<sup>11</sup>

Safe Arctic air operations also required new approaches, so the RCAF began actively testing aircraft and engines at the Winter Experimental

Establishment in Churchill in 1946-47. This included work on the special equipment needed to service aircraft during winter operations, as well as suitable winter ground crew clothing and aircrew clothing that would allow people to survive if they experienced a forced landing in the Arctic. Actually flying under arctic winter conditions was “the least difficult of all factors affecting operation from northern detachments,” Wood summarized. “Once airborne, the aircraft functioned quite satisfactorily and, for the most part, aircrew carried on successfully using normal operating procedures.” The most significant challenge for aircrew operating in the North was one of survival if forced down. “Technical difficulties with aircraft and equipment on the ground are being solved at a satisfactory rate,” the RCAF historian noted, “but the problem of survival, difficult but not impossible, has been almost completely ignored until now it ranks first among the problems requiring urgent attention.”<sup>12</sup>

Such considerations would also play into the military’s responsibilities for search and rescue. In 1946, the RCAF assumed leadership of the federal government’s Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue, and, with the creation of the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Canada’s acceptance of responsibility for SAR in international airspace over Canadian territory and adjacent ocean jurisdiction, it created permanent Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) in Halifax, Rockcliffe, Winnipeg, Edmonton, and Vancouver early the next year.<sup>13</sup> “The RCAF Search and Rescue Organization stands ready at all times to carry out mercy flights in the Arctic,” Wood explained. “The job may be to look for a missing airliner down at sea, or it may be to put down on a ‘homemade’ landing strip in the Far North to bring out an Eskimo [Inuk] or missionary requiring immediate hospital attention.” He elaborated that:

Behind all such operations is a carefully-planned organization, stretching from coast to coast, co-ordinated and largely operated by the RCAF. Search and Rescue, however, is not designed to displace existing means of assistance to distressed persons. Its primary responsibility is to carry out Canada’s international commitments under ICAO [the International Civil Aviation Organization] and, in addition, it stands ready to operate as a mercy organization within Canada whenever a life and death matter comes up that is too big for anyone else to handle. When a request is received from existing agencies, such as local authorities or a government or provincial department, the job is started. A call from an individual may start an operation, but a check is made with other authorities to ensure that the matter is not, or cannot be, handled satisfactorily by them, or perhaps by a commercial agency.<sup>14</sup>

There was no local capacity to deal with the situation that had befallen Canon Turner at his remote mission at Moffet Inlet. The nearest permanent military base was at Fort Churchill (about 1,300 kilometres away), with a snow-packed field operated by the Department of Transport at Coral Harbour (which RCAF crews had used during recent survey operations). To gather information about Moffet Inlet, the military flew Reverend Maurice Flint, a missionary who had spent four years in the area, to Rivers, where he assisted the team devising plans for the rescue operation. Flint brought his local knowledge to bear, drawing maps and sharing his personal photographs of Moffet Inlet and the surrounding terrain. Historian Hugh Halliday notes that:

The problem was a formidable one. The mission itself was on a narrow, boulder-strewn tongue of land, 200 yards long and 100 yards wide, flanked by icy waters. The seaward approaches were choked with floating ice; neither seaplanes nor wheeled aircraft could operate there. Evacuation by boat was problematical. The most immediate need was to get a medical and communication team into the mission. That could be done only by air, using parachuted personnel. Even so, the narrow peninsula and deadly waters presented hazards. A more favourable drop zone appeared to exist behind the mission, but people landing there would have to descend 500-foot cliffs to reach the mission itself.<sup>15</sup>

Just after 10:00 a.m. on 2 October, a Dakota aircraft with a seasoned aircrew left Rivers with Major George Flint and a jump team aboard. The plane refuelled in Winnipeg, where it picked up an Inuk girl who had been undergoing treatment for burns for return to her home on Southampton Island, and then continued northward to Churchill. The team switched to a new plane equipped with LORAN (long-range navigation) aids, but rain and a low cloud ceiling grounded them in Churchill until the morning of 3 October. By the time they arrived in Coral Harbour, there was not enough daylight to launch a return flight to Moffet Inlet, so they remained at the desolate base until the next day.

The various documents in this volume recount the difficulties encountered by the aircrew. First, the starter motor for one of the engines had burned out and had to be repaired in the Arctic cold. Second, after the Dakota aircraft managed to get aloft on the morning of 3 October and arrived over Moffet Inlet in the early afternoon, fog and rugged terrain made it difficult to discern the mission buildings. When the aircrew finally made out several figures waving from below, Flint dropped a message, along with two panels that could be used to indicate if Turner was still alive:

We are to help Canon Turner. It is proposed to parachute a small party including a medical officer for this purpose. Owing to the ruggedness of the ground men cannot be dropped safely near the

mission but we intend dropping the less fragile stores at the mission and the men and other equipment in the deep country. Divide your eskimos into two parties. Keep one party at the mission and send the other to the top of the cliffs to go to the aid of the party when they drop. Please acknowledge by signalling a reply to this question with the panels attached. Are we still in time to be of help?

They were. The pilot searched for a drop site behind the mission, with Captain D'Artois deciding on a small lake several kilometres away. After dropping a loaded fuel drum to test the strength of the ice and then a smoke bomb to determine the wind's strength and direction, the parachuters began to jump from the aircraft with their radio equipment. When the pilot determined that all had made it, he hastily returned to Coral Harbour before the plane's fuel ran out.

With all of the soldiers safely landed at Moffet Inlet, Captain D'Artois began to walk to the mission. He soon encountered two Inuit, one of whom escorted the officer on the two-and-a-half-hour trek to the mission while the other proceeded to the drop site. At the mission house, D'Artois met Canon Turner and his family before jumping on a boat with Cormack (the trader who had come from Arctic Bay) and two Inuit to go to Bartlett Inlet near the drop zone. Here they picked up Dr. Willoughby and his medical supplies.

On the ground and on local waters, the operation proved challenging. The large No. 52 radio set had been damaged in the parachute drop and could not be repaired. Accordingly, the team could receive messages from Ottawa but could not send them. (When the Dakota aircraft was overhead, they could pass reports to the crew using a smaller No. 58 radio.) With ice floes beginning to choke the inlet, the two signallers joined the others at the mission on 6 October. Dr. Willoughby decided that Canon Turner should be taken by boat to Arctic Bay, but a storm on 7 October nearly sunk the mission boat. The rugged terrain meant exhaustion when members of the mission arduously trekked back and forth to the drop zone to retrieve supplies. Another attempt to evacuate Canon Turner on 10 October failed when the motor on the whaler died and rough water and ice forced the party to take overnight refuge in a small inlet. The next day, the whaler's motor problems continued as the ice situation worsened, and Cormack had to tow the mission boat, inhibiting progress. They retreated back to Moffet Inlet, where Captain Willoughby had to conduct emergency surgery on Turner – without anaesthetic – to cut out gangrenous flesh around a bed sore.

Abandoning hope for a marine evacuation to Arctic Bay, Captain D'Artois resurrected the plan to evacuate Turner by air – but communication issues continued to plague the operation. On 14 October, D'Artois and the two signallers packed the heavy No. 52 radio to the mission, necessitating the descent of a 600-foot cliff behind the mission. Despite these heroic efforts,

they ultimately failed to get the damaged equipment to work and requested a replacement. On 17 October, the RCAF returned with a new radio set and other supplies, which it dropped at the new site next to the mission – one that “proved less than ideal for the aircrew,” historian Sandy Babcock explains:

Because of the steep cliff and the narrowness of the shoreline, the Dakota had to fly parallel to the cliff at a low altitude and then bank to starboard to avoid another cliff. The aircrew had only a small window of opportunity over the target site, necessitating [Flying Officer Robert] Race to make a number of passes for multiple drops. More than another metric ton was dropped by parachute, although one large box with radio parts jammed in the door and could not be delivered on this mission. All other supplies were delivered on target and undamaged except the first drop, which landed about 25 metres off shore and broke through the ice. This contained the replacement radio, which was damaged by the freezing water. Judd and Cook retrieved it and proceeded to make improvised repairs, using parts from the damaged radios and the small No. 58 set. They finally were able to establish contact with the outside world on 18 October, two full weeks after their arrival.<sup>16</sup>

In the meantime, Captain Willoughby worked diligently to keep his patient “not merely alive but strong enough for future surgery,” Halliday summarizes. “Beyond the medical problem he had to work on Turner’s psychological situation. Although some (his wife included) recalled that Turner remained resolute, cheerful, and optimistic, those sending out radio messages reported his moods as varying from determination to optimism to despair and resignation.”<sup>17</sup> The documents describe the techniques that the medical doctor and Mrs. Turner used to treat the canon, from sulpha drugs and penicillin to the massaging of limbs.

Resupply remained not only difficult but dangerous. Captain d’Artois searched in vain for a suitable landing strip nearby, setting out each day with an Inuk guide and a dog team. As the documents reveal, d’Artois camped for eleven days at a promising site that he identified on 2 November to test the ice and study the snow and wind conditions. At one point, he waited out a two-day storm in his sleeping bag and tent, with no fuel for heating or light. When he returned to the mission on 13 November, he radioed confirmation that the site would accommodate a landing. Poor weather had prevented the Dakota at Coral Harboure from flying between 13-17 November, and a soft runway, freezing drizzle, and low cloud at Coral Harbour stymied attempts on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

On the morning of 21 November, weather conditions at Moffet Inlet, Resolute Bay (the alternate strip), and Coral Harbour allowed for another attempt. At the mission, Captain d’Artois set out by dog team for the lake

with the improvised airstrip that he had laid out in previous weeks. The aircraft touched down at 12:52 p.m., unloaded its cargo, and met with d'Artois and Sergeant Judd. Turner, who had been bundled in furs, blankets, and a sleeping bag and carried to the landing strip along with his family and Rebecca Dahneckee (who helped Joan with the children), arrived at around 6:00 p.m. After weather concerns abated, the plane took off two-and-a-half hours later, landed safely at Coral Harbour, and then proceeded onwards to Winnipeg, where it touched down at 6:15 p.m. on 22 November. Halliday recounts:

Seldom did an RCAF Dakota arrive to such a welcome. The Minister of National Defence had sent congratulations. Family members were present; so were representatives of the Anglican Church as well as doctors and nurses. Canon Turner, accompanied by Captain Willoughby, was immediately whisked away to the Winnipeg General Hospital; reporters posed the others for a series of photographs. The army and air force personnel were studies in contrast; d'Artois and his companions had sprouted beards during the previous 51 days; Race and his crew, who had seldom been far from some form of frontier civilization, were clean-shaven.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the incredible resourcefulness and perseverance demonstrated in the successful completion of this sixty-day rescue mission, the story did not end on a happy note. John Turner was taken immediately to a Winnipeg hospital, but he did not recover from the damage that the bullet fragments had done to his brain (or from the confirmation that he was inflicted with meningitis). Canon Turner passed away on 8 December 1947 and was buried in Winnipeg two days later, his funeral attended by military personnel representing the first responders who had gone to great lengths to save him. For those interested in the Turner family and the awards given to the military personnel involved in Operation CANON, Babcock has furnished a useful overview.<sup>19</sup>

The documents in this volume not only provide rich details on Turner's life and the military operation that tried to save him, but they also provide various "lessons learned" that continue to resonate today. Successful SAR operations rely on many factors, including access to the proper equipment and highly skilled crews ready to go out on short notice, having SAR resources in the right places, and following practical procedures.<sup>20</sup> The RCAF report (doc. 2) on Operation CANON emphasizes the importance of having access to reliable information about the state of northern airstrips, and of improved communications with both civilian partners and allies. Furthermore, it references the need for enhancements to aircraft to enable take-offs from and landings on unprepared airstrips and deep fields of snow. It also highlights the importance of Arctic survival training for soldiers and aircrews so that they are prepared to respond appropriately to contingencies, as well as the instrumentality of appropriate clothing and equipment to conduct operations

in austere, unforgiving conditions. Operation CANON also confirmed the importance of treating operations in the High Arctic as “expeditionary-type operations” in which CAF personnel take all that they need with them. It also emphasized the critical importance of reliable communications – an ongoing challenge and opportunity space for the CAF and other first responders in the Canadian Arctic.<sup>21</sup>

Writing about Operation CANON, Wood observed that “though the difficulties of the operation seemed insuperable at times, the members of the rescue crew surmounted them with a spirit and courage that is highly commendable.”<sup>22</sup> This spirit and courage lives on in the CAF’s 140 highly trained SAR Technicians (SAR Techs) who are dedicated to rescuing people in distress in remote areas. They are trained to a primary care paramedic national standard and provide advanced pre-hospital medical care, are land and sea survival experts, and specialize in rescue techniques including Arctic rescue and parachuting.<sup>23</sup> Today, the responsibility for launching an air or marine SAR response in Canada’s Arctic generally rests with the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) in the region where the response is needed. The northern footprint remains small, with Canada’s military SAR assets being strategically based at locations in southern Canada where they can effectively respond where SAR incidents occur the most and where there is supporting infrastructure and favourable weather. In responding to distress calls in the Arctic, a JRCC can request the support of any nearby military asset and can call on nearby civilian or commercial vessels or aircraft to help as required. Since 1985, the CAF also sponsors the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association (CASARA), which includes northern-based commercial operators in Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet who provide both search and communications services.<sup>24</sup>

In 2015, a group of Inuit from Arctic Bay travelled about 80 kilometres by snowmobile and qamutik to Moffet Inlet to unveil a plaque commissioned by the community to honour Canon Turner. Reverend Darren McCartney, the Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of the Arctic, highlighted how elders – like ninety-four-year-old Qaapik Attagutsiak, who made the trek to Moffet Inlet – remembered Turner with affection and shared stories about his life. “He had a genuine love for the people and they reciprocated that, they loved him,” McCartney told a reporter. Turner helped people medically as a trained pharmacist, spoke Inuktitut, and worked on translations, and the mission at Moffet Inlet became a cross-cultural meeting place. That he was remembered so fondly and celebrated nearly seven decades after his tragic accident speaks to his lasting impact.<sup>25</sup> Recalling the arduous military operation that managed to evacuate him from this remote location in an attempt to save his life also reminds us of the long history of SAR in the Canadian Arctic and the people who risk their lives to save others.



A group from Arctic Bay, Nunavut, unveils the monument to Rev. John Turner in Moffet Inlet. *Photo by Elizabeth A. Roberts in CBC News.*

### Editor's Note

I have reproduced the reports *ad verbatim* in this volume, with grammatical edits noted in square brackets. I have retained the original wording in the reports to preserve their integrity as historical documents produced at a specific time and bearing the biases of the era in which they were written. Accordingly, some of the terms used by the authors are no longer preferred usages for people or places. Today, the name “Eskimos” has been replaced by “Inuit” (“the people” in Inuktitut) as the preferred nomenclature. Various locations described in the text have also been renamed, such as Arctic Bay (Ikpiarjuk), Coral Harbour (Salliq), and Frobisher Bay (Iqaluit). I have also spelling of locations as they appeared in the original documents, such as Ponds Inlet (Pond Inlet / Mittimatalik), Hudson’s Straits (Hudson Strait), and South Hampton Island (Southampton Island / Shugliaq). In other cases, there



are Inuktitut names for the locations described in these reports that reinforce that the Canadian Arctic is Inuit Nunangat – the Inuit homeland.

## Notes

Please note that the narrative information in this introduction is derived from a few key sources, particularly Directorate of Air, Army Headquarters, “Operation Canon,” *Canadian Army Journal* 2:2 (May 1948) (reprinted in this volume); Maurice S. Flint, *Operation Canon* (London: The Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society, 1949) (reprinted in this volume); Hugh A. Halliday, “Rescue Mission,” *The Beaver*, vol. 75, no. 2 (April/May 1995): 14-25; and Sandy Babcock, “Operation CANON: A Case Study of Early RCAF Arctic Search and Rescue Capabilities,” in *De-Icing Required!: The Historical Dimension of the Canadian Air Force’s Experience in the Arctic*, eds. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and W.A. March (Trenton: Canadian Forces Air Warfare Centre, 2012), 31-41.

<sup>1</sup> DND/CAF, “About Search and Rescue (SAR),” 11 October 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/types/search-rescue/about.html>. Military assets respond to an average of about 1,000 SAR missions across Canada each year.

<sup>2</sup> See LCol Dany Poitras, “Search and Rescue in the Arctic,” in P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Heather Nicol, *Whole of Government through an Arctic Lens* (Antigonish: Mulroney Institute, 2017), 387-425.

<sup>3</sup> Sandy Babcock, “Operation CANON: A Case Study of Early RCAF Arctic Search and Rescue Capabilities,” in *De-Icing Required!: The Historical Dimension of the Canadian Air Force’s Experience in the Arctic*, eds. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and W.A. March (Trenton: Canadian Forces Air Warfare Centre, 2012), 32.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice S. Flint, *Operation Canon* (London: The Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society, 1949), 70-72 (reprinted as doc. 1 in this volume).

<sup>5</sup> See P. Whitney Lackenbauer and K.C. Eyre, eds., *Unfurling the Air Force Ensign in the Canadian Arctic: The 1922 Eastern Arctic and 1927-28 Hudson Strait Expeditions*, Documents on Canadian Arctic Sovereignty and Security (DCASS) no. 3 (Calgary and Waterloo: Centre for Military and Strategic Studies/Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, 2015, rev. ed. 2019); and P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Grace Chapnik, eds., *Canada’s First Eastern Arctic Patrol, 1922: First Person Perspectives* (Antigonish: Mulroney Institute on Government, Arctic Operational History Series, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> On this theme, see Matthew Farish and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “High Modernism in the Arctic: Planning Frobisher Bay and Inuvik,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 35:3 (2009): 517-44.

<sup>7</sup> See K.S. Coates and W.R. Morrison, *The Alaska Highway in World War II: The U.S. Army of Occupation in Canada’s Northwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); Shelagh D. Grant, *Sovereignty or Security?: Government Policy in the Canadian*

*North, 1936–1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988); P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “Right and Honourable: Mackenzie King, Canadian-American Bilateral Relations, and Canadian Sovereignty in the Northwest, 1943-1948,” in *Mackenzie King: Citizenship and Community*, eds. John English, Kenneth McLaughlin, and P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2002), 151-68; and P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, “Sovereignty and Security: The Department of External Affairs, the United States, and Arctic Sovereignty, 1945-68,” in *In the National Interest: Canadian Foreign Policy and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 1909-2009*, eds. Greg Donaghy and Michael K. Carroll (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 101-20.

<sup>8</sup> *Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside*, vol. 2, *On the Bridge of Time* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 308-9.

<sup>9</sup> On Exercise MUSK OX, see P. Whitney Lackenbauer, Peter Kikkert, and Kenneth C. Eyre, “Lessons in Arctic Warfare: The Army Experience, 1945-55,” in *Canadian Arctic Operations, 1941-2015: Lessons Learned, Lost, and Relearned*, eds. Adam Lajeunesse and P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Fredericton: Gregg Centre for the Study of War and Society, 2017), 47-104; P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, eds., *Lessons in Northern Operations: Canadian Army Documents, 1945-56*, DCASS no. 7 (Calgary and Waterloo: Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies/Arctic Institute of North America/Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism, 2016); and P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Peter Kikkert, eds., *Tracks North: The Story of Exercise Muskox* (Antigonish: Mulroney Institute on Government, Arctic Operational History Series, 2018). Early Canada-U.S. surveys for the Joint Arctic Weather Stations pushed into the High Arctic in 1946 and 1947, eventually yielding a program that created a permanent presence supported by military assets in the Queen Elizabeth Islands. See Daniel Heidt and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Joint Arctic Weather Stations: Science and Sovereignty in the High Arctic, 1946-1972* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> Edward P. Wood, *Per Ardua ad Arcticum: The Royal Canadian Air Force in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic*, ed. P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Antigonish: Mulroney Institute on Government, Arctic Operational History Series, 2017), 206.

<sup>11</sup> On Operation INVESTIGATOR coverage in 1946, see Wood, *Per Ardua Ad Arcticum*, 249-77, and on Operation POLCO, see Wood, *Per Ardua Ad Arcticum*, 277-91. See also Peter Kikkert, “Constructing a Role: The Royal Canadian Air Force in the Arctic, 1945–1953,” in *De-icing Required!*, 17-30.

<sup>12</sup> Wood, *Per Ardua Ad Arcticum*, 220-21.

<sup>13</sup> Babcock, “Operation CANON,” 31.

<sup>14</sup> Wood, *Per Ardua Ad Arcticum*, 211-12.

<sup>15</sup> Hugh A. Halliday, “Rescue Mission,” *The Beaver*, vol. 75, no. 2 (April/May 1995): 14.

<sup>16</sup> Babcock, “Operation CANON,” 35.

<sup>17</sup> Halliday, “Rescue Mission.”

<sup>18</sup> Halliday, “Rescue Mission.”

<sup>19</sup> Babcock, “Operation CANON,” 36-38. In 1948, National Defence Headquarters announced that Captain Guy d’Artois and Flying Officer Robert Race received the George Medal; Captain Ross Willoughby was awarded the MBE (Member, Order of the British Empire); Sergeant Howard Clifford Cook received a British Empire

Medal; Sergeant William W. Judd was accorded the King's Commendation for Brave Conduct; and Flying Officer Clifford C. McMillan received the Air Force Cross and Corporal James Rae the Air Force Medal. Corporal Lorne D. Hawkins, Sergeant Kenrick C. Swinford, Flying Officer Kenneth O. Moore, and Flight Lieutenant Anthony B. Morabito all received the King's Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air.

<sup>20</sup> DND/CAF, "About Search and Rescue (SAR)."

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Peter Kikkert, P. Whitney Lackenbauer, and Angulalik Pedersen, *Kitikmeot Roundtable on Search and Rescue – Report and Findings* (Report from a workshop hosted at the Canadian High Arctic Research Station (CHARS) in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, 31 January – 1 February 2020), <https://kitikmeotca.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/kitikmeot-roundtable-on-search-and-rescue-general-report-and-findings-1.pdf>; and Peter Kikkert and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "'A Great Investment in Our Communities': Strengthening Nunavut's Whole-of-Society Search and Rescue Capabilities," *Arctic* 74:3 (September 2021): 258-75.

<sup>22</sup> Wood, *Per Ardua Ad Arcticum*, 214.

<sup>23</sup> DND/CAF, "About Search and Rescue (SAR)."

<sup>24</sup> DND/CAF, "Search and Rescue (SAR) in the North," 15 March 2018, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/types/search-rescue/northern-canada.html>. JRCC Victoria provides the primary SAR response to Yukon; JRCC Trenton covers the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, including the north of Baffin Island; and JRCC Halifax covers the southern half of Baffin Island.

<sup>25</sup> CBC News, "Arctic Bay elders remember Rev. Jack Turner with new memorial," CBC News, 23 May 2015, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/arctic-bay-elders-remember-rev-jack-turner-with-new-memorial-1.3085222>.

## **Document 1: Operation CANON by Maurice S. Flint**

### **OPERATION CANON**

A short account of the life and witness of THE REVEREND JOHN HUDSPITH TURNER, M.P.S., Coronation Medal for Arctic Service (1938), Hon. Canon of the Cathedral of All Saints at Aklavik in the Diocese of the Arctic, Missionary of The Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society in its Eskimo field

**By MAURICE S. FLINT**

LONDON  
THE BIBLE CHURCHMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
96 VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1

To

the three little girls JUNE, GRACE and FAITH, with the prayer that these pages may help them either to remember or to know their Father, whose consecrated life will always inspire those who were privileged to know him.

The Reverend Maurice S. Flint was a missionary of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society in the Arctic 1936—41, being stationed at Pond Inlet. During the war he served as a chaplain with the Royal Air Force in Canada, and is now completing a course in Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto. He has engaged in Eskimo translation work.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Grateful acknowledgements are due to the many who have so willingly helped in the preparation of this biography: to those who lent material, especially to the Canadian Army Public Relations Bureau and to the Royal Canadian Air Force Public Relations Bureau for the loan of photographs and documents, and to the Rector of Christ Church, Aylmer, for the loan of the photograph of that church; and to Miss Frances Bloor, who typed the final MS [manuscript].

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It was with trepidation, and a sense of unworthiness, that I complied with the request of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society that I should write the biography of my friend and former colleague, John Hudspith Turner. The task has been so great, with such numerous possibilities, that I dared not attempt it without first receiving in my own mind the assurance of Divine leading.

My twelve years of association with John Turner were times of inspiration and affection, for his daily living demonstrated *signs following* the steps of faith. His story has been difficult to record, for his simple belief, sterling moral qualities, deep spiritual insight, and great physical achievements, marked by meekness, sincerity, and steadfastness, glowed with such inner holiness and consecration that words, expressions, or descriptions seemed inadequate.

I have found my work akin to that of the writer setting out to describe a large cut and polished diamond. At close range its well-defined edges and many plain facets are easily pictured, but that same stone, viewed from a distance and while moving in a bright beam of light, assumes each moment so many startling and rare beauties that it almost defies description.

May a loving Saviour by the "*riches of His Grace*" so overcome my imperfections that something of the true consecrated personality of His devoted servant will be revealed to the readers of this book.

TORONTO, July 1948

MAURICE S. FLINT

## INTRODUCTION

It was a September evening in the great Dominion of Canada. Many farmers had finished their 'chores' on the wide prairies, and were seated at their meal tables. Office workers from the cities and towns had attained the comfort of their easy chairs, and sat engrossed in the newspaper or their favourite book. Students in their colleges, young people from the schools, patients in hospital beds, and especially the old people, who found the fruits of broadcasting a real boon in their lives: all were now awaiting the evening news report, thankful for this Dominion-wide service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The words of the announcer that night seemed charged with a new interest. The usual reports of unrest abroad, the strikes and labour troubles at home, assumed second place to a fresh and startling news item.

A joint force composed of members of the Royal Canadian Air Force and paratroopers of the Canadian Army were to undertake a dangerous mission. Some unknown northern missionary had been accidentally shot and the bullet was lodged in his brain. His mission station lay well within the Arctic circle, far

from civilization with its hospitals and medical care. The only earthly hope for this man, his young wife and two little daughters, rested in the resourcefulness of the armed forces.

An experienced air crew waited beside their Dakota aircraft on an air field in Western Canada. A picked team of four paratroopers, including a doctor, had already been chosen and equipped to jump into this northern outpost.

A former missionary to the Eskimo, an ex-RAF [Royal Air Force] chaplain, resident in Eastern Canada, but well acquainted with that northern district, and who possessed maps of the location, was now being flown by special plane to 'brief' the members of the rescue team before they departed on their difficult assignment.

Ex-service men moved restlessly in their chairs as word of this hazardous undertaking came through. Ministers of churches were vitally interested. Doctors thought of the perilous task of their young colleague. Veterans of the northern wastes realized the extreme difficulties of this mission. The heroic impulses of men far and wide were stimulated, while the deep sympathies of human nature for those in distress were aroused. Great congregations in the Christian Church were called to prayer, and these rescue efforts received worthy attention in the daily newspapers.

The 'rescue' dragged on for many weeks, as sufferer and rescuers were marooned in the grip of the polar regions. The skill, courage, and resourcefulness of the airmen and the paratroopers filled the Canadian people with admiration. Whilst the endurance, bravery, and faith of the badly wounded missionary and his wife appealed to all people, awakening interest and sympathy in many in whom it had been dormant for years.

Shortly after his arrival in hospital in the city of Winnipeg, the emaciated frame of Canon John Hudspith Turner, so long dominated by his will to live, could no longer sustain his slowly ebbing life, and early one morning nearly ten weeks after the day of his accident, he 'slipped' into the presence of His Saviour.

For many people 'OPERATION CANON' ended there, but even they are thankful for the message that it brought to their hearts. They are conscious of a deeper appreciation and renewed interest not only in their fellowmen, but in the Church, and in acts of courage and sacrifice beyond the demands of duty. But nobody who knew Canon Turner believes either that 'Operation Canon' started on the day that he was wounded, or that it ended at the time when he quietly passed to his reward.

This short book is an attempt to record 'Operation Canon', as those who knew and loved him see it with the eye of faith, both in view of personal Christian experiences and because God, the Everlasting Father, has said,

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways."<sup>1</sup>

"... I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 55. 8

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 1. 8

## PART I

### THE MAN—and HIS CONVERSION

“Before I formed thee ... I knew thee; and before thou camest forth ... I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations”—*Jeremiah* 1. 5

#### CHAPTER 1

#### “BEFORE I FORMED THEE . . . I KNEW THEE”

##### ANCESTORS—BIRTH—EARLY DAYS

“My times are in Thy hand”—*Psalms* 31. 15

THE French wars of religion, which occupied the latter half of the sixteenth century, had many far-reaching results both in that country and in places overseas.

Many devout, sincere Huguenot believers began to flee to lands which were, for people of their deep Protestant convictions, of comparative safety.

These members of the ‘new Faith’ were not unconscious of all that was happening in other lands. In England Queen Mary had sent Protestant bishops to the stake, while in the Netherlands their co-religionists were being buried alive. However, in many places the brave flag of Protestantism rode the stiff winds of opposition and heralded the approaching victories of Biblical Christianity, and the advent of a new era of freedom from the mediæval bondage of blindness and intolerance. Before that time was to come many innocent souls were to perish in the ‘Massacre of St. Bartholomew’, and numerous brave soldiers were to give their lives on European battlefields for a “*Faith which was once delivered unto the saints*”.<sup>1</sup>

Of these French Protestants fleeing before such horrors of religious persecution, some came to England seeking there a home and security. From amongst these devout, earnest folk, there is reason to believe, are to be found the ancestors of John Hudspith Turner.

His birth on July 14, 1905, was marred by an earlier tragedy. His parents had lived in London where two older sons were born. Four months before his birth his father Thomas Hudspith Turner died, and the young saintly widowed mother, Ellen Anna Turner, was compelled to return to the home of her aged and ailing

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<sup>1</sup> Jude 3

parents in Felixstowe. It now became necessary for the older boy, aged five, to be sent to stay with relatives living nearby. The young widow's time was fully occupied in tending to her invalid parents, assisting with the work of the parish church to which she was deeply attached, and caring for her young family.

The family was often in straightened financial circumstances but Faith was in that home where prayer was often made to God, and His love filled their hearts, bringing contentment and peace.

The old grandfather had served his church as Parish Clerk for over twenty years, and his knowledge of the liturgy and love for the Scriptures were a fine example to the growing boys.

After the death of their grandmother, the family moved into other quarters, and it was again possible for the boys to be reunited under one roof, but this was not until John was in his seventh year.

A number of close relatives of these lads were well-known and respected in their locality for piety and kindness. Neighbours sought them out in times of trouble and distress to obtain sound advice, comfort and help.

In this environment of true Christian living the three healthy lads, Edward (Ted), Arthur, and John (Jack)—filled with fun and high spirits—grew up and became inseparable companions.

## CHAPTER 2

### “BEFORE THOU CAMEST FORTH . . . I SANCTIFIED THEE”

#### SCHOOL DAYS—CHURCH ASSOCIATIONS—EARLY BUSINESS LIFE

“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He pondereth all his goings”—*Proverbs* 5. 21

THE boys received their schooling at the local Felixstowe elementary school, and were popular with their young schoolmates. Often in company with a young lad from ‘next door’ they took jaunts together into the marshlands bordering the River Deben, and with home-made bows and arrows sometimes stalked numerous species of wild fowl that nested there. Such ramblings would take them twelve to fifteen miles afield over most difficult country which involved many adventures in navigating dykes and swamps.

They all loved to ‘camp out’, and even in those early days made a make-shift tent in the back garden of the house, by borrowing mother’s clothes-horse and using old mats and worn pieces of linoleum. Incessant pleas to mother finally procured the necessary permission to sleep out at nights. Not many months later,



by pooling resources from choir pay, rewards for running errands, and doing ‘odd jobs’, they became the proud possessors of a small canvas tent, which was to provide nightly accommodation during many summers.

John did well at school and at the age of eleven years proceeded to the Ipswich Municipal Secondary School. He stayed there from 1917 until the autumn of 1921, when he finished his schooldays, having attained the sixth and highest form, and become captain both of cricket and football.

From his earliest days he had been introduced to Church activities, of which he attended Sunday school and Bible class. However, he was never very seriously-minded, as his Sunday school teachers were apt to discover—when sitting upon a ‘tack’, or in a specially prepared pool of water. Such early pranks caused his mother no little grief, as his mind seemed far from attracted by the most important things of life. This sense of humour remained throughout his life, and his face was often wreathed in smiles, and his laughter and fun filled the house.

In 1925 a new Vicar, the Rev. H. B. Greene, was appointed to the parish church of Felixstowe, with its daughter church of St. Andrew. He was a man of outstanding gifts, and a keen and ardent minister of the Church of England. He was loyal to the Scriptural foundation of that Church, accepting the Scriptures as the “*Word of God*”, and adamantly refusing to permit any teaching or practice contrary to the XXXIX Articles and the Book of Common Prayer.

Fully alive to the great need of the young people he threw open the doors of the Vicarage to them every Sunday evening after Church. Thither many wended their way to sing hymns, and enjoy fellowship in a wholesome environment, whilst coming within the sound of the Gospel message. This faithful ministry had its obvious results, for ten young people now on the mission field call Felixstowe their home Church.

When John left school, he began training as a chemist and was employed in the nearby town of Ipswich. The hitherto infrequent use of a cigarette had now become a general practice and he liked his ‘pipe’. Having become friendly with some members of a local dance band he was made their popular percussionist.

A pleasing personality, friendly attitude, and manly bearing made him an attractive young man, especially with the fair sex, and his life was very full.

Ted, the eldest son, after a period of service with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the first Great War, returned home, and found time to give his younger brothers instruction in the handling of boats, especially under sail. They had all learned to swim magnificently. Thus John grew into a fearless, strapping young man, self-confident but never arrogant, always happy and seldom serious: wholesome but not particularly ‘religious’. What was in his heart those years few people know, but the prayers of a godly mother, the example of a fine Christian grandfather, and the faithful witness of true servants of Jesus Christ, were soon to be effective.

Does not our God say

“I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known”?<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER 3

### “I ORDAINED THEE A PROPHET UNTO THE NATIONS”

#### CONVERSION—EARLY SPIRITUAL GROWTH

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”—*Proverbs* 14. 12

DURING Advent 1925 in the first year of his ministry in this parish (which was to last until his retirement in 1946) the Vicar invited Mr. Reginald T. Naish to conduct a series of meetings on Prophecy, in the St. Andrew’s Church Hall. Mr. Naish was a seasoned minister of the Gospel, rich in experience, and a firm believer in the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. His consecrated humble life and prayer-filled ministry had already proved an instrument of great blessing to many lives.

John Turner, now at the age of twenty, was not particularly attracted to these special meetings and at first ignored them. Passing the Hall one rainy night, however, he entered, and was immediately struck by the obvious joy of the missionary, and the force of his message.

Perhaps it would be well to report the events of that evening, and subsequent days, in the words of an eyewitness. The Rev. Rowland H. Haste, a great personal friend of John, who later sailed under the B.C.M.S. [Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society] flag to India, has written:

“The great moment of John’s life was when he yielded his life to God. Reginald Naish had been holding meetings on ‘Prophecy’ in St. Andrew’s Hall, Felixstowe. John, Harold Denny, and Alf. Adams were present when the Holy Spirit fired a salvo, and hit them all amidships. Instead of sinking, they ventured at midnight to Mr. Smith’s house, White Lodge, where Reginald Naish was staying, and all these found the Lord. They had a midnight prayer and praise meeting afterwards in the house. From that moment John was all out for the Lord.

One autumn morning John and I were going to Ipswich on the top of an open-roofed bus, when he exclaimed, ‘My pipe must go!’ He stood up to the astonishment of the other passengers and threw pipe, pouch, and matches into the field, from the top of the bus, saying, ‘There goes another weight’.”

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 42. 16

From his conversion on December 20, 1925, John Turner became a living proof of St. Paul's words: "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*".<sup>1</sup>

Ted, his brother, has written concerning this event in the following manner:

"Many views are held regarding conversion, some even doubt if it has any value at all! In this particular case, however, there was no uncertainty. John from that day forward was a new creature. Henceforth he had one aim and one object in life, and that to glorify God and to serve Him to the limit of his capacity."

