

Operation *Kigliqaqvik Ranger*

The Canadian Rangers' Expedition to the Magnetic North Pole, 2002



Julian Tomlinson and P. Whitney Lackenbauer

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Foreword and Acknowledgements

If there is a *heart* or center of the Canadian psyche, it resides here in Canada's North.

The vastness of the Canadian North is home to some of the most beautiful, harsh, and resource rich landscapes on the planet. Sparsely populated, hard to navigate, and challenging to defend, it is also a land that has been home to some of the most resilient, ingenious, and generous people I have ever met. Northerners who know their lands intimately and are prepared to defend them.

For twenty-five years I had the privilege of living in and exploring Canada's Arctic, and for a number of those years I also had the great honour of serving as a Canadian Ranger. The Rangers, with their ability to thrive in extreme wilderness conditions, are an arm of the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves who support and patrol the most remote regions in Canada. In this volume, you will read about the rich history of the Canadian Rangers and hear directly from the voices of Rangers as they share their reflections on Operation *Kigliqavik Ranger*, a sovereignty operation and epic undertaking to the Magnetic North Pole in 2002 in which I participated.

Many thanks to my colleague, Whitney Lackenbauer, whom I first met on the edge of an abandoned snow-drifted gravel runway in the High Arctic twenty-two years ago. I appreciate his remarkable academic work in service of Canada's northern defence and development, and for his friendship and persistence in bringing this and other important perspectives and stories forward.

To Major Yves Laroche and his team up and down the regular forces chain of command who had the vision and commitment to make this special patrol possible, I thank you for your dedication and outstanding leadership.

To the Rangers of Operation *Kigliqavik Ranger*, many of whom are still on patrol, I thank you for your service and the lifelong bond of friendship we share.

And to respected Inuit Elder and Sergeant of the Gjoa Haven Ranger Patrol, Paul "the Rock" Ikuallaq, who has been my teacher, mentor, and partner in countless arctic adventures for thirty-five years; and with whom I have trekked almost every inch of arctic coastline...fill your grub box



with bannock, tea, and char, my friend, and load your komatik, it's time we head out once again on another trek across the stunning frozen seas and lands that you call your *backyard*.

Julian Tomlinson
December 2023

Preface

Cape Isachsen, Ellef Ringes Island, Nunavut, latitude 78°8' N, longitude 103°6' W, 18 April 2002. It was a biting minus thirty-six degrees Celsius with windchill when the Canadian Forces Northern Area commander and his entourage, including me, stepped off the yellow Canadian Air Force Twin Otter plane. The serious faces of twenty-nine Canadian Rangers, lined up in rows behind their snowmachines, greeted us. They had just conquered the magnetic North Pole. Ten days before, these Rangers and four soldiers from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG) Headquarters in Yellowknife had left the community of Resolute Bay. Operation *Kigiliqavik Ranger*, named after the Inuktitut word for “the place at the edge of known land,” covered more than 1,600 kilometres of rough sea ice, pressure ridges, rocky river valleys, and breathtaking expanses of tundra. Each Ranger drove a snowmachine that pulled a sixteen-foot *komatik* (sled) laden with up to 675 kilograms of supplies. They endured wind chill temperatures below minus fifty degrees Celsius, near whiteout conditions, and twenty-four-hour sunlight.¹

The patrol had travelled more than 800 kilometres when it was forced to stop on the sea ice north of Ellef Ringes Island. Two kilometres ahead lay a huge, impassable lead – a crack in the sea ice over 400 kilometres long and 5 kilometres wide. By attaining 79°N latitude, the expedition technically could claim that it had reached the magnetic pole – the point where Earth’s magnetic field

points vertically downwards, “wobbling” in an oval up to 200 kilometres in a single day.

The Rangers on the patrol, all part-time members of the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves based in communities across Canada’s remote regions, expressed their excitement. These men and women, many of their weathered faces burned by frost and exposure, loved and lived the land. In this group, I saw a microcosm of northern Canada. They came in all shapes and sizes. Some were Inuit, some Dene, some White. Ranger Paul Guyot from Fort Simpson emphasized one common characteristic: “they are all tough.”² He took me back to the tent he was sharing with three Inuit Rangers. The group exuded a spirit of camaraderie. Over bannock and cups of “cowboy coffee,” visitors coming and going, the Rangers swapped stories. They told me about the trip, but the conversation soon shifted to their personal encounters with polar bears. Lounging comfortably on a polar bear skin despite the frigid temperature outside, I relished listening to these tales celebrating life on the land and waters, their homeland, as northerners and as Canadians.

The Rangers reflected on patriotism and service. “We don’t want other people intruding on our land without us knowing about it,” Ranger Sergeant Darrel Klemmer of Tulita explained. Operation *Kigiliqavik Ranger* demonstrated the Canadian Forces’ ability to patrol the outermost reaches of the country. The exercise also offered Rangers from different areas a chance to share their experiences. “You get 30 different Rangers

together and they'll have 60 different ways of doing the same thing," he noted. "But we talk about our families and our communities and tell stories of the old ways. Everybody has hunting in common. Everybody likes to hunt." The Rangers had much in common, regardless of whether they called the forest or the bush, the Subarctic, or the treeless tundra home. Ranger Sergeant John Mitchell of Dawson observed: "the Rangers are one of the things that link the whole North."³ They also linked northerners to Canada. "People don't realize how far we are from the nation's capital," Mitchell explained, standing at one of the remotest reaches of Canada's High Arctic. "The Rangers make you feel more like you're a Canadian."⁴

The political profile and extensive media coverage of the operation highlighted the Rangers' contributions to Canadian sovereignty. While we were visiting, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Art Eggleton, the defence minister, telephoned from Ottawa to congratulate the Rangers on their operation. "This sovereignty patrol is a continuing example of the service and dedication of the Canadian Rangers over the past 60 years," Eggleton told the press. "It illustrates their unique skills and vital contributions, not only to their own communities, but to Canada. Canadian Rangers, who are masters of operation in Canada's harshest environment, are an invaluable component of the Canadian Forces."⁵ The media reported that the exercise provided Canada with "crucial ammunition" for its northern sovereignty disputes. "It's all about sovereignty here," Captain Rick Regan, the deputy commanding officer of 1 CRPG, explained. "The Rangers

are the ones letting us know what's going on in our own back yard."⁶

This contribution to the Arctic Operational Histories series on the Canadian Rangers' Operation *Kigliqavik Ranger* in 2002 is built around Julian Tomlinson's "The Canadian Rangers and the North Magnetic Pole Sovereignty Operation: An Exhibition and Archiving Project," which he completed in July 2003 while in the University of Alaska's Department of Northern Studies graduate program. I have provided a short overview on the Canadian Rangers in the Territorial North to set the context for the 2002 operation, followed by the daily summary of the operation released by Canadian Forces Northern Area (now Joint Task Force North). Julian's photo journal of the expedition forms the heart of this collection, supplemented by excerpts that he collected from various Ranger participants' diaries, as well as from the diary of CBC journalist Ian Hannah. The final section reproduces stories about Operation *Kigliqavik Ranger* published in news media.

"It's always been a national thing, you know, to wave the Canadian flag here," Mitchell told a reporter at the time. "I think what everybody ... got was a sort of personal understanding of sovereignty as it pertains to them. You know, it became a personal thing."⁷ We hope that this volume not only celebrates the collective achievements of the Canadian Rangers, but also serves to advance understanding of the mental and physical toughness, perseverance, and esprit de corps are required for participants in "modern" military operations in the Arctic to overcome adversity.

P. Whitney Lackenbauer

Notes

¹ The narrative in this preface is drawn from P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).

² Guyot made a similar comment to a reporter soon afterwards. See Derek Neary, “Almost There,” *Northern News Services*, 3 May 2002.

³ “Rangers Mark 60th Year with Polar Trek,” *Montreal Gazette*, 9 April 2002.