Whenever an opportunity came he still resorted to the old haunts in the marshlands of the River Deben, or on the river banks. But now accompanied by new friends in the Christian Faith he spent the time around an opened Bible in prayer and meditation. Only the sea birds flew overhead to break the silence of those quiet meeting places, while the Saviour drew near to comfort and guide these young lives. As John grew in grace there came to him the vision of a new standard for living. "*Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*"<sup>2</sup>

This inner growth, and deepening spiritual conviction[,] affected even his business life, for he felt even there, in a work which he deeply loved, and which was so full of interest, that he was not really permitted to serve His Lord fully. Prayerfully the future was faced, and then with willing heart, a deep sense of unworthiness and human frailty, he offered his life for service anywhere.

Prepared in body, soul, and spirit he was learning the truth of the Psalmist's words, "*Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass*".<sup>3</sup>

## PART II

### THE MAN—and HIS COMMISSION

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit"—1 *Corinthians* 2. 9–10

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"—*St. John* 14. 6

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<sup>1</sup> 2 *Corinthians* 5. 17

<sup>2</sup> *Ephesians* 4. 13

<sup>3</sup> *Psalms* 37. 5

## CHAPTER 4

### A PREPARED WAY

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way”—*Exodus* 23. 20

### THE BIRTH OF A NEW MISSIONARY SOCIETY

“... if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord”—*Deuteronomy* 28. 9, 10

DURING the early years of John Turner’s youth, even before his conversion, God was forging another instrument of His blessing to the world, which was to influence his life greatly.

The birth pangs of the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society were already apparent in missionary circles within the Church of England. Many stalwart supporters of Evangelical missionary endeavours, over a period of years[,] were distressed by the very obvious results of earlier Liberal theological views, and the growth of Modernism. It was evident that missionary recruits were being commissioned to the foreign field who no longer preached a Scriptural message and who lacked the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Also young recruits of great promise were being sent to work with senior men who had little sympathy with a dynamic faithful ministry, but endeavoured to circumscribe the activities and lives of their new colleagues.

In an atmosphere of misrepresentation and misunderstanding a few faithful servants of God, convinced of His guiding and leading, prayerfully initiated a new Church of England missionary society.<sup>1</sup> The birth of this society was not an easy one, for men who once worked and prayed together on missionary committees for many years, were now in disagreement and could no longer walk together harmoniously. The forces of criticism fanned by the strong winds of opposition were to try these new endeavours for Christ’s Cause from its very beginning.

The Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society came into being on October 27, 1922, with the motto,

“FOR THE WORD OF GOD, AND FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST,”<sup>2</sup>

and has endeavoured (accepting the Holy Scriptures as in very truth the Word of God, and remaining true to the Reformation principles of the Church of England) to reach with the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ some of the

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<sup>1</sup> The history of the formation and work of the Society is fully told in *The First Twenty-Five Years of The Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society*, by W. S. Hooton, M.A., B.D., and J. Stafford Wright, M.A. Obtainable from the Society, 256 pp., illustrations and maps, 7/6.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 1. 9

unevangelized fields of the world. All workers, missionaries and members are required to sign the basis of the Society annually and every safeguard is taken to ensure continuance of its evangelical character.

It is possible that for many casual observers the history, accomplishments, and great blessings of the B.C.M.S. have been overshadowed by the dread fears of ‘controversy’ and ‘schism’. However, in providing the setting for the life and witness of Canon John Turner, it is not improbable that some will understand in a new and deeper way the need and worth of this society, which has always been intent upon doing everything possible, both to maintain a Bible Christianity at home, and to send it to the uttermost parts of the earth.

## CHAPTER 5

### A PREPARED MAN

“Jesus calleth unto Him whom He would... And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach”—*St. Mark* 3. 13, 14

### CALL—COLLEGE—CONSECRATION—AT KESWICK—GOD’S CARE

“And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him”—*St. John* 10. 4

A VERY clear sequence of events led to John Turner’s association with this missionary society. His new Vicar had formerly been the assistant in Liverpool to the Rev. Daniel H. C. Bartlett, M.A., who was so soon to become the stalwart, courageous leader of the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society as its first (and honorary) Secretary.

It must not be imagined that the high principles, Protestant teaching, and evangelical outlook of the vicar necessarily endeared him immediately to all his new parishioners. Amongst those who looked upon the change in the parish with disfavour were the young Turner brothers, Arthur and John. However this prayer-filled ministry was empowered from on High, and even before one year in that benefice had passed, there came the joy of seeing twenty-five young men, including Arthur and John Turner, respond to an appeal to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and to surrender their lives for His service.

Then on March 26, 1926, Dr. Bartlett (as he later became), visited the parish to introduce the new missionary society and seek recruits for full-time service. The two young Turner boys, among others, stepped forward in complete and glad surrender.

As the society had already founded its own Bible Churchmen's Missionary and Theological College at Clifton, Bristol, thither the lads turned their steps in preparation for service whithersoever God might lead.

From the beginning of his college days John Turner's life and witness began to assume unique proportions. In his studies he not only attained a standard satisfactory for ordination but 'extra-murally' gained his membership of the Pharmaceutical Society. The Rev. Dr. C. S. Carter, M.A., first principal of the college, has written in glowing terms of his former student,

"I would like to bear my testimony to his outstanding zeal and diligence during his period of training (1926-9). I can truthfully say that I never had a more wholehearted and consecrated student. His sunny and joyous disposition was a tonic to all, and even non-Christian fellowstude[n]ts with whom 'extra-murally' he also studied chemistry bore witness to his single-minded devotion to His Master and Saviour. With him it was clearly, '*This one thing I do*', and the watchword of his college life could well be summed up in 'WORK' to be more effective as a future missionary and constant witness for Christ. In fact St. Paul's words were literally true of him, '*For me to live is Christ*'."

Money was very scarce for this young soldier of the Cross during his days of training, and often at the end of the terms, whether in winter or summer, he cycled the one hundred and ninety miles between his home and the college to save travelling expenses.

At all times and in divers manners he endeavoured to witness for His Lord, and often, as he passed through the streets carrying his small attache case in his hand, its sides were illuminated by brightly painted Scripture texts.

During the succeeding days of his training, the strong influence of his godly Vicar, the environment of a consecrated home life, the atmosphere of a college directed by a faculty of true evangelical scholarship, together with a deep conviction of his past worthlessness and a growing love for His Saviour who had so lovingly redeemed and saved Him, began to remould the young man.

This metamorphosis in a life is hard to describe in a few words, but possibly the notations in the margin of his well-worn and much beloved Bible will indicate the change.

"Come ill, come well, the Cross, the Crown,  
The rainbow or the thunder,  
I fling my soul and body down,  
For God to plow them under."

Is not this an echo of the words and mind of Martin Luther?

"Christians are to be exhorted to endeavour to follow Christ, their head, through pains, death, and hells."<sup>1</sup>

From his earliest days John seemed to attain a new attitude to time and a new sense of the need to use every opportunity for witness.

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<sup>1</sup> 94 Thesis, 1517

“Take from me all slothfulness, that I may fill up all the spaces of my time.”

“Tis death, my soul, to be indifferent.”

Thus submitting his life daily to the hammer blows from God’s Word, his personality began to shine with a new lustre and his character became endued with new strength. Even though such lessons were hard and the discipline severe, yet neatly in the margin of his Bible appear these words,

“There is no bar that can shut out love.”

Perhaps the shadow or spirit of John Calvin marked this life, for his love for Scripture and his obedience to that Word could easily be described in the Reformer’s words, “Nothing therefore is safer than to banish all boldness of human sense, and adhere solely to what the Scriptures deliver”.

These deepening Protestant convictions were reflected in his rigid adherence to the Reformed rule of the Church concerning vestments, and his unswerving faithfulness to the 1662 Prayer Book, which he loved. Such attitudes, although not necessarily conducive to popularity with many (though they had sworn similar oaths of fealty in the Church), admirably portray his sincerity and devotion to His Lord and His Church.

Before he left for the mission field, John longed to visit the Keswick Convention, and being without funds he committed this desire to His Master. The distance was some 300 miles across England, but taking his bicycle, with a small tent made from two bed sheets which had been rendered waterproof with a mixture of linseed oil and paraffin wax, he loaded his clothes, food, and equipment and set forth. Sleeping on the roadside for two nights he reached his destination on the third day. The conference proved a great spiritual blessing and joy. On the morning of his return he climbed Skiddaw to watch the sunrise, and then starting out he took but two days and one night of cycling to reach home.

A little later a remarkable escape from serious danger confirmed in John’s mind the assurance of his Heavenly Father’s watchful care, and increased his sense of indebtedness. During one of his trips up the River Deben with a group of seven youngsters the boat capsized, and he nearly lost his life when, with one of the younger passengers, he became entangled in the sail. However, he managed to free himself and help his young companion to the safety of the river’s bank. John felt sure that this was but another sign of God’s blessing in his life.

This, then, was the man whom the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society commissioned to its unique Arctic field. Is it not obvious that a gracious Heavenly Father had watched over him in a wonderful way since his birth? Born with a wonderful spiritual heritage forged in the fires of persecution; reared in a truly Christian home where faith, hope and love reigned; and nurtured by faithful ambassadors of the Living Christ, he was “*a vessel unto honour ... meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.*”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 2. 21

## CHAPTER 6

### A PREPARED PLACE

“... the place which the Lord your God shall choose”—*Deuteronomy* 12. 5

### A PRAYER—A NEED AND A CALL—ESKIMO MISSIONS— ORDINATION IN CANADA

“... to bring thee into the place which I have prepared”—*Exodus* 23. 20

ONE day there appeared in the margin of his Bible the words of a prayer, “Lord, what wilt Thou have *me* to do?”

Thus John sought God’s plan and purpose for his future ministry. His Heavenly Father did not leave His servant in doubt very long, for the place and the work were already being prepared. The Lord Himself had indeed “*gone before*”.

Although the founding of the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society had taken place only in October 1922, in the March of 1923, but five months later, Bishop Lloyd of Saskatchewan, Canada, urgently appealed to the Society for help. He wrote saying,

“As the Church Missionary Society has entirely withdrawn from the field, we are faced with the necessity of closing up some if not many of the missions... I sincerely hope that B.C.M.S. may see its way to saving this work.”

The Bishop of Keewatin on May 23 of the same year issued yet another appeal,

“I venture to bring before you the urgent needs of the Indian and Eskimo work in the Diocese of Keewatin, and apply to your Society for assistance for at least a few years.”

These two appeals had no sooner received sympathetic attention than Bishop Anderson of Moosonee Diocese appealed that the need of the Eastern Arctic Eskimo be met. Following up this written appeal Bishop Stringer, of the Yukon, visited the College at Clifton, and after telling the story of Eskimo missions in Canada, appealed for volunteers. Both Arthur and Jack at that gathering sensed a call, and later offered themselves for service in the polar regions.

There is little wonder that these young men were enthralled by the story of the Eskimo missions, for it is a narrative filled with sacrifice, noble endeavour and great accomplishments.

The Eskimo of the Eastern North American continent were first visited by missionaries of the Christian Faith in the middle of the 18th Century. These ambassadors of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, sent by the Moravian Brethren, first reached the Eskimo of the Labrador in 1752. On September 13 of that year their first messenger of the Cross was murdered at Davis Inlet, Labrador, by natives who were then described as “the most savage people in all the world”. For the next fifty years the Moravian missionaries[,] “*constrained by His love*”, reached out



to the “*regions beyond*”<sup>1</sup> and in 1811 visited Ungava, becoming the first Christian missionaries to reach the Canadian Eskimo.

It was not until 1820 that the Rev. John West, sent to Canada by the Church Missionary Society, passed through the Hudson’s Straits [*sic*], and, meeting Eskimo who visited his ship, became the first Church of England missionary to them. Later in 1823 he visited the Eskimo at Fort Churchill and spoke to them of Christ through the interpreter Augustus, who had previously accompanied the then Captain Franklin on his adventuresome exploration of the mouth of the Coppermine River.

In 1862 the Rev. John Horden, later to become Bishop Horden, using as an interpreter an Eskimo who had formerly lived on the Labrador coast and who had received Christian teaching there, journeyed northward from Moose Factory and carried the Gospel of glad tidings to the Eskimo of Great Whale River. He wrote concerning this trip, “those eight days were indeed blessed ones, and will not soon be forgotten by me, for they were amongst the most successful missionary days I have had since I have been in the country”.

In 1878 Mr. E. J. Peck came from England and was placed in charge of the work at Great Whale River. The subsequent history of this missionary’s service amongst the Eskimo is an epic of the Christian Church and caused him to be called ‘[The Apostle to the Eskimo]’. In 1884 this valiant soldier of the army of Truth, after failing two years before, when he suffered much hardship on the trail, managed to reach Fort Chimo, Ungava, and stayed there three weeks preaching the Good News to those needy people.

Ten years later, in 1894, the Rev. Dr. Peck was permitted to establish a more northerly mission on desolate Blacklead Island, in Cumberland Sound, Baffin Land, and became the first and much beloved missionary to the natives of Southern Baffin Land. He was given the Eskimo name of Okangmat—meaning ‘*The Speaker*’, or ‘because he speaks’.

On May 4, 1900, the first convert there, a girl on her deathbed, was admitted to the visible Church of Christ. From Blacklead Island a more southerly station was opened at Lake Harbour on the north coast of the Hudson’s Straits. It was here that the Rev. A. L. Fleming served from 1909–11 and 1913–15. Then in 1919 he was granted his Licentiate of Theology from Wycliffe College and served for the next ten years both as Chaplain and Secretary of his ‘Alma Mater’ and latterly as Rector of St. John’s (Stone) Church, Saint John, New Brunswick. In 1927 he was appointed Archdeacon of the Arctic, and subsequently assumed great responsibilities in the lives of the English missionaries proceeding northwards. Then in 1933 the Rev. A. L. Fleming was consecrated the first bishop of a newly formed Diocese of the Arctic. This new diocese was to cover a territorial area of two and a quarter million square miles and a land area of 1,204,697 square miles or one third of the Dominion of Canada.

Meanwhile in 1915 the C.M.S. [Church Missionary Society] had withdrawn from the Arctic work and the field was left to the care of the Canadian Church.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 10. 16

The heritage of Dr. Peck's unselfish and devoted ministry was left to the care of partially-trained native catechists.

Ten years later, in 1925, Bishop Anderson of Moosonee appealed to the B.C.M.S. to save this work, not only by shepherding the flock left so long without real pastoral oversight, but by undertaking the opening of new missions in the East coast of Hudson's Bay, and in the unevangelized fields of Northern Baffin Land.

How true the Word of God is that says, "*and it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear*".<sup>1</sup>

A work, which had begun many years before and left fallow for ten years, and which had proved to be too great for the young and growing Canadian Church, was committed to this new missionary society less than three years after its inception. At the same time young men filled with faith were being called out and trained to accept the challenge of the great need.

In the summer of 1928 the Rev. Arthur Turner at twenty-six years of age sailed for Pangnirtung, a new station only a few miles from Blacklead Island. He has now given twenty years of faithful and effective service amongst his beloved Eskimo people.

In the following year, John Turner, at the age of twenty-four, sailed with a companion, Harold N. Duncan, also a graduate of the B.C.M.T. [Bible Churchmen's Missionary and Theological] College[,] to establish the most northerly mission in the British Empire at Pond Inlet, Baffin Land. Thus began a brilliant missionary career in which he was so manifestly conscious of the power of his indwelling Lord and so obviously dependent upon His daily guidance.

John Turner, on July 12, 1929, under a special faculty from the Primate of the Church of England in Canada, was both made a deacon and admitted to the priesthood of the Church of England by Bishop Farthing of the Diocese of Montreal.

This ordination took place in the small but historic and beautiful Christ Church, Aylmer, Quebec. It is of interest to note that although this church was founded in 1842, it has, through monetary difficulties since the depression of the early thirties, become a 'mission' church. Nevertheless the Rector, the Rev. Cecil Earle, reports that in spite of difficulties his congregation are planning some permanent memorial to commemorate the ordination of Canon Turner[,] whom they have come to regard as one of their own sons.

On the day of his ordination John's constant companion[,] "Daily Light upon the Daily Path", a book which he loved next to his Bible and Book of Common Prayer, contained the following promises.

*"My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee: He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee... The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee ... for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 65. 24

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 33. 14; Deuteronomy 31. 6, 8; Joshua 1. 9

Is there any wonder that this young man yearned to go forward into the unknown in the face of such gracious assurance of the Divine blessing?

## PART III

### THE MAN—and HIS MISSION

“And a still more excellent way shew I unto you... Love ... beareth all things, believeth all things ... endureth all things... Love never faileth”—1 *Corinthians* 12. 31; 13. 7, 8 (R.V.)

“I feel a greater love for the Eskimo each time I go amongst them; they are a most lovable people”—*John Turner’s Diary*, 1929

“I love this country and its people... This is my first love”—*John Turner’s Diary*, 1947

## CHAPTER 7

### “NOW THEREFORE ... SHEW ME NOW THY WAY”

#### AN ARCTIC VOYAGE—FIRST CONTACT WITH ESKIMO—SOME ESKIMO COMPANIONS—THE SECRET OF HIS POWER

CANADIAN friends were most gracious and kind to the young missionaries before they departed on the final part of their journey northwards. On Monday afternoon after the ordination there began a friendship and fellowship in the work which was only to reach a climax in the great kindnesses and affection during the tragic days of December 1947. The Women’s Auxiliary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada gave a reception in the Hebert Simon Memorial House, Montreal, for the young recruits, and this was followed by a farewell service in the Cathedral. The next day the voyagers were bidden farewell by their friends, including Mrs. Farthing, the wife of the Bishop of Montreal. Showered with presents and gifts they stood at the rail as the faces of the watchers on the quayside dimmed in the distance.

The long awaited day had arrived! The last lap had begun! The trip on the *S.S. Nascopie* was filled with interest and fascinating experiences. As the days lengthened into weeks they steamed through the cold waters of the Hudson’s Bay [*sic*], and gigantic icebergs passed majestically by in the bright sunlight of the

Arctic summer. An occasional walrus or seal was seen sporting in the water. The ship called at various isolated trading stations as places with historic names were visited. At each settlement Eskimo were encountered and contact made with personnel of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, as well as missionaries, both of the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Mission.

The panorama of daily events during the initial voyage in Arctic waters holds the interest of the travellers. There are the days and nights in the ice pack when the ship shudders from stem to stern, crashing her way through the heavy frozen pans. There are the nights in the cabins or dining saloon when experienced northern travellers relate their personal experiences and tell stories of the North. How 'tall' some of these events have grown in the imagination of the narrator will only be proved during arduous personal adventures in succeeding years. Then there are the days and nights when the gales buffet the small vessel and angry waves with gaping maw seek yet another victim, only to be thwarted as the valiant craft rides serenely over their greedy lips.

John Turner and his companion were much inspired by the eager desire of the natives for Church services, and often at various ports of call, even with their meagre knowledge of the difficult Eskimo language, they helped the various catechists in a number of services. Harold Duncan pleased the natives with his rendering of hymn accompaniments on his accordian. John, too, learned to play this musical instrument, and in very many igloos of the Northern Eastern Arctic he was to sit some time during the next eighteen years to play hymns and watch the dark faces of the natives lighten and glow with pleasure, as they joined vigorously in their praises to their newly-found Heavenly Father.

Sometimes services were held in the fetid atmosphere of huts or tents on the shore. The eager smiling faces of the dusky natives, their obvious attention to their leader as he discoursed from the Word of God, left an indelible mark on the mind[s] of the visitors from overseas.

It was after one of these meetings at Port Burwell that John Turner wrote to his mother,

"there were about fifty to sixty natives present and the service was held in the Hudson's Bay Post Manager's House, where the natives always go for worship. They all seemed to enter into the meaning of the service, and the singing was sweet. We had the hymns, 'Jesus loves me' (Jesu naglegengmanga, ela kauyemavoonga, etc.); 'There is a gate that stands ajar'; and, 'Abide with me'. I feel a greater love for the Eskimo each time I go amongst them; they are a most lovable people."

The missionary party was increased at Lake Harbour, Bishop Fleming's former mission station, by the addition of an Eskimo called David Sandy, and his family. This native hunter was engaged to act as catechist to the Pond Inlet mission for at least the first year of its history.

Later at Southampton Island Ben, a young Eskimo lad, one of two boys who had spent some months in a Canadian School in Ontario, but who through ill-health were being forced to return home, continued northwards with the

missionaries. John Ell, the boy's father, a leading Eskimo of Southampton Island and pilot to any boats entering the waters of that district, was most anxious that his son should continue his education.

Thus a wee native lad, with a shock of black hair, mongoloid features, twinkling black eyes, ever capable of mischief and fun, came both to enliven and brighten the lives of his white companions. He struggled aboard with two suitcases, a box containing exercise books, pencils, an atlas, toys, New Testament in English, geometrical instruments and a primer, together with one broad grin.

These native companions were to be a real asset to the mission. David was a truly spiritual and devoted Christian with a delightful family. He introduced the raw recruits to Eskimo ways of living and helped them through the difficult period of adjustment. Ben, in his search for an 'education'[.] was a great source of information to his white teachers and provided one means whereby they quickly grasped the difficult Eskimo language.

John Turner in later years often related stories of Ben's adventures, whom they lovingly endeavoured to treat like a son or a younger brother. One day after John had removed one of Ben's teeth, the lad suggested that he should continue and remove them all and then put them all back again. The missionary explained that this was impossible, but the lad[.] having seen some white person remove a dental plate[.] was insistent and even endeavoured to prove his point by trying to see whether he could remove his companion's full set!

John Turner's letter at this time began to reveal the source of his growing strength, and the reason for his later success as a missionary. Each evening in the dusk, as the Northern Lights played across the heavens, or the moonlight floodlit the seas, he sought the quietness of the upper deck, and there spent precious times of meditation and prayer. The words of an old familiar hymn sung by friends at home often came to him,

"Walk with me,  
Precious Saviour, walk with me.  
All the way from earth to heaven,  
Precious Saviour, walk with me."

These times of quiet waiting upon His God charged his life with a new dynamic so clearly demonstrated in his daily routine.

One night as the boat steamed northward through the Hudson's Straits, he heard God speaking "precious promises" to him from the 43rd Chapter of Isaiah, and these he continually claimed throughout his ministry as being "*Yea and Amen*"<sup>1</sup> in His Saviour Christ.

"Fear Not:  
for I have redeemed thee,  
I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine.  
When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ...  
I have loved thee ...  
I will say to the North, Give up ... bring my sons from far,

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians 1. 20

and my daughters from the ends of the earth ...

Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen

...

I will work, and who shall let it?

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth ....

I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.”

Therefore a young soldier of the Cross of Christ set foot upon the rocky shore of Northern Baffin Land, conscious of His Master’s call and commission, and confident in His ability to undertake in all things.

## CHAPTER 8

### “I HAVE CALLED THEE BY THY NAME”

#### POND INLET—NORTHERN NATIVES—MIKENEKS— REASSURANCE

THE ship’s motor-boat bearing the two missionaries approached the shore at Pond Inlet. Gazing at the land which had never known the shade of a tree and where tiny flowers grew but a few inches high in the short summers, they hardly saw the small sandy shore almost completely surrounded by the hills coming down to the water’s edge. For them this was not necessarily Pond Inlet or as in the native tongue Mitsemutalik—‘the burial place of Mitsemut’, but the place of God’s appointment.

This mission station was to be the headquarters for the most northerly parish in the British Empire and most probably the largest. In area it is greater than the whole of England and France together. To the East, across Baffin Bay, stand Greenland’s icy mountains. Northward and Westward it is bordered by the famous North-West Passage, the grave of so many fond hopes and brave seamen.

The work of these missionaries was to be entirely among the Eskimo, for apart from a handful of white men they are the only inhabitants of this Arctic fastness. It is a desolate land, creating an impression of barren rocks, stunted growth, and wind-swept snow. Summer is like one long day of nearly three months’ duration and winter is a night of similar duration. Between the two there are periods of twilight. In winter the northern traveller depends a great deal upon the light of the moon. The Eskimo are a nomadic people, whose peregrinations are governed by the seasons and the supply of game. They dwell in camps, which may be hundreds of miles apart, and which vary in size but seldom contain more than a few families.

The sole means of transportation during the cold period, snow being on the ground for ten months of the year, is by dog team and sledge, which when loaded will weigh up to 1,200 pounds. Twenty miles of travelling a day is a good average

in the depths of winter. In the warmer spring weather and in more favourable conditions this distance may even be doubled.

Whaling vessels had in favourable times wintered in the more sheltered waters of Pond Inlet, farther back than any of the living Eskimo could remember, but until now the ministry of the Christian Church had scarcely reached them. The content of the Gospel message was not unknown to them, for in their constant travels other natives had told them a great deal and in 1928 Bishop Anderson of Moosonee had visited Pond Inlet, both preaching, baptizing and distributing the Scriptures.

These natives now stood upon the shore watching the advent of their new teachers. Standing in groups they conversed animatedly amongst themselves, often bursting into laughter and displaying a sense of good humour and bonhomie. Less touched by civilization than their fellows of the more southerly districts, the Northern Baffin Land natives are usually better dressed, for the hunting is good in the north. They appear healthier, having an abundance of fresh meat. Although in their isolation they are more inclined to be under the influence of their pagan background and their heathen witchdoctors.

When the white men reached the shore the Eskimo came forward to shake hands most ceremoniously, father shook hands and mother shook hands, the children shook hands and even the little babes shook hands, while every face glowed with an eager smile generated by a spontaneous friendship and goodwill.

Each newcomer is given an Eskimo name and because of the marked difference in height, John Turner was called MIKENEKSAK—‘the smaller one’, and Harold Duncan, being well over six feet, ANGENEKSASAK—‘the bigger one’.

AYOGESUEYE MIKENEKSAK—‘the smaller teacher’, is now a name which has become firmly entwined in the history of the Eskimo people and there are few names in the Northern limits of the Eastern Arctic that are given such respect and affection by the native population.

How true it is that when the world only sees a ‘small one’, God in Heaven may recognize a ‘great one’[,] although probably not until Eternity’s dawn will the true greatness of the life of Canon John Turner be fully revealed.

The promises which strengthened John’s spirit on September 2, 1929, as he began his Arctic missionary career appeared in *Daily Light*.

“Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart.”

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.”

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 27. 14; Isaiah 41. 10; Hebrews 10. 36

## CHAPTER 9

### “BEHOLD, I WILL DO A NEW THING”

#### POND INLET MISSION, 1929—AT THE MISSION—WITH THE CHILDREN—A MISSIONARY’S DAILY ROUTINE

“For ye have need of patience”—*Hebrews* 10. 36

FOR two days some members of the Nascopie’s crew helped the missionaries lay the foundation of their house and erect its framework. Natives also came along to help. Then the ship slowly steamed out of the Inlet, not to return until the following September.

All the supplies for the mission had been placed on the shore and these could not be replenished until the following year. Probably northern missions are amongst the most isolated and expensive to operate. Mail is delivered but once each year while the freightage charges amount to about one hundred and fifty dollars a ton, or thirty pounds sterling at par (five dollars to the pound). Already during that first week in September snow had fallen and remained strewn over the rocky ground, and nightly the temperature was falling below freezing. It was becoming difficult to handle the tools and the construction of a four-roomed house with loft presented no mean task to these novice carpenters. In describing their progress John Turner wrote in 1930:

“By the time the boat left we were well on with the work. After a week we were able to sleep in the loft until we had finished the outside work and our own rooms. This took five or six weeks.

After two months we were pretty comfortable. The natives received us warmly, and showed us no little kindness; men and women alike set to and transported all our goods and lumber from the shore to the site. We cannot tell how much we owe to the copies of the Scriptures which we found here but the people gathered around us very readily, eager to unite for worship and hear ‘the Word’. We have visited their houses regularly and have always had a warm welcome.”

This was but the first of three mission stations that John Turner was instrumental in building in the North. In the Autumn of 1937 he set out to Arctic Bay to found the Moffet Inlet station, but perhaps his personal description of this event will provide a more adequate picture than the words of any third party.

“November 18, 1937. Arrived at Arctic Bay at 2.30 a.m. We wore out the native’s sledge completely before we had gone three miles on the land. We cached what gear we could and went on with just my sledge. When my runners gave out we kept patching them with pieces of iron, wood, etc., but eventually had to go on the wood of the sledge and when we finally abandoned the latter about sixteen miles from the head of Adam’s Sound, it was getting ‘down badly at the heel’ and one side was cracked in the middle. One day our camp



was only about 200 yards from the previous one, after nine hours' hard work. Another day we made about 300 yards, and several days we averaged less than a mile. While still near the Pond Inlet side, I thought seriously of going over to a camp and borrowing an iron shod sledge (though even that would have soon worn out as events proved later) but the Lord said unto me—'*in Me is thine help*'<sup>1</sup>, so I refrained and went on as we were and certainly HE did help us through."

"November 25. Left Arctic Bay with borrowed sledges and heavy loads after spending about a week sorting out gear."

"December 3. Arrived at SIORALIK (Moffet Inlet) feeling definitely that this is God's will to stop and build here. Snow was deep and going hard on dogs for whom we had not much reserve food. Huge loads—the native had a load of stores and I had lumber for shack (including door, windows, nails—130 pounds) besides 400 or 500 pounds of other gear."

"December 4. Finish foundations and floor of store and begin sides. Temperature—43°F. Cold on hands!"

"December 11. Go into store—leaving David (native helper) and family in an 'igloo' (snow house). NOT enough wood to finish store roof so use sail."

In this manner yet another mission is born, and concerning its dedication in the following May, the intrepid and zealous missionary writes:

"I should have liked you to have been here for the dedication of the site of this new place but I know you will be with us in spirit, and praying that this may be a centre of Light and Life in a Dark and Dying world. These last two mornings I have had significant and encouraging messages in my daily readings. 'The Lord God of Heaven ... *hath charged me to build Him an house*.'<sup>2</sup> It seems indeed the height of presumption for one so absolutely unworthy to claim this as a word for oneself, but one remembers that our 'sufficiency' is of Him, 'The Lord our Righteousness'."

Again in April 1940, John Turner built the outstation at Fort Ross, which he used as a base for missionary activities amongst the Netselingmiot and other Western natives. It is of interest to note that practically the first hundred dollars subscribed towards the founding of this mission was subscribed by a missionary leaving for furlough who sold his 'breakfast cereals' to an incoming white man and gave the proceeds for this purpose. It is probably the only mission in the world founded on 'Corn Flakes', 'All Bran' and 'Puffed Rice'!

These three centres at Pond Inlet, Fort Ross and Moffet Inlet, during the days since the initiation of this most northerly work, became true centres of light and love.

Each evening when a missionary is in residence, although usually in the winter he is on trail for anything up to nine months of the year, a service is held at the house. Also natives coming in to trade, or for any other reason, will visit the missionary both to enjoy his hospitality and to ask questions concerning difficulties in the Scriptures. During most of these informal chats those in the

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<sup>1</sup> Hosea 13. 9

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chronicles 36. 23; Ezra 1. 2

house will kneel down around the kitchen chairs for a word of prayer, or to commit the visitors to God's gracious keeping.

The mission house becomes, too, a centre for the children who come to look at picture books or to play games of ludo, snakes and ladders, chinese checkers, or jig-saw puzzles. It is at these times that the house is filled with laughter and screams of delight. John Turner loved the children and they found in him not only a teacher and a guide, but a very jolly playmate. His ingenuity often created great fun for them. He would wire old radio batteries together and the kiddies would form a circuit, and then the middle two would make a contact by kissing in Eskimo style by rubbing noses. Each time they would get a shock right on the centre of their brown flat noses. They loved it! At other times they would complete the circuit by dipping their fingers for a prize in a bowl of water, and of course the one who could withstand the shock and grasp the prize could keep it. Most nights the fun would end with a large bowl of tea in the centre of the table and each child would be given a long stick of macaroni. A race would then start to see who could drink the most. This method, of course, saved the missionary washing-up duties!

Concerning the children John wrote in his diary, in 1940:

"I might add that as usual the children occupy their time (not only on Sundays but often during the week) in memorizing Scripture. In just over a fortnight the elder children have practically mastered the first chapter of Romans, and the two younger children are making surprisingly good progress. I hope to get the children to learn in time the whole of the Epistle."

And from Pond Inlet, Christmas, 1942:

"We had some competitions for the Eskimo. The first one took the form of a Scriptural Examination. I distributed paper among them and then quoted a number of texts and asked for the references. This competition gave much pleasure. Samuel (age 14 years) was the winner with 18 out of 32, a very creditable performance since I am sure very few white people could have equalled it."

The northern missionary's life is very full indeed. The Eskimo people are friendly and seek his teaching. He must learn the language which, as V. Stefansson, the well-known Arctic traveller and pioneer, says, is harder to acquire than Russian, Swedish, French and Greek together, as well as visit his parishioners scattered so sparsely in this wilderness.

John Turner acquired the Eskimo language to a remarkable degree of accuracy and was in the period of his greatest literary accomplishment when his accident occurred. He had prepared a number of Old Testament Books for publication, revised the existing Eskimo New Testament, translated many new hymns and a remarkable number of Scriptural choruses, and had almost completed the translation of the Book of Common Prayer.

In the midst of these arduous tasks the sole regular contact with the outside world, other than by the annual mail ship, is through their radio receiving sets. Although radio reception in these areas is by no means dependable at all seasons, the isolated white men are usually able to keep abreast of current affairs. A

reference to this phase of the missionary's life occurs in John's letters home in October 1940.

"One continues to find the radio a pleasant link with the homeland. It is nice to feel that some of the programmes, at least, we are sharing with our loved ones at home. One such was Princess Elizabeth's delightful debut this evening. It might be of interest to the Princesses to know that their voices were heard at the extreme North of the British Empire.

After service this evening I turned on the radio so that the Eskimo could hear the electrical transcription of that broadcast and at the same time give the gist of what was being said. The Eskimo were very interested as they listened, especially as they had before them, on the walls around, pictures of the Royal Family. It was good to be able to tell them that the King and his family were true believers in the Lord Jesus. It was moving to hear Princess Elizabeth boldly follow the example of the King and Queen and acknowledge her faith in God."

In the darkness of the Arctic Night and the brightness of the summer days, the lone missionary fulfils his task and follows his vocation. Commander Peary, the conqueror of the North Pole, enumerated the forces militating against his victory as being, (1) the difficulty (sometimes almost insuperable) of conveying heavy baggage over steep, rugged, slippery mountains of ice, (2) the difficulty of the piercing, penetrating, paralyzing cold, and (3) the difficulties of the dense depressing darkness—the long polar night. So the workers in the spiritual realm have many problems with which they must contend. If the true experiences of John Turner are to be recorded, some of his many problems must be narrated.

As St. Paul said concerning his missionary labours, "*For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries*".<sup>1</sup>

And the works of these adversaries are manifold.

## CHAPTER 10

### "BESIDE ME THERE IS NO SAVIOUR"

#### THE TASK IN HAND—HEATHEN RELIGION—SIN— ANGAKOKS—CANNIBALISM—GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

THE task of evangelization which faced the young missionaries in 1929 could only have been done in a wisdom and a strength surpassing that of men. Their parish stretched southwards from Pond Inlet to Home Bay on the East coast of Baffin Land, south-eastwards to Repulse Bay on Melville Peninsula, and westwards to King William Island. For more than nine years during his eighteen years of service John Turner lived alone either as the sole Protestant missionary

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 16. 9

in the district, or when maintaining one of the small bases as a centre for long distance sledge trips to the more outlying regions. Few natives live in this area, probably not more than 2,500, yet only by constant travelling across thousands of miles of territory was he able to carry the message of redeeming love into every camp.

The Eskimo of these Northern parts, scarcely touched by the Gospel message in 1929 and almost pagan in their outlook, were not easily to be won. Even today, some twenty years later, it would appear that their pagan customs and old habits have outlasted in certain places the earthly ministry of God's faithful and diligent servant.

A few quotations from John Turner's diaries will give an adequate picture of these conditions as they exist today.

"May 18, 1941. Amongst these Eskimo one is up against the *old heathen religion*, which has still quite a firm hold, though most of the people are favourably disposed towards Christianity. Some, however, attempt to combine both the old and the new. Often when trouble comes they turn back to the old 'torngaks', or spirits. Their cult seems very much akin to spiritism (spiritualism).