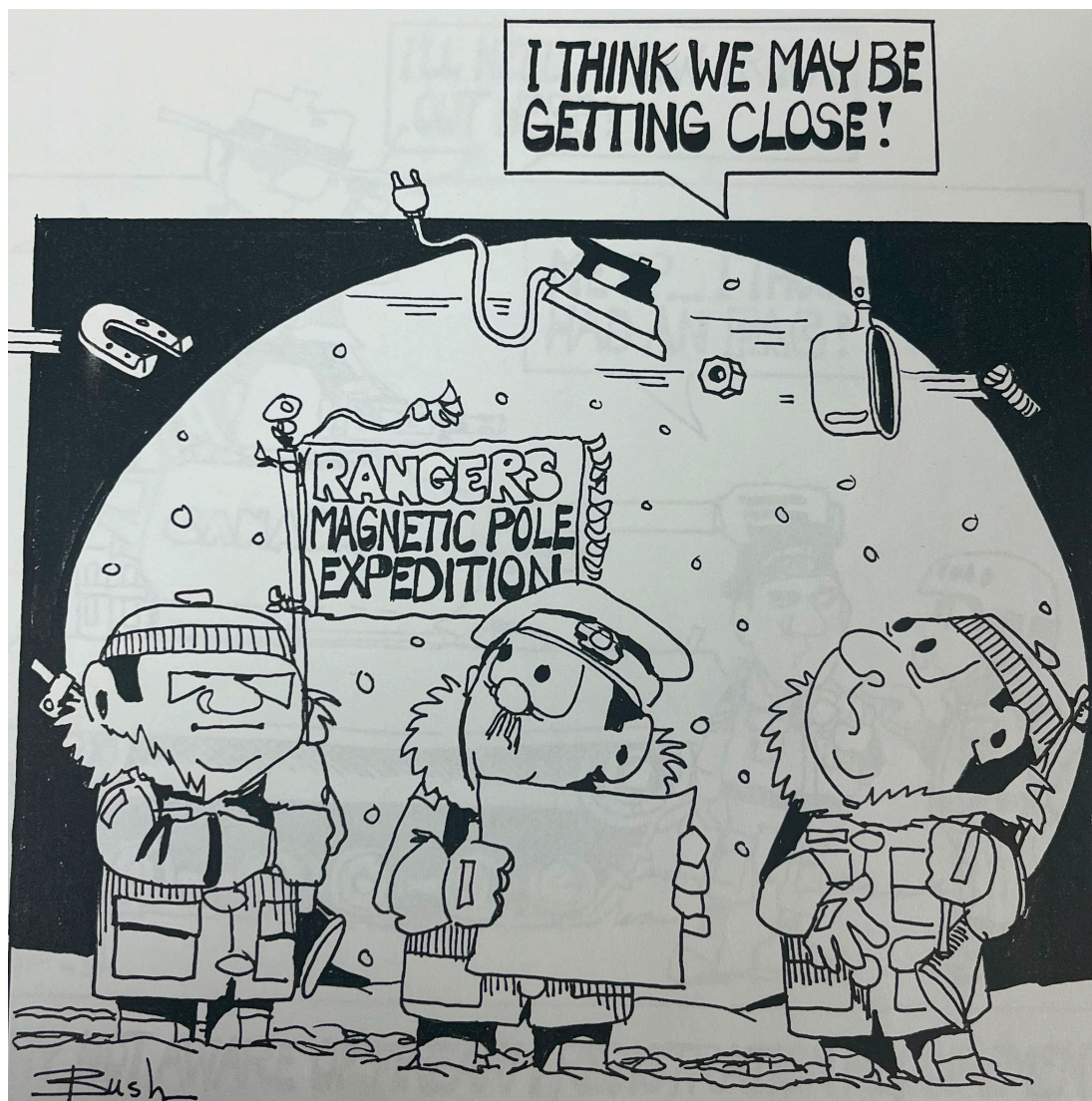
⁴ “True North Strong, Free Thanks to the Rangers,” *Toronto Star*, 11 April 2002.

⁵ “Canadian Rangers’ Sovereignty Patrol Praised,” *Klondike Sun*, 26 April 2002.

⁶ “Rangers Mark 60th Year with Polar Trek.”

⁷ Stephanie Waddell, “Polar Expedition Called a Boost to Sovereignty,” *Whitehorse Star*, 26 April 2002.

Cartoon from *News North*, 21 April 2002



1

The Canadian Rangers: A Sketch History

P. Whitney Lackenbauer¹

In 1947, Minister of National Defence Brooke Claxton quietly announced the creation of an unorthodox military force: the Canadian Rangers. Through this unique organization, residents of sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas of Canada would provide a military presence on a shoestring budget. The original military vision saw the Rangers defending national security – protecting their communities from enemy attack – using their knowledge of local conditions. By the 1970s, their basic purpose was linked to the armed forces' role supporting Canada's sovereignty. Since the 1990s, the Rangers have played a prominent nation-building and stewardship role, symbolizing deep cooperation between the Canadian Forces, Indigenous People, and other Canadians living in isolated areas.

Defence officials resurrected the Ranger concept during the Second World War, when Canadians realized that they no longer lived in a "fireproof house" (as Senator Raoul Dandurand described Canada in the interwar years). Terrified British

Columbians, facing the Japanese threat in the Pacific, pushed the federal government to improve west coast defences. The army responded by forming the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (PCMR) in early 1942. This reserve force allowed British Columbian men who were too old or too young for overseas service, or engaged in essential industries such as fishing and mining, to contribute to home defence. Apart from a sporting rifle, ammunition, an armband, and eventually a canvas uniform suited to the coastal climate, the army expected the Rangers to be self-sufficient. Using their local knowledge, they reported any suspicious vessels or activities they came across during their everyday lives. If an enemy invaded, they were expected to help professional forces repel it. By 1943, nearly 15,000 Rangers represented all walks of B.C. life, from fish packers to cowboys. They trained with other military units, conducted search and rescue, and reported Japanese balloon bombs that landed along the coast. The organization stood down when the war ended in the fall of 1945, having accomplished their home defence mission without firing a hostile shot.

As Canadians awoke to the reality of the Cold War, defence planners acknowledged that the country did not have the military resources to station large numbers of regular soldiers in its vast northern and remote regions. Instead, officials resurrected the Ranger concept in 1947, this time creating a nation-wide Canadian Ranger force. The first Ranger units took shape in the Yukon, before extending across the breadth of Canada's northland and down its Atlantic

and Pacific coasts. The civilian backgrounds of these “ordinary” men (there is no record of any women Rangers until the late 1980s) determined their contributions, whether they were trappers, bush pilots, missionaries, fishermen or miners. In Indigenous communities, Inuit, First Nations, and Métis men filled the ranks – although until the 1970s the army usually appointed a token “White” officer to lead them. Largely untrained, the Rangers’ local knowledge allowed them to serve as guides and scouts, report suspicious activities, and (if the unthinkable came to pass) delay an enemy advance using guerrilla tactics – at least until professional forces arrived. The army equipped each Ranger with an obsolescent .303 Lee Enfield rifle, 200 rounds of ammunition each year, and an armband. To hone their marksmanship skills, they were expected to hunt and feed their families.

The strength of the early organization peaked in December 1956, when 2725 Rangers served in forty-two companies from coast to coast to coast. Rangers provided intelligence reports on strange ships and aircraft and participated in training exercises with Canada’s Mobile Striking Force. In one case, Rangers even helped the RCMP intercept bandits trying to flee the Yukon along the Alaska Highway. Journalist Robert Taylor observed that year that this diverse mix of Canadians was united in one task: “guarding a

country that doesn’t even know of their existence.”

By the 1960s, Ottawa’s defence plans largely overlooked the Rangers. Citizen-soldiers with armbands and rifles could hardly fend off hostile Soviet bombers carrying nuclear weapons. Officials turned to technological marvels like the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line to protect the continent. The Canadian Rangers survived thanks to local initiative and its miniscule cost, but the “Shadow Army of the North” received little to no direction or support from military officials. Apart from Newfoundland and Labrador and a sprinkling of northern communities, the organization was largely inactive by 1970.

The voyages of the American icebreaker *Manhattan* in 1969-70, which Canadians believed threatened their control over the Northwest Passage, renewed interest in Arctic sovereignty. In response, the government turned to the Canadian Forces to assert symbolic control, promising increased surveillance and more Arctic training for southern troops. Because the



Rangers still existed (on paper at least) and cost next to nothing, they fit the bill as guides and expert teachers of survival skills. Staff from the new headquarters in Yellowknife provided basic training to Inuit and Dene Rangers in the 1970s, and these activities proved highly popular. Furthermore, Rangers in the north now elected their own leaders – a form of self-governance over their community-based patrols. By the early 1980s, the Rangers were again active in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec, and along the eastern seaboard.

When a US Coast Guard icebreaker pushed through the Northwest Passage in 1985, resurrecting sovereignty anxieties, Brian Mulroney's Conservative government promised a host of big-ticket military investments to improve Canada's control over the Arctic. The Canadian Rangers also received recognition and support as an important grassroots way to keep Canada's "true North strong and free" – a positive example of Northerners contributing directly to sovereignty and security. Media coverage began to emphasize the social and political benefits of the Rangers in Indigenous communities. As a bridge between diverse cultures and between the civilian and military worlds, the Rangers successfully integrated national sovereignty and defence agendas with local interests.

Most of the government's promised investments in Arctic defence evaporated with the end of the Cold War, but the number and geographical scope of the Canadian Rangers increased in the 1990s. Their footprint expanded across the

provincial norths, with most new growth directed to Indigenous communities. This reflected the importance of building and reinforcing Indigenous-military partnerships in a post-Oka world. Furthermore, journalists applauded the Rangers' role in teaching the military and in encouraging Elders to share their traditional knowledge to younger people *within* Indigenous communities. This was clear in the creation of a youth program, the Junior Canadian Rangers, in 1998.

Given the growing responsibilities and the expanding size of Ranger staff, it made sense to organize the patrols into a formal "patrol group" in Canadian Forces Northern Area and in each of the Land Force areas. This happened in early 1998 with the creation of five new patrol groups. 1 CRPG, based in Yellowknife, was responsible for patrols in Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan, northern British Columbia, and northern Manitoba. 2 CRPG was responsible for Quebec, 3 CRPG for Ontario, 4 CRPG for the West Coast and Interior of BC, and 5 CRPG for Newfoundland and Labrador. Patrol commanders now reported to the commanding officer of their patrol group, who in turn reported to his or her area commander.

Captain Dwayne Lovegrove was the master of ceremonies at the stand-up parade for 1 CRPG, held in Yellowknife on 2 April 1998. He remarked:

Today marks a significant moment in the military history of the North. This afternoon, we will formally stand up the



1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group as a unit of the Canadian Forces. The creation of this unit demonstrates an acknowledgment by the federal government and the military of the significant contribution that Canadian Rangers have made over the past fifty years to the defence of Canada and the maintenance of national sovereignty.

... The operational tasks assigned to Rangers have remained constant. They are expected to report unusual or suspicious activities, and collect and maintain detailed information on their local area. They carry out these tasks, for

which they receive no pay, in concert with their normal daily routine. In addition they can be called upon to assist CF units deployed in their area, conduct surveillance/sovereignty patrols, patrol and inspect North Warning Radar sites, and respond to emergency situations. When tasked by the CF in these latter roles, they are paid in accordance with CF Reserve Force rates of pay. They undergo 10 days paid training per year during which they are taught basic military skills and are required to demonstrate their ability to travel and survive on the land.

... Rangers come from all walks of life, reflecting the many faces of the North. In the NWT approximately 80% of the members are First Nations peoples, whereas in the Yukon the opposite is the case. The patrols in Atlin BC, Fort Chipewyan AB, and Churchill Manitoba also reflect the demographic and cultural diversities of their communities.

Regardless of who they were before enlistment, service as a Ranger generally results in a change in their personal status. Rangers, and particularly their leaders, are respected members of their communities and are often treated as role models. Serving in their ranks you will find politicians, mayors, chiefs, by-law officers, businessmen, tradesmen, elders, educators, hunters and fishermen. Chances are that you have met many Rangers without realizing it.

Rangers are unique in many ways within the Canadian Forces. Each patrol is commanded by a Sergeant assisted by a

Master Corporal, both of whom are elected by the patrol at large. They generally can serve until age sixty-five. Rangers older than sixty-five can continue to serve at the discretion of the CF provided they are of good mental and physical fitness and continue to be able to live on the land.

The formation of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group does more than amalgamate all Ranger patrols in the North. It creates a total force unit by transferring all members of the regular support training and administrative cadres previously assigned to Northern Area [Headquarters] into the unit as well....

A year later, the prominence of Canadian Rangers and Junior Rangers during the creation ceremonies for Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, on 1 April 1999, affirmed the Rangers' place as a nationally recognized and respected symbol. Fifty



Rangers representing twenty-four of the twenty-five patrols in Nunavut formed an honour guard during ceremonies in Iqaluit. A colour party of fourteen Junior Rangers also played a high-profile role. Junior Rangers Ryan Nivingalok of Kugluktuk and Daryl Tee of Coral Harbour had the honour of unveiling the territorial flag and coat of arms. The Canadian Rangers embodied the old and the new in the North: Sergeant Tony Manerluk of Rankin Inlet, the oldest Ranger on parade, and Tommy Naglingniq of Iqaluit, the youngest, lowered the Northwest Territories flag and hoisted the new Nunavut flag for the first time. With a new millennium dawning, the Rangers had clearly come of age.

The Canadian Rangers in November 1999 comprised 3,446 Rangers in 140 patrols. Their physical footprint had expanded and so had their purpose. Over the preceding decades, the Rangers had evolved from being the informal eyes and ears of the military to become Canada's sovereignty soldiers. In the process, they assumed more social and political roles within their communities, roles that matched the priorities of Northern communities. Lieutenant-Colonel Rory Kilburn, the chief of staff at Canadian Forces Northern Area, observed that some Indigenous elders played a direct role in identifying Rangers with leadership potential and encouraging them to become sergeants and master corporals so they could develop skills to lead their communities and territorial governments. The Rangers also groomed future leaders by transferring

knowledge and land skills to younger members. It presented a "win-win" situation for communities and for the military, which made it so popular.

The Rangers aligned perfectly with the spirit of political cooperation and national support that Ottawa hoped to foster with Northern communities. The connection between encouraging traditional land skills, teaching traditional knowledge, and sustaining military operations in remote regions over the long-term became increasingly clear. In late 1998, 1 CRPG anticipated that:

The Canadian Ranger profile will start to change dramatically in the next few years. Currently Ranger training places a priority on development/ integration of technological skills and the demonstration of land skills. The land skills are for the most part traditional



skills learned from elders. Retention of these skills is disappearing. Most Rangers over 40 years of age have them, but few under thirty have the same capability. Despite a resurgence of traditional values through the North the common complaint in communities is that the young are becoming town bound and exhibit little interest in seriously pursuing traditional skills. These young people are, however, better educated than their parents and retain information such as GPS and map reading better than their elders. To maintain our current deployable capability more emphasis will have to be placed on exercising on the land.

These ideas were not new, but the political environment of the 1990s was more receptive to this emphasis on knowledge transfer. Commentators recognized that the Ranger organization depended upon healthy communities. The line between what was of military value and what was of national value had blurred.

The growing emphasis on the Rangers' contributions to the social fabric of remote communities seemed to fit with the government's emerging circumpolar emphasis. The parliamentary committee report *Canada and the Circumpolar World*, released in 1997, explained that the "new agenda for security cooperation is inextricably linked to the aims of environmentally sustainable human development."

A national review of the Rangers, called CAN RAN 2000, highlighted their impact as community role models. Indigenous communities had suicide rates up to seven

times higher than in the Canadian population at large, and higher-than-average rates of illness, family violence, alcohol abuse, and incarceration. They also had lower-than-average life expectancy, education, and employment rates, and they suffered from poor housing and sanitation conditions. The Rangers offered a ray of hope in an otherwise dreary picture:

By their nature, the Canadian Rangers are having a tremendous impact on the lives of the people and communities in which they are located ... They are active community members who are in a position to have a positive influence on their local environment. Rangers, in those communities where there is no other federal presence, are often perceived to be the elite of the community and are held up as role models for others. Frequently the Rangers represent the only identifiable and formed group that is readily available to the community in times of need ... The Rangers have now taken on a new role—they are educators and role models for over a thousand youth that participate in the JCR Programme. Consequently, there is beneficial value in the presence of Rangers in a community both from the perspective of enhancing the community environment as well as adding to the image of the federal government and the Canadian Forces.

The Rangers served as a consistent, visible link to the state and were worthy of expansion.

CAN RAN 2000 had an immediate impact: the number of instructors and headquarters staff grew in the patrol groups, and the Rangers began to receive modest allotments

of new equipment. Observing and reporting anomalies required binoculars and communications devices, so each patrol now received new radios and two GPS units. Each patrol group also had access to satellite telephones for use during exercises. Rangers also received new combat pants and boots – a modest addition to their uniform.

Into the Twenty-First Century

Growing concerns about climate change, the opening of the Northwest Passage, and global demands for Arctic resources and security in the post-9/11 world conspired to put the Arctic back on the national and international agenda at the start of the twenty-first century. The Canadian Rangers played a major role in the unfolding drama. The perception that countries such as the United States and Denmark were challenging Canada's ownership of remote regions gave renewed meaning to sovereignty operations. In the early twentieth century, the RCMP had planted cairns to establish Canadian ownership. One century later, it was the Canadian Rangers who served as Canada's sovereignty soldiers.

In the military's eyes, the Canadian Rangers had one main role: to assert Canadian sovereignty. Their activities as guides, scouts, and patrol members conducting surveillance and demonstrating a military presence around their home communities fit within the organization's traditional mandate. The growing expectation that

Rangers should demonstrate Canadian sovereignty over the most remote stretches of coastline in the Far North applied in particular to 1 CRPG. "The significant amount of equipment needed to conduct a patrol of several days duration several hundred kilometres away from established communities" was "still more economical than a series of Aurora flights or naval patrols," the chief of review services noted in 2003. These enhanced sovereignty operations cost significantly more than "a ball cap, .303 rifle and a couple of hundred rounds of ammunition."

The investments certainly paid off from a public relations standpoint. The Canadian Ranger mystique gained new lustre under the national spotlight, and assumed almost mythic proportions in media stories. "They're the MacGyvers of the Canadian Arctic," reporter Stephanie Rubec exclaimed in 2002. "Strand any Canadian Ranger on an ice floe north of 60 with their military issued .303 rifle and they can live off the land indefinitely. Throw in a needle and some dental floss—which no Ranger would be caught dead without—and they'll sew up a fur outfit to ward off the most chilling arctic wind."

Caricatures such as these reveal the Rangers' high status in the popular imagination. Stories about the Rangers appeared regularly in regional and national newspapers, and a postage stamp released in 2003 depicted a Ranger peering through binoculars that reflected a snow-custed mountain peak. The Rangers symbolized the



military's positive cooperation with all Canadians in remote areas, particularly Indigenous communities. Furthermore, the organization proved that the military could successfully integrate national security and sovereignty agendas with community-based activities and local priorities.

The national profile revealed one face of the Canadian Rangers. Their other face was well known by the residents of northern communities. "We rarely make notice of the Rangers, but they are the ones we see at the cenotaph every Remembrance Day. But more than sombre figures to remember the ones that have fallen, the Rangers are here to provide us all vital service," an editorial in *Nunavut News/North* noted on 18 October 1999. "When search and rescue teams are

required, the Rangers are trained, ready and willing to deploy on a moments' notice. When emergency situations call for help, our Rangers are there first. We don't often notice them and we hope we never need them, but we can all sleep a little better at night knowing they're out there ready if the unexpected happens."