One young fellow refused to observe some of the old customs when his elder brother died and for this reason was ostracised by the rest of the camp, though all apparently professed a desire to follow 'The Book'. There is one custom that is still almost universally observed even by most Baffinlanders and that is the naming of children after dead relatives. On the surface this seems a very innocent custom but there is so much more attached to it than what appears at first sight. I thought that in Baffinland at least all heathen significance had been lost, but I was surprised to learn that even amongst the most promising Christians there was considered to be 'something in it'. The old heathen belief was that the 'torngak' of the departed returned to the child or children named after the deceased one. Also recently an old man from near Fort Ross, while he was dying, told his sons that as he had great affection for them he was going to return after his decease to look after them, but since his 'torngak' was going to frequent a certain tract of country they must not go there after his death. This was very unfortunate, for that land was the most convenient route to the Trading Post. I used the story of Dives and Lazarus to discredit this belief.<sup>1</sup>"

The more awful result of some of these customs is exemplified in a later diary written while staying in a camp in Lord Mayor Bay, Boothia Peninsula, in February 1942.

"At this camp we stayed in a house which was by no means the most suitable, for it was not only small but indescribably filthy—even by Eskimo standards! These folks are loath to abandon completely their old heathen customs. Few if any of the sins found in Sodom are lacking here and in this uncongenial atmosphere any who would follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth<sup>2</sup> need

<sup>1</sup> St. Luke 16. 19-31.

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 14. 4

the mighty power of God. These children here have a special claim to our prayers.”

In March of the same year, while in a camp near Spencer Bay, King William Island, the missionary relates more of his experiences.

“This cold reception and lack of friendliness is explained by the fact that these folks still cling tenaciously to their old pagan customs. One of their ‘angakoks’ ‘witch doctors’ is a young fellow, possibly in his twenties. Incidentally he is a murderer and his young wife, who instigated the murder in order to be relieved of her former husband, is his accomplice in the ‘black magic’. In fact this young lady has had two previous husbands. The first, a white man, became insane and committed suicide by fixing up a rifle over his bed in an ‘Heath Robinson fashion’. This woman was at our service and seemed to be quite interested. This was the locality in which Sir John Franklin and his men perished from hunger and scurvy, in spite of the fact that the shallow waters around these coasts abound in ‘rock cod’. Beneath their feet there was good health-giving food in abundance yet little or no attempt seems to have been made to procure it, and consequently all the men perished. I pointed out what a wonderful parable this was for the Eskimo people. Many Eskimo are just like those white men. God’s Word is a ‘life-giving food’ to our souls, but how many Eskimo are proving it to be so although it is so near to their hands?”

Later on in the same missionary journey yet another contact was made with the heathen witch doctors and their practices.

“April 1942. Unfortunately over at their camp is a noted witch doctor, a young woman. She and her husband do their best to keep the folk following their old heathen customs. Although few of these Eskimo around here want to be led by the witch doctors, most, if not all, have great respect for their powers. Cases of sickness, and barrenness, etc., are attributed to the spell of some person who bears the victim some grudge. This seems to be firmly believed even by the Christians. I told them that Jesus had all power and when he was on earth was able to cast out evil spirits. If He indwells us, no evil spirit has any power over us.

One young fellow, who has a nasty rash on his head, attributes it to the machinations of a certain witch doctor who is displeased with him.”

At another camp Mr. Turner came into contact with one of the few Eskimo who has practised cannibalism and is still living. The history of this event is interesting.

“Two Eskimo, a man, Umaga, and a woman, Takornak, were travelling across the land between Igloodik and Arctic Bay just north of the Gifford River, when they encountered great difficulties in deep snow. While struggling with the sledge and urging the dogs forward they seemed to hear strange sounds in the distance which were like a dying animal in great pain, but at times interrupted with a human voice. Drawing nearer, the sounds though cracked and lacking in power seemed to carry some meaning, although the words were jumbled, and at times broken off altogether. Suddenly in the side of a snow drift, sitting

in a small shelter, the emaciated form of a woman was discovered, who weeping and in great sorrow, was mumbling:

‘I am no longer one who can be with my fellows because I have eaten my kinsfolk’.

By her side was a human skull with the flesh gnawed from the bones. Her face, thin with suffering and sorrow, turned piteously towards her visitors and she moaned repeatedly in almost unintelligible sounds,

‘I have eaten my husband and children’.

Apparently this family, stranded by poor travelling conditions and unsuccessful in the hunt had been reduced to the point of starvation. Their dogs had died and they had fed upon the carcasses and had even eaten the skins from their bedding. After the father and the two children had been frozen to death the woman as a last resort had fed upon their flesh. Returning to Igloolik the woman was, years later, re-married and is today the wife of the leading Eskimo there. She has been known to recount these experiences in the presence of her present husband!”

John Turner, with a heart filled with love for these needy people, prayerfully sought every opportunity to reach them all with the words of salvation. Here again there is evidence in the diaries of wonderful answers to his petitions.

“Our Scripture reading for the day (Daily Light, etc.) seemed to encourage us to pray that the Eskimo from the more distant camp might meet with us on the trail. We were not entirely surprised, therefore, when we called at a camp about 15 miles from the Trading Post to learn that four men from the camp in question had arrived the previous evening and had gone on to the post, and here we met them when we arrived at 8.30 p.m. Praise God for His wonderful over-ruling: ‘*Before they call I will answer*’, had been one of the promises the previous day. We gave these visitors something of His Word to take home with them. May He add His blessing to our feeble efforts to bring them to a knowledge of Him.”

In spite of many more problems in this Arctic missionary service, the faithfulness which reacheth unto the clouds<sup>1</sup> was gloriously manifested and His Promise, so freely given and so tenaciously claimed, was to be fulfilled—

“Since thou was precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.”<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER 11

### “I WILL EVEN MAKE A WAY IN THE WILDERNESS”

#### DIFFICULTIES—THE SERVANT HONOURED

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 36. 5

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 43. 4.

JOHN TURNER in his wilderness environment was not only to be opposed by the forces of heathendom alone, but also at times the influences of white civilization were not conducive to the progress of his missionary work. Government reports and other publications have indicated these difficulties in a clear and concise manner.

“However, contact with white men during the whaling and exploring days of the past few centuries has added other blood to the race.”<sup>1</sup>

“I cannot too strongly emphasize the duty of the white man to save a race they have done so much to destroy. The work has been made more difficult by the adoption of white man’s sin.”<sup>2</sup>

Any encounters with such problems were not to be too easy for a man whose personal standards were so high and whose vision of “*a perfect man*” in “*the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*”<sup>3</sup> was so bright and clear. During some periods of his ministry he found that any relationship with some of his fellow white men was almost impossible without jeopardizing his witness amongst the natives.

At one Christmastide, for instance, when John was living with another missionary, they were both invited to the annual Christmas dinner at the Post. Some unfortunate happenings during preceding months created the necessity of courteously declining this invitation. One of the white men, though, came later to urge the acceptance and was very insistent, even voluntarily promising that if only the missionaries would attend the white men would conform to their unusual standards during the mealtime. He urged that as the missionaries abstained from both alcoholic beverages and smoking that they, too, were most willing during the mealtime to act likewise. Faced by such insistence, generosity and apparent sincerity, the missionaries joined the festivities. However, before the meal was finished one of the men excused himself from the table, promising to return quickly. Shortly afterwards he was followed by another guest. As these men failed to return, fearing some reason for this unheard of breach of etiquette, Mr. Turner also excused himself in similar terms and hurried back to the mission, which he had left in charge of two orphan Eskimo girls who were in the care of the mission at the time. Quietly entering the mission he discovered the missing guests in the mission house with his native charges.

Such incidents repeated in manifold ways proved a constant hardship. Nevertheless John Turner never evaded his responsibilities ‘in Christ’ to his white companions and his diaries contain evidence of his zeal and love for them and his friendship with them.

“January 1943, Pond Inlet. Before we left for our Christmas rendezvous with the natives ... the H.B.C [Hudson’s Bay Company] Manager here gave the usual Annual Dinner and all the white inhabitants were invited. It was an enjoyable time ... has always treated us very well, we could not wish for

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<sup>1</sup> Government Report

<sup>2</sup> Captain Burnier, Report 1910

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 4. 13

anyone more considerate or helpful. We certainly have much to be thankful for in this, for missionaries are by no means popular, generally speaking.”

“March 1942, Fort Ross. The next day, Saturday, we covered about 32 miles and reached the camp north of Elizabeth Harbour. There we spent the weekend. On Sunday evening a sledge was reported but as it was Sunday and I do not encourage the Eskimo to travel unnecessarily on that day, I did not go outside to welcome it. It turned out to be the Police patrolling for the ship *St. Roch* [*sic*],<sup>1</sup> now wintering in Paisley Bay on the West coast of Boothia. The Sergeant, a Norwegian, said he thought it was Saturday! He and his constable and Eskimo helper, Ekoalak, came into the house where we were staying and joined us in our Services. The Sergeant and I sat up talking till about 2.45 a.m. so as I was up again at 6 a.m., twas a rather short night.”

“September 1942, Pond Inlet. The [*St. Roch*] was here several days taking on oil and putting ashore a number of things. Four of the men, including Sgt. Larsen, the skipper, came to our service on Sunday night. They preferred to join in the Eskimo Service rather than have a special service in English.”

In these histories of his travels John often speaks of the desire of the white men in the north to be helpful, and there is evidence of his many attempts either to speak to them or loan them literature in an earnest endeavour to win them for His Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Although he often felt that his labours were being undermined and that some white men did not appreciate his presence, this was by no means entirely true. Once again his Heavenly Father graciously kept His promise to his sincere and earnest servant that “*If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour*”<sup>2</sup>, and in September 1938 John Turner was awarded the Coronation Medal in recognition of his ‘Arctic Service’. Later in the following year (1939) he was made a Canon of the Cathedral of All Saints at Aklavik (North-West Territories) in the Diocese of the Arctic, a richly deserved promotion after ten years of pioneer activities in the North.

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<sup>1</sup> *Editor's note: St. Roch.*

<sup>2</sup> St. John 12. 26



## CHAPTER 12

### “I WILL BE WITH THEE”

SLEDGE TRAVELLING—DEEP SNOW—IN NEED OF DOG  
FOOD—BAD ICE CONDITIONS—A BROKEN  
SLEDGE—IGLOO BUILDING—CROSSING THE LAND—THE  
LORD SUPPLIES A NEED—ON THE LAND  
AGAIN—TRAVELLING COMPANIONS—ANSWERED  
PRAYERS—IN GRAVE DIFFICULTIES—ON THE MOVING ICE

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”—*Hebrews* 13. 5

“Men sometimes grow impatient at what they consider God’s slowness. But those rest periods are necessary for later fruitage. Nothing of serious import should be rushed”—*John Turner’s Diary*, 1940

The Lord’s Sufficiency

“I will go in the strength of the Lord,  
To the work He appoints me to do;  
In the joy which His smile shall afford  
My soul shall her vigour renew.  
His power will protect me from harm,  
His grace my sufficiency prove,  
I will trust His omnipotent arm,  
I will rest in His covenant love.”

*Author unknown, John Turner’s Diary, 1940*

WHEN John Turner had been in the North some three years there appeared in his diary a description of sledge travelling.

“Soon after midday we came into very rough ice which meant plenty of warm work. We wanted to reach another snowhouse, so we pushed on. ‘Pushed’ is hardly descriptive enough; ‘struggled’, ‘stumbled’, ‘pulled’, and ‘sweated’ are only some of the words needed to describe travelling in the dark, through rough ice and deep snow.”

Most travelling in the Arctic regions presents many hazards, difficulties and dangers, and it is so easy at times to be “*much discouraged because of the way*”<sup>1</sup>. Like David of old, John Turner in his journey oft “*encouraged himself in the Lord*”<sup>2</sup> and his diaries are redolent with the fragrance of God’s goodness at all times.

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers 21. 4

<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 30. 6

“February 25, 1932, Pangnirtung Fiord. Wind extremely heavy. Feed dogs with little meat found here. Repair kumotik (i.e. sledge) broken in rough ice. Walls of snow house nearly worn through by wind, and house half full of snow. Remain here, *Daily Light* very appropriate. ‘*When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet*<sup>1</sup>.’”

“March 3, 1932. We have had to leave one sledge and most of our load on the trail and proceed with dogs combined into one team. A bit better going this morning but terrible in the afternoon, through not only deep snow but water underneath it. The weight of snow on the top of the ice had made the water rise through the seal holes. This salt water when it sticks on the runners of the sledge makes the going extremely heavy, almost impossible. Stop at a little island about 3.30 p.m. Feet very wet with salt water, so walk up and down while house is being built, to prevent them freezing; have happy time of communion with the Lord at the same time.”

“March 10, 1932, Amitooakjoogoserk. Today *Daily Light* says ‘*My God shall supply all your need*’ and He cannot break His Word. I sent my native companion off on Monday with all the dogs in company with other hunters of this place to the floe edge. What a sorry sight our dogs were, thin and shivering, and especially when one remembers how well and fat they were when we left Pangnirtung. How slow they were as they started with hardly any load: When we left Pangnirtung they raced away with nearly half a ton... One of the hunters returned bringing some seal-meat and blubber and says that three seals have been secured by the men (my man getting one) and that all the dogs have been fed! Praise God! You cannot realize what a great relief it is to know that the dogs have been fed. We expect the hunters back tonight, in fact they have been seen in the distance and I trust that they will arrive with a good supply of dog feed. The Lord said, ‘*ALL your need*’ and there is no doubt that He will make His word good. Meanwhile as I remain here there is a good opportunity of teaching the people. I am having regular teaching times once a day and sometimes twice. There is a young lad here in the last stages of consumption. He is too bad to do much for but I trust that the Word of God which he is hearing daily may do a far greater healing work in his soul. The Lord grant that it may.”

“January 1936, from Pond Inlet to Pangnirtung. We had hoped to reach before night a camp only 13½ miles away but were disappointed. We found that the winds had broken and carried out the ice at the mouth of the fiord and the new ice formed was too thin to bear. We tried by the edge of the land, but broken ice was piled up too badly and there was very deep soft snow all around. We decided therefore to camp and try again in the morning, hoping that the ice would bear by that time. In the morning we found that the winds had been favourable throughout the night in keeping the ice in. The ice was none too thick and there were cracks through which some of the dogs fell occasionally, but we crossed safely to the other side.”

“March 1936, near Kivitok, Baffin Land. On Thursday evening just before we camped, as we rounded an island we came to a wide crack in the

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 3. 24

ice. I had stopped my dogs to let Arpak (native helper) get around where the crack was narrowest, but my dogs had still plenty of life in them and before I could stop them some had leapt across the crack to follow the other sledge and I was powerless to hold the sledge back. I could only give it a little push to straighten it and let it go and hope for the best. It seemed almost certain that even if the bow went across safely the stern of the sledge would slip back into the water and all my gear be spoilt, even if the whole sledge was not lost, for it was heavily loaded. Two things, however, were in my favour, the sledge was long and I had placed two heavy seals on the bow where the front of the sledge curves upward and the extra weight prevented the sledge from falling back into the water. The Lord's promise that morning was surely fulfilled—*'There shall no evil befall thee'*<sup>1</sup>."

Then a few days later:

"Yesterday the alarm wakened me at 5 a.m. but the wind was almost as strong as ever, so I pushed my head back into my sleeping bag for another 1½ hours, by which time the wind had dropped considerably though there was still heavy ground drift. We encountered rough ice for about a mile after the start and then two or three miles of fairly smooth ice. This did not last long and soon we were back in rough ice again. My native companion was troubled most by the rough ice, mostly on account of his sledge and at dusk his sledge runner buckled under as all the lashing broke. It was impossible for him to proceed so we stopped just where we were, though I had hoped to go on until 6 or 7 p.m. Our troubles, however, were by no means over. After chopping up a seal for the dogs—a job which takes a considerable time—we started to build an igloo. The snow was poor, so we took much longer than usual especially as we built a larger house for convenience over the weekend. We had just finished filling in between the blocks of snow with loose snow when the whole thing collapsed like a pack of cards. The only thing to do, of course, was to follow the man who did not succeed, and 'try again'."

The narrative of the sledge journeys of Canon Turner is so filled with daily stories of high adventure and his Heavenly Father's undertaking, that to present a true and fitting picture of his life would take many, many volumes. It is hoped that these will one day be written, that the Church and the world may realize afresh that "*the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*"<sup>2</sup>, and loves His children upon earth.

That this book may be a true account of the real 'Operation Canon' a few more incidents are included to exemplify other difficulties of the life of the Arctic missionary, although the reader must bear in mind that these are but a few isolated events torn from the glorious pattern of God's daily beneficence over many years.

"November 1940, between Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet. The day before yesterday was another strenuous day. The snow was soft and deep but no protection from the rocks beneath so we could keep no ice on the runners. In spite of much exertion it is doubtful whether we covered more than three miles. Yesterday we found our hopes realized and the snow was much better

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 91. 10

<sup>2</sup> Revelation 19. 6

though still far from good. At least it was hard in parts. We stopped once to 'ice up' (put ice on the runners of the sledge) on a lake and soon after had to cross a rocky ridge and then make a steep and rocky descent. Immediately after this we came to an almost impossible hill to descend. We went to inspect and decided that not only must we take off the dogs but also remove everything breakable from the sledge. We managed to get everything down without mishap, thank God, though it took about 3½ hours, and it was after 6 p.m.... We went on for another hour in the glorious moonlight that we have been enjoying lately and then camped at the end of another lake. As a result of our strenuous week's work, it was 1.30 p.m. when we woke today (Sunday) but nevertheless the remaining hours have been very blessed. You all (Mother and friends at home) have been much in my thoughts and prayers. Angnadloainok informs me that he wants to go home. I think he is afraid of making the long journey back with only his young brother. He is only a young fellow and is only now building snow houses for the first time. I had to help him the first night. He has not been long married either and possibly is anxious to get back to his wife whom we left at Strathcona Sound. ... The Lord's messages today are very encouraging. *'I will bless thee ... and thou shalt be a blessing' ... and 'I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee with the shadow of Mine hand'.*<sup>1</sup>

On the trail the problem of an adequate supply of dog food for the team is always present.

"January 1941, Clyde River. Yesterday the weather—after long waiting—was perfect, and we were up again at 4.30 a.m. and away after 7.30 a.m. We found a place where seal holes were plentiful but in spite of this we had very little success. The Lord had not yet seen fit to grant us the dog food necessary for resuming our journey. We each stood at several holes. Aloofoo fired three times without success. Idlout also fired twice without getting a seal. I had two chances and missed one. The first time, however, though I did not hit the seal, the concussion stunned it and I was able to harpoon it quickly, killing it outright at the same time. It was not a large one and while we continued hunting my dogs attacked the sledge and devoured half of it before they could be stopped, but still there was some excellent meat left for ourselves and the remainder will help feed the dogs later. ... I have been without sugar for about ten days and for some time have been short of biscuits (though locust beans are proving a good substitute). Paraffin was all but finished. ... The Eskimo at the camp we went to were very hard up and their poor dogs, those that remained, were a pitiful sight. I would like to have given them a good meal but had not got sufficient, though we did give two or three of the weakest some blubber. One of the dogs was too weak even to eat. ... Next morning while we were at breakfast one dog got over the snow house into the store and this caused a stampede amongst the remaining dogs. Our snow house was unable to stand the weight of the dogs passing over it and it collapsed on top of us. It took us some time to clear up the mess but fortunately the weather

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 12. 2; Isaiah 51. 16

was calm and mild (—20° F.) at the time. We were able to clean up the mess as a storm broke upon us.”

“February 16, 1941, Middle of Baffin Land on way to Igloolik. On Tuesday there was a strong head wind and drifting snow and the temperature registered —38°F. The prospects were not too pleasant but as the first big waterfall was near, I decided to take part of our load and get that up and then if possible return for the rest the same day or else return to the house to sleep. The wind was so unbearably cold in our faces that we soon determined to dump our load and return to the snow house, but changed our minds and went on to the waterfall which was only about a mile farther on. The fall itself was a straight drop of 50 feet or more so of course it was impossible to ascend there, but to one side was a steep rocky incline, and it was here where we had to climb. We carried our load up on our backs, except my large travelling box weighing about 200 pounds which we hauled up by the dogs, together with a barrel of paraffin. Idlout almost froze his feet and I slightly froze my chin and ear but that is a common occurrence and not at all serious. Next day the thermometer was down to —47° F. but fortunately the wind was not quite so strong; nevertheless it was strong enough to drift the snow along the ground and it was extremely uncomfortable to our faces, but we soon reached the fall and, praise God, had much less trouble than was anticipated. We were able to get up a small load on the sledge in spite of the extreme incline of the ascent. The dogs pulled well. Then we made two journeys using our bear skins for a sledge and thus we got up everything and were loaded up and were ready to start again before 1 p.m. ... and so again we were able to praise God for obstacles overcome. He had not granted us the human aid we had expected, but in its place He had given *more* grace, and we found that ‘sufficient’ for us.”

The choice of suitable travelling companions who are both willing and able to accompany the itinerant Northern missionary is a matter of constant prayer.

“February 1941, [Foxy] Basin, on way to Igloolik. On Tuesday morning we brought our need of dog food to the Lord as usual, and as this was good deer country expected He would bring some deer to us. However, He speedily answered our prayer in quite a different way. Only a few minutes after we started we sighted a sledge coming in our direction, and it proved to be Pewatok—probably the best hunter in [Foxy] Basin. He had, as usual, a fine team of dogs, and a load of walrus meat. It seemed rather a pity that we should meet him here and so early in the day. A few years earlier, he seemed to have little interest in spiritual things but since then his keenness to hear has steadily increased. I would like to be able to spend a little time with him but do not feel that I could sacrifice a day. It did not seem to be the Lord’s will somehow. I gave them their Scripture Union card which they were anxious to have, and gave his two tiny boys the customary package of sweets, and Pewatok on his part gave me a sack of walrus meat already chopped for the dogs. He bemoaned the fact that it was so early in the day and we could not camp and have some time together, and I heartily agreed, though I felt that I must hurry on. He was in no hurry, he said, and throwing off his load, prepared to turn back with us so that we could camp together that night and have a chance of

hearing more. So not only did the Lord provide dog food, but also he sent a helper to take part of our load and go ahead of us! Hallelujah!

We camped early in the afternoon out of consideration for Pewatok and had a good time over the Word in the evening. In the morning Pewatok brought out his New Testament and asked to have various passages explained. We had another nice time over the Scriptures and then talked of other things. He said that I could have all the dog food that I required from his camp. I mentioned that I must look for another travelling companion as Idlout complains of a hernia and ought not to undertake anything strenuous. Pewatok decided that the business in hand was not urgent and, as there was plenty of food at his camp, that he himself would travel with me. 'We need to hear more of this', he said, touching his Bible. There is no one I would choose in preference to Pewatok as a travelling companion. He has, I should say, the best team around here and is a really competent hunter and traveller. I cannot help feeling that this is the Lord's arranging. May He grant too that Pewatok may come to a fuller knowledge of the Saviour!"

This prayer was wonderfully answered on Sunday, January 25, 1942, at Moffet Inlet.

"I have no doubt of the sincerity of Pewatok's faith, so last Sunday I felt led to suggest baptism and that evening he was baptized. Beforehand he went diligently through the service to get a clearer conception of the vows he was about to take. Soon after the service we had a quiet little communion service. There were only three of us but the promise holds good. *'Where two or three are gathered together in My name.'*"

In a striking way John Turner not only accepted the promises of God but claimed them from God as his right in Christ.

"March 1941, en route to Fort Ross. I made a mistake in reading *Daily Light* yesterday, reading the portions set for today, but I am sure the Lord intended it to be so for no collection of Scriptures could possibly be more appropriate to our circumstances. *'How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord, forever? Can a woman forget, etc.? The trial of your faith, etc.'*<sup>2</sup> (see *Daily Light* for Evening, March 30).

Again in error I read tomorrow's portion this morning, and how reassuring: *'My God shall supply ALL your need, etc.'*<sup>3</sup> Again the Psalms for the day (the 30th) are most appropriate, and we have been rejoicing over them in our evening devotion as those who find great spoil. *'The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand: and fillest all things living with plenteousness. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him. Who feedeth the hungry ... who giveth fodder unto the cattle ... and filleth thee with the flour of wheat'*<sup>4</sup>.

We have only enough beans for the morning and our rolled oats will make but one more good meal, but we still have plenty of *biscuits and flour*.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew 18. 20

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 13. 1; Isaiah 49. 15; 1 Peter 1. 7

<sup>3</sup> Philippians 4. 19

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 145. 15, 16, 19; 146. 6; 147. 9, 14 (P.B.V.)

... When I came up with Pewatok I joyfully discovered that he had got the bear though it was a small one and had already fed his dogs on a great part of it. Nevertheless, our need for the immediate present had been supplied and we thanked God. *However*, His word had said, '*according to His riches in glory*' and this small bear when He had other and larger bears in abundance in these parts was not '*according to His riches*', so we knew that this could not be the whole amount promised nor the final answer to our prayer. We loaded the remains of the bear on the sledge and started off back to our load which was a long distance off and already it was getting on toward 7 p.m. Suddenly Pewatok spotted a bear beyond the barrier of rough ice. The dogs got wind and turned into the rough ice and got stuck. I hurriedly freed some of my best dogs while Pewatok did the same. Then he ran off with some of his dogs, while I got my rifle to follow, but realized it would not do to leave some of the dogs behind me for they would undoubtedly be up to some mischief, especially since mine had not been fed. I therefore stopped and set all the dogs free before following myself. When only a short distance off, some of the dogs turned back. I did my best to make them go on but to no purpose. They were determined to go back to the sledge so I went back with them and harnessed them up again, and taking them some distance from the sledge and out of wind and sight of it, tethered them to a piece of ice.

By this time Pewatok, the dogs, and the bear, were a long way off and worse still there was no indication of the way they had gone. I felt sure that Pewatok and the dogs would overtake the bear and then Pewatok had no rifle with him... I imagined him waiting in vain for my arrival and then having difficulty in getting the dogs to leave the bear and return. Already it was getting dark. When would troubles end? I went some distance in the direction that the returning dogs had indicated and then climbed a high pile of rough ice and listened, but the wind was too strong. I went on a bit farther, but again I listened in vain. It was getting dark and I did not want to lose the sledge as well, so I thought I had better return. I followed my own tracks carefully until I came to the place where I had first listened and then close by I lost my tracks on a hard patch of snow. Thinking I could judge my direction well enough I did not stop and look carefully for them but went on. After a time I realized I should be getting nearer the sledge, but did not recognize the ice. First I went in one direction and then in the opposite one in the hope of crossing my outward tracks, but there was no sign of them. I chided myself for foolishly getting off the tracks and started to go back to the place where I had separated from them. I thought that I might start the dogs howling by shouting, so I called out. There was no response. Later though I heard Pewatok's voice and fortunately he was not far off from the sledge. The bear had gone to the southward and he had not been able to follow it. We could not reach our load that night, so Pewatok built a tiny house and we crawled in after giving the dogs their belated meal. We had no primus, no light, but munched frozen bear meat and biscuits before lying down. I was too cold to sleep much—at least one foot was—and I did not want to risk freezing it. The temperature in the house next morning was minus 18° F. and outside it must have been minus

30° F. With no proper meal we felt the cold badly when we started at about 7 a.m.”

Two days later in the evening.

“... I finished building the snow house and prepared a ‘mug-up’ and kept looking out for signs for Pewatok who had gone out for a bear. The daylight faded but the moon, half-full, was bright. Midnight passed, and then Pewatok’s head appeared in the doorway. The dogs have had a feed, he announced. Praise God! He had fulfilled His promise. The bear was a full-grown female and fat with lots of blubber so this was according to His riches. Furthermore, I can testify that never before have I tasted such lovely bear meat. It was 4 a.m. when we turned in eventually but of course not before remembering the Giver of *‘every good and perfect gift’* and returning thanks.”

The danger of moving sea ice is also recorded.

“Easter Day 1942, near Fort Ross. Last Monday we met trouble that might have ended much more unpleasantly than it did, but for the Grace of God. About half an hour after we had started, while attempting to cross a smooth patch of ice it gave way beneath the sledge, for it was new and we had failed to realize it. I could feel the ice giving and shouted to the dogs to keep going but Pewatok called them to stop, and they stopped with the result that the sledge settled down in the water and all our load was in danger of perishing. Fortunately my two more important travelling boxes were on the front of the sledge and were accessible and Pewatok soon got them off the sledge. With the bow of the sledge lighter it lifted, and we were able to start going again but a small pan of thick ice in our road made matters worse than before. The sledge was plowing its way through the ice when one runner went over this pan which was too thick to give, with the result that it threw the sledge over on the side and things which up to now had been dry were tipped into the water. I feared that if we broke the ice which was partially supporting the other runner in an attempt to put the sledge on an even keel, the whole thing would sink. For a long time we were at a loss what to do. Pewatok fell in the water above his knees in attempting to right the front of the sledge, but eventually he got one or two of the heavy things from the middle of the sledge and then while he levered up the nose of the runner that was under water with a spear, I started off the dogs, and fortunately we were able to keep going and reach thick ice—though as we went we plowed a furrow. On reaching firm ice we set about repairing the damage as best we could and for hours we were beating ice off skins and pouring water out of boxes and pots and pans, etc. By the time we had loaded up again it was after 4 p.m. so practically the whole day had been lost. We camped about an hour later since we still had much to do as a result of this experience. That night we were better able to estimate the damage. The things on top of my smaller travelling case had all been in the water but I am thankful to say that nothing of importance was badly affected. My Bible and other books had not been on the bottom and were not injured. My cine camera and some other valuables including my concertina were in the larger box and into this not enough water had been able to penetrate to do any damage. Our rifles had been on the top of the load and were not at all



wet. My sleeping bag was too wet to be of any use for a long time for it will take ages to dry, but I can easily do without it. Most of Pewatok's spare clothes and books were badly soaked."

"March 1942, on the moving ice near Fort Ross. The ice on which we were travelling was moving steadily to the north and was touching the fixed ice, but 'rubble ice' which we would have to cross was not sufficiently frozen together to be safe for a sledge. Idlout, who went over to try it with a spear, had great difficulty in getting back. It was getting dark and was extremely cold, and the prospect of spending the night on this damp new ice without shelter was not very pleasant. I felt sure, however, that the Lord would not allow us to endure that, and He didn't.

"After a short time the ice touched at a safer place quite handy and we hurried across. The dogs were most unwilling, and we had difficulty in getting the sledge through the rubble caused by the grinding of the floes. To crown it all our sledge tipped over in the process. It was 11 p.m. before we were able to camp. It was very cold and our boots were frozen stiff but in a couple of hours we were enjoying the modest comforts of a snow house. All through the night the roar of the grinding ice floes was terrific and awe-inspiring. How wonderfully our God takes care of us—*'The steps of a man (it does not say "good" in the original) are ordered by the Lord'*<sup>1</sup>. Praise God! As usual *Daily Light* was most appropriate yesterday. *'He ... preserveth the way of His saints.'* *'The Lord your God ... went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in.'* *'Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.'*<sup>2</sup>"

Thus this man of God travelled, seeking lost sheep for his Master's fold, fighting each day the good fight of Faith and following after righteousness. In all John Turner's trips, covering well over 25,000 miles of hard winter travelling, he had nought but praise for His loving kindnesses.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."<sup>3</sup>

## CHAPTER 13

### "WHEN THOU PASSEST THROUGH THE WATERS"

#### OPPOSITION AND EVIL INFLUENCES—FALSE PROPHETS— COMMITTED TO HIM THAT JUDGE TH RIGHTEOUSLY— AMONGST THE PROSELYTIZERS

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 37. 23

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 2. 8; Deuteronomy 1. 32, 33; Psalm 34. 19

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 23. 6

THERE are times when the missionaries of the Master are cast into the fiery furnace not only of opposition and difficulty, but also of testing, temptation, and divers evils.

Many white people have in the past criticized Christian missions and found it convenient to refer to certain incidents, or mistakes of young and inexperienced missionaries, to support their criticisms. It is not unusual to discover that many such attacks are founded on misunderstanding of the facts, misrepresentation by untrustworthy people, or a poor interpretation of actual events. Such experiences can often be most difficult for the sincere Christian minister, especially if he labours in isolated areas.

John Turner's life was not unmarked by these experiences, which, faithfully recorded in his diaries, will enlighten the reader yet further concerning his valiant fight for the Faith. In one of his last letters to his mother he wrote,

"December 1946, Moffet Inlet. '*Against principalities, against powers.*' I am sorry to say that recently two or three Eskimo not far from here have set themselves up as 'prophets' to their own people. By their fruits it is evident that they are false prophets and it is good that the Scriptures give ample warning that such would arise. We pray that this may turn out to the furtherance of the gospel. Two Eskimo arrived last week to tell me the news and I hastily wrote letters to those concerned and also epistles of warning to all the rest. Fortunately there were some other visitors here at the same time so that we were able to send our letters in all directions without delay."

"March 1947. It certainly does seem that the trouble I mentioned has turned out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel. Most of the Eskimo seemed quite alarmed, realizing that this was the work of the Evil one and a number who had not bothered very much about spiritual things now appear to be taking some interest. Evalak and Aooloo his son-in-law have camps close together and it was there that the trouble began. It seems that Aooloo's wife began acting strangely last fall. She set herself up as a teacher and to give authority to her words pretended to be able to perform ridiculous little miracles. Probably as a result of her influence her half-brother and her husband were affected. When some visitors from Fury and Hecla Straits called by their camps on their way to the Post to trade, they, too, became influenced, so much so that they all became abnormal and one young fellow lost his reason for quite a long time. Aooloo, Evalak and son went along to the post with these visitors and influenced several of the Eskimo at the camps on the way, who in turn became abnormal. It is doubtful whether one of these has completely recovered mentally. Immediately Evalak and his party had returned to their camps, two Eskimo arrived, as I mentioned, to report this matter and seek advice.

As is usually the case, the false prophets had mixed a little Scripture in with their teaching with the result that a number of the Eskimo were half inclined to believe them.

Our epistles, however, seemed to have the desired effect. Thank God! And now most of those who were influenced for evil realized the danger they were in and will, I feel, be more careful in the future. The whole affair was

obviously the work of evil spirits<sup>1</sup>, and one fellow under their influence claimed to be God. When he arrived, however, at Christmas he immediately confessed his wickedness and seemed truly sorry for what he had said and done. He found much comfort in Psalm 51. Aooloo and his wife called a few weeks ago and they too seemed sorry for what they had done. The woman is still 'mental', though her husband says she is improving gradually. I had a letter also from the young fellow who lost his reason, and he thanked me for writing to admonish him, and said how grateful he was that his reason had been restored. Evalak and his son have also called twice since I sent out those epistles but I fear that they do not show any sign of true repentance, though they do seem very anxious to please us. None of the Eskimo will call by their camp now so they feel very isolated. Evalak's son denied saying a number of things of which he was accused; he said people had misinformed me. I told him that whether I had been misinformed or not the chief thing was the influence which his words had on those who heard him and this influence I knew was entirely evil.

The Spirit of God would never make people say and do the things which those people who had been influenced said and did. Evalak's son Eperk, has always had a very high opinion of himself, and I know he will find it hard to confess that he was in error. Although the trouble is over for the moment, I cannot feel that we have seen the last of it so prayer is needed that the devil, who will undoubtedly return to the fight, may be completely defeated."

The incidents recorded above occurred after the veteran missionary had laboured consistently for nearly seventeen years amongst these people. Perhaps the reader can envisage the perils in which the young Christian Church of the Northern wastes stands now that their faithful pastor and friend has left them.

In the midst of this wrestling with the enemy, even the missionary's character, reputation and person are not exempt, being brought under constant bitter attacks. In 1939, before he returned home for furlough, John Turner employed various native families at Moffet Inlet to do certain tasks for him. As the natural Eskimo is a very carnal person both in word and deed, the missionary's kindness was most evilly repaid, but the results of the wickedness [were] not known to John Turner until some three years later.