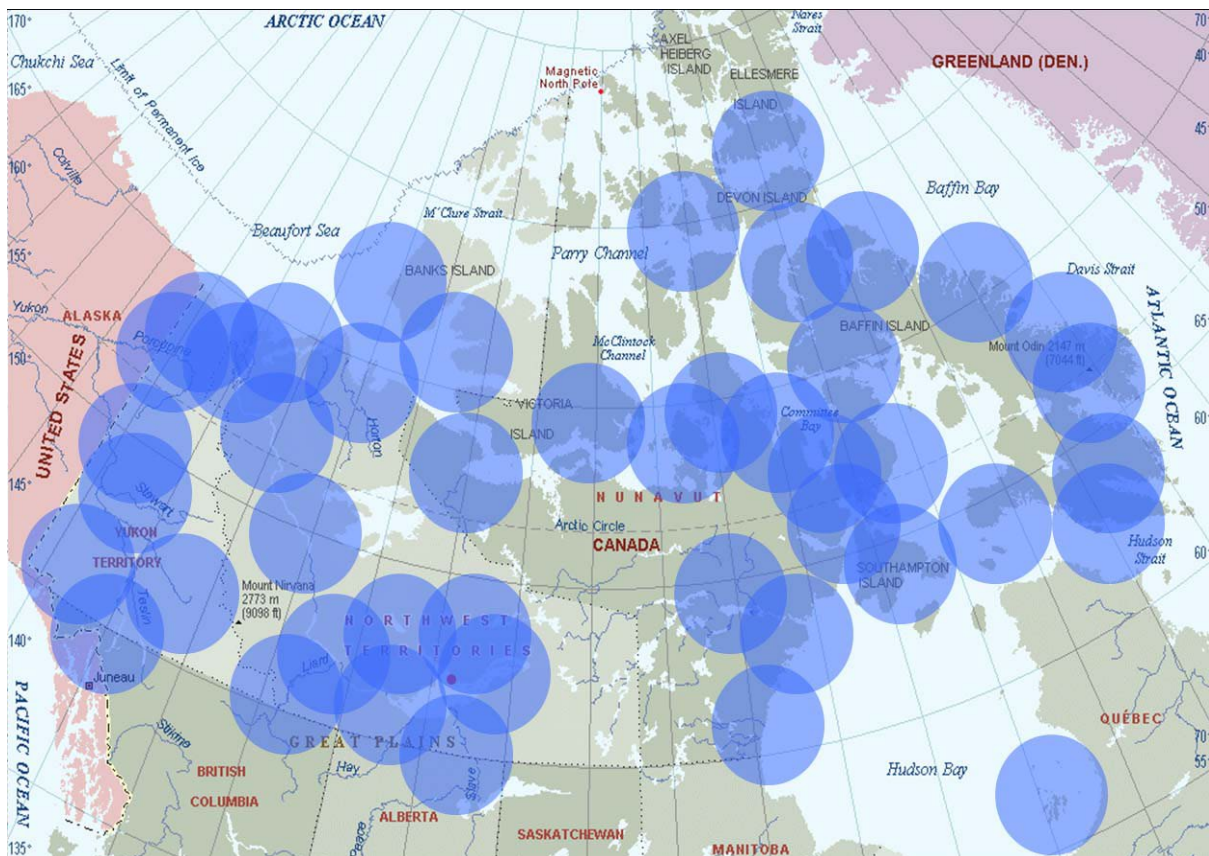
Colonel Pierre Leblanc, the commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, noted a disturbing trend away from maintaining a military presence in the Arctic. In 1998, for example, the army decided to reduce its annual sovereignty operations from five to three. The change further weakened the Canadian Forces' capabilities in the North and, in Leblanc's view, also eroded Canada's sovereignty. Many unoccupied

islands in the Far North received “very little military coverage,” and he asserted that international law provided a basis for foreign powers to claim unoccupied territories if Canada was “perceived as losing interest in the Arctic.” Although the Canadian Rangers provided an extensive and visible military presence, as well as constructive and intimate connections with northern communities, Leblanc warned that Arctic security issues were becoming more complex while the military’s Arctic capabilities deteriorated.

Leblanc insisted that increasing maritime activity in the Arctic in particular demanded more surveillance. In 1999, Rangers reported a submarine sighting in Cumberland Sound as well as the unexpected arrival of a Chinese research

ship in Tuktoyaktuk. Cruise ship visits increased exponentially after the end of the Cold War. Global warming, which made Canadian waters more accessible, heightened the risks. Thinning ice raised the possibility of international shipping traffic exploiting extended ice-free periods to run cargoes between Asia and Europe through the Northwest Passage.

“The Arctic Region is a huge, vast treasure chest for Canada and her future generations,” Colonel Kevin McLeod, Leblanc’s successor, asserted in his cover letter for the *Arctic Capabilities Study* released in December 2000. “The increased threat to both the people and the resources of this area should be a concern to all of us. This threat and increase in vulnerability must be countered.” Canadian Forces



Northern Area's detailed study linked Canada's Arctic sovereignty and security challenges to the issues of environmental protection, climate change and the opening of new northern shipping routes, the opening of Russia's airspace and heightened commercial airline activity, and the transnational criminal activity that accompanies resource development such as diamond mining. To meet its obligations, Northern Area argued for improved capabilities to monitor and respond to emergencies. Although the study triggered significant media attention, the Department of National Defence decided that its scarce resources should go to more pressing priorities. Northern Area would have to fulfill its surveillance responsibilities with what it already had.

The majority of the Canadian Forces' activities in the Territorial North revolved around the Canadian Rangers, which remained a cost-effective and high-profile

way to let northerners show the flag. National Defence Headquarters consequently doubled 1 CRPG's annual budget in 2001 to more than \$5 million and authorized it to increase its Ranger strength to 1,800 members by 2008.

"My goal is to have a Ranger patrol in every community in the North," Major Yves Laroche, the Commanding Officer of 1 CRPG from 2000-02, told a reporter. In reality, there was little opportunity to expand the Rangers' footprint. Only eight communities in Canada's northern territories without an existing patrol had the demographic potential to support one, and there were no communities in the Arctic Archipelago that could.

1 CRPG prided itself on being the only patrol group that accomplished operational tasks on direct orders from Ottawa, and it insisted that sovereignty and security patrols took priority. Northern Area had funding to

Types of Ranger Patrols in 1 CRPG (2004)

Type 1	Ranger Training Patrol	Annual standard training for each patrol, consisting of classroom and field exercises.
Type 2	Ranger North Warning System (NWS) Patrol	Inspections of NWS installations by individual patrols.
Type 3	Ranger Mass Exercise	Collective training exercises conducted by two or more patrols.
Type 4	Ranger Sovereignty Patrol (SOVPAT)	Patrols tasked by CFNA HQ as part of the CFNA Surveillance Plan.
Type 5	Ranger Enhanced Sovereignty Patrol (ESOVPAT)	A long-range patrol tasked by CFNA HQ to a remote part of area of responsibility. One ESOVPAT is conducted each year, involving 1 CRPG HQ personnel and representatives from various Ranger patrols.

conduct thirty sovereignty patrols (SOVPATs), its main flag-planting activity, each year. Combined with the Rangers' existing footprint in communities across the territories, the coverage looked impressive on paper, but it remained modest in terms of Canada's perceived need to demonstrate a continuous military presence in the remotest reaches of the archipelago.

In addition to annual standard training for each patrol in its home community (Type 1 patrols), increased funding permitted a wider variety of activities. All Rangers in 1 CRPG received annual training, and various patrols inspected forty-seven North Warning System sites (Type 2 patrols) periodically throughout the year. Mass exercises (Type 3 patrols) allowed multiple patrols to meet and train at a predetermined location. These exercises challenged Rangers to operate in unfamiliar terrain and to build esprit de corps as a patrol group.

Alongside Sovereignty Patrols (Type 4), joint training with other Canadian Forces and international units, and tasks such as confirming reports of submarines or suspicious activities in Canadian waters or airspace, Major Laroche estimated that Rangers conducted about 350 activities each year in the Territorial North. Colonel McLeod explained that the military expected the Rangers "to know their backyards very well," and this would not change. Their "backyard," however, was expanding in the minds of military officials and the Canadian public.

Enhanced Sovereignty Patrols

Rangers had always gone on patrols but never far from their home communities. With the renewed emphasis on Arctic sovereignty, Northern Area recommended that Rangers conduct regular enhanced sovereignty patrols over vast, uninhabited stretches of the High Arctic. "What they will do is cover some area, and they will show the flag and report any unusual activity," Major Laroche told reporters.

Major Bob Knight, the former commanding officer at 1 CRPG, used the maxim "possession is nine-tenths of the law" to rationalize these activities. "In purely legal terms, they're proving Canada's sovereignty over the territory they're travelling through simply through their presence," he asserted. "If you claim that you have sovereignty over a certain area, yet you have never been there, then someone else could turn around and say, 'Is that really your sovereign territory?'" Other media, political, and academic commentators made similar arguments for Ranger patrols based on the idea that Canada's legal sovereignty depended upon effective occupation. These highly publicized patrols also served to increase awareness of the Rangers' existence and solidified their role as sovereignty soldiers.

The connection between sovereignty issues, security threats, and land-based surveillance took tangible form at the dawn of the new millennium. Rumours of polar bear hunters crossing from Greenland to Ellesmere Island

led 1 CRPG to participate in Operation Ulu, a fifteen-man operation with the RCMP, in April 2000. In an unprecedented move, the military airlifted Rangers from their communities to the uninhabited Alexandria Fiord region of Ellesmere Island, 300 kilometres above Canada's northernmost settlement of Grise Fiord, to show the flag and deter illegal hunters from violating Canadian laws. Whether the primary goal was to enhance Ranger skills or deterrence, the operation took the Rangers beyond their typical area of responsibility. Although a more covert operation might have caught "Greenlandic hunters red-handed," a Northern newspaper editorial noted, "the whole point of sovereignty patrols is to fly the flag and let the world know the borders of Canadian soil and tundra."

The scale of the enhanced sovereignty patrols quickly grew as Northern Area conceived plans to both demonstrate sovereignty and bolster the Rangers' national profile.

To mark the Rangers' sixtieth anniversary celebrations in 2002, thirty-three Rangers from patrols in 1 CRPG met in Resolute Bay in April to launch Operation *Kigiliqavik Ranger*, named after the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge of known land."

The patrol had travelled more than 800 km when it was forced to stop on the sea ice north of Ellef Ringnes Island. Two kilometres ahead lay a huge, impassable lead—a crack in the sea ice over 400 km long and 5 km wide. By attaining 79°N, the

expedition technically could claim that it had reached the magnetic pole. Ranger Sergeant Peter Moon reported that a "small iceberg was selected as the symbolic centre of the Pole and Rangers ran to it whooping and shouting and waving two big Maple Leaf and Canadian Ranger flags, as well as the flags of the three territories and their home communities. They hugged, shook hands and slapped high fives." Major Laroche "sat quietly on his snowmobile amidst the jubilation and thought about the 18 months of planning that had gone into the event, the longest, furthest and largest sovereignty patrol in Canadian history." "You know, guys, usually I don't say too much," he told the group, "but today is outstanding. Today, you made history. You should all be very proud."