"Christmas Day 1942, Pond Inlet. *'Against the wiles of the devil.'* There was only one thing to mar the pleasure of a happy day, and that was the news of having to deal with a very unpleasant affair. I hesitate to mention it, but this would be a very one-sided account of things if I omitted it, and in any case it will serve to show how active the enemy is, and how much we need your prayers. While I was home on furlough a woman made some serious and absolutely untrue remark about me. She possibly thought that I would never return to the North. Until the spring though, I was quite ignorant of the unwholesome rumour that had gone far and wide. I do believe that there were many who refused to believe it but unfortunately there were some who would like to think that there was some truth in it. Angnawyak was the first to acquaint me

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy 4. 1

of the story and I immediately summoned the woman in question and made her answer for herself before Angnawyak. Of course she could not substantiate the story, and denied even having said anything of the sort. All I could do was to urge the woman to make known the truth so that 'the work' would not suffer. The matter virtually dropped until a few weeks ago when a young man came along obviously distressed in mind.

He went straight to his subject. He had been the person to hear those unpleasant remarks about me from the woman's own lips, and there is little doubt about the fact that it was he who helped to spread the tale. Now, however, he himself had become the victim regarding some further remarks the woman had made more recently. He said that he had been inclined to believe what the woman had first told him about me but now that he had some obvious evidence of her untrustworthiness, he accepted her word no longer. I told the young fellow that at the first opportunity we would have this poor woman face to face and do our best to clear up the matter. Of course I could safely leave my defence in the Lord's hands,<sup>1</sup> but I felt that for the work's sake it was essential that I should do all in my power to counteract the effect of this evil report.

This Christmas was our first opportunity of meeting the woman together. I called her and the young fellow along to our snow house and invited Samuel in as a witness. I might have invited more witnesses but the size of our snow house would not allow it. At first the woman denied having circulated the evil report, but when the young fellow recalled the words she had used she remarked quietly, 'Did I say that?' He assured her that she did and she remained silent. When he reminded her of some of her more recent untrustworthy stories she tried to justify herself but was not very convincing. When they had finished I turned to Samuel and said, 'You were living over at Moffet Inlet with me and know very well my mode of life. You know there is no truth in this story that has been circulating'. Samuel assured me that he himself had not even heard the story nor had he known any such evil to charge me with. I then tried to show the woman the great evil she had done—not so much to me personally, that did not matter a great deal as far as I was concerned—but to the Lord's work here, by putting a stumbling block in the path of the Eskimo and others. I urged the three of them to do their utmost to counteract the evil done. I am afraid, however, that some amount of evil had already been caused, but we have a wonderful God who is able to turn even curses into blessings."

Added to these trials and temptations to despondency in the heat of the conflict, the missionary needed much grace to face the incessant subtleties of active Roman Catholic opposition. In the same summer of 1929 the Roman Catholic Church established its mission at Pond Inlet and thus this small settlement, hundreds of miles from civilization, with but three hundred and eighty natives from widely scattered camps trading into its store, was to be the scene of rivalry in the name of Christianity.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 2. 23

The subsequent history of these missions, although closely connected with the life of Canon Turner, must not be permitted to colour this narrative too greatly. John reporting to his headquarters in 1931 said:

“The R.C’s. [Roman Catholics] have been more active this year and just recently I felt led to give some direct warning against them. Hitherto I had been content with, very occasionally, pointing out one or two of the chief differences between the R.C. teaching and that of the Scriptures (e.g. re mariolatory [*sic*], [Corporel] Presence, etc.), but when I learned of definite attempts on the part of our adversaries to pervert the people—and you are not ignorant of Rome’s devices—I felt the time had come for something more aggressive. We had always, of course, exalted the Scriptures, and this is where we have a great advantage over any false teaching. The people have a great reverence for the Word of God, and any appeal to it is final.”

How effective this prayerful ministry and witness proved in the North, is amply exemplified in the recent words of a Roman Catholic bishop who is responsible for that district. His words were reported in *La Presse*, Montreal, October 23, 1946:

“Of the three hundred and fifty natives of Pond Inlet where ‘oblates’ established a post in 1929, not a single person in good health has consented to receive baptism ... it is not superfluous to note that a protestant missionary lives here.”

The eighteen years of service at Pond Inlet demonstrate a glorious triumph for the Reformation principles and historic Scriptural Faith of the Church of England, upheld by a single minister who was faithful to his vocation. It would be a mistake, though, to think that this aggressive opposition to the Protestant cause was easy to bear.

It is a hard thing for primitive Eskimo to see white men, professing to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, who will not shake hands or greet one another. Bribery, untruth, misrepresentation and baser methods are not new to students of history, but to the isolated natives of the Northern darkness they provide nothing but misunderstanding, and a hindrance to full spiritual development. Old native men and women in these Arctic wastes, by nature given to hospitality, friendly and happy, have found themselves threatened with eternal punishment if they entertain a Protestant missionary. New Testaments and Prayer Books have been confiscated and burned by the servants of Rome. One good example of these methods is given in John Turner’s diary for March, 1946.

“Those who have been asked here why they follow the priests have acknowledged that they have no desire to do so but simply respond to pressure. The priest tells them all that unless they follow him they will die. His latest story is that the great chief of Protestant teachers (presumably the Archbishop of Canterbury) has now become an R.C. so it is foolish to follow the ‘teachers’.”

Roman Catholic priests in the North have been known to support such claims by showing pictures of the hierarchy of the Protestant Church, extracted

from the daily newspaper of civilization, in which they are wearing vestments which the priests [claim] are essentially Roman.

Throughout the past eighteen years the Church of England staff has nearly always been outnumbered by three to one, but as “*He can save by many or by few*”, and His Word is the Sword of the Spirit to those who wear the helmet of salvation, the victory has been sure.

During his missionary journey in 1940 Canon Turner reported one of his many brushes with the Roman Catholic priests which may prove interesting.

“This morning just as we started our service in one of the snow houses here, I was surprised to see one of the priests coming in.

... Father—— is a very ardent Romanist who misses few opportunities of proselytizing. One cannot doubt his sincerity and undoubtedly it was his conscientiousness that made him come to our service. One could not help admiring him for it. He listened quietly throughout our service. The Scripture Union (of which most of our natives are regular daily readers) portion seemed rather appropriate, being St. Mark 7. 1–23, and spoke of those who made the Word of God of no effect through their tradition. In my comments I told the Eskimo that the Word of God is our only guide, neither I nor the priest here was to be followed except in as far as we adhered to the Scriptures. After we had finished our service the priest got up and said he had a word for the people. He said that the ‘teachers’ (as we are called by the Eskimo) differed much amongst ourselves and were no guides to the people, but the Church of Rome was one the whole world over and only through the priests who were infallible could the people get the Truth. He also mentioned the subject of saint worship which I had been attacking very strongly. I feel that there is nothing more dishonouring to God than mariolatry and saint worship. They are a wilful breach of the First Commandment.”

In the dim recesses of that snow house with perspiring natives crowded together, with their dark eyes intent upon the speakers and the flickering light of the blubber lamps casting strange shadows on the igloo walls, the controversy continued.

“Father —— said that we knew that the saints were with God, and so it was right to seek their help. He gave no Scriptural reference, of course. He quoted 2 Peter 3. 16 to prove that it was not right for the folk to attempt to understand the Scriptures without the guidance of the priests. I allowed the priest to have his say and then replied. I said that it was perfectly true that there were different kinds of ‘teachers’, but I reminded them that I had said previously that we were not to take man as our guide, but simply the Word of God Himself. I quoted John 7. 17 and said although it was true there was much that was ‘hard to be understood’ in the Scriptures just as there is in all God’s works, yet it only requires a sincere mind and a willingness to do His will to be able to understand all that is necessary (to our salvation). I disagreed that the Church of Rome was as united as the priest would have us believe ...

How were we to know that the priests were the only true guides? I asked. Were we to accept blindly their word for it? I saw nothing in the Bible to that effect. He had said that our Scriptures contained errors, but the priest was

unable to produce any evidence of the fact though I invited him to do so. One of the Eskimo had asked him to do the same thing and had received no enlightening reply.

I was very conscious of the Lord's help in speaking, and I cannot help feeling that the whole affair will turn out to the furtherance of the Gospel and not to the advantage of the Church of Rome as intended. The Psalms for the day again seemed most appropriate, Praise God!"

How reminiscent this is of the words of John Bunyan:

"Then did Mr. Greatheart, Mr. Contrite, Mr. Holy Man, Mr. Dare-Not-Lie and Mr. Penitent with their weapons, go forth to meet him. Now the monster, at first was very rampant, and looked upon these enemies with great disdain; but they so belaboured him, being sturdy men-at-arms, that they made him make a retreat... And it is verily believed by some that this beast will certainly die of his wounds."

But even John Bunyan never conceived of Greatheart as going into battle by himself. Perhaps now that Greatheart has been called from the fray, his comrades of history will step forward to fill the breach and meet the raging of the seriously wounded enemy.

## CHAPTER 14

### **"MAKETH MANIFEST THE SAVOUR OF HIS KNOWLEDGE BY US IN EVERY PLACE"**

#### **ON FURLOUGH**

IT is natural that the thoughts of the missionary in the Church in far distant places should often turn homeward, and the longings come to see familiar faces and embrace loved ones. John Turner had a great affection for his home, and a deep love for his mother. These emotions, though deep and intense, seldom caused, as they so often do, soul distressing home sickness, for he found true communion and satisfaction in prayer around the Throne of Grace. When reading his diaries the impression is sometimes given that he managed to participate in a real, though spiritual way, with many of the events at home.

"January 4, 1942. We are reminded over the radio from London that today commences the Universal Week of Prayer. I am still the more glad therefore to be at home with you all and with all Christians throughout the world."

He never seemed to forget a loved one's birthday, and special prayers were offered on that day. The open-air meetings on the beaches or in the streets in which he formerly was such an effective and appreciated witness were always remembered, and on his knees he battled for the Faith with his friends in other places. In order to keep pace with events at home a pile of 'last year's' Church

papers and periodicals were always kept by the side of the meal table, and while eating, in order that no time should be lost, he would also digest their contents.

“October 12, 1941, Moffet Inlet. My meal times have been very long—though rendered pleasant and profitable—by perusing *The English Churchman* that Miss Todd so kindly sent.”

“July 1943, Moffet Inlet. The periodicals, though some are now two years old, have been much appreciated. Especially *The English Churchman*, which made many a meal time much more enjoyable and profitable. I finished them only yesterday.”

An impression that John Turner did not look forward to his furlough must not be created, for he deeply appreciated the spiritual fellowship of his praying friends, and the atmosphere of his mother’s house was a comfort to him. During his years of service he returned to England only twice. At first in 1933–34 and again in 1939–40. His friends noticed during the latter visit that his thoughts seemed to turn often northwards and the time did not seem to pass quickly enough before he could return to his deeply loved people in the land of his adoption.

Although at home and on furlough, John still retained his sense of vocation, and the urgency of his message burdened his heart. The man who so often knelt in snow and ice and braved the opposition of the elements and the hindrance of sinful man, now in the midst of ‘civilization’ and the progress of the 20th century[,] displayed the same zeal, courage, and sincerity of purpose.

An incident that occurred at a Glasgow railway station, and its sequel on the train journey southward, is of untold interest to those who would seek to know the truth of this man’s life. James Stewart, the founder of the European Evangelistic Crusade, was paying one of his many flying visits to his native Glasgow. In showing his ticket at the barrier he handed the ticket collector a Gospel tract urging him to read it. “What!” exclaimed the ticket man, “another of you religious chaps giving away leaflets?” “What do you mean?” asked Stewart. “Just now a tall chap gave me one of these things”, the collector replied, as he waved Stewart’s tract in the air.

Thinking that the company of ‘another religious chap’ might be interesting on the long journey southwards, Stewart asked to be shown the carriage which the ‘tall chap’ had occupied. Soon both men were deep in conversation. They possessed so much in common and both were filled with the same passionate love for the unconverted. “What’s your name?” asked Stewart. “Turner, Jack Turner of the B.C.M.S. Arctic Mission”, replied his newly-found companion. “What does B.C.M.S. stand for?” enquired Stewart. “Is that a Baptist or a Brethren society?” Turner explained the meaning of the initials B.C.M.S. Stewart looked at Turner. “But you can’t be a member of the Church of England and distributing tracts. I’ve never heard of such a thing.” Turner laughed heartily and explained that within the borders of the Church of England there was a large band of keen, faithful people who did such things. Stewart was hard to convince. A member of the Church of England giving away tracts! He had seen many strange things in his widely travelled life but this was a new experience. John



Turner saw incredulity written on the young Scottish evangelist's face. To give convincing proof he took down his travelling bag from the luggage rack and opening it he displayed his surplice, scarf and hood which he had been using over the weekend, during deputation services. This final revelation was nearly too much for Stewart. A member of the Church of England giving away tracts—well! Perhaps that might be true. But a clergyman of the Church of England doing so! That seemed impossible. Yet the evidence was before him. The collector's testimony, the broad-shouldered young missionary, the suitcase containing clerical attire. He bowed before the inevitable, and both praised God together. By the time the train had conveyed Turner to his destination they had talked long and earnestly of the work that lay nearest and dearest to their hearts—one, of his passion for the scattered Eskimo, and the other, of his yearnings for Europe's suffering millions. In relating this story James Stewart said, "Jack Turner was one of the finest Christians I have ever met".

John Turner was an acceptable and efficient deputation speaker for his missionary society as may be well imagined. The following letter from a young boy in England reveals the enthusiasm for his work. Only those who knew him, though, ever realized how hard he found preaching, and how inadequate he felt himself.

"Canon Turner visited this small town in the early days of World War II. I do remember this visit very well as he gave the most interesting talks on the Arctic and its peoples. There was snow on the ground at the time and the Canon was in his element as we boys stood aside and watched him run and crack his whips. He also brought a model 'igloo' and we all had a very interesting time trying to build it, and even though it was a model there was still a 'knack' in building it, and the Canon was the only one who could overcome the difficulty.

Canon John Turner was a great man and it will take an awful long time for another servant to do such work as he did in his time with the Eskimo."

One of the most revealing incidents that occurred to John while he was at home happened in 1934. Just a few weeks before he was due to sail back to the mission field he developed an acute attack of appendicitis. The operation was successful and he soon returned for convalescence. As the time for his sailing drew near an attack of pleurisy prolonged his recovery and medical advisers were strongly against his departure. His surgeon, somewhat concerned about his patient, paid him a surprise visit, and discovered to his dismay that John was not in bed, but sleeping in his old boyhood tent in the garden despite a late frost—in order to harden himself to go back to the Arctic. His determination and these methods won over both doctor and the committee of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, and all gave their consent for his return. As soon as the ship reached his station he wrote home saying, "Thank God I am once more at Pond Inlet".

Could there ever have been a more fitting representative of the Church of England than this man, whose life both on the mission field and at home showed

such wholehearted devotion and singleness of purpose to do His beloved Master's Will?

## CHAPTER 15

### “THE WAY OF A MAN WITH A MAID”

#### FRIENDSHIP—DELAY—ENGAGEMENT—THE WEDDING—BLESSINGS

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord”—*Proverbs* 18. 22

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”—*St. Matthew* 6. 33

THE missionaries had often sat together in their Pond Inlet house and discussed their life and witness amongst the natives. Sometimes, but not often, the subject of marriage would be discussed. Natives would often question why the missionaries had no wives and there could be no doubt that the celibate missionary was in some ways handicapped while living with these primitive and natural peoples. Amongst the natives a man without a wife is an oddity. In their simple philosophy of life it was not good for man to be alone, and a wife is not only a companion and help-meet but essential to the completion and fulness of living. Celibacy for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake is to them an incredible idea, and appears totally unnecessary.

The missionary often realized what a real witness a Christian home and family could be to the people, but always the discussion would end with the thought—whoever would ask a loved one to share such a life of hardship, loneliness, and difficulty? Sometimes a brave young woman would venture into this wilderness of ice and snow and the white men would moodily foresee tragedy or unhappiness. More brides came, brave, courageous and earnest[,] and their influence was seen to be good amongst the natives, especially with the women and children. Their husbands, too, were happier and more settled.

What of the missionaries in the more distant place, far from the reach of civilization? Were they not committed to months of travelling each year? Surely no one could expect a wife to share such an ‘existence’. Sometimes when a missionary biography was studied, though seldom in the foreground, the wonderful work of a Christian help-meet could be seen contributing much to the success of her husband. These facts were at times measured against the Scripture

teaching, and the Gospels and St. Paul's words<sup>1</sup> would weigh heavily in the discussion, which would usually end with a confident assertion that *if* God wanted them to have a help-meet, one would certainly be prepared and ready in His time!

This time came for John Turner during his furlough in November 1939 when he was introduced to Miss Joan Miriam Hobart. Little did Joan think as she spent her girlhood in foreign countries and camped with girl friends in the deserts of Egypt, visited the bazaars, and grew to love the nationals among whom she lived, that she was being well prepared for missionary labours in the Arctic regions in Canada. The day did come in her life, however, when she found in the Lord Jesus Christ her own personal Saviour and acknowledged Him as her Lord, willingly giving her life for His service anywhere.

This friendship between John and Joan ripened into a deep affection. As no 'directions' seemed to come from 'above' John sailed back to his mission field in the following July alone and with no understanding reached concerning their future, other than that they both desired God's Will for their lives.

John then spent two years in sole charge of the territory before another missionary recruit joined him in the person of the Rev. Tom Daulby. Of his coming to the North John wrote in his diary after receiving a radio message from the Bishop,

"February 1942, Fort Ross. Regarding Tom Daulby's coming 'him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come'<sup>2</sup> seemed very appropriate and reassuring in my reading last night."

Not until 1943 did John Turner feel that it was God's will that he should ask Joan Hobart to share his life in the North. During the past three years Joan had completed her missionary training at the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Training College for Women at Bristol and had begun her nurse's training at the East Suffolk and Ipswich Hospital.

In June 1944 Joan started on the long and hazardous wartime journey into the North. The wedding took place on August 29 at Pond Inlet. Perhaps Joan's personal description of that happy day could be appropriately included here.

"September 3, Pond Inlet. At midnight on August 28, 1944, I was in my cabin on the R.M.S. *Nascopie* reading *Daily Light* for the 29th for we were expecting to reach Pond Inlet within a few hours from that time. God's Words are always true and apt but it would have been difficult to have chosen anything more suitable for that long-looked-for day. The first quotation being, "*Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he*", and the last, "*O fear the Lord ye His saints for there is no want to them that fear Him*". By 3 a.m. we had dropped anchor, so I dressed and went out on to the deck. The beauty of the morning and of the scenery was indescribable. The sun was just rising over the snow-capped mountains at the back of the Post, the air was frosty and invigorating and the deep blue sea was unruffled by any wind. This glorious morning was a forerunner of a wonderfully fine sunny day which proved to be the warmest and most perfect

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<sup>1</sup> St. Matthew 19. 12; 1 Corinthians 7. 7-9, 29-33

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 16. 5

of the whole summer. Is it true that “*the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*?” It wasn’t long before Jack had come on board and we met again after just over four years. It was the Lord’s doing and marvellous in our eyes.

We went ashore almost immediately as there was much to relate and to see. I met the Rev. Tom Daulby, Rebecca and the Eskimo helpers. It was hard to believe that it was so early on my wedding day and therefore so unconventional. The sun was high in the heavens and the air warm and bright. Occasionally I would pick up my ears as I heard the ‘alert’ siren—only to find out later that it was the wail of the dogs. The ceremony was to be at 10 a.m. Jean Greenlaw (my bridesmaid) and I went up to the Mission house to get dressed. We were escorted by a few of the male passengers who carried our suitcases and the wedding cake. The latter being borne like a coffin, as it was packed in a large cardboard box and was held aloft at shoulder height on a small sledge. As may be imagined there was much mirth!

Now for some kind of description of the wedding. The folding doors between the kitchen and the dining-room were thrown open and the witnesses sat closely packed together on chairs along one side of the room, leaving a very narrow passageway on the other side so that I might enter from an adjoining bedroom. Thus the ‘aisle’ was from one end of the room, past the stove to the table under the window in the centre of the end wall! When everything was ready Jean preceded me and Mr. Anderson (H.B.Co. District Manager) waited at the door of the bedroom till I was ready to be led to the top of the room where Jack, Tom, Jean and Hugh Longfield (passenger friend and best man) were waiting. Actually there were two Royal Canadian Mounted Policemen *in the chancel* as well because of lack of space. After the service the necessary folks adjourned to the aforementioned bedroom where the register was signed, then we returned to the larger room for the reception.”

Joan proved a wonderful companion to her husband, entering fully into his life and work. In their short life together she learned to love the Eskimo, travel with her husband on short sledge trips and live in igloos, take Eskimo service when he was absent for months on end, and attended to the medical needs of her native visitors as well as tend to her home.

In June 1945 a daughter came to bless that home located 800 miles away from the nearest doctor, and Joan wrote in her diary:

“On June 4 at 10.15 a.m. our daughter June Mary was born. At birth she weighed eight pounds and continues to progress according to schedule although she seems disinclined to sleep for the prescribed length of time. To her parents she is a gift from the Lord and a potential ambassador for Christ. To Pond Inlet she is a record-maker being the first white child to be born here and the only one in residence. To the Eskimo she is of great interest and amusement.”

In the summer of that year this happy family moved to the little two-roomed house at Moffet Inlet situated seventy miles away from the nearest white man, and Jack now attended to the more westerly natives of the district and concentrated on his literary work. In September 1946 Barbara Grace was born, and they were all very contented enjoying life to the full, finding satisfaction in

daily service to the Eskimo, and one another, and never feeling isolated or lonely. They had the assurance that they were working with their Lord and Saviour, knowing that they were where He had placed them.

*“I am with thee ... in all places whithersoever thou goest.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“As thou goest step by step, He shall open up the way before thee.”*

## CHAPTER 16

### “I WILL SAY TO THE NORTH, GIVE UP”

#### A ‘CASE’ AGAINST MISSIONS—THE MISSIONARY’S ANSWER

CHRISTIAN missionary efforts do not necessarily receive the support of all people even from within the limits of Christian congregations. There are authors who are frankly critical of such endeavours. A good example of such opinions is included in *The Queen*’s (University) Quarterly of Spring 1944, in an article entitled “When God came to the Belchers” by Alan Sullivan. In this well-written article the author composes his contribution around some unfortunate happening in those islands where ‘religious murders’ are reported to have taken place. At that time certain men and women called themselves ‘God’, ‘Jesus Christ’, ‘Holy Spirit’ and ‘Satan’. These natives had had no pastoral oversight for almost sixteen years and, in the opinion of one who has had experience with such native peoples, the first cause of these events does not necessarily lie in religion. It is incredible that in these days of ‘advanced learning’ it is still possible for men to accept events on their face value rather than seek their true origin. That these people should use religious terms to excuse their conduct does not necessarily imply that they are religious people. It is hoped that one day those unfortunate happenings in ‘the Belchers’ may be fully understood and the real cause of the evil brought to light. Alan Sullivan, in his presentation of these events, concludes in this way:

“What then are mentalities like these (Eskimo) capable of absorbing from our conflicting philosophies, our too numerous rival creeds? Under our conditions of living these northern tribes sicken and die. They are congenitally allergic to what we call civilization and the impact of any religious subtlety shakes their reason. They cannot discern fine shades of difference. A thing is black or white.

That some divinity should have appeared on earth cycles ago has no significance to folk who are without consciousness of the past and have no vision of any future save a cessation of the struggle of today. Who are we to question their immorality? Their battle is for life only and it has been the harder since the white man came with gunpowder, liquor and disease.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 28. 15

Ages ago by mastery and occupation the forerunners of Peter Sala made the far Arctic their own fronting the Lord of the North with spear and bow. We are but newcomers in these solitudes.

Today they ask little more than that they be left alone in the bleak wilderness they know so well. Why, then, should we violate the austere seclusion of these spartan lives?"

Many people may have read these words, including Church people and their friends, university graduates and undergraduates, among whom may be some who are impressed and begin to doubt the wisdom of missionary work amongst primitive peoples. Of course such doubts are quickly dispelled by a consideration of the beneficent gifts of true Christianity both to our own civilization and our country today. Perhaps the best answer to the legitimate question raised in the article is given in the diaries of John Turner, who loved the Eskimo and gave his life in their service.

"July 20, 1941, Sioralik. I think that I mentioned last Fall in this letter that I feared that Tategak's old mother was not likely to live very long, and on my return this spring I learned that she had been very sick with a very nasty bodily hæmorrhage and discharge, and was still unable to get up, though she was somewhat better. This is perhaps the chief reason why I invited them along here. Not that one can do very much for the old lady physically but it is good to dispense spiritual 'potions'. I do feel that the poor soul has a fairly clear grasp of spiritual things ... especially of the Lord's Atonement and her own personal need. The other evening she said she felt she wanted Jesus to take hold of her and not let her go. It was good to see the expression of joy and gratitude on her face when I gave her the assurance she longed for from Isaiah 41. 9-10, 13-14, etc., '*I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee—I will never leave thee*'. She has a great deal of pain and weariness and the devil is continually seeking to depress her... It is good as well as humbling to witness her simple faith and one prays that if it is His Will He will spare her continued suffering and grant her an abundant entrance into His Kingdom. A little time back I baptized her and also her daughter... (A week later) Our prayers have been heard at last; the poor lady's suffering is past (she chose the name 'Dorcas' at her baptism). During Sunday and Monday she was unable to keep down any nourishment and she had considerable hæmorrhage. This of course reduced her strength rapidly. On Monday, considering her weakened state, I thought it might be better to have an evening service here rather than in the tent as usual. She said, however, that she would like us to have our gathering there and that she might join in. Our service was made extremely brief. I again gave her that comforting promise and told her to keep Jesus always in her thoughts and speak with Him. She assured me He was continually in her thoughts. We had prayer and then she chose a hymn which goes to the tune of "We love the place, O God", and is a prayer to the Holy Spirit to remove the darkness from our hearts and enlighten us, and continues,

"Thou knowest my great sins,  
Reveal to me the Blood of Jesus,

Abide with me, Thou art my help,  
Guide me while I remain here.'

She thanked me warmly for what little I had done for her, bewailing her own sinfulness. After we had left her she asked her daughter to read over again to her John 3. 16 and here she cast her last anchor. It was sufficient and held to the last. Clinging to this promise she frequently broke into prayer and her last audible word was "Father". Without doubt she had come to Him and it is even more certain still that He did not cast her out.<sup>1</sup>

"February 13, 1943, Arctic Bay. Yesterday I heard two items of sad news. First, I heard of the death of my late travelling companion Erkoak. Erkoak was a very fine type of Eskimo and there seems to be ample evidence that he was a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Last spring he was nearly lost at the floe edge when he was hunting. Now I hear that only a few months later he died. Apparently he was safe on the Rock of Ages for he told his relatives not to weep for him for he was going to the Lord Jesus. He was only young and a fine big fellow. His father is another very upright, humble and sincere believer. He has known much trouble but his faith has remained unshaken. The other item of news was perhaps even more pathetic. Ooraiyok, the eleven year old little son of Amaroalik (another travelling companion who went with me to Fort Ross in 1938), perished less than a week ago.

He and his father had been away to their traps beyond Cape Crawford and were asleep in their snow house when a very hungry bear, regardless of the dogs, attacked their store to get at some seals. In doing so apparently the bear broke a hole into the house. In a panic the father and son fled into the night. It was blowing hard and cold but they managed to keep themselves from freezing. In the morning the father suggested going back to the snow house but the poor boy was so scared that he begged the father to make for home. The father gave in to the lad and they started to walk into the Post. In milder weather they may have succeeded without much difficulty but the temperature went down to about —50° F. and there was a heavy wind with drifting snow. The boy's strength began to fail after about thirty-five miles, for they had no food. The father tried to carry the lad finally but it was against the wind and he could not get along. They were not far from an old snow house but the poor lad did not live to reach it. Amaroalik struggled into the Post but his face and hands were badly frozen. He still looks very worn. He told me that Ooraiyok gave him a message for me—"Tell the teacher I will be coming to meet you both with Jesus when He comes". God grant that we may meet him among the redeemed on that great day."

"January, Milne Inlet. Akomalik and his family started off with us and took a bit of our load. We parted company at about 5 p.m. on Friday night. Parting was not easy. In spite of occasional differences of opinion with poor old Akomalik, there has always been an affectionate regard for the one who has stood by us so staunchly since the commencement of our work at Pond Inlet thirteen and a half years ago. Not one bit less is our affection and gratitude for Angnawyak. No one could have served us more faithfully than

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<sup>1</sup> St. John 6. 37

she has done. Sometimes her efforts at housekeeping might not have earned the approval of the more sophisticated, but we have always appreciated her faithful service, service that has ever considered the job in hand more important than its reward. As we said good-bye Angnawyak slipped a little note into my hand. I read it when we camped that night. She had written, 'I am extremely grateful and I shall never forget—I shall want to see you again. I don't want to forget God's Words. Yes, if Jesus tarry we shall see each other again'. Thank God for these two helpers! May He reserve a glorious place for them in His Kingdom!"

"May 1942, Pond Inlet. There were many Eskimo at the Post and I had not been there long before several came asking for baptism. As always, I gave them all strong warnings regarding making these solemn vows lightly. All affirmed that they did mean to follow the Lord wholly, so nine were baptized last Sunday. Among these was a young lad of 13 or 14. He is keen and I did not doubt his sincerity. He chose the name of Mark."

"November, 1942, Pond Inlet. Several visitors as well as two young girls at the post (one of the latter was Akomalik's little grand-daughter) came asking for baptism recently, and last Sunday nine were baptized. Beforehand I had had some very happy times with them over the Scriptures. I do feel that they all had a fairly good idea of the step they were taking and of its responsibilities."

"July 1943, Moffet Inlet. Yesterday the Lord gave me also another great encouragement. It came in the course of a casual conversation with a visitor. You may remember that I mentioned last year a young lad whom I met near Igloodik on trail and who was lost shortly after in a boating tragedy. The boy's step-father, who was here yesterday, remarked that the boy on his arrival home passed on to his folk the message I had given him and produced the reference in the Bible. I told the step-father, 'You must be mistaken. It must have been a message I had given to other Eskimo and which he had heard from them'. (For I only met the boy during the day for a few minutes, and we did not camp together.) 'No,' replied the step-father, 'it was the message you gave him and his companion yourself when you met on the trail.' I remembered kneeling in prayer with them, but I had quite forgotten the fact that I had given them a message from the Word. The lad had apparently remembered every word and passed the message on to others. Coming at a time when many facts would seem to imply the opposite this certainly seemed to be the Lord's reminder that '*Your labour is not in vain in the Lord*' and was a great encouragement."

"January 1942, [Foxe] Basin. One son, about 14 years old, was living with other folk and last spring he was very sick and at that time he broke all connection with the Church of Rome. He does not at all fear the wrath of the priest, though, as elsewhere, the priests here try to rule their flock with a rod of iron. I saw this lad at a camp and I fear he looks as though he had T.B. [Tuberculosis]. When we left he rode with me for a time. He told me that when he went back to the camp he was going to pray for me and then said he was going to sing. With a loud voice, though not always in tune, he sang one of our choruses—



‘In all thy way acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct thy paths.’

He seemed most keen to hear our message. May the Lord lead him on in the knowledge of Himself.”

“May 1947, Moffet Inlet. The following weekend we had our special gatherings and there were 120 Eskimo here. It was nice to have Tom Daulby here but we were really crowded with our four selves, Rebecca and Mary. On Sunday we had twenty candidates for baptism and one young man renounced the Church of Rome into which he had been baptized as an infant. For the latter we had to prepare a special form of service. There were a number of others asking for baptism but we felt led to ask them to wait for a time.”

Joan includes in one of her letters a revealing incident which should be of interest to students of Eskimo life and culture.

“I feel I cannot leave out an incident told by an Eskimo when he was in the other day. The last time he had come in to the Post to trade he had said ‘good-bye’ and left in the usual way, but instead of getting to his camp in two sleeps he was caught in bad weather and took seven! For six nights he had slept out in the open not building a snow house, hoping to arrive home the next day. His dogs got weaker, and one by one unable to go on, so all except one had to be shot. In the end he abandoned his sledge and load, just putting essentials on a skin to drag along but still he was unable to see the way. At last he thought to pray about it asking the Lord to reveal the way enabling him to get home. Then it seemed that the cloud was raised, the sky cleared, he recognized the landmarks and was able to traverse the last few miles to his camp. How near he was to passing his camp and becoming lost or perishing with hunger we do not know, but you may imagine the joy and gratitude with which he tells of the Lord’s wonderful answer to prayer and his deliverance. We believe that this will be an incentive for this man to go on with the Lord. Even if we are at ‘wits-end corner’ and then call upon Him, yet the Lord never fails us. *‘They shall not be ashamed who wait on Me.’*”

The results of Canon Turner’s ministry are unmistakably clear and can doubtless bear the closest scrutiny of either scholars trained in the ways of men, or those who want merely to be critical of the missionary endeavours of the Christian Church. Surely the old Eskimo woman’s letter to the missionary after thirteen-and-a-half years of unremitting service is a sufficient answer for all time.

“I am extremely grateful and I shall never forget—I shall want to see you again. I don’t want to forget God’s Words.”

Had not our Heavenly Father again fulfilled his promise to his servant?

*“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 2. 8

## PART IV

### THE MAN—and HIS PROMOTION

“As for God, His way is perfect”—*Psalm* 18. 30

“No toiling yonder, and no weariness,  
 No disappointments and no more distress,  
 The future bright, the past all understood,  
 We’ll see that all the way He led was good.  
 No partings yonder, and no sad goodbyes,  
 No pain, no sickness, and no weeping eyes,  
 But best of all, my Saviour I shall see—  
 No cloud shall come between my Lord and me.”

*Author unknown, John Turner’s Diary, November 1940*

## CHAPTER 17

### “INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ONE ... OF THESE MY BRETHREN”

#### THE ACCIDENT—THE RESCUE—ARRIVAL IN WINNIPEG— UNTO CHRIST

THE annual ship for 1947 had arrived and left Arctic Bay, and the Turner family returned to Moffet Inlet in their whale-boat with all the supplies that they could safely load. John was anxious to get back to translation work, and also he was in difficulties over dog food. He had written in his letter home:

“July 1947, Moffet Inlet. As a result of the Eskimo staying around so long I was not able to do much seal hunting this spring. As Tom left four dogs with me, and I have three pups of my own as well as the older dogs, I have sixteen dogs to provide for during the coming winter. At the moment I have less dog food on hand than I had at this time last year. Then I had fewer dogs, but undoubtedly the Lord will provide. Having no helpers except Rebecca means that we have more to do ourselves, but we can manage quite well.”

The next week after their arrival at the Mission was spent away from home hunting in the Inlet. David Tongalok and family, who had cared for John’s dog-team while the missionary’s family was absent in Arctic Bay for ship-time, was taken by boat to a nearby lake for fishing. As the weather was poor it was not until the following Saturday evening that the party returned to the mission house. During the next few days the weather continued to be unfavourable and John undertook some tasks indoors. Their crowded quarters necessitated the

preparation of the upstairs loft as a bedroom, and he endeavoured to insulate it for this purpose. How useful this spare room was to be in but a few days!

On Wednesday morning, September 24, John read in his *Daily Light*, "*It is good for me to draw near to God*".<sup>1</sup>

The weather that morning was still unsuitable for outside work, so he continued with his jobs within the house. Two young Eskimo girls, Rebecca and Elizabeth, were outside breaking up ice, and carrying it indoors in buckets, to replenish the dwindling fresh water supplies. They saw a seal in the shallow waters near the shore, so this good news was shouted to John as he worked upstairs. He hurriedly grasped his .22 rifle, which only a few days before he had mentioned as needing some attention, as a part was loose, and hastened outside. On returning he met young Elizabeth as she came through a gate to the children's enclosed playground placed around the house. With his usual concern for others he slipped his rifle under his left arm, and helped her carry the heavy bucket of ice up the three steps. In some way or other, while he was still on the top step the trigger of his rifle was released. Maybe it caught in a buttonhole or in the zipper of his coat, or possibly the rifle slipped and hit something. The bullet, which was discharged vertically, wounded his upper lip, tore through the inner nasal bones to fracture the base of his skull, and transversed [*sic*] the right side of his brain. He fell backwards down the steps into the snow. It was probably at this time that, on the corner of the top platform, he bruised badly the base of his spine.