On 22 April 2002, a *Northern News Services* editorial titled "The Heavy Responsibility of Sovereignty" noted:

There's a lot riding on the shoulders of a few Rangers.

It's ironic these days when the mighty American military is talking about continental defence. They will rely on satellites, high-flying planes and other high-tech sensors to keep terrorists and others from infiltrating our shores—from Mexico to the Arctic.

All well and good. But that doesn't diminish the importance of the women and men in red who have been the guardians of the North for the last 60 years. If anything, it makes the Rangers' role more essential to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

With their .303 rifles, ball caps and sweat shirts these “citizen soldiers” have been Canada’s eyes and ears in the North, patrolling on snowmachines for decades.

And for the past two weeks, 29 Rangers from around the NWT, Nunavut and Yukon have been taking part in one of the most ambitious sovereignty patrols in Canadian history, making their way from Resolute to the Magnetic North Pole and back. A publicity stunt?

Perhaps.

But such a trek to uninhabited territory—and publicity that comes with it—does help establish Canadian ownership to the Arctic and reinforces the Rangers’ importance.

The extensive media coverage of *Kigliqavik Ranger* reflected a growing interest in Arctic sovereignty and the Rangers’ activities in support of it. Applauding this “heroic and historic accomplishment,” Vice Chief of the Defence Staff Lieutenant-General George Macdonald wrote:

This courageous expedition in support of our country’s sovereignty was not only a clear demonstration of the importance of the mandate and roles of the Canadian Rangers, but is also a testament to the special breed of person it takes to fulfill this most important duty. The sheer magnitude of the journey leaves one breathless and the daily media releases ... could only



provide us with a small glimpse of this grand adventure. This initiative can only serve to reflect positively on the Canadian Rangers organization and the Canadian Forces.

I know that the Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence were both delighted to have been directly involved by phone, and their conversations with participants have reinforced their support for the Canadian Rangers and their personal interest in the members. It is indeed fitting that this courageous journey was the first of our special events to commemorate 60 years of history with the Canadian Rangers in 2002.

...

Your recent achievement in reaching the farthest North has become a matter of great national pride amongst Canadian Forces members across Canada.

Unataktuksainun ukiuktaktumitunun:
Quyanamik. Uvagut unatktigigpta
nunalimainit quviagiypsi Qigliqavik
tikivigigapsiuk aullarsutik
ungasiktumit.

Political accolades matched the Rangers' sense of personal accomplishment. Governor General Adrienne Clarkson awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal to the participants the following year and thanked each one in a letter "for the support you have given me as Commander-in-Chief and for the loyal and dedicated service you provide Canada." She also applauded the Rangers for the operation in her Canada Day message on Parliament Hill.

In the years ahead, Rangers participated in even more enhanced sovereignty patrols. The Kigliqavik series of patrols occurred annually and included increasingly ambitious plans to trace lines over Canada's remotest islands. Costs escalated accordingly, but capturing national media attention made the patrols worthwhile. "We're putting footprints in the snow where they are not normally put," Colonel Norris Pettis, commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, explained to journalists in 2004. Of course, these footprints came from Ranger boots—an important demonstration of Northerners' contributing to Canadian sovereignty.

Notes

¹ This chapter is derived from P. Whitney Lackenbauer, *Vigilans: The 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group* (Yellowknife: 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, 2015). For citations to original source material, see Lackenbauer, *The Canadian Rangers: A Living History* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013).





2

Canadian Forces Northern Area News Details on Operation *Kigliqaqvik Ranger*

Expedition Trains in Resolute

2 April 2002

All Rangers have arrived in Resolute, received their clothing and settled into rooms.

3 April

Expedition members received and inspected their snowmobiles and identified any required maintenance. A meet and greet was held for all members to get better acquainted with each other.

4 April

Snowmobile maintenance continued. Issued tent group equipment to the tent groups in the morning. The tent groups then deployed out onto the bay to set-up their respective tents. Classrooms after lunch reviewing March Discipline, Navigation and Weapons handling. Issued all the fuel to the tent groups along with the plywood for the Komatiks after classes. Issued Warning Order for Cross-country driving familiarization /refresher training.

5 April

Deployed Rangers at 1315 hrs for a cross-country snowmobile refresher/familiarization training exercise. Rifle introduction/familiarization [training] after supper. Administration NCO accompanied the last fuel insert to Helena Island fuel cache. He took a number of pictures at the fuel point and on his return trip. It would appear that snow condition between here and the Island should not be a problem.

6 April

Issued Orders for the move to Griffith Island for rifle ranges at 2000 hr.

7 April

The Rangers deployed at 0900 hrs for Griffith Island to conduct the Ranges. The Rangers returned at 1645 hrs. After the briefing a SOP working group was conducted with the leadership to sort out minor issues identified during the move to and from the rifle ranges.

Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger

Day 1

Wednesday, 10 April 2002

The patrol covered 139 kilometers on its first day, slowed by problems with two snowmobiles and a number of minor problems with equipment.

“It was slow travel, but you expect that on the first day,” said Ranger Julian Tomlinson of Inuvik, NWT. “But it was just a beautiful day and we saw lots of polar bear tracks. We passed a hunting team headed for Resolute with a bear it had taken.”

He said the first night's camp went well. “The tents were nice and warm and the caribou skins we used to insulate us from the sea ice were great. Everyone's looking forward to going through Polar Bear Pass (on Thursday).”

Day 2

Thursday, 11 April 2002

Location N 75°29'26" W 97°55'19", Weather Conditions: Clear -15

The patrol made good progress and travelled 107 kilometres, crossing Bathurst Island. The route took the Rangers west through the spectacular Polar Bear Pass, which is noted for its towering cliffs, numerous polar bears and muskox.

The weather was clear and the high temperature was -15C. “We stopped at an old polar bear counting shack for morning tea and then pushed on,” the patrol reported to base camp in Resolute Bay, Nunavut.

“We met a team attempting to cross-country ski to the Magnetic North Pole and they asked if we could pull their komatiks to the high ground because they were having trouble with their dogs. We traversed the most difficult leg of the move pretty well unscathed.”

The patrol made camp for the night in May Inlet. The next camp is expected to be at Helena Island, a distance of about 100 kilometres, where a fuel cache has been placed for it.

Day 3

Friday, 12 April 2002

The patrol had a good day and travelled 80 kilometres.

“It was another great day,” said Ranger Julian Tomlinson of Inuvik, NWT.

The weather was good with clear skies and temperatures reaching a high of -30C. The patrol encountered some ice fog late in the day.

The patrol made camp overnight, southwest of Helena Island, about 4 p.m. and several Rangers went hunting for seal. Numerous polar bear tracks were seen but no bears were sighted.

The tents were proving to be “toasty warm,” said Tomlinson. Some snowmobiles were experiencing trouble and one blew an engine so badly it will have to be replaced.

Day 4

Saturday, 13 April 2002

The patrol spent the day in camp on the sea ice under a cliff at the western end of Helena Island. "It's been a beautiful day, clear and about minus 30," said Ranger Julian Tomlinson of Inuvik, NWT. "We didn't travel. It was a gear-up day. We set up a garage and checked over all the machines."

Several Rangers drove around the area, spotting bear and fox tracks and several open seal holes. A few tried to catch seal but were unsuccessful. "The bears had been there before us," Tomlinson said.

He said the members of the patrol, who come from across the Arctic and bring with them different languages and cultures, are working well together.

"The guys are pretty focussed," he said. "We have to get from Point A to Point B. We have guidelines on how we are to go travel and we do it."

The expedition supplemented army rations with fresh food and bannock.

"But everything you do is so slow in the Arctic," Tomlinson said. "Everything takes four times as long to do. Take water: you don't turn on a tap. You have to cut out a chunk of ice, chip it into pieces, and put it on a slow burning stove for an hour until it boils. It's that kind of thing that takes so long. "But no-one's complaining. Spirits are good and we're having a great time."

Day 5

Sunday, 14 April 2002

The patrol was joined early on Sunday morning by Major Yves Laroche, commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

Laroche flew to the patrol's camp at Helena Island on a resupply flight from Resolute Bay, Nunavut. The flight brought in a replacement for a snowmachine that had broken down and could not be repaired, as well as other supplies. It flew out with empty fuel drums and other refuse.

The patrol reached King Christian Island by the end of the day, after travelling approximately 150 kilometres in sunny weather with a daytime high of -20C.

"(We) expect to depart this location at approx 0900 hours (on Monday)," said the patrol's report to base camp in Resolute Bay. "We are expecting rough ice conditions crossing the Danish Strait. The Noice Peninsula should be spectacular for sight seeing.

"I suspect that the ice conditions crossing Deer Bay will be similar to the conditions we have experienced (todate). We should be into Isachsen in about 10-12 hours...

"All (personnel) continue to do well."

Day 6

Monday, 15 April 2002

The patrol travelled a distance of about 200 kilometres today in a journey that took almost 12 hours.

Progress was good, despite severe ice conditions, according to a brief voice report sent by satellite telephone to Canadian Forces Northern Area headquarters in Yellowknife.

The patrol travelled from its last overnight camp at King Christian Island to a point about half way to the top of the west side of Ellef Ringnes Island, placing it within striking distance of the Magnetic North Pole.

The weather was so cold that the special laptop computer the patrol is carrying froze, making it impossible to send the regular daily written report.

Day 7

Tuesday, 16 April 2002

The Canadian Rangers completed their task of patrolling to the Magnetic North Pole today, but few details were available because of communications problems.