The first intimation that anything was wrong came to Joan when Sarah, David Tongalok's wife, came into the house and cried something which Joan could not understand. Sensing trouble, Joan ran to the door to find John unconscious on the ground, and bleeding profusely from the mouth. At first it was hard for her to believe that he had received any gunshot wound for the only sign that she could see was a small puncture in his upper lip. During the succeeding fifteen to thirty minutes while her husband remained unconscious, Joan threw bedding and a mattress down the stairs and prepared a bed on the floor of their little study. At this time she was expecting another child in just over three months, but with the help of the Eskimo she managed to carry the Canon to this couch prepared for him.

The natives were then called into the kitchen for prayer, and kneeling down David led his family and the others present to the Throne of Grace, and Joan prayed with her husband. Fortunately John retained perfect sight except for two black eyes, and perfect hearing, understanding, and power of reason. His speech was, however, muffled and indistinct for some days. He was not conscious of any actual head injury, although he was kept uncomfortable by pain and frequent hæmorrhage. The badly bruised base of his spine troubled him in an almost unbearable manner.

David Tongalok, although he had never handled the mission motor boat (so well named *Ebenezer*<sup>2</sup>), agreed to go to the Hudson's Bay Company's Post, seventy

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 73. 28

<sup>2</sup> "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us*", 1 Samuel 7. 12

miles north at Arctic Bay, with a message and an appeal for assistance. The weather had calmed by 7 o'clock in the evening, and he set out in an endeavour to help the missionary, whom he had grown to love so dearly.

Mr. John Cormack of the H.B. [Hudson's Bay] Company hurried southwards in his motor launch but could not arrive until the 28th. In the meanwhile Ed. Jordan, of the radio station there, transmitted the emergency appeal for help to the Department of National Health and Welfare at Ottawa, and the Offices of the Diocese of the Arctic in Toronto.

Joan summoned all the knowledge she had gained during her nurse's training, and, using drugs from a small emergency kit that John always carried, worked and prayed that she might keep her weakened, partially paralysed husband alive until help arrived.

As soon as John Cormack arrived John Turner heard his voice and summoned him to where he was lying on the floor, to apologize for not welcoming him properly and for the trouble which he was causing. The H.B.C. Factor efficiently assumed control of the situation, and proved an invaluable companion and friend. He had brought two Eskimo with him, and he set them (together with David Tongalok and his two sons) to empty the store house of all its contents and prepare it as [a] habitation for any help that might come from civilization. The whole Turner family had previously used this storehouse as a 'summer cottage', and it had proved quite comfortable. The walls had already been lined and insulated. A coal-burning stove was installed, wash basin placed in position, and bunks, tables and chairs assembled.

The hours and days dragged on and time seemed interminable. John's condition was undoubtedly critical. His spine now pained him continuously, and was being aggravated by bed pressure; but he was too heavy for Joan to lift, and the Eskimo were afraid. Would help arrive in time?

On September 30, 1947, the Department of National Health and Welfare made contact with the Department of National Defence stating that immediate aid to the missionary was required. The Army and Royal Canadian Air Force set up a combined rescue squad of four paratroopers and a flight crew for a Dakota aeroplane. The latter was at first named *Snowbird*, but before the rescue was accomplished it had been renamed *The Blizzard Belle*. Col. Graham Rowley[,], who, when travelling in the Arctic in 1936 with the British and Canadian Arctic Expedition, had been befriended by John Turner and had stayed at the Pond Inlet Mission for some days, was at the time stationed at Ottawa and was called in for conference.

The forces were faced with difficulties, for Moffet Inlet was situated in a practically unmapped district. They had no knowledge of the terrain or of landmarks that might guide a rescue party in their journey. Moffet Inlet is 1,700 miles north of Winnipeg, situated in most rugged country 400 miles within the Arctic Circle. It was impossible to despatch an aeroplane and crew on such an errand without adequate knowledge of their objective and reasonable chances of success.

Graham Rowley remembered that the author of this biography had lived both at Pond Inlet and Moffet Inlet, and telephoned from Ottawa to Toronto to see if I could help.

In a remarkable way during the past summer, after years of travelling and being away from home, I had been setting my house in order and had sorted all northern photographs, and destroyed many other papers. While a group of old records were burning in the hearth I noticed some old sketch maps of the Northern district and quickly rescued them from the blaze thinking that sometime perhaps they might be useful. On September 30 when the call came from Ottawa all the maps and photographs needed by the rescue team were ready.

An overnight train trip took me to Ottawa. An early morning conference at Air Force Headquarters with both Air Force and Army officials brought the decision to attempt the rescue. The orders were issued and special planes laid on for my trip to Western Canada in order to 'brief' the rescue team before they left on their difficult assignment.

Not until nearly midnight did I arrive in the briefing room of 'Operation Canon'. All available chairs were filled with Army and Air Force personnel, and as photographs and maps were projected on to a screen, I lectured on the trip, the terrain, the natives, climate and clothing. Far into the night the men asked questions. Afterwards I was free to have my first meal for many hours.

Next morning, in the very early dawn, the great aircraft was wheeled into the open air. Every available space was loaded with equipment, which included a large radio set weighing many hundreds of pounds, and many other articles which were to be dropped by parachutes at Moffet Inlet. There was a final opportunity of shaking hands with the members of the courageous rescue team: F/O. Robert Race, of Edmonton, pilot; F/O. [K.O.] Moore, of Rockhaven, Saskatchewan, co-pilot; F/O. C. C. McMillan, of Melfort, Saskatchewan, navigator; F/L. A. B. Morabito, of Creston, B.C., wireless operator; L.A.C. J. P. Rae, of Cupar, Saskatchewan; Sgt. L. Hawkins, of Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Sgt. K. Swinford, of Toronto. Accompanying them as the jump quartette were Capt. L. Guy D'Artois, O/C detachment; Capt. Ross Willoughby, M.D., of Toronto; and Signals Sergrts. W. W. Judd and [H. C.] Cook, of Calgary. They were a brave group composed mostly of men who had proved themselves in the lines of battle as capable, resourceful and ready to face any difficulty or trial. In the grey dawn of that cold October morning (October 2) the heavily-laden plane rolled into position and then with increasing speed moved along the runway before slowly and doggedly climbing into the overcast. Our hearts beat more freely then, for the plane was loaded to capacity and it had been with some concern that these initial stages had been watched. The adventure had only just begun, and before these brave men were to be able to report to their Senior Officers the successful conclusion of 'Operation Canon' they were each one to be tested to the uttermost. The Canadian public was now fully aroused to all that was happening. Maps, photographs and feature articles appeared in the daily papers, news bulletins and reports were repeated on the radio broadcasts.

The plane sped northwards first to Fort Churchill, Manitoba, where final Arctic clothing was procured. All radio stations in the Northland were alerted on a 24-hour basis. Then the crew launched out into the cold, bleak, and grey-lined skies of the North. A landing was made at Southampton Island on October 3, and on the next day the final dash for Moffet Inlet began.

As Moffet Inlet is situated north of the magnetic North Pole the magnetic compasses were valueless to the aircrew. Lakes and rivers were mostly frozen over and snowswept, rendering them useless for 'pin-pointing'. The maps provided were not drawn to scale, and many other difficulties confronted the navigator. For three-quarters of an hour the plane moved above Moffet Inlet, but fog, and unfamiliarity with the land, hindered the aircrew, and they could not find the little mission house.

The mission is situated on a tiny spit of land, about seventy yards wide, jutting out into the Inlet from [... the] base of [a] 600-foot cliff. It was obvious that this boulder strewn neck of land, surrounded with freezing salt water, was no place to drop supplies and men, but it had been decided that some small lakes about six miles inland might be the safe dropping area.

On Saturday, October 4, Joan awoke at 6 a.m., and when she looked out at the weather her faith nearly failed her. How could a rescue plane possibly come in such circumstances? But before midday, as she sat holding her husband's hands, they heard the plane pass overhead, though visibility was too poor for it to be seen. As she continued to pray, those awful questions kept coming. Would they return? Would they be able to sight the mission? Would they be in time? Now at times his breathing was poor and John was showing the first signs of diaphragm spasm. Quite suddenly the sky around the mission opened up, the weather cleared, and, as the airmen said in their report, "through a hole in the fog" the mission was sighted. Can there be any doubt that God answers the prayer[s] of His children?

The great Dakota aircraft flew lower, and swooping over the mission house dropped the following note and panel code:—

"We are to help Canon Turner. It is proposed to parachute a small party including a medical officer for this purpose. Owing to the ruggedness of the ground men cannot be dropped safely near the mission but we intend dropping the less fragile stores at the mission and the men and other equipment in the deer country. Divide your Eskimo into two parties. Keep one party at the mission and send the other to the top of the cliffs to go to the aid of the party when they drop. Please acknowledge by signalling a reply to this question with the panels attached.

Are we still in time to be of help?"

☐

Yes

☐
☐

No

The aircrew reconnoitred the surrounding country for a suitable spot to drop the men and then flying over the mission and looking down they saw the one panel lying on the ground. They were in time to help. *Daily Light* for that day says,

*“And they helped David ... for they were all mighty men of valour.”*<sup>1</sup>

The paratroopers buckled on their harness[es] and strapped on their steel helmets. A large 250 drum of gasoline floated earthwards to test the strength of the lake ice, and when all was ready generators, food, tents, sleeping bags, weapons, ammunition, packboards, cigarettes and medical stores dropped from the skies. Sgt. Judd jumped first, carrying a portable radio set, followed by Capt. D’Artois, Capt. Willoughby and Sgt. Cook. The doctor narrowly missed serious injury when he landed almost among the rocks strewn along the edge of the frozen lake. Sgt. Judd by means of his portable radio informed the captain of the aircraft that all had landed safely, and the little group on the lake watched the aircraft grow smaller in the distance and finally disappear.

Capt. D’Artois headed overland for the mission and was soon met by an Eskimo who had been sent to guide him across the difficult country. The rest of the party proceeded to the coast to be picked up by [the] boat sent out from the mission. Perhaps extracts of the Service’s Report on ‘Operation Canon’ will best describe the work of the next few weeks.

“October 4. On arrival Capt. Willoughby examined the patient. Canon Turner’s left side was completely paralyzed and there was a large bed sore on his lower back. Treatment which then commenced, and continued throughout the seven-week period, consisted of regular dressing of the bed sore, administration of penicillin every three hours, day and night, as well as administration of Sulpha Drugs and general nursing care. Capt. Willoughby arranged to carry out the necessary treatment each night, being assisted by day by Mrs. Turner.”

“The mission house is eleven feet by twenty-four feet and contains two rooms. This was occupied by the patient, Mrs. Turner, their two children and one Eskimo girl. Capt. D’Artois decided to use a shack ten feet by seven to house the team and store equipment and supplies. Living conditions for the seven-week period were primitive.”

“October 5. With Mr. Cormack, Capt. D’Artois and the two sergeants returned to the dropping zone. There they collected the widely scattered equipment. A tent was then set up and the No. 58 wireless set put in operation. The large number 52 set was tested and found to be out of order. Throughout the afternoon and night until 6.25 a.m., October 6, the signal sergeants worked without rest or sleep in an attempt to repair the damaged set.”

“October 6. All this time a dozen radio operators from all stations in the North were listening for signals from Moffet Inlet, but none was heard.

On the suggestion of Mr. Cormack and the advice of Capt. Willoughby, Capt. D’Artois decided to move the patient and his family to Arctic Bay, seventy miles north. Accommodation and medical facilities were better there.”

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Chronicles 12. 21

“October 7. Rough weather prevented the departure and nearly wrecked the mission motor boat.”

“October 8. The aircraft circled the mission and made contact through the small radio set. Medical report and requests for needed supplies were transmitted to the plane.”

“October 9. The motor boats were loaded and a stretcher fashioned for the patient. The Canon’s boat was launched but weather prevented departure. The trip was attempted next day but bad ice conditions, failure of the boat’s engines, and the patient’s long exposure compelled the abandonment of the voyage, and the whole party returned to the mission at mid-afternoon on October 11. This was a bitter disappointment to all.”

It was probably this attempted trip to Arctic Bay that revealed to the men of the armed forces the mettle and make-up of the man they had come to help. Lying on but two thicknesses of skins placed over wooden cross bars, they attempted to carry him. His whole side was paralysed, his back abscessed, and he was entirely incapacitated and in pain. To reach the boat as it lay off shore the men slipped and stumbled over the rock-strewn land before breaking through the shore ice, and wading into the already freezing sea to place him into that small 30-foot boat. From Friday morning until Saturday night the wounded man lay in this uncomfortable position. The size of the boat and the compass of its load prevented any real nursing and but a small degree of assistance being rendered. The temperature was now well down and the spray was freezing on the sides of the boat. Yet John never once complained. When the party returned to the mission, dejected and disappointed, as they lifted him back into the house, they felt constrained to say to him, “You’ve got what it takes”, and in reply he smiled back at them.

The Service’s Report continues:

“October 12. It had now become necessary for the doctor to operate on the patient’s bed sore which had become gangrenous. Although it was not possible to administer an anæsthetic, the Canon displayed remarkable courage and stood up well under the ordeal. The operation lasted about twenty minutes.”

“October 14. Capt. D’Artois decided that an attempt must be made to move the damaged No. 52 radio set from the dropping zone to the mission where efforts to complete repairs could be made more conveniently. On reaching the dropping zone, the commander and two Sergeants strapped sections of the four hundred and fifty pounds set to packboards and commenced the journey back. The rough country and heavy loads proved formidable. A slip or fall on the rocky hills might mean irreparable damage to the set. The last portion of the trip was made at night in a blizzard and was climaxed by a descent down a 600-foot cliff. On arrival, although worn, the team stripped the set.”

“October 15. Was spent in attempts to repair the radio set. Further attempts at repairs were made the following day without success.”



“October 16. The plane circled the mission again and dropped supplies. Another radio set unfortunately missed the safety of the dropping zone and broke through the shore-ice and was badly damaged by salt water.”

“October 18. By using parts from various radio sets the rescue team managed to establish their first contact with other radio stations.”

“October 18–November 22. Capt. D’Artois carried out reconnaissance trip in search of a suitable airstrip. Before the ice made on the sea he walked on the land, or used the boat. Later he travelled by dog team and sledge. One occasion the Captain fell through the ice, but he was pulled to safety by an Eskimo boy and returned to the mission to change his clothes before setting out once more.”

“November 3–13. For eleven days this officer camped at a lake some 23 miles south of the mission, where a suitable landing strip had been discovered. During this period a blizzard prevented an Eskimo from reaching him with fuel for his stove and lamp. In addition a high wind smashed the tent pole and he was forced to live for two days without either light or heat. He was compelled to remain in his sleeping bag for two days until the storm blew over.”

“November 17. The aircraft took off from Southampton Island for Moffet Inlet but bad weather terminated the flight.”

“November 21. A safe landing was completed on the lake. The patient and rescue team proceeded to the plane by means of dog teams and sledges and after a delay of some hours by reason of bad weather the *Snowbird*, now named with good reason *The Blizzard Belle*, took off and headed southwards.”

Throughout those last few weeks before the evacuation took place, John Turner did his utmost to help everybody. When necessary he interpreted for his rescuers, and tendered his advice. Natives came to see him, or wrote to him; and, when necessary, by using Rebecca as his secretary, he answered them. Each Sunday the natives held their service in the kitchen, and he lay in his study with the door wide open. On the last Sunday he even tried to play the concertina with one hand, and when this proved impossible his beloved people sang all the louder for him. On the day they were to leave the Eskimo gathered near his sick bed. John said his last prayers with them, as with bowed heads and tear-filled eyes they stood around him, and they committed each other to God’s keeping.

Then Pewatok, who had so often accompanied ‘Mikeneksak’ in the blizzards, through the deep snows, across the rough ice, and on the moving ice, and had so often gone hungry with him on the trail as they searched the barren wilderness for the ‘lost sheep’, drove his beloved companion on that last sledge journey to the waiting plane.

The group of natives watched as with a roar in the dark night the giant aircraft gathered speed along the flare path and climbed into the sky, bearing into the clouds their devoted advisor, teacher, missionary and friend.

Dr. H. M. Speechly wrote the following eye-witness account of the arrival of *The Blizzard Belle*, and subsequent events in Winnipeg, for the *Canadian Churchman* of March 4, 1948:—

### **“The Return to Winnipeg**

The first hour south was flown in overcast at 6,000 feet, but rising to 10,000 feet the pilot found clear star-lit sky yet so cold that he decided to stay at Coral Harbour overnight as the passengers were tired and cold. At 7 a.m. on Saturday morning, November 22, *The Blizzard Belle* left for Winnipeg, a non-stop flight of 1,130 miles. By midday the radio advices in Winnipeg pointed to the early afternoon for their arrival at Stevenson field, but later 5 p.m. was quoted. Long before that a goodly crowd of R.C.A.F. and Army officials and personnel, a swarm of Pressmen, the wives and relatives of the crew, assembled together with Mrs. W. C. Folliott, the ready hostess of the Turners, Archbishop Sherman, and the two administrators appointed by Bishop Fleming, the Rev. Canon F. Glover and the present writer, all eagerly awaiting *The Blizzard Belle*. At 5 p.m. all turned out of the hangar. The sun had set; the recent snow sparkled brightly with a bluish radiance; the moving and stationary signal lights gave colour and brilliance to the scene; and at last, long last, away north the port and starboard lights of the plane appeared moving so slowly inward. Just then a commercial T.C.A. [Trans-Canada Air Lines] plane hurried south across our vision. At last *The Blizzard Belle* dipped to land on the tarmac and deliberately rolled up in front of the keenly expectant crowd. What a moment! Why so silent—not a cheer? No, our hearts were too full of thankfulness to God, of pride that such a man with such a wife had been so grandly rescued by so gallant, so intrepid a team of brave men. We could only put our feelings under severe control. The doors then broke open revealing the happy smiling faces of the tired young crew. Quickly amid Press flashes the stretcher bearing the wounded Canon was unloaded and taken to Winnipeg General Hospital; and Mrs. Turner with her family was whisked away to a comfortable home; strangers, unknown to Winnipeg, but at once embraced by sheer loving kindness, had become honoured friends. It should be understood that Canon F. Glover and the present writer were appointed by Bishop Fleming as Administrators, the former for all hospitality, the latter to arrange medical care and hospitalization, as well as at a later date to organize the ‘Turner of Moffet Inlet Fund’.”

### **“The Battle for Canon Turner’s Life**

November 22–December 9, 1947

This was fought out by a picked team of surgical, medical, nerve biochemical, and X-ray specialists, with three nurses every 24 hours. All the newer drug aids were employed including streptomycin. No expense was spared. The hospital authorities were completely co-operative. The Canon’s left side remained paralysed; his temperature fluctuated considerably; but till the last three days he was conscious enough to recognize people and talk a little. As in the Arctic so in the hospital, the staff and nurses felt a deep respect for Canon and Mrs. Turner. Medical attention was also given to Mrs. Turner by three specialists. She had stood the strain wonderfully well. The post-mortem examination of the Canon’s brain and spine showed so much injury to brain tissue and inflammatory infection at the base of the brain that recovery was impossible.

His body was laid at St. John's Cathedral cemetery where many gallant missionaries to the North also are laid."

The people of Winnipeg were so kind to Mrs. Turner, her babies and her Eskimo ward. The friendship and fellowship in Christ's service started so spontaneously in the days of 1929 had been nobly carried on through the years, a fact duly witnessed in John Turner's Diaries.

"October 1941, Moffet Inlet. Though B.C.M.S. was unable to send the usual case of woollens, etc., the Canadian Church through various branches of its 'Woman's Auxiliary' had responded magnificently and supplied our needs—again—'Thank God!'"

"February 1942, Fort Ross. Awaiting my arrival here I found a number of bales kindly sent me by the Woman's Auxiliary of the Church of England in Canada."

Each year these gifts of love and devotion had aided the missionaries in their labours, but now while in depths of personal need and distress the Woman's Auxiliary, with deep understanding, took Joan and her loved ones to its bosom and softened the harshness of those days with love.

"Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

## CHAPTER 18

### "AS FOR GOD, HIS WAY IS PERFECT"

AN old colleague and prayer partner of John Turner sat in his study listening to the evening radio reports on his friend's condition on December 8. The report was not favourable, and as he bowed in prayer he read *Daily Light* for the evening as they had so often done during their ventures of faith together. He read:

"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return... One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet... The Lord Jesus Christ ... shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body."<sup>1</sup>

He realized that the Lord had kept His Covenant with His servant to the very end. There now seemed no place for sorrow but a glorious sense of the Divine will. John had gone next morning, and again *Daily Light* spoke reassuringly,

"We are confident ... and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord ... with Christ; which is far better."<sup>2</sup>

Oh, the joy there must have been revealed in Heaven that day as this faithful servant joined the hosts of the redeemed, for the Psalms set for the day on which John Turner was injured, say

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 3. 19; Job 21. 23; Philippians 3. 21

<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 5. 8; Philippians 1. 23

“right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”<sup>1</sup>

Surely these promises are a fitting answer to the question—Why?—that has been in the minds of so many people.

It is only when the alabaster box is broken that the house can be filled with the odour of the ointment, and the fragrance of this earthen vessel, which was a sweet savour of Christ and of Life, is not necessarily diminished by so sudden and unexpected a call home.<sup>2</sup> A Church of England clergyman from Ontario, Canada, writing to the B.C.M.S. and enclosing a subscription said:

“We are deeply grieved at the death of Canon Turner. All Canada followed the radio reports of the heroism surrounding the attempted rescue, yet I knew that it was no more heroic than his own twenty years of devoted service to His Saviour in the Arctic. As the co-pilot of the rescue plane said to a reporter in telling of the little house where they found Canon Turner and his wife and children and band of Eskimo. ‘*There* was Love.’ And although he rests now in the light perpetual of His Lord... Perhaps one of *my* boys may be an answer to his prayers.”

Eternity’s Dawn has broken for John Hudspith Turner in the glorious presence of His Saviour. No longer do the cruel biting winds tear into his flesh, or the cold drifting snows blind his vision. No longer can fatigue destroy his vitality, or cruel sinful men belittle his beauty. He rests from his labours. His work he did well, and his diocesan bishop’s tribute is a fitting summary of his life and witness:

“The death of Canon J. H. Turner is an irreparable loss to our Canadian Church and to the Diocesan of the Arctic in particular. No missionary since Dr. E. J. Peck has gained such a mastery of the Eskimo language, few have equalled Canon Turner’s ability as traveller by dog team, and none have surpassed him as an evangelist amongst the people of the Polar North. He loved the Eskimo because he had a burning passionate loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ as Saviour, Lord and King. The poet Lowell would have classed him as a man of the plain heroic breed. He went to the Arctic because he believed he had God’s end to serve, a Master to obey, a course to take.”

John Turner fought a good fight, he finished the course, he kept the Faith,<sup>3</sup> but the task in Arctic Canada remains unfinished, and the cry of the ages comes yet once again from the Throne of His Glory:

“WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 116. 13 (P.B.V.)

<sup>2</sup> St. John 12. 3; 2 Corinthians 2. 15

<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy 4. 7

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 6. 8

**APPENDIX A****THE SLEDGE JOURNEYS OF CANON JOHN H. TURNER,  
1930–47**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Route Adopted</i>	<i>Approximate Mileage</i>
1930 (Spring)	Pond Inlet—River Clyde—and return	720
1930–1	Local trips in the Pond Inlet district	200
1931–2	From Pangnirtung to Padlik	350
1932–3	Pond Inlet—Arctic Bay—Igloolik—Pond Inlet	970
1933–4	ON FURLOUGH	
1934–5	Pond Inlet—Arctic Bay—Igloolik—Pond Inlet	970
1935–6	Pond Inlet—Pangnirtung—and return	1,700
1936–7	Pond Inlet—Arctic Bay—Igloolik—Repulse Bay—Igloolik—via land crossing to Pond Inlet	1,760
1937–8	Pond Inlet—land crossing to Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet—Igloolik—Repulse Bay—Return to Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Prince Regent Inlet to Fort Ross—beyond Fort Ross—and return to Arctic Bay and Moffet Inlet	2,510
1938–9	Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet—Igloolik—Repulse Bay—over land to Committee Bay—Lord Mayor Bay—Fort Ross—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet	1,970
1939–40	ON FURLOUGH	
1940–1	Pond Inlet—Clyde River—overland to Igloolik—Fort Ross—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet	2,400
1941–2	Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet—Agu Bay—Igloolik—Akonerk—Igloolik—Jens Munk Island—via Gifford River Moffet Inlet—via land crossing and Prince Regent Inlet—Elizabeth Harbour—Lord Mayor Bay—Spence Bay—King William Land—Fort Ross—Moffet Inlet—via land crossing to Pond Inlet—River Clyde—return to Pond Inlet to await ship	3,800
1942–3	Local Pond Inlet trips—Pond Inlet—Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Fort Ross via land crossing—Elizabeth Harbour—Lord Mayor Bay—Fort Ross—Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet—various trips to Arctic Bay	2,500

1943—4	Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet—via land crossing and Prince Regent Inlet to Fort Ross—Moffet Inlet—Arctic Bay—Moffet Inlet—Pond Inlet	1,710
1944—5	MARRIED AT POND INLET—Arctic Bay—Fort Ross and return to Pond Inlet	1,600
1945—6	Moffet Inlet—NO TRAVELLING OWING TO DOG DISEASE	
1946—7	Moffet Inlet—Fort Ross via Prince Regent Inlet—return via the land crossing	1,100
	TOTAL APPROXIMATE MILEAGE	24,300

*Note:* The Northern traveller usually follows the coast line, or may utilize various land crossings along valleys or river courses. Eskimo camps may be situated many miles either side of a 'direct route', but must be visited. The above figures are therefore very approximate, and have been kept as conservative as possible. The mileage for 1941-2 is equal to that between Toronto and Felixstowe.

## APPENDIX B

### GOVERNMENT AWARDS TO MEMBERS OF 'OPERATION CANON'

On July 30, 1948, the Defence Department of the Canadian Government announced eleven awards to those who took part in 'Operation Canon'.

#### The George Medal

*CAPTAIN LIONEL GUY D'ARTOIS*, D.S.O. [Distinguished Service Order], of Rivers, Manitoba, and Montreal, commander of the paratroop expedition.

Capt. D'Artois travelled hundreds of miles on foot, looking for a landing spot for the rescue plane. Once he fell through the ice, and finally camped on the proposed site, twenty-three miles distant, for eleven days, to gather data for weather reports to guide the air crew.

*FLYING OFFICER ROBERT CARSON RACE*, of Hilliers, British Columbia, and Winnipeg, pilot of *The Blizzard Belle*.

F/O. Race made four return trips, each longer than 1,000 miles, "in the face of unpredictable and severe early winter storms" and with the minimum of weather and navigational aids.

**Member of the Order of the British Empire**

*CAPTAIN ROSS W. WILLOUGHBY*, R.C.A.M.C. [Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps], of Rivers, Manitoba, and Toronto, paratroop medical officer.

**Air Force Cross**

*FLYING OFFICER CLIFFORD C. McMILLAN*, of Saskatoon and Winnipeg, who “displayed skill of the highest degree as a navigator”.

**British Empire Medal**

*SERGEANT HOWARD C. COOK*, of Calgary, who, amongst other duties, helped manhandle a heavy section of signals equipment down a 600-foot cliff at night in a blizzard.

**Air Force Medal**

*CORPORAL JAMES PATERSON RAE*, R.C.A.F., of Cupar, Saskatchewan, who made the four “extremely hazardous” return flights and worked devotedly in sub-zero weather to keep the plane in shape.

**King’s Commendation for Brave Conduct**

*SERGEANT W. W. JUDD*, of Port Arthur, wireless operator.

**King’s Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air**

*FLIGHT LIEUTENANT ANTHONY B. MORABITO*, D.F.C. [Distinguished Flying Cross], of New Westminster, British Columbia, wireless operator.

*FLYING OFFICER K. O. MOORE*, D.S.O., of Vancouver, co-pilot.

*SERGEANT K. C. SWINFORD*, of Toronto, crewman.

*CORPORAL L. D. HAWKINS*, of Winnipeg, crewman.

## **APPENDIX C**

*An extract from a Calgary newspaper, December 10, 1947: by kind permission of Canadian Press.*

### **He left his heart behind**

#### **RESCUER PRAISES WORK DONE BY CANON TURNER**

“There aren’t many men up to the calibre of Canon Turner, and I don’t think I’d be wrong in saying that he left his heart behind him.”

This tribute to Canon John Hudspith Turner, Anglican missionary at lonely Moffet Inlet, on Baffin Island, was paid by Sgt. Howard Cook in a letter to his parents[,] Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Cook, of Calgary, which arrived in Calgary on Monday, the day before Canon Turner’s death in Winnipeg. Sgt. Cook was among the para-rescue crew which assisted in the evacuation of the Canon.

The clergyman spent 20 years on Baffin Island. "The Eskimos in his district are very good and don't smoke or work on Sundays", Sgt. Cook wrote. "They think the world of Turner, and the parting was a sorrowful one."

"The Canon had a device consisting of a bicycle wheel, seat, and small friction generator running off the wheel. In front of the bike contraption he had a podium. Thus he used to pedal the 'bike', charge his batteries, get his exercise, increase his knowledge all at the same time. The Canon shunned modern manufactured conveniences and used to improvise his own. He said he wanted to be as self-dependent as possible."

Canon Turner had many ingenious devices for hunting seal, Sgt. Cook stated. He made his own fish hooks from tin and ivory. He fashioned a door bell from a sardine can, key, and a home-wound coil. He had a six-volt charger, and wired his small house for electric lighting.

Mrs. Turner arrived in Baffin Island only four years ago. Following the accident she used to sleep at the foot of the Canon's wooden makeshift bed.

"Water is a real problem in that country, and in winter they have to find and melt old ice and snow. In summer, it's even more difficult, as they have to climb over large hills and get the water from fresh-water lakes."

"It is rather fortunate we got out when we did, as the daylight hours were getting rather short. Another week and it's likely we would have had no daylight at all. Then we may have had to face the prospects of remaining there until next summer."

## APPENDIX D

### THE TURNER MEMORIAL APPEAL

*"John Turner acquired the Eskimo language to a remarkable degree of accuracy and was in the period of his greatest literary accomplishment when his accident occurred. He had prepared a number of Old Testament books for publication, revised the existing Eskimo New Testament, translated many new hymns and a remarkable number of scriptural choruses, and had almost completed the translation of the Book of Common Prayer."* (Chapter 9)

What more fitting memorial to Jack Turner's apostolic labours could be devised than the perpetuation of his work by the publication of the Old Testament Scriptures and the Prayer and Hymn book, which may both be used of God to build up and strengthen the Eskimo Church?

In Canada the memorial has taken the form of a generous response to the appeal for \$20,000 to assist Canon Turner's brave widow and his three little girls, one of whom, Faith, was born a few weeks after his death. While the B.C.M.S. naturally accepted an obligation to maintain Mrs. Joan Turner and her little ones, this generous fund has greatly assisted the Society in its financial responsibility. The fund was started by the indefatigable efforts of Dr. H. M. Speechly and



Canon Glover of Winnipeg, nobly assisted by Mrs. Bildfell, and is known as “The Turner of Moffet Inlet Fund.”

In Great Britain the Turner Memorial Appeal is for £1,000 to help in the publication of Canon Turner’s literary work, and further the task he had begun, through the agency of his brother, the Rev. Arthur Turner of Pangnirtung, and the Rev. Tom Daulby of Pond Inlet, under the lead of the Bishop in the Arctic.

The Ryerson Press of Toronto has undertaken to secure the necessary Eskimo type and the British and Foreign Bible Society (of Canada) has undertaken the printing of the Old Testament books. The appeal, therefore, is to make possible the publication at the same time of the Prayer Book and Hymn book, and for two typewriters, with Eskimo characters, to be placed at Pond Inlet and Pangnirtung, to make possible the duplication of other translation work that may not be printed immediately.

Any sums received over and above the initial £1,000 required will be devoted to the perpetuation in print of Canon Turner’s labour of love in the Gospel.

Gifts marked “Turner Memorial” may be sent in Canada to The Church House, 604 Jarvis Street, Toronto, and in Great Britain to the B.C.M.S., 96, Victoria St., London, S.W.1.

A. T. HOUGHTON,  
*General Secretary.*

## APPENDIX E

### THE ARCTIC MISSION OF THE BIBLE CHURCHMEN’S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

It was in 1925 that the Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society stepped into the Arctic field “to save from decay the work nobly carried on by the Rev. Dr. E. J. Peck and the Rev. E. W. T. Greenshield in earlier years”. At first work was undertaken at Port Harrison on Hudson’s Bay, and at stations in the south of Baffin Land, but latterly the work has become confined to areas further north and only on the Island itself.

The two mission stations at present staffed are at Pangnirtung, where Canon Turner’s brother—the Rev. H. Arthur Turner—and his wife and daughter live, and Pond Inlet, probably the most northerly mission station in the British Empire, where the Rev. Tom Daulby and his wife, a recruit, are at work. Canon Turner’s post at Moffet Inlet is at present vacant, and a small outstation for use on occasional visits is at Fort Ross on Somerset Island.

At Pangnirtung, where there is a Government-aided Diocesan hospital of which Mr. Turner is chaplain, there is a more settled population and regular schooling is given to young and old in the evening hours. But in these vast and practically uninhabited spaces it is the work of the pastor which is continually to the fore, and even one soul becomes of supreme importance.

This small but important mission—for “to every creature” must the Gospel be preached—is entirely manned and financed by the Society, but as a Church of England Society its work in the Arctic comes within that of the Diocese of the Arctic and each ordained missionary serves with the Bishop’s licence.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **THE BIBLE CHURCHMEN’S MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND ITS WORK**

The Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society was founded twenty-six years ago to provide for the Anglican a sphere of service thoroughly Scriptural, Evangelical and Reformed.

In Bristol it maintains two colleges, for men and women. Both not only train the Society’s missionary candidates, but also are fully recognized by the Church authorities; one as a theological college for preparation for ordination to the Home Ministry, and the other for preparation for the Inter-Diocesan Certificate of the Central Council for Women’s Church Work. Over 210 men have been ordained, nearly 150 for the Home Ministry, and more than fifty students are now in residence at both colleges.

Over 340 missionaries have been sent to the field during the years, and more than £1,300,000 raised to maintain the work which, though on a small scale, and in many places of a pioneer character, touches great diversities of needs and opportunities, from the Arctic to the Equator, and from Canada across Africa to China. The main fields of operation are in French Morocco and Tangier, Kenya and Uganda, Ethiopia, India (Central and United Provinces), Burma (Upper, Shan States, Rangoon and Arakan), and West and South China. In addition there is the small Arctic mission, three missionaries to the Canadian Indian Reserves are financed, and there is a small hospital in South-East Iran.

The Society’s emphasis is strongly upon direct evangelism, but it maintains six hospitals (three others having been destroyed in Burma during the war) and numerous dispensaries, schools in East Africa, India and Rangoon, and Bible Schools which God has singularly blessed in Ethiopia. The Society has also had the privilege of contributing to the pioneer translation of parts of the Scriptures in the Arctic, East Africa, Arakan and South China (amongst the illiterate Tais).

Fuller details may be obtained from The General Secretary, The Bible Churchmen’s Missionary Society, 96 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

## Document 2: RCAF Report on Operation Canon, 3 December 1947

### MEMORANDUM

RESTRICTED

File: 4-2-2

Date: 3 Dec 47

**O C**

**20 Tac Wing**

Appendix	“A”	Daily Log Dakota 969
“	“B”	Wireless Operators Report
Annex	1	Radio Facilities
Annex	2	NWAC Signal to Churchill
Appendix	“C”	Air Lift Equipment

Report

Operation Canon

### INFORMATION

1 On 1 Oct[ober] [19]47, 112 Transport Flight was informed by OC [Officer Commanding] 20 Tactical Wing that an Anglican Missionary was seriously wounded by an accidental rifle shot at his mission home, on Moffet Inlet. Medical aid was to be rendered immediately by an Army Medical Officer to be dropped there by aircraft and later when conditions permitted evacuated by air.

### INTENTION

2 A briefing was held in the 20 Tactical Wing, briefing room on the night of October 1<sup>st</sup>. Canon [Maurice] Flint was flown to Rivers from Ottawa to help with the briefing with his knowledge of the Moffet area, having lived there himself for several years. Canon Flint displayed hand drawn maps and photographs which were of a great asset to the briefing. The operation was to paradrop four Army Paratroopers including a medical officer into the mission along with supplies and radio equipment. The Army detachment [was] to depend on air supply until such time as a suitable lake and ice conditions permitted an aircraft to land and evacuate the personnel.

3 Preparation for the trip began immediately that night with all personnel drawing arctic clothing. Long range cabin tanks were fitted to the aircraft and it was then loaded with equipment and rations for the drop including a No.58,

No.52 and Gibson Girl radio sets. A Herman Nelson Heater, large type [dinghy] and 700 lbs. extra safety equipment were also carried.

### ACTION TAKEN

4 On 2 Oct [19]47 aircraft departed with the following crew:

<u>Air Force</u>		<u>Army Paratroopers</u>	
F/O R.C. Race	Captain	Capt. L.G. D'Artois	OC Detachment.
F/O K.O. Moore	Co-Pilot	Capt. R.W. Willoug[h]by	Medical Officer
F/O C.C. McMillan	Navigator	Sgt. W.W. Judd	Radio Tech.
F/L A.B. Morabito	Wireless Opr.	Sgt. H.C. Cook	Radio Opr.
CPL J.P. Rae	Crewman	Majr. G.A. Flint	Jump master
		Sgt. E. Ross	Spare

Major [George] Flint was to act as jump master and be equipped to jump if necessary. Sgt [E.] Ross was to remain at Churchill and replace Major Flint on any resupply drops.

5 Dakota 270 was used as far as Churchill where it was exchanged for Dakota 969 as the latter was equipped with Loran.<sup>1</sup> F/L Morabito contacted the DOT [Department of Transport] Marine Radio Station at Churchill and made arrangements for the communications system to be used throughout the operation.

6 On 3 Oct [19]47 the aircraft landed at Coral Harbour and made ready for the drop on the next day. Refueling was done by means of a rotary hand pump out of 45 gal. drums and trouble was experienced over the variety of caps in the drums, necessitating three different types of wrenches. All gasoline was filtered through a chamois.

7 On 4 Oct [19]47 aircraft departed for Moffet Inlet. In order to carry supplies and sufficient fuel the all up weight was 31,120 lbs. and the aircraft handled well. On starting the port engine the starter motor burned out and jammed thereby rendering the hand crank useless. A rope was then tied loosely around the propellor tip to allow it to slip off on rotation of the propellor, and with the aid of five men pulling through on the rope and using the meshing switch for booster coil the engine was started. This procedure was used for several more trips and was found very successful, never requiring more than three pull throughs.

8 The navigation problems were numerous. Due to the proximity of our track to the North Magnetic Pole, magnetic compasses were useless and were noted to continuously [...] swing over a range of 30 to 40 degrees. This meant

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<sup>1</sup> *Editor's note:* Long-range aid to navigation.

that the sun must always be visible in order to fly Astro Compass courses. The maps were fairly accurate but the scale considerably out. Pin pointing could only be done on coastlines due to the fact that inland lakes were frozen and covered with snow therefor[e] blending in with the surrounding [countryside]. Later in the year when the sea is also frozen, coastlines are unreliable unless the coast is of a rocky nature and affords a definite [demarcation] between land and water.

9 On the flight up to Moffet accurate pin points were made on the South coast of Melville Pen., and later on the North coast. The weather was such that both the sun and [landmarks] were visible making accurate navigation possible. A further excellent pin point was observed in the form of a mountain 2 miles to the left of track and twenty miles from the Southern Coast of Baffin Land. This mountain was called Sugar Loaf Mountain by the crew due to its shape and moving pictures were taken of it as was done of all prominent pin points along the route.

10 The aircraft arrived directly over Moffet Inlet but due to inaccurate mapping and fog over the Inlet it was 45 minutes before the mission was finally located through a hole in the fog. The mission is located on a small strip of land some seventy yards wide jutting out into the Inlet from the base of a 600 ft. cliff. This was obviously no place to drop men and supplies due to open water on both sides of the mission. A note and panel code [were] dropped on the mission informing the wife of Canon Turner of our purpose and requesting her to inform us by means of the panel code if we were in time to be of help. A suitable dropping zone [then] had to be found so the aircraft climbed above the fog which was lying some 200 ft. above the water. The country directly behind the mission was mountainous with no flat ground other than frozen lakes suitable for dropping. Furthermore most of these lakes had high cliffs surrounding them or the location was such that the aircraft had insufficient room to make a circuit between drops. Extreme caution had to be exercised to avoid being trapped, that is, flying into valleys too narrow to turn in or climb out of[,] and all turns had to be carefully contemplated before being executed to ensure the manoeuvre could be completed in the space afforded. A small lake eight miles inland, North East from the mission measuring 200 yards by 100 yards[,] was located and afforded a clear approach for the aircraft. It was realized by the crew that rugged country would have to be traversed by the paratroopers to reach the mission but under the circumstances this had to be accepted.

11 Dropping commenced immediately, dropping a 250 lb. drum of gasoline first in order to test the strength of lake ice. Thereafter the supplies and men were dropped. Some supplies were dropped first and were despatched at the same height as the live drops were to be made, in order to give the pilot an indication of how they were reaching the lake before risking the live drops on such a small DZ [drop zone]. All supplies and personnel landed safely on the lake and Sgt [W.W.] Judd who jumped immediately after the small 58 radio set was in contact with the aircraft some 5 minutes after reaching the lake. The aircraft had now

been over the area close to two hours so as soon as the ground party reported that everyone was safe a course was set for Coral Harbour.

12 A severe blizzard had set in at Coral Harbour by the time of arrival and after landing it was impossible to put on engine or wing covers due to the high wind so the aircraft was tied down securely by means of full gasoline drums.

13 Radio contact with Moffet was expected within 24 hours so the aircraft remained at Coral Harbour waiting for contact to be made. Refueling was carried out on the second day with considerable difficulty due to a 50 mph. wind. By 6 Oct [19]47 radio contact had still not been made with the party at Moffet so a reconnaissance flight over the mission was planned[;] however, weather at Coral Harbour delayed the flight until 8 Oct [19]47.

14 On this date the aircraft flew up to Moffet Inlet and while circling overhead made radio contact with the small 58 radio set. It was learned that the large 52 set was damaged on landing. A complete medical report was received from Capt. [R.W.] Willough[h]by along with a list of supplies that were needed. The party at Moffet [was] making preparation[s] to proceed to Arctic Bay by boat, estimating the trip to take from 8 to 10 hours in good weather or 1 to 2 days in adverse weather. This move, if successful, would simplify the operation considerably due to the radio facilities at Arctic Bay. Further, there was a lake near the Hudson[s] Bay Post that was suitable for landing an aircraft and had been previously used during the war by the Americans to land a C47. The aircraft [then] passed on the information to NWAC [North West Air Command] and 11 Group Winnipeg through Cambridge Bay and Churchill and proceeded to Coral Harbour, continuing the following day to Churchill, to pick up the re-supply and wait for the ground party to reach Arctic Bay. In the hangar at Churchill the aircraft was thoroughly checked and starter motor replaced. Three days after reaching Churchill it was learned through Arctic Bay that the party from Moffet Inlet had been forced back due to the sea ice conditions so extra supplies were loaded on the aircraft including a number 29 radio set. The operation now remained as originally planned, with the party remaining at Moffet, so it was imperative that they have suitable radio communications.

15 Adverse weather conditions at Coral Harbour prevented the aircraft from reaching there until 16 Oct [19]47 and proceeding the following morning to Moffet Inlet. Sgt Ross of the Army Paratroopers was added to the crew for this drop to help with the packing and despatching of supplies. Major Flint returned to Rivers. The weather conditions for this trip were ideal being CAVU [Ceiling and Visibility Unrestricted] over the entire route.

16 On reaching the mission it was found that a dropping zone was laid out right beside the mission house. This was considered as a very poor DZ due to the fact that the aircraft had to fly close [alongside] a 600 ft. cliff [then] drop on an area only 70 yards wide followed by a steep turn to the right to avoid a further mountain almost directly in front of the aircraft after dropping. However there



Starting the aircraft engine with a rope at Coral Harbour. Source: Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH) 181.003 D2261

was insufficient time for the party to reach a nearby lake in order to receive the supplies as they dropped so the drop was carried out on the mission as requested. The drop had to be carried out in one direction only regardless of the wind and with an airspeed of 110 mph. in order to maintain maximum [manoeuvrability] of the aircraft. The aircraft was at a slight bank to the right when actually dropping followed by a steep turn and increase in speed immediately after the load was cleared. A small [circuit] was then carried out over the Inlet and the drop repeated as before until all supplies were despatched. Signals to drop were given by means of the "bail out bell" in the aircraft and despatching by Sgt. Ross was excellent. All supplies were seen to drop safely on the mission except the radio set which overshot the DZ due to being so heavy and therefor[e] having a slight delay in the exit. The radio landed on thin shore ice a few feet from the land but was soon retrieved and no damage was expected.

17 Immediately after the supply drop the aircraft proceeded on a reconnaissance for a lake suitable for a future landing and one was located approximately 11 miles West of the mission on the far side of the Inlet. This lake was 2 miles long and afforded a good approach from either end. A suitable route to the lake for the ground party was also located in the form of a series of rivers and small lakes leading to the lake chosen. This information along with the latitude and longitude and bearing from the mission was passed on to Capt. [Guy] D'Artois. The aircraft [then] proceeded to Coral Harbour and Churchill the following day to wait there until radio communications were established with Moffet. On the night of 18 Oct [19]47 radio contact was made for the first time

with Moffet Inlet and a further request for supplies was received. The main item needed was penicillin, insufficient supplies having been sent from Winnipeg for the last drop.

18 The supplies for the next drop along with the necessary parachutes were requested from Winnipeg and were flown up two days later. The medical supplies were [then] carefully checked in the [company] of the Medical Officer at Churchill, packed and loaded on the aircraft. On 21 Oct [19]47 the aircraft proceeded to Coral Harbour and there due to weather waited until 24 Oct [19]47 before leaving for Moffet. The drop again had to be made on the mission due to low clouds and the mission itself being the only area with any ceiling. The aircraft was able to reach the mission by letting down through a hole in the overcast some distance up the Inlet [then] proceeding down the Inlet under a ceiling of approximately 200 ft. A very careful study of the Inlet had been made on the previous trips and proved invaluable on this drop due to the restricted visibility. The drop was carried out immediately because of the lowering conditions and the penicillin was ordered to be dropped first in the event that the drop had to be discontinued for the weather. The ceiling was ragged and it was therefor[e] impossible to remain out of cloud at all times in the dropping circuit with windscreen ice resulting[... ;] however, after four runs over the DZ all supplies were safely despatched and the aircraft climbed up through the overcast and proceeded back to Coral Harbour.

19 The ground party now reported having sufficient supplies until the evacuation sometime in the middle of November so the aircraft proceeded back to Rivers.

20 At 112 Transport Flight Rivers the aircraft underwent an eighty hour inspection and Dakota Skis were ordered from Edmonton to be used in the event that snow conditions at Moffet were unsuitable for wheels. The skis were fitted to the aircraft in the hangar to overcome any snags that might be encountered when fitting them again up North. An extra crewman Cpl [L.D.] Hawkins and a Rigger Sgt. K.C. Swinford were added to the crew to help in extra ground handling necessitated by the skis.

21 Information received from Capt. D'Artois stated that the lake chosen from the air was unsuitable for the ground party due to the fact that there were fast flowing rivers leading to the lake and therefor[e] ice to[o] thin to bear the weight of a dog team. A second lake was reported but rejected by the aircrew due to the nearby mountains described in the signal. A third lake was [then] reported and on plotting its position on a map could be seen it was on the edge of the barren lands, 26 miles South of the mission and therefor[e] would undoubtedly have good approaches. This lake was accepted until an aerial survey could be made of it.





Operation Canon group photo. Back row (left to right): Flying Officer (F/O) R.C. Race; F/O C.C. McMillan; Flight Lieutenant A.B. Morabito; Corporal L. Judd; Captain G. D'Artois. Source: DHH file 181.003 D2261Hawkins; Sergeant (Sgt) K. Swinford. Front row (left to right): "Rebecca" with the Turners' youngest child; Mrs. Turner and elder child; F/O K.O. Moore; Sgt H.C. Cook; Sgt W.W. Judd

22 The plan decided upon now was to proceed to Resolute Bay[,] an airstrip 200 miles North West of Moffet[,] and from there proceed to the lake. This would enable the aircraft to carry less fuel, land lighter and make a shorter flight in the event that skis were used. The skis along with wing jacks were to be carried on board to Resolute Bay and there fitted to the aircraft if necessary. Also carried on board was a portable oxygen set, plasma and morphine along with an ambulance type stretcher and blankets.

23 On 5 Nov [19]47 the aircraft proceeded to Churchill picking up mail at Winnipeg for Arctic Bay, Igloolik and Ponds Inlet to be transported later by dog team from Moffet. Adverse weather conditions held the aircraft at Churchill until 12 Nov [19]47 and again at Coral Harbour until 17 Nov [19]47. Extremely bad weather conditions were experienced at Coral Harbour with unusual high temperatures averaging between 18 and 30 degrees [Fahrenheit] [-8°C and -1°C]. A high pressure area over Baffin Land caused an Easterly circulation over Coral Harbour bringing in Polar Atlantic air with resulting low ceilings and freezing rain. Wing covers were very necessary at all times due to the freezing rain and if

the weather cleared heavy hoar frost was encountered. Windscreen covers would also have been a big asset at this time. Ice also had to be removed from propellor blades before each flight. The runway at Coral Harbour at this time was very soft making a take-off difficult and as snow conditions on the lake as reported by Capt. D'Artois looked suitable for a wheel landing the skis and jacks were loaded off at Coral Harbour to lessen the aircraft load. This also enabled the aircraft to carry three extra 45 gal. drums of fuel on board as had been done on all previous trips to give a greater selection of alternates. If needed the gasoline was transferred by hand-pump from the drums to cabin tanks while in flight.

24 On 17 Nov [19]47 the aircraft took-off from Coral Harbour enroute for Resolute Bay and to make a reconnaissance of the lake at Moffet on the way. On reaching Moffet a low overcast had moved in and at the same time a radio report indicated that the weather was closing in rapidly at Resolute Bay so the aircraft returned to Coral Harbour.

25 On returning to Coral Harbour three alternate plans were decided upon;

- (i) Proceed to Resolute as originally planned,
- (ii) To carry a Herman Nelson Heater, three extra drums of fuel and rations and land on the lake directly from Coral. An approximate eight hour wait was expected at the lake in this event and provided for, or
- (iii) To proceed to Cambridge Bay and then to Resolute, thereby following a more Westerly route where better weather conditions prevailed.

The weather conditions at these respective places would decide the plan to be adopted on the morning of take-off.

26 On the morning of 21 Nov [19]47 weather was clear at Moffet and Resolute so it was decided to fly directly to the lake and use Resolute Bay as an alternate. Navigation at this point was even more limited due to the short daylight hours and by the fact that the sun never rose above the horizon at Moffet.

27 The aircraft reached the mission at mid-day and then proceeded directly to the lake as light conditions were failing rapidly and a landing would have to be made soon. Capt. D'Artois was already on his way to the lake by dog team and was observed from the air. On reaching the lake visibility was reduced by ground fog but the silk panels indicating the landing path as laid out previously by D'Artois were visible when directly overhead. A gyro heading was noted from the panels and then by means of a "runway procedure" a landing was made. On landing the ground party [was] informed by radio to start out for the lake and Arctic Bay was instructed to transmit hourly weather reports on Churchill, Coral Harbour, Resolute Bay, and Cambridge Bay. These transmissions were to be made blind as no transmitting was to be made from the aircraft after landing in order to conserve the batteries. The aircraft was then refueled from the drums carried on board, engine covers put on and the Herman Nelson Heater made

ready. A flare path that was carried on board was [then] laid out with the aid of the dog team, which was used by Capt. D'Artois to reach the lake.

28 After the arrival of Canon [J.H.] Turner and party it was necessary to wait several hours for weather conditions to lift at Coral Harbour. The flare path was [then] lit and with the aid of landing lights the take-off was made. The snow conditions on the lake were quite good, the average depth being from eight to twelve inches, soft and with few drifts. It was found that the wheels smashed through the snow with little resistance and the take-off, using one-quarter flap, was made in approximately 4,500 ft. Due to the bulkiness and weight of the load taken on at the lake the Herman Nelson Heater was left behind. On leaving the lake the aircraft proceeded to Coral Harbour, remaining there overnight before flying directly to Winnipeg the following morning.



Putting the patient aboard the aircraft at Coral Harbour. Source: DHH 181.003 D2261

### CONCLUSION

29 This entire operation was undertaken at the very worst time of year for Arctic flying and navigational aids were very few. Once the aircraft was beyond the radio range at Coral Harbour there were no facilities for radio bearings. There were no Loran signals received North of Coral Harbour. This left only two means by which navigation could be carried out, Astro Compass courses by day and Astro Navigation by night. By November the angle of the sun was very low with long periods of twilight giving neither sun nor stars. Maps were fairly accurate

but pin points could only be made on coastlines. Weather conditions could change very rapidly and severe icing conditions were experienced in any cloud flying. However, with the excellent communication system in regards to weather reports, worked out by F/L [A.B.] Morabito and the carrying of extra fuel supplies on board, each trip was carried out with a maximum safety margin. Except for the adverse weather conditions there were no serious obstacles encountered. The aircraft serviceability was excellent and Dakota once more proved itself as a very versatile and dependable aircraft for Arctic flying.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### J.A.T.O.

30 On any future operation such as this where the aircraft is landing on virgin snow of a[n] unpredictable [depth] J.A.T.O. should be carried for use on take-off.

#### SKIS

31 Due to the limited ground handling facilities on Northern Bases a ski should be developed with a more simple attachment, [preferably] a type that fits directly to the wheel as was used on the Byrd Antarctic Expedition.

#### SAFETY EQUIPMENT

32 Safety equipment as carried on board aircraft for flying in the Arctic should include a Colman type gasoline stove. Gasoline is preferred so that the aircraft fuel could be used. Snow-knives and hand-saws should also be included to facilitate the building of igloos in the event of a forced landing [and instruction on how to build.]

#### WING AND ENGINE COVERS

33 All covers should have as simple a fastening device as possible because gloves or mit[t]s have to be worn at all times. Windscreen and propellor blade covers should be carried as well.

#### CABIN TANKS

34 The fibre composition cabin tank[s] as used on C47 aircraft at present are not suitable for continuous use. The installation of these tanks is also to[o] complicated and when flying a variety of loads it would be an asset to be able to remove the tanks easily in order to load the aircraft more suitably for a proper C of G [Centre of Gravity], when on trips where overload tanks are not necessary.

#### REFUELING

35 With the present variety of fuel drums found [throughout] the North all aircraft should carry a complete set of wrench[e]s needed for opening these drums. A large filler with a chamois and [rotary] hand pump is also necessary equipment.

AIRCRAFT HEATING

36 The present heating system used on C47 aircraft is suitable but all aircraft used on Arctic flying should be lined and insulated [throughout] the cabin.

EVACUATING OF CASUALTIES

37 If casualties are to be carried an electrical heated blanket wired for the aircraft[s] 24 volt system should be used. A stretcher also devised that would clamp securely to the floor and have safety straps attached for proper securing of the patient.

(R C Race)F/O  
112 Flight  
JAS [Joint Air School] Rivers

RESTRICTED  
Appendix "A"  
File: 4-2-2  
Date: 3 Dec 47.

DAILY LOG DAKOTA 969

2 Oct 47	0600 hrs.	Dakota 270 loaded with all equipment to be dropped plus 700 lbs of extra safety equipment, including a [Dingy] and Herman Nelson Heater.
	0830 hrs.	Dakota 270 proceeded to Winnipeg, weather at Rivers 400 feet ceiling 1½ miles visibility. Winnipeg 900 ft ceiling 2 miles visibility.
	0940 hrs.	Landed Winnipeg where a small Eskimo girl, "Chinook"[.] was taken on board for transportation to Coral Harbour. Aircrew proceeded to weather office for a weather briefing enroute to Churchill. Due to the heavy load being carried no overload tanks were filled.
	1000 hrs.	Airborne, climbed to 5000 f., topped overcast and proceeded to Churchill without event.
	1410 hrs.	Landed Churchill and transferred load from Dakota 270 to Dakota 969, the latter being equipped with Loran. Aircrew checked weather for Coral Harbour. Was found to be

		unsuitable to proceed that day. F/L Morabito proceeded to DOT Marine Radio Station to organize the signal set up for the operation. (See Wireless Operator's Report Appendix "B") Army personnel drew extra Arctic clothing and aircraft was refueled to 1200 gals. and made ready for morning take-off.
3 Oct 47	0800 hrs.	Weather was checked for Coral Harbour, ceiling unlimited, 10 miles visibility. All personnel loaded on board. Some delay caused in waiting for Eskimo girl "Chinook" to be brought down from Station Hospital.
	0947 hrs.	Airborne, climbed to 5000 ft. topped the overcast. Trip without event. No drifts obtainable. Flying on true course obtained by Astro Compass.
	1300 hrs.	Landed Coral Harbour. Runway conditions good with surface of rolled snow. Aircraft refueled by hand pump from 45 gal. drums on hand at the air strip. Supplies re-loaded in preparation for dropping. Last minute details worked out for radio procedure to be used with DOT Radio Station Coral Harbour.
4 Oct 47	0600 hrs.	Checked weather Arctic Bay. Ceiling 800 ft. 10 miles vis. Suitable conditions for fog. Temperature 35 degrees. Dew point 35. Weather Coral Harbour CAVU., wind east 25 mph., heavy cloud banks to South.
	0730 hrs.	Prepared aircraft for starting, no Herman Nelson was used. On starting port engine, starting motor burned out and jammed, rendering hand crank unserviceable. The engine was then started by using a rope, attached loosely to the propellor tip to enable it to slip off easily and with the aid of four men pulling propellor through with the rope and using meshing switch to operate booster coil.
	0923 hrs.	Airborne, all up weight 31,120 lbs. Bad cross winds experienced on take-off.

4 Oct 47	0925 hrs.	Set course 0070 degrees true, 3000 ft with about 10/10 overcast, topped 2000 ft.
	1024 hrs.	Pin point was obtained through break in clouds on the South end of Melville Pen. Aircraft on track. Weather subsequently cleared to CAVU conditions enabling drifts to be taken. True course being steered by Astro Compass and Directional Gyro.
	1146 hrs.	Pin point was made over Amherst Island. Aircraft still on track. Photographs were taken of all main pin points, one especially, a mountain on the South Shore of Baffin Land, two miles to the left of track. Mountain was called Sugar Loaf Mountain due to its shape.
	1248 hrs.	Arrived Moffet Inlet on ETA., but trouble was experienced in locating the mission due to the inaccuracy of small maps obtained at the briefing and low fog in the straits and inlet. After 45 minutes search the mission was spotted through a small break in the cloud and the aircraft proceeded down through a hole in the fog to drop a message and code panels on the mission at 1342 hrs. The message requested Mrs Turner to inform us by panel code if we were in time to be of help. One signal panel was to indicate that Canon Turner was still alive. Aircraft [then] climbed above fog and made a reconnaissance for a suitable lake on which to drop men and supplies. The mission being unsuitable due to the narrowness of the land spit and surrounding cliffs. The lake chosen as a DZ was 7 miles behind and above the mission and although in somewhat inaccessible country it was the only one in the immediate area affording a clear approach[.] The lake measured approximately 250 by 100 yards. On finding a suitable lake, the aircraft proceeded over the mission, saw the message laid out by Mrs Turner and preparations were made for the drop.
	1400 hrs.	Gasoline drum weighing approximately 250 lbs was dropped to test the thickness of the

ice in the lake and was seen to land safely. Four runs were made dropping supplies, then first live stick of Capt. D'Artois and Sgt. Judd dropped. The remainder of supplies were then dropped being followed by Capt. Willoug[h]by and Sgt. Cook. All personnel and supplies were seen to land safely on the lake and radio contact was made with Sgt. Judd, five minutes after reaching the lake. Sgt. Judd informed us that supplies and personnel were all okay. The intention prior to this point was to make a reconnaissance for a lake suitable for a landing at a future date, when ice conditions permitted. However our fuel supply made it imperative that we proceed directly to Coral Harbour.

- |          |           |   |
|----------|-----------|---|
|          | 1500 hrs. | Set course for Coral Harbour, weather unchanged for most of the route. Obtained some pin points. Winds at 2600 ft remained constant. 150 miles north of Coral Harbour a weak signal was received from on Loran Station Gimli. Weather reports from South Hampton Island were now giving 1500 ft. ceiling, 7 miles vis., barometer falling. Next report 1000 ft. ceiling, 5 miles vis., 20 minutes before ETA Coral Harbour. Cloud build up 10/10 moist cloud, no icing experienced. |
| 4 Oct 47 | 1840 hrs. | A let down was made at Coral Harbour, ceiling at this time 200 ft., 2 miles vis., darkness falling rapidly. Due to rapidly closing weather conditions it was decided to land immediately rather than wait for flare path to be laid. Landed Coral Harbour. Severe cross winds 50 mph. Aircraft covered for the night. No attempt made at refueling.   |
| 5 Oct 47 |           | Stood by for entire day for radio contact to be made with party at Moffet. Severe storms at Coral Harbour with wind 77 mph. No contact made with Moffet Inlet that night.   |
| 6 Oct 47 | 0900 hrs. | Aircraft was refueled with difficulty with a wind of 40 mph. An attempt was made to repair starter motor. Due to the lack of facilities nothing could be done. Midnight still   |



		no contact made with Moffet Inlet. A reconnaissance flight was planned for the next day.
7 Oct 47	0800 hrs.	Checked weather for Moffet Inlet through Arctic Bay, found not suitable for trip. 800 ft. ceilin[g], 4 miles vis.
	0900 hrs.	Checked weather again, very little change so trip was cancelled. Weather South Hampton Island CAVU.
8 Oct 47	0600 hrs.	Weather checked at Arctic Bay, 1000 ft. ceiling, 15 miles vis. Prepared aircraft for take-off, starting port engine again by rope. This system working very satisfactory. Last minute check Arctic Bay give 1500 ft. ceiling, 10 to 15 miles vis., improving.
	0836 hrs.	Airborne, weather South Hampton Island, clear.
	0837 hrs.	Set course 5000 ft. Pin points were obtained crossing the coast of South Hampton Island, Southern coast of Melville Pen., and again on North coast. No difficulty was experienced in navigation. Drifts and Astro Compass courses were obtained with no difficulty over the entire route.
	1040 hrs.	Climbed to 5500 ft. near Moffet to top the overcast.
	1235 hrs.	Over Moffet Inlet having made contact with ground party by radio, 5 minutes before. Through a hole in the clouds the aircraft was able to let down and fly low over the mission. Ground party informed aircraft that Canon Turner's condition was fair, all personnel were okay, but large 52 transmitter was damaged in landing. Doctor Willough[h]by gave a complete [diagnosis] of case over radio and ordered further medical supplies. Capt. D'Artois informed us that party planned to leave for Arctic Bay in two boats. Estimating the trip to take 8 to 10 hrs. in good weather but two days if weather poor. More supplies including gasoline for motor boats were requested. If party reached Arctic Bay re-supply trip would

		be made there. That there was also a lake near Arctic Bay suitable for landing a C47 on. From information gained by ground party it was learned that fresh water ice conditions should be suitable for landing by the middle of November.
8 Oct 47	1307 hrs.	Set course for Coral Harbour at 6000 ft. Astro Compass courses were obtainable at all times with occasional drifts being sited through breaks in the overcast. Pin points were obtained on the North and South coastline of Melville Pen. No signals were received on Loran.
	1612 hrs.	Landed Coral Harbour, ceiling 900 ft., 15 miles vis. Engine and wing covers were put on the aircraft. Plans to refuel and take-off for Churchill in the morning.
9 Oct 47	0900 hrs.	Refueled aircraft and stood by for visiting aircraft with the CAS aboard, before take-off for Churchill. Major Flint returned to Winnipeg in AOC's aircraft.
	1457 hrs.	Airborne for Churchill. Set course at 5000 ft., after topping 8/10 Stratus clouds. Churchill weather 800 ft. ceiling, 10 miles vis. Loran reception proved exceptionally good over entire route. Five accurate fixes were obtained and Astro Compass Courses were flown.
	1810 hrs.	Let down and landed at Churchill. Aircraft was put in the hangar for the installation of a new starting motor.
10 Oct 47	0800 hrs.	Crewmen started installing new starter motor. Sgt. Ross, Army paratrooper[,] was added to crew to aid in the despatching of supplies on the next supply drop. Aircraft was loaded with the supplies requested by the ground party at Moffet Inlet. Weather at Churchill was unsuitable for take-off due to fog.
11, 12, 13 Oct 47		Stood by at Churchill. Zero ceiling with poor visibility and freezing rain at Coral Harbour, prevented take-off on these days. No reports

- to date of ground party reaching Arctic Bay by boat.
- 14 Oct 47      Message received from Arctic Bay stating that only one boat carrying Hudson Bay Factor, Mr Cormack[,] had reached there from Moffet Inlet and that second boat with Canon Turner, his family and ground party had turned back to Moffet Inlet owing to ice conditions. Due to this fact it was imperative the ground party have a serviceable radio so a No.29 Radio Transmitter was added to the supplies to be dropped plus extra Ten in One Rations to be free dropped. Trip was cancelled on this date due to poor visibility and blowing snow at Coral Harbour.
- 15 Oct 47      Weather unsuitable Coral Harbour so trip was postponed until following day.
- 16 Oct 47      0800 hrs.      Coral Harbour weather was checked and found suitable for flight.
- 1136 hrs.      Airborne, take-off weight 30,500 lbs. Set course for Coral Harbour at 5000 ft. No difficulty was experienced with navigation. Astro compass courses, drifts and Loran position lines were used. Coral Harbour was reached on ETA and aircraft landed at 1503 hrs.
- The runway had been rolled since the recent snowfall but was soft in places and hard to see from the air. It was suggested to DOT personnel that runway be rolled again and more markers be placed along strip. Aircraft was refueled and wing and engine covers put on.
- 17 Oct 47      0600 hrs.      Arctic Bay weather was CAVU. Weather at Coral Harbour was clear but forecast indicated lowering conditions around time of return, so four 45 gal. drums of gas and a rotary pump were carried on board to enable refueling cabin tanks in flight.
- 0739 hrs.      Airborne, 31,000 lbs. all up weight. Set course Moffet Inlet 0740 climbing to 3500 ft. Weather over entire route was clear. Astro

compass courses and drifts were procurable at all times. Pin points were obtained on all coastlines.

0808 hrs. Only one signal, which was split, was picked up on Loran.

1103 hrs. Arrived at Moffet Inlet. Captain D'Artois had the DZ laid out beside the Mission. This was considered a poor DZ due to the surrounding high cliffs and the narrow neck of land (Approximately 70 yards) on which the mission was located. A near-by lake was considered a better DZ but as it was necessary to have personnel on the ground to receive the supplies as they dropped and the difficulty of transporting the supplies to the mission, the supply drop was made at the mission. In order to make the drop it was necessary to fly [alongside] a 600 ft. cliff and then bank slightly to starboard while dropping to avoid a further cliff. The narrowness of the inlet necessitated a very small circuit to be made between drops. All supplies landed safely beside the mission except the 29 radio, which landed on shore ice, but was retrieved by the ground party. The re-supply was made with a slight tail wind but the dropping run could only be made in one direction due to the surrounding hills. One large box of radio equipment jammed in the doorway causing severe vibration in the aircraft but was quickly pulled in to be dropped on the next run. After the drop was completed the aircraft proceeded on a reconnaissance for a lake suitable for a future landing. Lakes for this purpose are very limited due to the ruggedness of the country. A lake was located approximately 11 miles to the west, across the Inlet from the mission. This lake was approximately 2 miles long with a clear approach from either end. Ice appeared to be forming smoothly. Captain D'Artois was informed of latitude and longitude[,] also bearing and distance of it from the mission. A suitable route to the lake for the ground party

		was also located. This information was passed to Capt. D'Artois.
	1240 hrs.	Set course for Coral Harbour and experienced CAVU conditions which enabled Astro Compass courses and drifts to be used for entire trip home. No signals were received on Loran on return trip. Landed at Coral Harbour at 1608 hrs.
18 Oct 47	0900 hrs.	Aircraft refueled in preparation to leave for Churchill. As yet no radio contact made with ground party Moffet Inlet.
	1414 hrs.	Airborne, set course 6000 ft.
	1510 hrs.	Encountered warm front with freezing rain. Climbed to 10,500 ft. to top the overcast. At this height some Astro Compass courses were available later homing on radio range Churchill.
18 Oct 47	1746 hrs.	Landed Churchill.
	1800 hrs.	Radio contact made with Moffet Inlet ground party through Army Signals Churchill and were informed that they needed further supplies, especially Penicillin. Signal was despatched to Winnipeg, requesting supplies with more chutes and containers.
19 Oct 47		Standing by at Churchill for supplies. Regular radio contact being made with Moffet Inlet and were informed that second re-supply drop was due to the fact that insufficient Penicillin was sent from Winnipeg on last supply drop. Signal received from Winnipeg that supplies were forthcoming.
20 Oct 47		Maintaining radio contact with Moffet. Standing by for re-supply aircraft from Winnipeg. Received word aircraft had departed Winnipeg with supplies, estimating Churchill 1800 hrs.
	1900 hrs.	Transferred supplies to Dakota 969 and with the aid of Medical Officer Churchill, checked all medical supplies and found them in order. Aircraft prepared for morning take-off.