Colonel Kevin McLeod, commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, learned about the patrol's success in an internal message sent to him at 4.49 p.m. The message said: "The patrol has gone as far as conditions of ice and open water allow. The patrol is within 70 km of the pole and within the 80 km daily movement of the (Magnetic North Pole)."

The short message ended with: "They are at the Pole."

An official with the National Research Council's Canadian National Geomagnetism Programme in Ottawa confirmed that the patrol had reached the Pole.

The patrol has been reporting repeated problems with its satellite phones and a special laptop computer designed for the severe weather conditions of the High Arctic. The base camp in Resolute Bay was unable to contact the patrol to obtain further details about the success of its mission.

Day 8

Wednesday, 17 April 2002

The patrol continued to have problems with communications today but was able to confirm again that it had reached the Pole on Day 7. The following report was filed by satellite phone with Ranger HQ in Yellowknife.

"Patrol is at Isachsen [about 120 kilometres south of the point at which it reached the Pole] by the air strip. "Arrived last night at midnight. All members are tired but well. Warrant Officer Paul Burke (medic) visited all (personnel) and aside from fatigue found no problems.

"Day began with temp at -25 and a ground fog which was clearing. Computer still frozen but they will attempt to thaw it today.

"Intentions: Today they will conduct rifle ranges (shooting practice) and do maintenance. Tomorrow they will wait for the (area commander's) plane and party. 19 Apr they will move to King Christian I(sland). 20 Apr move to Helena I(sland). 24 Apr in Resolute?"

Day 9

Thursday, 18 April 2002

Colonel Kevin McLeod, commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, flew to Isachsen to congratulate the patrol on its success.

He was greeted, in biting cold, by an impressive quarter guard of the patrol's members, drawn up in two ranks and standing at attention with their rifles next to their snowmobiles. The Canadian and Canadian Ranger flags they took with them to the Pole flew from two of their snowmobiles.

Colonel McLeod told them that all Canadians were proud of their accomplishment. He said all the members of the patrol should be proud of their success in showing the Canadian flag in such an isolated part of the Canadian High Arctic.

Both Sergeant Paddy Aqiatasuk and Ranger Deborah Iqaluk of Resolute Bay were surprised when the colonel emerged from his plane with their son, Pilipoosie Iqaluk, a 15-year-old Junior Canadian Ranger. Both parents embraced their son in an emotional greeting.

Colonel McLeod presented Corporal Levi Qaunaq of Igloolik, Nunavut, with the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 years service as a Canadian Ranger. He said the location of the medal presentation was unique in the history of the Canadian Forces.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien, in a satellite phone call from his residence at 24 Sussex Drive in Ottawa, offered his congratulations and those of the people of Canada to the members of the patrol.

The prime minister spoke with Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern, Sergeant John Mitchell of Dawson City, Yukon, Sergeant Darrel Klemmer of Tulita, Northwest Territories, Sergeant Aqiatasuk, and Junior Canadian Ranger Pilipoosie Iqaluk.

Defence Minister Art Eggleton also spoke by satellite phone with Major Yves Laroche, commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group and the leader of the patrol, as well as with several Canadian Rangers. He told them their patrol's success in reaching the Pole was a remarkable achievement and through them congratulated all its members.

Patrol members told Colonel McLeod that when they arrived at the Magnetic North Pole there was a general sense of elation and accomplishment. The Rangers posed for photographs with the Maple Leaf and Canadian Ranger flags, as well as those of Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon, and the flags of their home communities.

Shortly before the area commander's plane was due to depart, Sgt. Klemmer suffered a severe cut to the index finger of his right hand while loading a snowmobile. He had to fly out on Colonel McLeod's plane to Resolute Bay where he received several stitches. He is expected to recover fully from his injury. The patrol plans on travelling south to King Christian Island tomorrow on its way back to Resolute Bay.

Day 10

Friday, 19 April 2002

After a prayer in English and Inuktitut for those killed and wounded in Afghanistan the patrol left Isachsen at 9 a.m. and arrived at King Christian Island late in the evening, finally setting up camp shortly before midnight at N 77°48' and W 102°44'.

The patrol reported encountering extremely rough ice and experienced high winds that limited visibility to about one mile. Personnel and equipment arrived in good condition.

There were continuing problems with satellite telephones and the patrol's special laptop computer was frozen so badly it could not be used to send out the day's situation report.

Day 11

Saturday, 20 April 2002

The patrol left King Christian Island at 10.30 a.m. and arrived at its camp site on the west side of Helena Island in two groups, the first arriving at 11 p.m. and the second at 11.45 p.m.

The canvas was up, the troops were settled by about 12.30 (a.m.), and gone to ground by about 1 (a.m.)

after a hearty meal," Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern said. The patrol was able to travel for much of the day on the trail it had created going north to the Pole, which made driving easy compared with "the day before, which, coming in from Isachsen, was horrific," Mulhern said.

"The weather first thing (in the day) was almost blizzard conditions," he said. "Visibility was down at points to less than 500 metres, but we tightened up the order of march, sent the scouts out ahead, and they just kind of sausage-machined us out until we got to the (old) track (used by the patrol on its way to the Pole).

"Visibility lifted to about a kilometre to a kilometre-and-a-half for most of the morning, then last night it was just beautiful conditions."

By the time the patrol made camp at Helena Island "the troops were all in good shape. Morale was high and they were looking forward to getting back to Resolute Bay, Mulhern said.

Day 12

Sunday, 21 April 2002

The patrol rested for most of the day and worked on repairing and maintaining its snowmobiles and preparing food rations for the remainder of the trek.

The weather was very cold with the wind gusting to 20 kilometres an hour, Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern said, but members of the patrol were in excellent spirits.

A highlight of the day was the surprise appearance of Sergeant Darrel Klemmer of Tulita, NWT, who had been flown out on Day 9 for medical treatment in Resolute Bay for a cut to a hand. After medical treatment, he had insisted on continuing to contribute to the patrol by working regular shifts in the base camp's radio communications room at Resolute Bay. His hand had improved sufficiently to allow him to help in loading the supply plane at Resolute Bay and unloading it at Helena Island, where he received a warm greeting from his fellow patrollers. The supply plane left Helena Island to pick up three adventurers who had abandoned their effort to reach the Magnetic North Pole on skis. They were camped on the sea ice about 40 kilometres north of the patrol's camp and waiting for a plane to pick them up.

Sgt. Klemmer helped the skiers break camp and get their equipment, komatik and exhausted dogs onto the supply plane, which took them back to Resolute Bay.

The trio said they abandoned their attempt to reach the Pole after hearing reports about the bad ice conditions ahead of them over the sovereignty patrol's radio. They had been skiing for 20 days.

Day 13

Monday, 22 April 2002

The patrol made good progress in clear weather and good ice conditions.

It travelled from Helena Island to May Inlet on Bathurst Island, where it made camp for the night near the western entrance to Polar Bear Pass.

“It was an excellent travel day,” said Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern. “It was a beautiful day to be riding down May Inlet. It was one of the best days so far.”

One snowmobile broke down but was quickly repaired with a spark plug and a half thermos of hot water.

Morale was high and the patrol's members were looking forward to reaching base camp in Resolute Bay by Wednesday, two days ahead of schedule.

Day 14

Tuesday, 23 April 2002

The patrol made good progress, travelling through the Polar Bear Pass across Bathurst Island and making camp south of Polaris Mine. The patrol returned a snowmobile it had borrowed from Polaris Mines on its journey north after another machine broke down on Day 1. One snow machine is out of commission and is being hauled back to Resolute on a komatik and the rider has doubled up with another.

Patrol members are looking forward to making a fast run on Wednesday to base camp at Resolute Bay and completing their historic sovereignty patrol.

Day 15

Wednesday, 24 April 2002

The patrol left its overnight camp near Polaris Mine at 8 a.m. and headed slowly towards its base camp in Resolute Bay.

The temperature ranged around -20C and the skies were clear.

The patrol stopped for lunch and encountered a polar bear, giving everyone opportunities for photographs. A short distance from Resolute the patrol was met by a welcome party of people on snowmobiles from Resolute, including Sergeant Darrel Klemmer of Tulita, NWT. Sgt. Klemmer had been airlifted to Resolute on Day 9 for medical treatment after he cut his hand. He rejoined the patrol as it completed its historic trek.

The patrol swept across the bay in front of Resolute in a line a kilometre long and formed up on the snow covered beach in four ranks as it came to a stop. As a crowd of hamlet residents watched, riders jumped from their machines and embraced, exchanged high fives, shook hands and posed for photographs. The Rangers unhooked their komatiks and rode around the hamlet, with flags flying from their machines, and waved back to people.

They stopped to say hello to children outside the school. When the children recognized Melanie Howell and Deborah Igaluk, they mobbed the two local Rangers.

Nancy Karetak-Lindell, the Member of Parliament for Nunavut, phoned to congratulate Major Yves Laroche, the patrol leader and commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, which commands the 1,300 Canadian Rangers in the Arctic. She told him she will make a statement in the House of Commons recognizing the historic patrol to the Magnetic North Pole and the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers.





The Rangers' Journey to the Magnetic North Pole: A Photo Journal

Julian Tomlinson





Preface

The idea for this project had its genesis in a conversation I had with Major Yves Laroche, then Commander of 1C.R.P.G., while we were camped on the Ocean at Helena Island during the return leg of our journey to the Magnetic North Pole. Yves came for coffee at our tent and we launched into a good discussion about the Rangers. My journal captured the essence of the conversation:

I had a good chat in the tent with Yves today.... I offered him an equipment box for a seat and then we began to speak of the Rangers; "my Rangers" as he called us. He eyes were animated and he spoke in a crisp French-Canadian accent. While I listened to WHAT he said, I also heard within his words, a great conviction.