21 Oct 47		Weather checked for South Hampton and found suitable, overcast 1000 ft., 5 miles vis.
	1055 hrs.	Airborne, all up take-off weight 31,000 lbs. Set course 5000 ft. for Coral Harbour topping 8/10 Stratus Clouds. Some drifts obtainable and Astro Compass courses flown. No signals were received on Loran.
	1409 hrs.	Landed Coral Harbour, ceiling 800 ft., 5 miles vis. Heavy icing experienced in clouds during let down. Aircraft refueled, engine and wing covers put on. Weather at Coral Harbour now closing in with light freezing rain. Contact made that night with Moffet and weather there 300 ft. ceiling, ¼ mile vis., and snow.
22 Oct 47	0600 hrs.	Weather at Coral Harbour unsuitable for take-off with 200 ft. ceiling, light fog. Winnipeg forecast indicated no improvement. Remainder of day used to haul fuel from supply at the beach, 8 miles away.
23 Oct 47		Weather South Hampton Island remaining 200 ft. ceiling, low visibility. Trip was cancelled for that day.
24 Oct 47	0600 hrs.	Weather at Coral Harbour CAVU. Weather Arctic Bay 800 ft. ceiling, 2 to [?] miles visibility. Moffet Inlet 1500 ft. ceiling, 10 miles vis. Checked weather every thirty minutes there-after with improving conditions being reported at 0800 hours. Four 45 gal. drums of fuel were loaded for refueling purposes in the air due to for[e]cast indicating lowering weather conditions South Hampton Island.
	0847 hrs.	Airborne, all up take-off weight 30,500 lbs. Set course 5000 ft. for Moffet Inlet. Pin points were obtained on South coast of Melville Pen. A cold front was encountered over Melville Pen. giving light ice crystal fog conditions but drifts and Astro Compass shots were available.
24 Oct 47	1123 hrs.	Pin pointed over South Coast Baffin Land and arrived Moffet Inlet 1223 hrs. Fog obscured mission but a hole some distance

		down the Inlet enabled the aircraft to descend to 200 ft above the water and continue up the Inlet under the overcast to the mission. Height of clouds over the mission 250 ft. and dropping was carried out with difficulty due to the restricted visibility. Due to the low ragged ceiling on the dropping circuit wind screen icing was encountered. All supplies landed safely on the mission. Ground party passed message to aircraft by PT over small 58 set and advised that all personnel and Canon Turner in good health and no further supplies were needed before evacuation.
	1253 hrs.	Climbed above overcast to 6000 ft. and set course for Coral Harbour.
	1335 hrs.	Encountered cold front with light icing being experienced and climbed to 11,500 ft. At this altitude intermittent cloud flying was experienced and some light icing with temperature at minus 27 degrees Centigrade.  At 70:19 N, 84:10 W an aircraft was sighted crossing our track, heading south east. The distance was to[o] great for recognition but it appeared to be a large four engine type.  Front was passed approximately halfway down Melville Pen. Aircraft was then in the clear. Astro Compass courses were available for the entire route with pin points on coastlines. Favourable winds gave the aircraft a ground speed of 200 mph.
	1540 hrs.	Over Coral Harbour, weather CAVU. Landed 1550 hrs. Aircraft refueled, engine and wing covers put on. Take-off for Churchill, Winnipeg and Rivers planned for next morning.
25 Oct 47	0600 hrs.	Weather South Hampton Island clear.
	0940 hrs.	Airborne, set course Churchill, climbed to 10000 ft to top warm front over Hudson Bay. After 20 minutes cloud flying no ice was encountered. Aircraft climbed to 12000 ft. and was able to top overcast from there on. Astro Compass courses were flown and no

	signals were received on Loran. 15 minutes before ETA Churchill let down through break in clouds at 8000 ft.
1204 hrs.	Landed Churchill. After lunch aircraft departed 1411 hrs. for Winnipeg and Rivers. Flying at 6000 ft. above 10/10 overcast. Five pin points were obtained through breaks in clouds. Astro Compass courses were flown with split signals being received on Loran.
1800 hrs.	Landed in Winnipeg.
1910 hrs.	Airborne Winnipeg and landed Rivers 2020 hrs.
26 Oct to 4 Nov 47	Dakota 969 underwent minor inspection. Signals received from Capt. D'Artois that lake located by aircraft not suitable for ground party. Skis were ordered for the aircraft to be taken North in the event snow conditions too heavy for wheels and were fitted on the aircraft in the hangar in order to overcome any snags that may be encountered later. A further signal from Capt. D'Artois was received giving position of a lake 26 miles South of the mission. This lake located in barren country with a possible 6,000 ft. landing run, so was accepted as suitable until such time as reconnaissance could be made from the air. Snow conditions were reported 6 inches topped with drifts running to 13 inches.
5 Nov 47	Aircraft was loaded with skis, wing jacks, medical supplies and portable oxygen equipment to aid in evacuating Canon Turner, also ambulance type stretcher and hospital blankets. Above the regular crew an extra crewman Cpl J.D. Hawkins and Sgt. K.C. Swinford were carried to help with installation of the skis and extra ground handling required for this trip.
1705 hrs.	Departed for Winnipeg.
1755 hrs.	Landed Winnipeg. 800 lbs. of frozen meat and mail were taken on board for Coral Harbour, Arctic Bay and Ponds Inlet. Mail for Arctic



		Bay and Ponds Inlet. Mail for Arctic Bay and Ponds Inlet were to be left on the lake used for the evacuation, and to be transported later to Arctic Bay by eskimo dog team.
6 Nov 47	0800 hrs.	Weather at Churchill 400 ft. ceiling, freezing rain. Trip postponed until the afternoon.
	1400 hrs.	Again checked Churchill weather and found no change so trip postponed until next morning.
7 Nov 47	0700 hrs.	Checked Churchill weather, 1,200 ft. ceiling, 10 miles vis.
	0735 hrs.	Airborne, all up weight 31,000 lbs. Set course 6,000 ft., 10/10 overcast with breaks affording some pin points. Astro Compass courses were flown. No Loran signals were received.
	1119 hrs.	Landed Churchill. Weather South Hampton Island unsuitable due to fog. Take off proposed next morning.
8, 9, 10, 11 Nov 47		Weather at South Hampton Island unsuitable during this time due to fog conditions and later blowing snow. Runways also reported as unserviceable due to high temperatures which prevented rolling. No contact made with Moffet Inlet at this time due to a radio black out.
12 Nov 47	0800 hrs.	Weather at Coral Harbour reported as 1,200 ft. ceiling, 10 miles vis., and runways reported serviceable but to be used with caution. Weather at Churchill 800 ft. ceiling, 1 mile vis., light snow.
	0947 hrs.	Airborne, all up weight 31,000 lbs., climbed to 9,000 ft., and flew in light ice crystal fog. Astro compass courses only were available. No Loran signals received.
12 Nov 47	1308 hrs.	Let down was made at Coral Harbour breaking clouds at 800 ft. Severe icing conditions experienced in clouds.
	1319 hrs.	Landed at Coral Harbour. Runway conditions very soft with wheels sinking to ground

surface and [taxiing] almost impossible. A short while after landing a severe blizzard began, aircraft was refueled, covered and tied down for the night.

2000 hrs.

Radio contact was made with Moffet Inlet and a complete description on the lake to be used for a landing was obtained. Arctic Bay was also requested to obtain information on Resolute Bay in regards to conditions of landing strip, fuel on hand, flare path and serviceable Herman Nelson Heater. The plan at this time was to proceed from Coral Harbour to Resolute Bay making a reconnaissance of lake chosen by Capt. D'Artois enroute. After refueling at Resolute Bay the aircraft would proceed to Moffet when the weather permitted. This was considered advisable due to the fact that Resolute Bay was only 200 miles from Moffet Inlet.

13 Nov 47

Severe blizzard Coral Harbour prevented take-off. Radio contact made with Moffet Inlet every night at 2000 hrs. Arctic Bay advised that Resolute Bay had a hard rolled runway, flare path, fuel and serviceable Herman Nelson Heater.

14 Nov 47

Weather at South Hampton Island remaining blizzard conditions.

15 Nov 47

Blizzard conditions South Hampton Island now over but heavy fog preventing take-off. At this point a system was arranged with Churchill, Coral Harbour, Arctic Bay, Moffet Inlet, Resolute Bay and Cambridge Bay [whereby] these respective stations would transmit their weather every hour on the hour to Coral Harbour on days when the aircraft was proposing take-off and to transmit directly to the aircraft when the aircraft was airborne. These weather broadcasts were to commence at 0600 hours each morning until the aircraft was either airborne or trip was cancelled.

16 Nov 47	0600 hrs.	<p>Weather Moffet Inlet, Arctic Bay and Resolute CAVU but Coral Harbour 800 ft. ceiling, 5 miles vis. Forecasts indicated lowering conditions at Coral Harbour and Churchill during the day so trip was cancelled due to the fact that there were no suitable alternates in the event of Resolute Bay weather closing in. Due to the fact of continuous poor weather at Coral Harbour it was considered advisable to fly to Resolute Bay by way of Cambridge Bay where weather conditions on the whole were better. Cambridge Bay reported at this time that their runway was serviceable but no flare path on hand so a complete flare path was made ready at Coral Harbour to be loaded on the aircraft in the event of proceeding to Cambridge Bay. Three alternative plans were [then] decided upon;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Aircraft was to proceed to [C]ambridge Bay and [then] Resolute Bay,</li> <li>(ii) Proceed directly to Resolute from Coral Harbour, or</li> <li>(iii) To carry extra drums on board plus Herman Nelson Heater and proceed from Coral Harbour directly to lake at Moffet Inlet.</li> </ul>
16 Nov 47	0600 hrs./ Con't.	<p>Snow conditions on the lake were reported as 8 to 10 inches with slight drifts. So skis were removed from aircraft, thereby allowing an extra load of gas being carried on board.</p>
17 Nov 47	0600 hrs.	<p>Weather Arctic Bay and Resolute Bay CAVU. Coral Harbour overcast 2000 ft. ceiling, 10 miles vis. Aircraft loaded with Herman Nelson Heater, two 45 gal drums of fuel, hand pump and extra rations.</p>
	0944 hrs.	<p>Airborne all up weight 29,800 lbs. Runway conditions very soft combined with a 30 mph. cross wind. Take-off was made with considerable difficulty with the aid of ¼ flap. It was airborne at approximately 70 mph. Set course Moffet Inlet at 5,000 ft. Our</p>

destination being Resolute Bay but we were prepared to land at Moffet Inlet, weather and conditions there permitting. Astro compass courses were flown and pin points on coastlines were obtained through breaks in clouds. Approximately 40 miles South of Moffet Inlet heavy overcast conditions were encountered about 4,000 ft. Due to this, Radio at Moffet Inlet [was] requested to transmit on 1750 kcs., which was picked up by radio compass and the aircraft homed in on Moffet. Radio contact was [then] made with Capt. D'Artois on small 58 set who was standing by on lake chosen for landing, but a let down through the clouds was not attempted due to the low ceiling and mountainous country. At this time word from Arctic Bay gave Resolute Bay weather at 800 ft. ceiling, 2 miles vis. and snow which was a rapid change from past weather reports. With weather lowering at Resolute Bay and a let down at Moffet to[o] [hazardous] the aircraft set course for Coral Harbour.

1318 hrs. Set course for Coral Harbour at 4,000 ft., cloud conditions improved to a scattered condition by the South coast of Baffin Land and return trip was flown by Astro Compass courses obtaining drifts and usual pin points. Coral Harbour was still reporting 8,000 ft. overcast with 10 miles vis. No help was obtained from Loran. South Hampton range was used for homing last 15 minutes.

1604 hrs. Landed Coral Harbour. A flare path was already laid out as instructed by signal. Runway still very soft with severe cross wind persisting. Aircraft covered and tied down for the night.

18 Nov 47 Trip was not considered this date due to condition of runway, which required further rolling. Aircraft was also refueled.

19 Nov 47 Ceiling approximately 800 ft with freezing drizzle, runway in no better condition so trip was cancelled. More gasoline was brought up

		from the beach in the event that Coral Harbour might be used on the return trip from lake on evacuating Canon Turner.
20 Nov 47	0600 hrs.	Weather Resolute Bay, Moffet Inlet clear but ceiling Coral Harbour remaining low. A slight freezing drizzle and forecast from Winnipeg predicting very poor route conditions.
21 Nov 47	0500 hrs.	Weather Moffet Inlet, Resolute Bay CAVU, Coral Harbour overcast 2000 ft., 10 miles vis. Runway conditions harder after previous day[']s rolling so aircraft loaded to 31,000 [lbs] carrying three 45 gal. drums of fuel, Herman Nelson Heater, flare path, extra rations and a hand pump alon[g] with regular medical supplies as carried on all previous trips.
	0905 hrs.	Airborne, climbed to 10,000 ft. to top first layer, moderate icing experienced. Due to the overcast it was impossible to check course by Astro Compass. The directional Gyro had been pre-set on a [known] heading on the runway before take-off and an air plot was kept allowing for 3 degrees precession every twenty minutes on the directional Gyro.
	1015 hrs.	A back bearing was taken on Coral Harbour by radio compass on 500 kcs., which indicated aircraft was starboard of track. 15 minutes later cloud conditions thinned somewhat so aircraft descended to 4000 ft. in the hopes of obtaining a pin point. At this point returning to base was considered due to the complete lack of navigational [aids] but at 1056 hrs a break in the clouds afforded a fairly accurate pin point at Parry Bay. It was decided to carry on. Course was altered from a DR position for Moffet Inlet.
	1222 hrs.	An accurate pin point was obtained leading us directly to Moffet Inlet. During this time radio at Moffet Inlet was transmitting on 1750 kcs. to be used for homing purposes but was never picked up by radio compass. Weather over Moffet was clear but light conditions falling rapidly. Aircraft proceeded directly to the lake, passing Capt. D'Artois on dog team

enroute. The lake was found with no difficulty but low fog was rolling in. Panels indicating landing path, had been previously laid out by Capt. D'Artois but owing to fog conditions were hard to see. It was decided an immediate landing would have to be made. A message was then sent to Moffet Inlet informing them that we were about to land and to proceed directly to the lake. Arctic Bay was also informed to transmit weather conditions for Churchill, Coral Harbour, Resolute Bay, Cambridge Bay and Baker Lake, to the aircraft every hour on the hour. These transmissions were to be made blind due to the fact that the transmitters on the aircraft could not be used while on the lake, in order to conserve the batteries. A "runway procedure" was carried out over the lake and a landing was affected at 1252 hrs. On landing snow conditions were found to be 10 to 12 inches of soft snow affording little resistance to the wheels. The aircraft [then] taxied to the end of the lake, near a tent set up by Capt. D'Artois. Immediately on stopping the aircraft was unloaded, tanks were refueled from drums carried on board and Herman Nelson Heater set up and aircraft was [then] re-started and engines diluted, [then] covered. Complete darkness descended an hour after landing and fog conditions remained. Within an hour after landing Capt. D'Artois and Sgt. Judd arrived by dog team. With the aid of a dog team, F/O Race and Capt. D'Artois surveyed a take-off path and laid down flare path.

21 Nov 47      1800 hrs.

First dog team arrived carrying Canon Turner and Capt. Willough[h]by, followed shortly after by a second dog team carrying Mrs Turner and three children and Eskimo girl, who was also to be evacuated. Another dog team arrived carrying Sgt. Cook. Canon Turner was made comfortable in the tent and heat was applied to the aircraft engines. On the hourly weather reports, Resolute Bay was reported 2000 ft. ceiling, 1 mile vis and snow. Churchill 3000 ft. ceiling, 2 miles vis. and snow with fog

- conditions. Coral Harbour 400 ft. ceiling, 1 mile vis. Cambridge Bay CAVU but due to radio operator there having trouble with his transmitter it was considered to overlook this route if possible. It was decided to stand by for another hour with the hopes of improving conditions at Resolute Bay, Coral Harbour or Churchill.
- 2100 hrs. Weather broadcasts from Arctic Bay gave thin overcast Coral Harbour with stars and moon visible so it was decided to fly to Coral Harbour. Flare path was [then] lighted, Canon Turner and party loaded on board in preparation for take-off. Due to weight and bulkiness of load it was deemed advisable to leave the Herman Nelson Heater at the lake.
- 2200 hrs. Weather report indicated Coral Harbour remaining thin overcast so engines were started and aircraft taxied down to end of flare path. Sky was now clear above so directional Gyro was lined up by Astro Compass. Snow conditions were [somewhat] heavy for take-off.
- 2239 hrs. With the aid of  $\frac{1}{4}$  flap and landing lights the aircraft took-off on a heading of 179 degrees true. Initial speed was slow to build up but with 48 inches of manifold pressure the aircraft became airborne after a run of approximately 4,000 ft. leaving 1,800 ft. to spare. Cloud cond[i]tions were encountered immediately after take-off but were topped on climbing to 10,000 ft. At this height the entire sky was visible and navigation was carried out with the aid of position lines from Dubhe, Benetnash, Deneb and the moon. No Loran signals were received. One hour and thirty five minutes before reaching Coral Harbour the radio range was picked up by radio compass indicating aircraft to be on track. Navigation presented no problems on return trip. An excellent flare path had been laid by the DOT Coral Harbour. Aircraft landed at 0155 hrs. Due to high altitude flown on the return trip Canon Turner was suffering

		somewhat from the cold and as ground party had a long and stren[u]ous day it was deemed advisable to remain at Coral Harbour [overnight]. Quarters and beds were made available for Canon Turner and his family and the operation signal on the day[']s trip despatched by the crew before retiring.
22 Nov 47	0800 hrs.	Aircraft was refueled and prepared for take-off for direct trip to Winnipeg.
	1100 hrs.	Canon Turner, Family and ground party were loaded on board.
	1130 hrs.	Airborne and set course at 5,000 ft. for Churchill. Shortly after setting course light ice crystal fog conditions were encountered eliminating any Astro Compass course checks or drifts. A pre-set heading on the directional Gyro was relied upon until accurate bearings were picked up on Churchill Radio Range.
22 Nov 47	1442 hrs.	PX over Churchill radio range and set course for Winnipeg at 6,000 ft. Shortly after ice crystal fog conditions changed to definite cloud layers and was topped at 8,000 ft. Five pin points were obtained enroute and Astro Compass checks were available until Doghead Point was reached at which time Winnipeg radio was picked up on radio compass. Twenty minutes before ETA Winnipeg ATC [Air Traffic Control] clearance was received and a let down made over Winnipeg, landing at 1815 hrs.
	1815 hrs.	Canon Turner was transferred to hospital by RCAF Ambulance and aircraft took-off for Rivers at 2110 hrs. landing at 2220 hrs.
		Operation Canon completed.



RESTRICTED

Appendix "B"

File: 4-2-2

Date: 3 Dec 47

WIRELESS OPERATORS REPORT

- 1 Oct 47      Attended briefing by Major G.A. Flint on operation Canon. Had consultation with F/L F.G. Winters on Northern signal facilities and collected all available information.
- 2 Oct 47      Churchill. Arranged conference with Lt. Kohler RCCS and Mr. Bambrick of Marine Station, VAP Churchill. Conference was also attended by Sgt. H.C. Cook and Sgt. W.W. Judd of Army Rescue Team. A working plan was made of the available facilities and conference was very successful due to the able co-operation given us by Mr. Bambrick. It was decided at this conference to use JAS as the call letters for the Army rescue party at Moffet Inlet. (For signal facilities see Annex 1 to Appendix "B".)
- 3 Oct 47      Collected all information pertaining to operation Canon from CJC Churchill before take-off for Coral Harbour CZ4V (see Annex 1 and 2 of Appendix "B"). Contact made with CHA Cambridge Bay, CJC Churchill, and CZ4V Coral. Atmospherics made communications difficult. A message was received from CHA advising aircraft that NWAC [North West Air Command] requested pilot of CAA to pass a running narrative of flight and story of parachute drop. All messages were to be passed with immediate priority, also position reports were to be sent on 6240 every hour. The length of time aircraft was expected to remain at Coral Harbour was also requested. Message was despatched from aircraft advising NWAC that due to length of time it would take to refuel aircraft and with existing daylight an overnight stay at Coral was anticipated. Advised Cambridge Bay CHA to pass all messages [emanating] from aircraft to 11 Group, Army HQ WC, and JAS Rivers. Passed landing report to Churchill and Cambridge Bay.
- 4 Oct 47      Advised CHA Cambridge Bay on 6240 Kcs. of take-off time and ETA. for Moffet Inlet. Cambridge Bay advised that WX [weather] at Arctic Bay was clear and requested that I advise them before changing over to 6850 Kcs. Sent position reports and also messages stating that operation was going according to plan and that WX on flight route was good. Cambridge Bay advised that we were to carry on with flight and that wind was to switch to SE [southeast] and that there was a possibility of

fog and stated that if we were unable to land at Coral to land at Churchill. Changed frequency to 6850 and called Arctic Bay CZ5H. Received special WX report from Arctic Bay and a detailed description of terrain around mission at Moffet Inlet. Advised Arctic that all details of jump would be passed to him, also to expect communication from ground party JAS in two days. Dropped paratroopers at 1855 hrs., and made contact with JAS with 58 set at 2005 hrs., in which they stated that jump was good and everyone was down safely. At 2040 hrs. sent message as to details of jump and condition of water in Moffet Inlet to CHA Cambridge, Arctic Bay and later to CJC Churchill. These messages were all addressed to NWAC, 11 Gp, Army HQ WC and JAS Rivers. On return journey to Coral received continuous WX reports and changed frequency to 5120 to contact CZ4V at Coral requesting more detailed WX reports and flare path. Landed at 2325Z at Coral.

8 Oct 47

At 1435Z take-off for reconnaissance Moffet Inlet sent to CJC Churchill (6240). Also sent position report and received WX for Arctic Bay from CJC Churchill. Later contacted CHA Cambridge and sent take-off time and ETA for Moffet Inlet. Contact made with Arctic Bay CZ5H on 6850 at 1630Z and sent position reports and received WX reports. Requested Arctic Bay to keep in touch with Coral CZ4V and keep Coral WX on tap at all times. Contacted JAS on 58 set 25 miles from Mission at 1717Z and received WX report. Received list of items needed by JAS, also that large transmitter 52 set had been damaged and could not be repaired. Also received detailed report from Doctor Willoughby on condition of Canon Turner. JAS advised that party accompanied by Mr. Cormack, Hudson Bay factor at Arctic[,] would leave the next day for Arctic Bay by boat. Received information on Marshal Lake at Arctic Bay and made arrangements with Arctic Bay for accommodations for party from Mission. Information as to daylight conditions was also received from Arctic Bay.

At 2000Z changed to 6240 and sent information as to Canon Turner's condition, plans of ground party to CHA Cambridge and later to CJC Churchill. Changed to 8910 and contacted Coral Harbour CZ4V. Requested WX. Landed at Coral 2120Z and landing report sent to CJC Churchill and CHA Cambridge Bay.

9 Oct 47

Take-off at 1957Z for re-supply at Churchill. Contact made with CJC on 6240. Landed at 2311Z.

- 16 Oct 47      Take-off for Coral Harbour with re-supply. Contact maintained with CJC on 6240 and with Coral Harbour CZ4V on 5120 and 8910. Landed at Coral Harbour at 2000Z. Landing report sent to CJC Churchill.
- 17 Oct 47      Take-off for Moffet Inlet at 1210Z. Was unable to contact CJC Churchill and CHA Cambridge. Sent position report to CZ4V Coral on 5120 kcs. and at 1446Z contact was made with CZ5H Arctic Bay on 6850. Sent position reports and received WX reports from Arctic Bay and requested Arctic to send position reports to CHA. At 1605 contact was made with JAS and F/O Race took over [i] liaison set to give instructions as to lakes and thickness of ice to Capt. D'Artois. Supplies were dropped. After leaving JAS Moffet was able to contact CHA on 6240 and sent messages dealing with lake chosen and condition of Canon Turner. Message was later sent to CJC Churchill. Changed to 5120 and contacted Coral Harbour CZ4V giving position reports and requesting WX. Landed Coral Harbour at 2105Z and landing report sent to CJC Churchill and CHA Cambridge Bay.
- 18 Oct 47      Took-off for Churchill at 1917Z. Maintained contact with CJC Churchill on 6240 sent position reports and received WX reports. Landed at Churchill 2245Z. Learned later that night that JAS had repaired large 52 set and needed more supplies and penicil[i]n.
- 21 Oct 47      Took-off for Coral with supplies at 1555Z. Maintained contact with CJC Churchill on 6240 and with Coral Harbour CZ4V on 5120 and 8910 kcs. Landed at Coral 1910Z.
- 24 Oct 47      Took off for Moffet Inlet at 1347Z. Unable to make contact at this time with CJC or CHA (Cambridge Bay) but was able to contact CZ5H Arctic on 6850 kcs. and at 1449Z made direct contact with JAS on 6850 at Moffet Inlet. Sent position reports and received WX from Arctic Bay and Moffet Inlet. Dropped supplies at Moffet at 1723Z and returned to Coral. On return flight was able to contact CHA Cambridge Bay and sent message stating supplies had been dropped satisfactorily. Unable to contact CJC Churchill. Changed to 5120 and contacted CZ4V Coral Harbour and received WX. Landed at 2050Z.
- 25, 26 Oct      Took-off for Churchill and WG (Winnipeg) contact made with CJC /47 and CHP on 6240 kcs. Landed Rivers 0230Z.

- 7 Nov 47 Took-off from WG for Churchill at 1338Z. Landed Churchill 1718Z. Maintained contact with CHP Winnipeg and CJC Churchill on 6240 kcs.
- 12 Nov 47 Took-off from Churchill for Coral at 1547Z. Maintained contact with CJC Churchill on 6240 and CZ4V Coral on 5120 kcs. Landed Coral 1915Z.
- 17 Nov 47 Took-off from Coral Harbour for Moffet Inlet at 1447Z for reconnaissance and possible landing at Moffet Inlet. Maintained contact with JAS on 6850 and Arctic Bay CZ5H on 6850. Were unable at this time to contact either CJC Churchill or CHA Cambridge Bay due to atmospherics. Received continuous WX reports from JAS and Arctic Bay and made contact with Resolute Bay CHW on 7560 kcs. and received his weather. Advised Arctic Bay to pass all position reports to CHA Cambridge and have CHA pass position reports to CJC Churchill. Advised JAS to be in semi-preparedness to leave Mission as a landing on lake was anticipated WX conditions permitting. WX at Moffet at this time overcast so JAS Detachment was advised to turn his transmitter down to 1750 kcs. and send long dashes and call sign for homing with radio compass. Picked up homing signal from JAS 25 miles from Moffet and homed in on it. Advised JAS that due to low ceiling no landing would be attempted and that a better system of receiving weather reports would be inaugurated with CJC Churchill, VEK Baker Lake, CHW Resolute Bay, CHA Cambridge Bay, CZ4V Coral Harbour and CZ5H Arctic Bay to send WX every hour. On return journey home contact was maintained with CZ5H Arctic Bay, JAS Moffet and later with CJC Churchill. Sent CJC message of [day's] operations and advised CJC that another attempt would be made as soon as WX permitted. Contacted CZ4V on 5120 and advised them to put on Range and flare path. Landed at Coral at 2205Z and sent landing report to CJC Churchill on 6240 kcs.
- 19 Nov 47 Inaugurated WX system by following means commencing at 1100Z station CZ5H would send on 6850 kcs. CQ CQ CQ CZ5H my WX - pass WX and then advise by sending GA (go ahead) CHW Resolute Bay. e.g.
- |      |   |    |   |    |       |                |
|------|---|----|---|----|-------|----------------|
| CZ5H | - | CQ | - | WX | ----- | GA CHW (7560)  |
| CHW  | - | CQ | - | WX | ----- | GA CZ4V (8910) |
| CZ4V | - | CQ | - | WX | ----- | GA CHA (6850)  |
| CHA  | - | CQ | - | WX | ----- | GA CJC (6850)  |
| CJC  | - | CQ | - | WX | ----- | GA VEK (6850)  |

With this method a complete picture of the weather was had at all times, and it was anticipated that if and when aircraft landed on lake at Moffet Inlet, Arctic Bay would collect all these reports and transmit them blind to Aircraft on the lake so F/O Race could determine his destination after leaving the lake.

21 Nov 47      Took-off from Coral Harbour at 1405Z for Moffet Inlet. Advised CJC Churchill, JAS Moffet and CZ5H Arctic Bay of take-off time and ETA Moffet. At 1505 advised CZ4V Coral Harbour to send call sign and dashes on 500 kcs and a bearing was obtained with the radio compass. Received WX reports on CQ WX system from Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, Cambridge Bay, Churchill and Moffet Inlet. Advised Moffet JAS to transmit on 1750 kcs call sign and dashes but no bearing was received on radio compass as signal was too weak. Arrived at Moffet Inlet at 1735Z and advised party at Mission to prepare to leave as soon as a landing was made on lake. JAS advised that Capt. D'Artois was on his way by dog team to lake. Sent out plan of operations stating that after aircraft landed at lake a wait of approximately eight hours was anticipated to wait for party to arrive from Mission to lake. All stations were to send WX reports without fail. All stations received this message. Advised Arctic Bay to collect all WX reports and transmit them blind to aircraft on the lake on schedule commencing at 1900Z every two hours until 2300 hrs. and from then on the hour. It was also arranged to have a ground check with Arctic Bay after landing. Arctic Bay was also advised to send to all stations our landing time on the lake.

Landed on lake at 1752Z and [word unclear] checked with Arctic Bay. Received WX reports from Arctic Bay of weather conditions at Churchill, Coral, Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay and Resolute Bay at 1900Z, 2100Z, 2300Z, 0000Z, 0100Z, 0200Z and 0300Z. From these reports F/O Race was able to determine his destination from lake. Take-off from lake at 0339Z and advised all stations of take-off time and ETA Coral Harbour. Received special WX [prognostic] for entire area and on return journey to Coral Harbour a very close check was kept on the weather at Coral Harbour and Churchill. Advised CJC Churchill that party intended to stay overnight at Coral Harbour. Advised Coral Harbour to put on flare path and to have food and quarters available for party. Landed at Coral Harbour at 0655Z. Sent landing report to all stations.

22 Nov 47      Took-off from Coral Harbour for WG at 1630Z and contact was maintained with Coral Harbour on 8910 and with Churchill

CJC on 6240 and with CHP Winnipeg on 6240 and with VYJ Rivers on 6240 kcs. WX reports were received and position reports sent out every hour. Landed Winnipeg at 0015Z.

### SUMMARY

Very able co-operation was given by all the northern stations, Churchill, Cambridge Bay, Baker Lake, Coral Harbour, Resolute Bay and Arctic Bay[,] in this operation.

Mr. E. Jordan DOT man at Arctic Bay was invaluable to the operation. He is the only operator at that station and normally is quite busy collecting and sending weather reports. During the entire operation Mr. Jordan stood by at all times and gave us every assistance and at times this meant a watch from 1000Z until 0400Z. On the whole signals were good and contact was made with at least one station at any time of operation.

### RECOMMENDATION

On such operations an RCAF ground operator should be carried to aid operators at terminal ground stations, e.g.:

“On such an operation as exercise Canon the terminal station was Coral Harbour. This is a DOT. operated station. The operators on watch have to collect and send weather reports which takes up most of their time. With an RCAF ground operator to aid them it would take part of the overload off their hands. The ground operator could be on hand to collect and send all messages pertaining to the exercise i.e. WX reports, reports from aircraft. The ground operator would be more familiar with RCAF procedure and this would expedite the dispatching and collecting of information.

Annex 1  
to  
Appendix “B”  
File: 4-2-2  
Date: 3 Dec 47

### OPERATION ‘CANON’

Following Radio facilities for Operation “Canon” compiled by Mr. Bambrick, F/L Morabito, Lt. Koehler and Sgt. Cook.

Coral Harbour, Southampton Island (CZ4V) crystal controlled on 5120 kcs. and 8910 kcs. only - no provision for other frequencies. Aircraft CAA based at Coral Harbour to work on 5120 kcs. for part distance enroute to drop area at Moffet Inlet then change to 6850 kcs. and establish contact with Arctic Bay (CZ5H).

Aircraft will remain in drop area until wireless contact with ground rescue party on 6850 kcs. has been made.

Arctic Bay has been advised to maintain continuous watch on 6850 kcs and 500 kcs. from five hours after take-off from Coral Harbour until contact with ground rescue party has been established. When communication with Arctic Bay has been established by ground rescue party definite schedules will be arranged. If communication has not been established within twenty four hours Arctic Bay is to inform VAP Churchill and an additional wireless set No.29 will be flown in on the resupply.

Arctic Bay has direct contact with VAP Churchill, therefore ground rescue crew will send medical report of condition of patient to Arctic Bay who will forward it to VAP Churchill. If Arctic Bay - Churchill circuit fails, messages may be routed from Arctic Bay to Churchill via Coral Harbour or Nottingham Island.

All movements of aircraft will be sent to VAP Churchill from Coral Harbour. VAP will pass all messages to Army Signals Churchill who will relay to Eleven Group, Prairie Command and JAS Rivers.

Nottingham Island (VCB) has been alerted and will maintain continuous 24 hour watch on 6850 kcs. and 500 kcs. and will act as control station for all traffic emanating from Arctic Bay. Repulse Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, Fort Ross, Pond Inlet and Cambridge Bay have been alerted and will maintain continuous watch on 6850 kcs. and 500 kcs. for entire operation.

All Hudson Bay Stations in the area have been alerted. Arctic Bay has been informed that if no contact established with Moffet Inlet to send traffic blind.



Annex 2  
to  
Appendix "B"  
File: 4-2-2  
Date: 3 Dec 47

RCAF  
MESSAGE FORM

Important

From: NWAC To: CHURCHILL

AF 106 2 OCT

UNCLASS(.) ENSURE THAT PILOTS FLYING ON MERCY FLIGHT TO MOFFET INLET ARE BRIEFED TO PASS REGULAR HOURLY POSITION REPORTS INCLUDING ANY COMMENTARY ON FLIGHT TO CHURCHILL AND CAMBRIDGE BAY ON 6240 KC (.) CHURCHILL IS TO PASS INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM A/C DIRECT TO NWAC HEADQUARTERS ON 6240 KC WITHOUT DELAY(.) 02940Z

MP/LT IN PONE ARMY SIGS 022120Z

OPERATION CANON

Personnel Involved

Army/RCAF Headquarters

<u>Aircrew</u>	Captain	F/O Bob Race	Edmonton, Alta.
	Co-Pilot	F/O K.O Moore	Rockhaven, Sask.
	Navigator	F/O C.C McMillan	Melfort, Sask.
	WOP [Wireless	F/L A.B. Morabito	Creston, B.C.
	Operator]		
	Crewmen	LAC J.P. Rae	Cupar, Sask.
		Cpl L. Hawkins	Winnipeg, Man.
		Sgt K. Swinford	Toronto, Ont.
<u>Paratroopers</u>	Doctor	Capt. Willoughby	
	O/C Ground Party	Capt. Guy D'Artois	
	WOPS	Sgt. Judd	
		Sgt. Cook	

Date



- 30 Sept. First Signal from RCAF and Army H.Q. in Ottawa to 11 Group RCAF and Prairie Command authorizing rescue operation. RCAF and Army personnel [alerted] for participation in "Operation Canon".
- 1 Oct. Whole rescue mission as laid down by Canadian Cabinet states RCAF to be coordinating authority.
- Reverend Flint on route to Winnipeg from Ottawa with maps and pictures prepared to brief the RCAF and Army personnel taking part in "Operation Canon" on the conditions they will meet at Moffet Inlet. Reverend Flint speaks from authority as he has spent some time in that particular part of the country.
- F/O Race named officer in charge of rescue party until paratroopers are dropped at Moffet Inlet. Then Capt. Guy D'Artois will assume command of ground rescue party. On pick up at completion of rescue mission F/O Race will again assume command until party arrive[s] in Winnipeg.
- 2 Oct. RCAF Dakota Snow Bird piloted by F/O Race and with Army paratroopers on board arrived at Churchill on first leg of rescue mission.
- 3 Oct Dakota aircraft "Snow Bird" arrives at Coral on second leg of rescue flight and holds overnight. Seasonable [unclimactic] conditions including fog and freezing drizzle fatal to flying delayed take off from Churchill.
- 4 Oct "Snow Bird" took off from Coral for Moffet Inlet to drop supplies and paratroopers to aid of Canon Turner.
- Panel Signals from the mission indicate that Canon Turner still alive. Aircraft did five runs over small lake about five or six miles Nort[h]-East of mission. All supplies and paratroopers dropped very accurately on dropping zone lake about 250 x 100 yds. long. F/O Race estimates the over land trip to the mission may be as much as 10 - 12 miles through this rugged country.
- Sequence of drops were: 1st run - petrol drum dropped first to test thickness of lake ice. A smoke bomb was dropped at the same time in order to estimate the wind drift for dropping the paratroopers.
- 2nd run - Large amount of medical supplies and food dropped accurately on dropping zone.
- 3rd run - Sgt Judd and Capt. D'Artois dropped in quick succession.

4th run - All heavy equipment including batteries manhandled out of aircraft on this run.

5th run - Captain Willowby [*sic*] and Sgt Cook complete dropping operation.

F/O Race took the "Snow Bird" over the dropping zone in one last low [pass] to ensure that all had landed safely. Everyone was seen walking and waving up at aircraft. The Army jump master commended the pilot, F/O Race, on the accuracy of the dropping of both the supplies and the paratroopers.

4 Oct. (Cont'd) Aircraft stayed overnight at Coral Harbo[u]r on way back from Moffet Inlet.

Before this flight one of the starter motors went unserviceable and the crewmen managed to start the engine by the use of a rope 'pull through'.

7 Oct. Long Arctic Winter definitely starting to set in results in extreme air turbulence and unpredictable weather changes. [Fog], freezing drizzle alternating with blizzards ground all aircraft in this territory at this time of year.

F/O Race's proposed reconnaissance of Moffet Inlet was forced to be cancelled due to climatic conditions typical of weather encountered in the Arctic at this time of the year.

8 Oct. To date no word has been received by radio from the ground party at Moffet Inlet. F/O Race took the "Snow Bird" up to Moffet Inlet on a reconnaissance flight and relayed back to Coral Harbo[u]r the first word from the ground rescue party. F/L Morabito, WOP on the "Snow Bird"[.] maintained constant relaying of messages received from Capt. D'Artois who was transmitting with the small radio set, the large radio set apparently having been damaged when dropped originally. Capt. D'Artois [s]tated ground rescue party would try to take Canon Turner to Arctic Bay by boat, also gave Canon Turner's condition as quite good. More supplies requested by ground rescue party as three of the original canisters of supplies dropped were never recovered.

12 Oct. Radio message from Arctic Bay states Canon Turner had not arrived and they believe that the party had to turn back to Moffet Inlet because the ice was almost two inches thick and was far to[o] heavy for a motor boat to plow through.

- 16 Oct. A message from Capt. D'Artois gave the first word as to how Canon [Turner] had accidentally shot himself.
- "Apparently the Canon left the mission house to shoot seal, and for some reason did not shoot any and returned to the house with the loaded rifle still cocked. At the door he met an [Eskimo] girl going in the house with a bucket of ice. He took the bucket in his left hand and slung the rifle over his right arm. When he reached out to turn the door knob with his right hand, the rifle slipped and the trigger caught in either his windbreaker or trousers. A shot went off and pierced his upper lip. He fell backwards over the door step, injuring his spine.
- 17 Oct. F/O Race makes another reconnaissance flight at Moffet Inlet and drops the supplies previously requested by the ground rescue party. Also confirms that party returned to Moffet Inlet with boats due to too thick ice on Bay. All apparently well and with sufficient supplies to last till mid-November.
- 21 Oct. Rescue party at Moffet Inlet request[s] further food and medical supplies.
- 24 Oct. Race proceeded with RCAF Dakota "Snow Bird" to drop supplies directly on the mission house due to low fog [ceiling] of 200 ft. preventing the dropping of the supplies on a nearby lake. At this time Race was forced to take the "Snow Bird" low in between the base of the clouds and the tops of the surrounding hills in order to effect a successful drop.
- 26 Oct. One of the regular reports from Dr. Willowby [sic] at Moffet Inlet stated Canon Turner progressing favourably.
- 27 Oct. In a message received from Capt. Guy D'Artois he states that Canon [Turner] was cross because the paratroopers risked a jump to come to his aid.
- 29 Oct. A signal from Capt. D'Artois to F/O Race gives the picture of the landing strip selected for their evacuation from Moffet Inlet. On three sides hills rise up several hundred feet at a distance of approximately 8 miles away while the southern approach is apparently the best.
- 3 Nov. A medical report from Capt. Willowby [sic] states Canon Tu[r]ner's condition is about the same. His voluntary arm movement is improving daily however his leg is still [paralyzed] and he suffers from frequent headaches.
- 3 Nov. (Cont'd) F/O Race plans to leave tomorrow to reconnoitre the lake selected about 26 miles south of Moffet Inlet. Thinks this is

only suitable lake in area for both parties. The best approach appears to be from the East.

Another of the periodic medical reports radioed through by Capt Willoughby states that Canon Turner's condition is about the same. While his arm movement is improving daily his leg is still [paralyzed], and he has frequent headaches.

4 Nov. F/O Race is in contact with Capt. D'Artois and between them they decide what they need in the way of a lake to land the heavy Dakota aircraft "Snow Bird" on.

5 Nov. Capt. D'Artois contacted F/O Race and gave the final disposition of the lake selected for the landing. In this case it was found that the best approach would be from the South as the lake was surrounded by mountains 8 to 10 miles away from it on three sides, the southernly end being the only open side of the lake for an aircraft approach. D'Artois' description of the lake states that the snow is hard packed with [intermittent] drifts for a length of 4500 feet. The paratroopers have selected the most suitable runway and marked it with panels every 300 yards.

Another medical report from [Capt.] Willoughby stated that Canon [Turner's] mental outlook was considerably brighter and he was taking an interest in things again.

8 Nov. The "Snow Bird" is forced to hold at Churchill because of unseasonably high temperatures making the air strip at Coral Harbo[u]r unserviceable. Rollers could not compact the snow under these conditions.

The Reverend F. Glover, 129 Evanson St. Winnipeg, will meet Canon [Turner] and his family on arrival at Winnipeg and has made arrangements for the disposition of Canon Turner and his family.

12 Nov. The air strip at Coral Harbo[u]r finally became serviceable and Race landed there at 3:20 P.M. (CST).

13 Nov. With the Arctic Winter setting in in earnest F/O Race is forced to hold at Coral because of sleet, storms and blizzards blowing in and around Moffet Inlet. Severe climatic disturbances have caused low overcast and sometimes fog.

15 Nov. Race now receiving direct hourly weather reports from Moffet Inlet, Arctic Bay and Resolute Bay.

17 Nov. Race takes the "Snow Bird" north in bad weather to reconnoitre the landing strip prepared by the paratroopers at

Moffet Inlet. En Route he encounters snow storms and Moffet Inlet finds the whole area covered with thick solid cloud almost down to the tops of the hills. Weather reports tell him that the weather is getting worse at both Moffet Inlet and Resolute Bay so he decides to return to Coral Harbo[u]r.

21 Nov. At 8:00 A.M. (CST) F/O Race took off with the "Snow Bird" from Coral Harbo[u]r estimating his time of arrival at Moffet Inlet shortly before noon. He flew through sleet and snow storms and arrived safely at Moffet Inlet landing at the air strip prepared by the paratroopers. Prepared to wait at least 8 hours for the ground rescue party they busied [themselves] putting on engine covers and Herman Nelson engine heaters in order that the aircraft would be warm and prepared at an instant[']s notice for take off. The ground rescue party with [...] Canon Turner in the care of Capt. Willoughby made the trip of 23 miles in 4 hours. The last 2 of the 3 dog teams arriving one hour later. The aircraft was then loaded, the flare path lit and with a final check on the weather the "Snow Bird" took off at 10:40 P.M. (CST) for Coral Harbo[u]r. The navigator used astro navigation and with a clear sky the return trip was uneventful, landing at Coral Harbo[u]r at 7 minutes to 1 A.M. (CST). on the 22nd November.

Appendix "C"

### AIR LIFT EQUIPMENT

#### 1ST AIR LIFT

Food and Rations	870	lbs.
Radios and Equipment	905	"
Batteries	300	"
Guns and Ammunition	185	"
Drum of Fuel	215	"
Chore-Horse	150	"
Clothing (Free dropped)	<u>85</u>	"

Total Equipment: 2710 lbs.

4 Men at 200 lbs 800 lbs.

TOTAL 3510 lbs

2ND AIR LIFT

Radio and Equipment	400	lbs.
Food and Rations	550	
Oil	200	
1 Drum Nap[h]tha Gas	400	
1 Drum Motor Boat Fuel	400	
1 Tent	30	
Hard Rations (Free dropped)	720	
Batteries	250	
Extra Fuel Drums on Board	<u>1400</u>	

TOTAL 4350 lbs.

3RD AIR LIFT

Medical Supplies	125	lbs.
Stretcher	50	
Radio Tubes	30	
Batteries	<u>500</u>	

TOTAL 705 lbs.

4 Extra Fuel Drums on Board 1600 lbs.

TOTAL LIFT CARRIED 10165 lbs.

Fuel taken from Cache at Coral Harbour 144 Drums.

Total Hours Flown 99:05

## Document 3: Preliminary Army Report

### “OPERATION CANON”

#### PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE ARMY ASPECT

REFERENCE MAP: DOMINION OF CANADA 1:7,000,000  
(Attached as last page of this report)

#### INFORMATION AND PRELIMINARY PLANNING - 30 Sep 47 to 4 Oc 47

1 “Operation Canon” began for HQ Prairie Command [in Winnipeg, Manitoba] when DD Air [the Directorate of Air at Army Headquarters, Ottawa] requested a teletype conversation with GSO 2 [General Staff Officer 2] at 1645 hrs 30 Sep[tember] [19]47. In this conversation the condition of Reverend Canon J.H. Turner was stated, and a plan suggested for a paradrop of a rescue team to include a medical officer and two signals operators. The missionary was stationed at a small mission at Moffet Inlet on the North tip of Baffin Island. The size of the dropping party suggested by AHQ [Army Headquarters] was four, together with necessary medical stores, signal and other equipment. Little information was available at this HQ [Prairie Command] regarding Moffet Inlet but those maps and photographs which could be obtained from other sources were to be sent forward as soon as possible.

2 All the available information was passed to GSO 2 (Air Liaison) at HQ 11 Group, RCAF, Winnipeg. Executive instructions were received and passed to all concerned the same night. “Operation Canon” was under way.

3 About ten to five in the evening a telephone message from Prairie Command was passed to the Officer Commanding, Army Wing at the Joint Air School, Rivers, Man. The gist of the remarks of the GSO 2 was:- “George, write this down. A teletype has just been received from Army Headquarters to the effect that a missionary has been severely wounded at Moffet Inlet, Baffin Island. He must receive immediate aid. We will probably parachute a small party at the mission. It should include a medical officer and signals operators. Their task will be to keep the wounded man alive until he can be evacuated safely - probably by an aircraft operating off the ice which may be strong enough to take the aircraft in about a month or so. The party will maintain wireless contact with operational headquarters and will reconnoitre the surrounding area to locate a suitable landing strip - possibly on a lake. Any questions?”

4 “Plenty” was the reply, “but I don’t suppose you have any more information”.

5        “No, that’s all I have. This is a warning order only - all instructions will be passed to you through the normal channels - RCAF are directing Search and Rescue generally - Good Luck”.

6        This brief message from Prairie Command was the first intimation received at the Joint Air School about the mission which was later named “Operation Canon”. It was passed to Lt. Col. D.R. Ely, MBE, Officer Commanding the Army Component of the Joint Air School[,] who conferred with Group Captain M.G. Doyle, Commanding Officer of the School. It was then directed that a preliminary conference would be held in the Operations Room at 1900 hrs that evening.

7        This was the first of several meetings held and a brief summary of what happened at each will be given here for the purpose of emphasizing the planning necessary for such an undertaking. The Library was notified early and a lot of reference material was made available. Maps of the area showing average ice and weather conditions in the North from month to month were produced, together with the positions of weather stations, radio beams and airports.

8        The issue of the warning order took little time. Major George Flint was placed in charge of the Army side of the operation and F/O Bob Race was detailed to head the Air Force team. A payload of 4,500 lbs was allocated for Army purposes and the respective commanders were then instructed to proceed with their planning.

9        Another meeting was then held, of Army personnel only, in Major Flint’s office. At that time the dropping team was detailed as follows:

Commanding dropping team:	Capt. G. D’Artois, DSO
Medical Officer:	Capt. R. Willoughby
Signallers:	Sgts. Cook and Judd

10       Duties were also allocated for planning as under:

Signals arrangements:	Major P.R. Layard, MBE
Preparation of stores for air dropping:	Capt. I.C. Stewart
Co-ordinator of supplies:	Capt. R.B. Firlotte

11       Capt. D’Artois was instructed to prepare a list of requirements based upon an anticipated stay of one month and to present them at a later meeting.

12       The Medical Officer was instructed to have his instruments and special supplies ready for packing for air drop by 0830 hrs the next morning.

13       The final meeting of the evening was held at 2230 hours. The RCAF had received a similar warning order for the operation. Because of the necessity for carrying additional emergency equipment the total Army payload was reduced to 3,500 lbs. Capt. D’Artois then presented his requirements of food, clothing and equipment. A representative of the Quartermaster advised that a number of items were not available at Rivers and suggested that they might be picked up at Fort



Churchill where the party would stage. A telegram listing these items of winter equipment was prepared for despatch the following morning. The co-operation of those at Fort Churchill assisted greatly in the success of the preparations. Medical supplies were obtained through the Command Medical Officer and made ready at Stevenson Field, Winnipeg.

14 It was anticipated that the rescue team could land at Canon Turner's Mission, that adequate medical assistance and advice would be available from the Medical Officer. AHQ had advised that no operation would be attempted without prior reference to that HQ except in case of extreme emergency. Communications were to be established to Coral Harbour and to Arctic Bay as soon as possible and reconnaissance was to begin immediately to discover a suitable lake on which to land a transport aircraft.

15 All next morning preparations continued. At a meeting held at 1030 hrs information was received that as it was desirable that the aircraft to be used on the last lap of the journey should be equipped with Loran and other navigational aids; therefore aircraft would be exchanged at Churchill.

16 At about noon information was received from 11 Group, RCAF, Winnipeg, that the operation had been approved but that the aircraft would not leave Rivers until 0800 hrs the following morning. The reason for this was that a former missionary at Moffet Inlet, the Reverend Flint, would arrive at the Joint Air School later in the day to give the party all information which he possessed about the mission and the characteristics of the surrounding terrain.



17 Later in the day, Sgt. Ross was detailed as an air supply member of the party. His duty was to drop extra supplies which might be required, and, in the event of urgent need, to parachute to assist the party.

18 The Reverend Flint was late in arriving at Rivers. As some of the dropping party lived at Shilo Camp, some 47 miles distant from Rivers, and wished to see their families before leaving, a preliminary briefing was held at 2100 hrs. The information was repeated and instructions given about dropping, signals, procedure and the selection of a landing strip for the evacuating aircraft. This had just been completed when the Rev. Flint arrived. He had flown all the way from Ottawa and was tired and hungry, but readily agreed to do what he could immediately, so that those desiring to get home could leave as soon as possible.

19 The Rev. Flint had spent some two years at Moffet Inlet and was well acquainted with the area. He brought with him photographs and sketch maps which were projected upon a screen, enlarged so that they might be seen by all. At the same time he elaborated verbally on the subject. This briefing was of great value, and any idea that the drop would be a simple one was quickly dissipated. The Mission station itself was a very small house constructed on a small spit of land approximately 200 feet long and 110 feet wide. Back of the Mission, and rimming the coast for miles[,] was an ugly, precipitous escarpment some 400 to 600 feet high.

20 It was obvious that no drop could take place close to the Mission since the water temperature was reported at 29 degrees[,] which would quickly prove fatal to a parachutist landing in the water. Attention then turned to the back country behind the cliffs. This was reported to be rocky, littered with boulders with a number of small lakes. It was generally described as “very rugged”.

21 Because of this unpromising information, Major George Flint[,] who had not intended to accompany the party, decided to do so to make the decision if, and where, the drop would take place. The drop would have to be made inland, and during the planning stage, due to lack of detailed information[,] it was not possible to designate a specific dropping zone. The first requirement would be to reconnoitre a suitable dropping zone as close as possible to the Mission. Proximity was important because of the weight of stores which would have to be transported from the dropping zone to the Mission. The largest item was a 52 set, which, with its gear, weighed some 900 lbs. Knowing the country as well as he did, the Rev. Flint was somewhat pessimistic about the operation and the chances of its success.

22 The possibility of wireless failure or defects was countered by the provision of ground strips and the establishment of a visual system for communication from ground to air. Through the Department of Transport and the Army Signals at Churchill, a careful check was made on all operating frequencies and schedules of wireless stations in the North. All of these stations were alerted and warned of the intended rescue. The aircraft was to leave Rivers; proceed to Winnipeg to load additional stores and to allow the Medical Officer

the opportunity of a conference with the Command Medical Officer; thence on to Churchill where aircraft were to be exchanged, further equipment was to be loaded and then on to Coral Harbour, Southampton Island. This would be the immediate base for the operation from which the aircraft would proceed to Moffet Inlet. All administrative matters were carefully planned and quickly organized, ensuring every chance of the completest success.

23 At HQ Prairie Command, a special roster for duty officers, to include only experienced staff officers, was established. This was to ensure the quickest handling of all matters pertaining to the rescue; the GSO 2 was detailed as [the] co-ordinating officer to whom all information was to be passed by the special duty officer. It was arranged that all messages with reference to the rescue would be passed to HQ 11 Group, RCAF, HQ Prairie Command, and the Joint Air School. In this way it was assured that all relevant information would be available to all concerned. On receipt of information from any source, a wire would be despatched to AHQ relaying the purport of the message.

24 Because of Major G.A. Flint's decision to accompany the party[,] it was necessary for Sgt. Ross to stay behind and follow on to Churchill on a plane leaving later that day.

25 The party left Rivers at 0820 hrs, 2 October. Upon arriving at Winnipeg it was met by Brigadier R.O.G. Morton, CBE [Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire][,] and Air Commodore Costello, CBE, and other service and press representatives. A little Eskimo girl, Chinook, who had recently been flown from Coral Harbour for treatment of burns[,] was placed aboard the aircraft which soon left for Fort Churchill.

26 Immediately after landing at Churchill, a weather forecast was obtained. As it was not too good, F/O Race decided to remain there for the night. As it transpired this time was used to the very best advantage.

27 After lunch Sgts Cook and Judd accompanied F/L Morobito [*sic*], the wireless operator of the aircraft[,] and Lieut. Kohler, Royal Canadian Signals Officer[,] to visit the Department of Transport representative in the town of Churchill. The remainder of that afternoon was required to finalize all signals details.

28 At the same time Capt. Willoughby liaised with Major Lippett, the Senior Medical Officer at Fort Churchill, and Major Flint and Capt. D'Artois drew the clothing and equipment previously requested by teletype and, aided by other military personnel there, transferred the load to the aircraft (later nicknamed the "Snowbird" and subsequently "The Blizzard Belle").

29 The value and efficiency of the detailed preliminary planning was exemplified in the successful organization of the rescue party so that only four days after receipt of instructions to stand by for the operation, the first stage had been completed at a distance of some 1700 miles from the initial base.

## THE RESCUE

### 4 OCT 47 TO 22 NOV 47

30 The party left Fort Churchill at 0950 hours 3 Oct and arrived at Coral Harbour, Southampton Island, NWT, at 1300 hours. The remainder of the afternoon was then used to refuel the aircraft and auxiliary tanks which had to be done by hand from 45-gallon drums.

31 The rescue party was not in contact with the Mission at Moffet Inlet. Their job was to aid the wounded man until he could be evacuated. If, by this time, he was beyond help, then the situation would call for quite different action. In order that this information on the Canon might be obtained before a drop was made, a message was placed in a streamer. This was wrapped in two fluorescent signal panels ready for dropping.

32 The next day dawned clear and bright but a delay was encountered when the starting motor on the port engine refused to function. This difficulty was overcome by starting the motor by the aid of a rope tied to a tip of the propeller. Although not normal procedure it worked, and at 0925 hours the aircraft left Coral Harbour for Moffet Inlet. The flight was uneventful. The Army personnel, having nothing to do, read and slept, and Capt D'Artois took several rolls of moving picture film of terrain features that might be used at some later date.

33 At 1248 hours the aircraft arrived over Moffet Inlet. The ground up to the South side of the Inlet was snow covered and rolling, and would have made an ideal area to drop. The North side, on the other hand, was even more rugged than expected after the briefing by the Reverend Flint. The Inlet was fairly free of ice and looked blue and cold. This feeling was accentuated by the sight of two dazzling icebergs on the horizon. The Mission was not to be seen and the maps available did not prove too accurate in detail. The shoreline contained numerous indentations of various depth and the search was difficult and made more so by a low fog which covered portions of the Inlet. One house was spotted but it did not answer to the description and there was no sign of life. To be on the safe side the radio operator at Arctic Inlet was asked if he knew of another similar structure in the neighborhood. He replied "No" so we told him of the one sighted and its approximate location. The search continued. Then Sgt Judd came up from the cabin and said that a boat and building had been seen through a break in the fog. We turned back and at 1340 hours spotted the Mission buildings. The aircraft made a circuit while the rear door was being taken off. On the run in over the Mission people could be seen waving, and Major Flint dropped the following message:

“WE ARE TO HELP CANON TURNER. IT IS PROPOSED TO PARACHUTE A SMALL PARTY INCLUDING A MEDICAL OFFICER FOR THIS PURPOSE. OWING TO THE RUGGEDNESS OF THE GROUND MEN CANNOT BE DROPPED SAFELY NEAR THE MISSION BUT WE INTEND DROPPING THE LESS FRAGILE STORES AT THE MISSION AND THE MEN AND OTHER EQUIPMENT IN THE DEER COUNTRY. DIVIDE YOUR ESKIMOS INTO TWO PARTIES. KEEP ONE PARTY AT THE MISSION AND SEND THE OTHER TO THE TOP OF THE CLIFFS TO GO TO THE AID OF THE PARTY WHEN THEY DROP. PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE BY SIGNALLING A REPLY TO THIS QUESTION WITH THE PANELS ATTACHED.

ARE WE STILL IN TIME TO BE OF HELP?

GEORGE FLINT MAJOR  
CANADIAN ARMY”

☐

YES

☐☐

NO

34 Owing to the amount of time and gasoline which had been consumed in locating the Mission, it was necessary to locate a dropping zone and commence dropping as soon as possible. As soon as the message was dropped the aircraft began to reconnoitre the back country for a suitable area. As we had been informed previously, this was very rugged and appeared to be of rock, littered with boulders, windswept of snow, and dotted with tiny lakes. After several circuits over the area one small lake was selected as a dropping zone. This was estimated to be about 1000 feet above sea level, 250 yards long, and 100 yards wide. It was about five or six miles in a direct line from the Mission and considerably longer on foot, but no closer one could be spotted. Capt D’Artois concurred in the selection, and the aircraft returned to the Mission where one panel, meaning “Yes,” had been laid out in answer to our message.

35 Dropping commenced at 1400 hours. A petrol drum weighing 200 pounds was dropped first to test the thickness of the ice, and a smoke bomb was dropped at the same time to assist in estimating the speed and direction of the wind.

36 The drum was seen to land safely, and from the result it was estimated that the ice was strong enough and that it was covered with four to five inches of snow.

37 Dropping of stores then commenced. The gasoline had been carried for a generator which would keep the batteries of the radio set charged. The generator was then dropped--this weighed 150 pounds. Then followed food, tents, sleeping bags, weapons, ammunition, packboards, cigarettes, and medical



"Sgt H C Cook"

"Sgt W W Judd"

stores. Major Flint did the dropping, assisted by Capt Willoughby and Sgt Cook. Capt D'Artois kept viewing the country from a window so that he would know it thoroughly upon landing. Soon it was time for personnel to drop. Sgt Judd went first with a portable radio set, followed by Capt D'Artois. Then the main radio set and batteries followed. The total weight of the set with spares was 580 pounds, and that of the batteries 300 pounds. These were seen to land, then on the last pass Capt Willoughby and Sgt Cook bailed out.

38 All the dropping was done on signal from Flying Officer Race, the pilot, and during the latter portion of the drop when Capt Willoughby and Sgt Cook were getting into their parachutes, excellent assistance was afforded by members of the aircraft crew.

39 All dropping concluded at 1455 hours[.] The aircraft made one more trip over the dropping zone and the Mission and then set course for Coral Harbour.

40 Sgt Judd had his portable set in operation and contacted the aircraft before the complete drop was completed. He said that he had made a stand-up landing and that conditions were good. At the same time Capt D'Artois could be seen heading for the Mission.

41 Enroute to the Mission[.] Capt D'Artois was met by two Eskimos. He indicated that one native should contact the other three members of the paratroop team while the second should accompany him to the Mission. The overland journey to the Mission took approximately two-and-one-half hours because of the rocky hills, some of which ranged to heights of 400 to 600 feet.

42 Arriving at the Mission the Dropping Team Commander was met by Mr John Cormack, Hudson's Bay Factor from Arctic Bay. He accompanied Capt D'Artois to the Mission house and introduced him to Mrs Turner, wife of the injured man. Capt D'Artois then met the patient, assuring him that medical aid would arrive shortly. Canon Turner at this time was unable to speak with clarity.

43 With two Eskimos, Mr Cormack and Capt D'Artois left by boat for Bartlett Inlet which borders near the dropping zone. There they met the other members of the team who had been conducted to the rendezvous by the Eskimo sent by Capt D'Artois. The party returned to the Mission by boat with the medical supplies.

44 On arrival, Capt Willoughby examined the patient. Canon Turner's left side was completely paralyzed. He had no control over his bowels or bladder and there was a large bed sore on his lower back. Generally, his condition was much better than was expected. The most imminent dangers were the probable development of meningitis and the extension of the bed sore.

45 Treatment which then commenced and continued throughout the seven-week period, consisted of regular dressing of the bed sore, administration of penicillin every three hours[.] day and night, as well as administration of sulfa drugs and general nursing care. Capt Willoughby arranged to carry out the necessary treatment each night, being assisted during the day by Mrs Turner.

46 The first time in fourteen hours that the paratroopers felt the urge to eat was a hot meal provided by Mrs Turner. All members of the Ground Force were weary from the strain of the day's operations and the food was most welcome.

47 The Mission house is eleven feet by twenty-four feet and contains two rooms. This was occupied by the patient, Mrs Turner, their two children, and one Eskimo girl. Capt D'Artois decided to use a shack, ten feet by seven feet, to house the team and store equipment and supplies. Living conditions for the seven-week period were primitive.

48 In the meantime, the aircraft was returning to Coral Harbour. Weather conditions had become worse, and so much time had been spent over Moffet

Inlet that not enough fuel was left to carry the aircraft to an alternative airport if a landing could not be made at Coral Harbour.

49 A landing was finally effected there, however, at 1840 hours, under a 200 foot ceiling. Eight hours and fifty minutes flying time had been required to accomplish the first part of this operation.

50 It had been intended to fuel the aircraft the next day--5 Oct--at Coral Harbour, but an average wind there of 52 miles per hour (gusting to 77 miles per hour) made that impractical and there was no urgent need.

51 On the same day, with Mr Cormack, Capt D'Artois and the two sergeants returned to the dropping zone. There they collected the widely scattered equipment. This was made difficult by the complete lack of contrast between the snow and the white parachutes. A tent was then set up and the Number 58 wireless set put into operation. The Number 52 set was tested and found to be out of order. Throughout the afternoon and night, until 0625 hours 6 Oct, the Signal[s] sergeants worked without rest or sleep in an attempt to repair the damaged set. These efforts were not successful[,] however, although the receiver and supply units were put into operation. Batteries, however, went dead.

52 At Coral Harbour, 6 Oct, the wind had lessened to an average of 40 mph all day, but the aircraft was re-fuelled and some work was done on the starting motor. As the next flight over the mission would be with a light cargo load, the pilot decided to carry four drums (180 gallons) of gasoline in the fuselage which could be pumped into the auxiliary tanks if bad weather was again encountered. All this time a dozen radio operators from all stations in the North were listening for signals from Moffet Inlet, but none was heard.

53 We now know that on the 5th of October none of the sending sets at Moffet Inlet [were] in working order. On that same evening[,] however, a newscast was heard over the CBC at Coral Harbour to the effect that the party at Moffet Inlet had established communication through Coral Harbour. As this was not so, enquiries were made to determine whether communication had been established through some other point, but it was learned that the newscast had been made in error. That same night Major Flint received instructions from Rivers to return by the first plane as the drop had been successful and nothing further could be done until time to evacuate the party.

54 The party at Moffet Inlet was still active. Early in the morning of the 6th October, the radio equipment and parachutes were stacked and covered with a tent. Mr Cormack advised immediate return to the Mission because of the possibility of a freeze-up in the Inlet. After loading the boat with supplies the party returned to the Mission.

55 On the suggestion of Mr Cormack and the advice of Capt Willoughby, Capt D'Artois decided to move the patient and his family to Arctic Bay, seventy miles North of Moffet Inlet. Accommodation and medical facilities were better there.



56 Weather prevented a departure on 7 Oct [19]47. That afternoon a storm nearly resulted in damage to Canon Turner's whaler. To prevent the boat from being smashed on rocks, the team, with the aid of Eskimos, moved out to the whaler in a small boat and attached a block and tackle. The whaler was then manhandled until safely on the shoreline.

57 On 8 Oct another flight was made over the mission. Radio communication was immediately established when it was learned that the large set had been damaged in the drop and that other supplies were needed. A message was also relayed to Arctic Bay stating that the party intended to try to move Canon Turner and his family to that place and asking them to prepare accommodation. These messages were also passed to Churchill to be relayed to operational headquarters, and the aircraft once again returned to Coral Harbour.

58 The following day the aircraft returned to Fort Churchill to obtain a new starting motor and pick up supplies which had already been flown from Winnipeg. Major Flint returned to Rivers and Sgt Ross joined the "Snowbird" when it returned to Coral Harbour for its re-supply mission.

59 After the aircraft had paid its visit and received the messages, the Ground Team travelled overland to the dropping zone once more, and, with packboards, strapped the supplies on their backs and returned. The terrain to be crossed was impossible for travel by dog team. This movement of supplies exhausted all members of the party.

60 On 9 Oct [19]47 the boats were loaded and a stretcher fashioned for the patient. The Canon's boat was launched but weather prevented departure.

61 On Thursday 10 Oct [19]47, the patient was put aboard the whaler. This proved extremely difficult because the boat could not be brought too close to shore due to rocks and thin ice. The weight of the patient, approximately 230 pounds, complicated the problem. The stretcher-bearers broke through the ice and waded through two feet of water to reach the vessel. The first boat, with the patient aboard, started the journey at 0820 hours. The second boat left one hour later. About two miles from the Mission thin ice was encountered but it did not halt the voyage.

62 The motor of the whaler went out of action early in the trip and the vessel drifted close to a large iceberg. However, [Sergeant] Judd was able to restart it but rough water and ice slowed progress and at nightfall the party anchored in a small inlet for protection.

63 The following morning an attempt was made to complete the trip. The calm of the previous night had permitted the ice to thicken and the whaler was frozen in and was in danger of being crushed as its engine was inoperative.

64 Mr Cormack and Capt D'Artois manoeuvred the second boat through the ice until a line could be thrown to the whaler. Gradually the stranded whaler



was worked free and the two vessels returned to the anchorage of the previous night.

65 In view of the patient's long exposure, Capt Willoughby explained that it would be necessary either to complete the journey immediately or return to the Mission. Meantime, an Eskimo who had surveyed the ice ahead from the vantage point of a high hill, reported it was impossible to proceed. The party then turned back. The return was made hazardous by thickening ice and the necessity of towing the whaler. The Mission was reached in mid-afternoon 11 Oct. Bitter disappointment was felt by all members of the party as a result of the failure to reach Arctic Bay.

66 The attempted trip had aggravated the patient's bed sore and Capt Willoughby decided that drastic treatment was necessary. On Sunday 12 Oct he operated. Approximately two inches deep and five inc[h]es across, the sore had become gangrenous. It was necessary to cut away the devitalized flesh. The Medical Officer was assisted by Mr Cormack and Capt D'Artois. Although it was not possible to administer an anaesthetic, the Canon displayed remarkable courage and stood up well under the ordeal. The operation lasted about twenty minutes.

67 Previous to this date, search for a suitable airstrip had been impossible as the ice was too thick for travel by boat and too thin for travel on foot.

68 On 14 Oct Capt D'Artois decided that an attempt must be made to move the damaged Number 52 wireless set from the dropping zone to the Mission where efforts to complete repairs could be made more conveniently. On reaching

the dropping zone, the Commander and two sergeants strapped sections of the four-hundred-and-fifty pound set to packboards and commenced the journey back. The rough country and heavy load proved formidable. A slip or fall on the rocky hills might have meant irreparable damage to the set. The last portion of the trip was made at night in a blizzard and was climaxed by a descent down a six-hundred foot cliff back of the Mission. The previous day it had been necessary for Mr Cormack to return to Arctic Bay.

69 On arrival, although worn, the team stripped the set to permit more rapid drying.

70 The 15th of October was spent in attempts to repair the set. The receiving unit was put into operation but the sender unit still was unserviceable. Further attempts at repair were made without success the following day.

71 The next day the RCAF Dakota arrived over the Inlet to carry out a re-supply drop. The first 'chute released carried a Number 29 wireless set which dropped into the sea twenty-five feet from shore. The remainder of the supplies were dropped with precision and messages were exchanged between the ground party and the aircraft. The medical supplies were undamaged. The Number 29 set was salvaged but salt water had caused extensive damage. Sergeant Judd was assigned to repair the set while Sergeant Cook continued work on the Number 52 set.

72 Using part of the Number 58 set and an unused circuit in the Number 52 set, Sergeant Cook completed repairs. At 1827 hours 18 Oct, the ground party made their first contact with another station--Arctic Bay--since the team had dropped at Moffet Inlet 4 Oct. Establishment of communications, through the initiative and improvisation of Sergeants Cook and Judd, proved an invaluable aid for the successful completion of the operation.

73 From 18 Oct to 22 Oct[,] Capt D'Artois carried out several reconnaissance trips in search of an airstrip on the Mission side of the Inlet. On 22 Oct, due to a Southeast wind clearing the ice from the Inlet, he made a reconnaissance by boat after arranging a rendezvous with Sgt Judd at Willoughby Lake. The delay of Sergeant Judd in reaching Willoughby Lake by the overland route caused considerable concern. However, the two met late in the evening and returned safely to the Mission without having discovered a suitable airstrip.

74 On the 24th October[,] despite an extremely low ceiling of some 200 feet, Flying Officer Race carried out a re-supply drop of urgently needed medical supplies, tubes for the wireless set, and newspapers. The low ceiling and high hills were a serious threat to the safety of the aircraft, and only superb flying made the drop a success.

75 Since landing at Moffet Inlet, Capt D'Artois had kept a constant check on the thickness of the ice. On 28 Oct, having searched the area on the Mission side of the Inlet thoroughly for an airstrip without success, he set out to explore the territory across the Inlet. Canon Turner suggested an airstrip might be found

there. From this date onward, the Ground Force Commander made a reconnaissance trip each day that weather permitted. His problem was to find an airstrip suitable for RCAF requirements as well as those demanded by the doctor for the patient. The distance that the patient could be transported in Arctic weather was a limiting factor. These trips were made on foot with a dog team and an Eskimo and averaged approximately twenty-five miles. In all, Capt D'Artois covered approximately 300 miles in his search for the airstrip. Thin and shifting ice was always a serious danger.

76 On one occasion Capt D'Artois fell through the ice and might well have lost his life. He returned to the Mission after being pulled from the water by an Eskimo boy, changed clothes, and set out once more.

77 Finally, on 2 Nov, Capt D'Artois discovered a lake 23 miles South of the Mission. It was situated in the barren lands at the foot of the hills. Examination showed that more than the 15 inches of ice required by the aircraft covered the lake. The approach from the South was suitable and the area was level.

78 For eleven days the Ground Force Commander camped at the lake in a tent, preparing the strip with markers and panels, and checking the snow and weather conditions. This information was forwarded to Sergeant Cook for relay to the RCAF. During this period a blizzard prevented an Eskimo from reaching Capt D'Artois with fuel for his stove and lamp. In addition, a high wind smashed the tent pole, and Capt D'Artois was forced to live for two days without either light or heat. He remained in his sleeping bag throughout the two days, waiting out the storm.

79 On 18 Nov, Flying Officer Race attempted to reach the airstrip but was forced to return to Coral Harbour by bad weather. Capt D'Artois then returned to the Mission on 20 Nov, his supplies having run low.

80 On 21 Nov, word was received that the aircraft had taken off from Coral Harbour on another attempt to reach the airstrip. Capt D'Artois left the Mission and proceeded to the airstrip. Half an hour from the airstrip he saw the aircraft circle overhead. Visibility was poor but through a break in the fog Flying Officer Race spotted the markers set up at the airstrip and decided to attempt a landing. With considerable skill he succeeded.

81 While landing, the Wireless Operator of the aircraft notified the Mission of the arrival of the Dakota. The patient was wrapped in furs, blankets, and a sleeping bag and placed on a dog sled. The temperature was 24° below zero. The fastest team was used to move the patient. A second team conveyed Mrs Turner and her two children, while a third team was used by Sgt Cook[,] who closed the mission before departing.

82 The intense cold was a danger to the patient but the precautions taken and the excellent time in which the dog team made the trip--three and one-half hours--had no serious ill effects on Canon Turner.



83 While the patient was enroute to the airstrip, Capt D'Artois prepared the tent for his reception. A delay of approximately five hours took place before weather was suitable for a take-off.

84 At 2230 hours, aided by a flare path laid down on the 6,000 foot strip, the party took off and returned to Coral Harbour. Here, due to the cold and exhaustion suffered by the patient and passengers during this flight, Flying Officer Race decided to remain for five hours.

85 Early on the morning of 22 Nov, the rescue aircraft departed from Coral Harbour, and landed at Winnipeg at 1715 hours[,] where the patient was admitted to hospital and his family turned over to the care of the Church of England.

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# Operation CANON

## Rescuing Canon John Turner in the Canadian Arctic, 1947

Compiled and Introduced by P. Whitney Lackenbauer



In the fall of 1947, Canadian Armed Forces personnel completed a heroic mercy mission in the Canadian High Arctic. Operation CANON involved Anglican missionary John Hudspith (Jack) Turner, who had been seriously injured in a firearms accident at his remote outpost at Moffet Inlet, Baffin Island. The documents in this volume provide detailed insights into this remarkable story of perseverance and courage, revealing logistical and environmental challenges of deploying and sustaining personnel to and in the High Arctic.



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