He is clearly incredibly passionate about his Rangers. He spoke with pride about the small team of people who organized this exercise and described his Rangers in this way:

"these Men, Women, Inuit, Dene, Metis and Non Aboriginal Northerners; they are my 'True Canadians'."

As he rose to go, he shared his desire to leave the Rangers of the Expedition and those who helped with a small legacy – a Journal of sorts, containing images and collected stories of this truly memorable event.

In addition to my conversation with Yves, in my regular job as a College Professor, I am trained to be curious about everything. One of the first questions I had after receiving my joining orders for the Expedition was "why are we going to the Magnetic North Pole?". Little did I know that this simple question, would lead to an epic journey in itself – a quest for knowledge about subjects as diverse as the history of the Rangers, the Northern Lights, the Earth's Magnetic Field, the Compass, and to the great question of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

In searching for my answers, I have begun to understand that this beautiful Arctic land and the Rangers that watch over it are a truly special and colorful element of our great national mosaic. For 15 months I have worked to collect the threads of this uniquely Canadian story and now I am happy to be able to share this little piece of Canada with you.



Commander, Yves Laroche
1 CPRG

Contributing Photographers:

Julian Tomlinson

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Julian Tomlinson

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The Canadian Rangers



The Canadian Rangers are members of the Canadian Department of National Defense Reserve Forces. They live and operate in remote regions of Canada including the Arctic. They provide a military presence in Canada's harshest wilderness regions and provide a highly visible expression of Canadian sovereignty.

Members are volunteers (though they are paid when undertaking tasks assigned by the Canadian Forces) and often perform their duties as Rangers in the normal course of their working lives, traveling, hunting and trapping in remote regions. Rangers are known for their wilderness skills and ability to operate in extreme environments.

The Canadian Rangers originate from the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, a group created in 1942 to act as coastal watchers during World War II. They were formally established as a Corps of the Reserve Militia by an Order-in-Council in 1947.

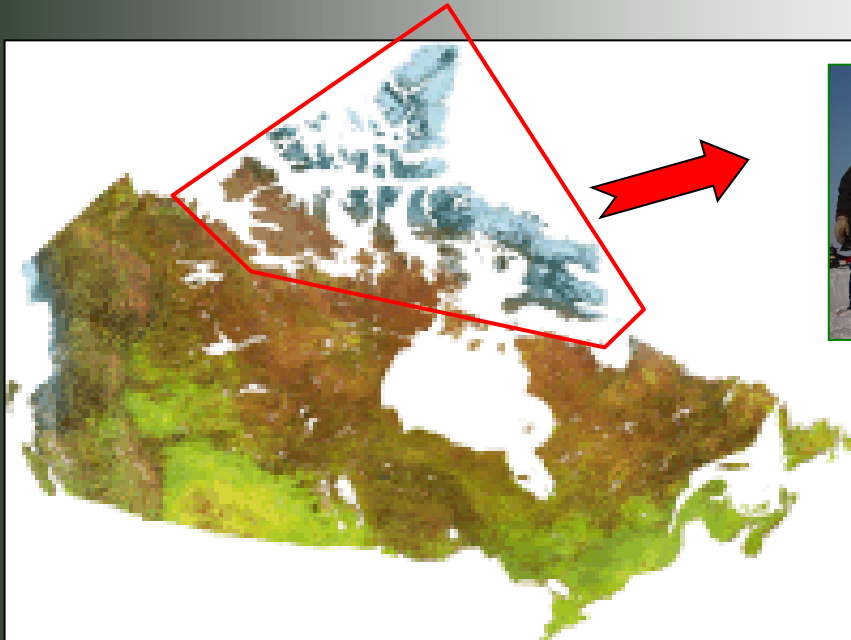
The Rangers provide surveillance, scouting, and arctic survival training to regular military forces, as well as support and assistance to local search and rescue operations and to emergency and disaster relief situations.

In the Arctic, the majority of Rangers are Inuit. They have a rich history of service to Northern communities and have become an important part of the social fabric of the Northern way of life.

2002 marked the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers. For their anniversary they chose to undertake a high profile Sovereignty Patrol to the Magnetic North Pole.



The Arctic Archipelago



The Canadian Arctic Archipelago is a triangular 'wedge' of Islands with their base starting just above the North American continent, extending towards the geographic North Pole. Forty nine major islands and several hundred smaller ones make up the this region. The Archipelago stretches east-west from approximately 62oW to 125oW and north-south from the southern shores of Baffin Island at approximately 62oN to the northern tip of Ellesmere Island at approximately 83oN.

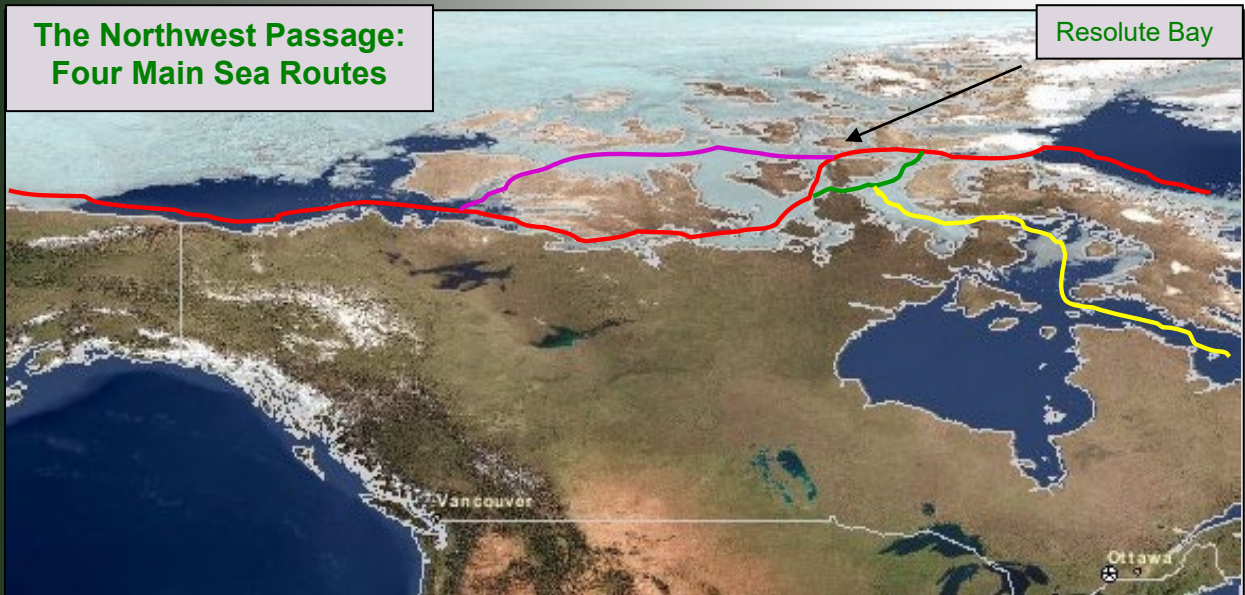
Between the islands are some areas where the ocean remains permanently frozen and some areas where the sea ice leaves briefly during the short summer.

With a total land mass of just over 500,000 square miles, the region accounts for a significant area of the Circumpolar Arctic, and a vast area of Canada.

Canada's current claims to sovereignty in the Arctic include all islands PLUS 12 miles of Territorial Sea surrounding each island. This claim includes control and regulation of the NORTHWEST PASSAGE as Canada's historic, internal waters...



The Northwest Passage



For over 400 years the quest to find a northern sea route to the orient through the fabled Northwest Passage, has been the 'holy grail' of European exploration. Unlocking a shorter route across the top of the world has been far more challenging than anyone dreamed and has kept the region inaccessible, locked in myth and legend.

The Northwest Passage is, in fact, several possible routes through a maze of Islands, ice choked channels and hidden shallow shoals. Because of these dangers, few ships have made it through. The shores of the islands throughout the Passage are littered with the bones of past explorers who failed to make their way back home again.

"Westward through the Davis Strait, 'tis there t'was said to lie,
A sea route to the orient for which so many died
Seeking gold and glory, leaving weathered broken bones
And a long forgotten lonely cairn of stones.../
Ah, for just one time I would take the Northwest Passage,
To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea..."



(Northwest Passage. Lyrics by Stan Rogers, Fogerty's Cove, 1981)

However, in recent years, with global warming and an increasing wealth of resources being found in the region, the quest for the Northwest Passage is heating up again and a debate is under way about who has control of the Passage.



Canadian Sovereignty



Canada has the right to regulate all international traffic through the Northwest Passage. This position is based on environmental concerns, concerns for Canadians living in the region, and concerns for national security.

There are a number of countries, including the United States, that have not yet been willing to recognize Canada's full sovereignty over the waters of the Passage. They instead believe that the Northwest Passage is an International Strait open to all vessels, including military ships of all countries.

At the turn of the 20th century, Canada's claims to the Arctic Regions were in doubt. From the late 1890's to the late 1920's, the RCMP were engaged as Canada's first 'sovereignty soldiers', sent out to establish Canada's claim to all of the Arctic Islands. It's an amazing piece of Canadian history.



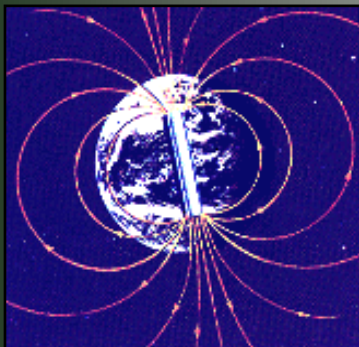
While no countries have disputed Canada's sovereignty the Arctic Islands since about 1930, and even though Canada claims the right to manage all the waters within the islands, there is still a great deal of international debate about control of the waterways in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago and the status of the Northwest Passage as an International Strait. This is one of the reasons that the Rangers chose to do a high profile Sovereignty Patrol over the *sea ice* to the Magnetic North Pole.

The Canadian Rangers of the Arctic play a role as 'sovereignty soldiers' in helping the Canadian government demonstrate their occupation, administration, and control of the Arctic coastal regions, islands and waterways.

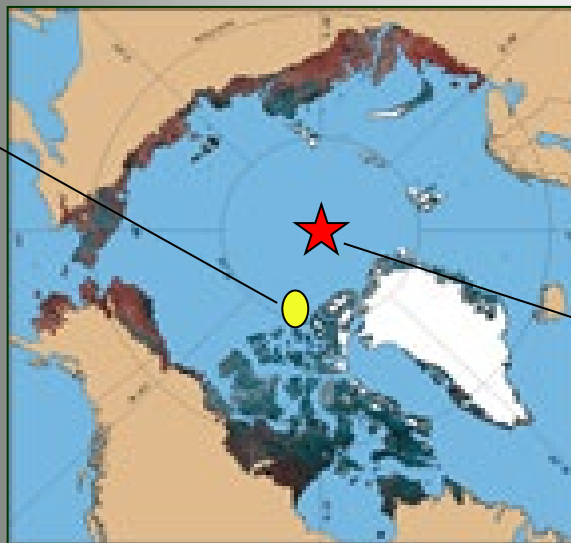


The Magnetic North Pole

Magnetic North Pole



The Earth is like a giant bar magnet with magnetic field lines radiating out from the Poles



Geographic North Pole



Some people are surprised to find that the Magnetic North Pole and the Geographic North Pole are two different things (see figure above).

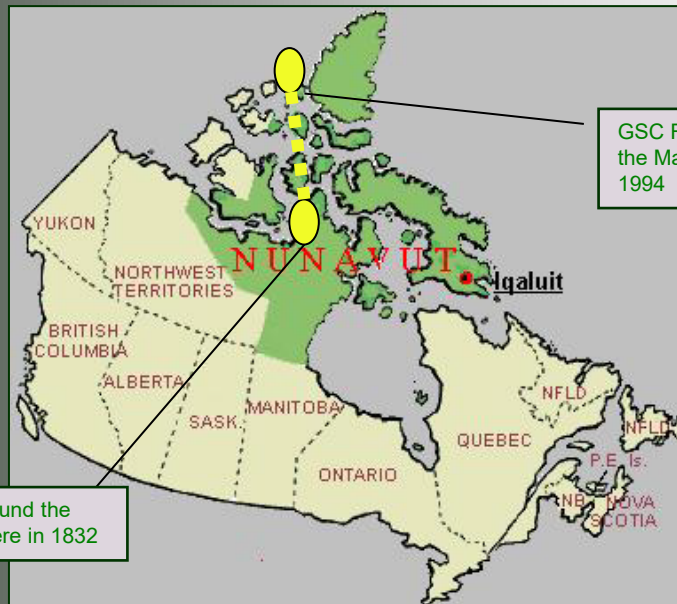
The Geographic North Pole is the point around which the Earth spins. It is also the point from which most maps are referenced.

The Magnetic North Pole is totally different. The Earth's core is like a giant bar magnet and the Magnetic Pole is simply one 'end' of the magnet, where all the magnetic field lines encircling the earth come together.

This Magnetic Pole, however, is almost 1000 km south of the Geographic North Pole and *it moves all the time*. It can be considered more of a 'region' than an exact point on the globe. This is because the pole 'wobbles' in an oval up to 200 km in a single day!



The Magnetic North Pole



GSC Researcher Larry Newitt found the Magnetic North Pole here in 1994

Explore James Ross found the Magnetic North Pole here in 1832

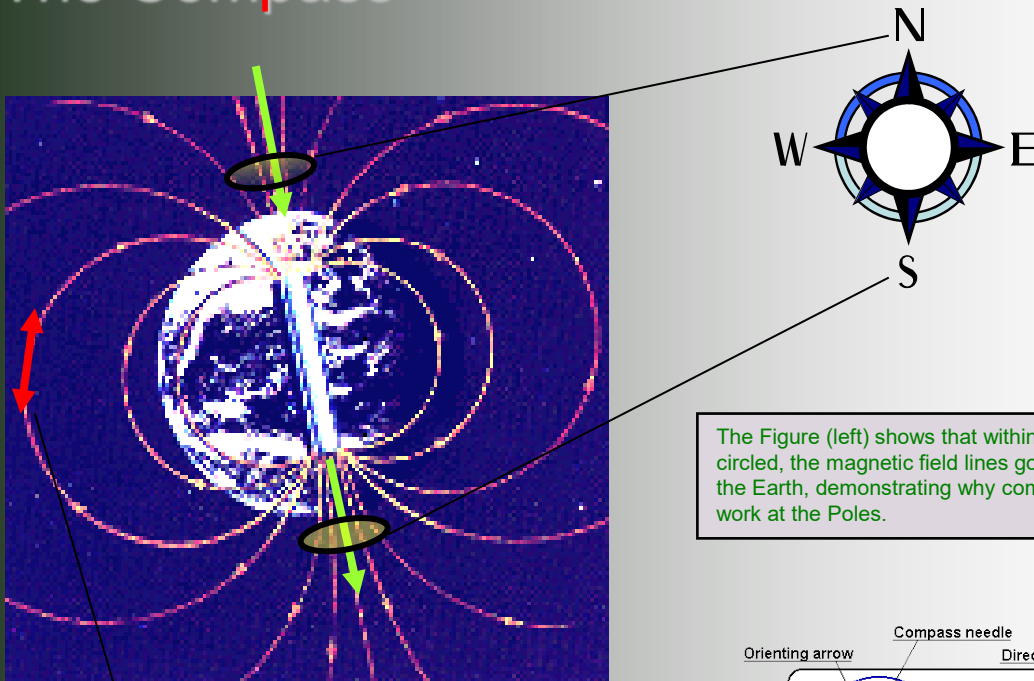
The Magnetic Pole is also 'migrating' (see figure above). The pole was moving northwest at about 10km per year towards Russia but in the last decade it has sped up and is now moving at 40 kilometers per year. In 2000, it moved from Nunavut into the NWT. If the Pole continues on its current course, it will be in Siberia in less than 50 years. However, this is unlikely since the path of the pole is unpredictable and it will likely change direction and speed again.

When its exact location was first discovered by James Ross in 1832, it was actually found on the North American Mainland near present day Taloyoak (Spence Bay). Its exact location was last measured in 1994 by Larry Newitt of the Geological Survey of Canada. His team located it on the Noice Peninsula on Ellef Ringnes Island.

When the Rangers traveled to it in 2002, the Magnetic Pole had moved North of Ellef Ringnes Island, onto the permanently frozen Arctic Ocean. The Rangers were able to travel to it's southern region before they were stopped by a huge lead - a crack in the ice over 400 km long and 5 km wide!

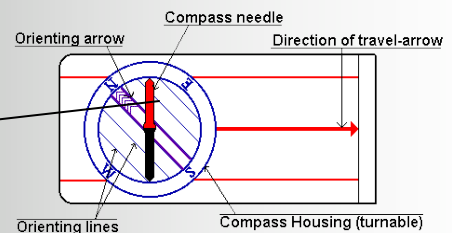


The Compass



Compass needles always line up along magnetic field lines and point straight towards the Pole

The Figure (left) shows that within the areas circled, the magnetic field lines go straight into the Earth, demonstrating why compasses don't work at the Poles.

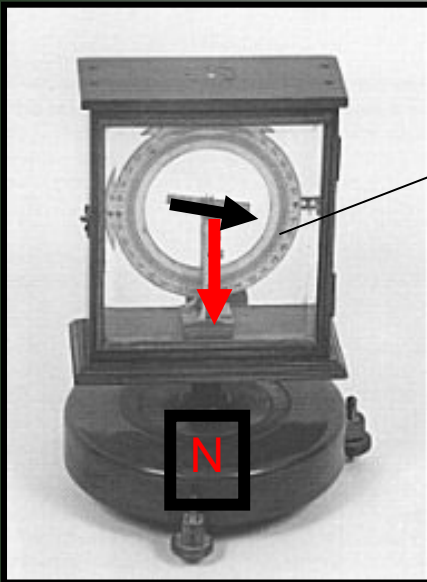


The Compass is also linked to the story of the Magnetic North Pole. The development of the compass, almost 1000 years ago, changed the course of human history. It provided a reliable means of navigation, regardless of whether the sun or stars were visible, allowing explorers to hold their course over long distances. Explorers were then able to travel vast distances, seeking out new and distant lands over unknown terrain and waters. The Arctic is one of the most featureless and challenging landscapes to navigate on the planet. Special skills and traditional knowledge or special tools like the G.P.S. are needed to travel safely in this region.

The Ancient Greeks, from a place called Magnesia, and the Chinese of this period were the first to observe that a magnetic needle always pointed in the same direction. Both cultures knew of rare stones (possibly chunks of iron ore struck by lightning) called 'lodestones' that could magnetize steel needles when they were stroked with the stone. The Chinese observed that a magnetic needle placed on a leaf floating in a bowl of water always pointed in the same direction. This observation led to the development of the compass – though it was not until many centuries later.



The Other 'Compass'



At the Pole, the needle of the Dip Magnetometer would point along the red arrow-directly at the ground.

Dip Magnetometer



G.P.S.

As you get closer to the Magnetic Pole, the compass becomes more unreliable. The compass needle always points to the Pole by lining itself up along the magnetic field lines which originate from there. Right at the Poles however, the magnetic field lines point straight down into the Earth! Your compass needle also wants to point straight down, but it can't because it's encased in a flat housing that doesn't allow it to. Therefore, near the Magnetic North Pole, the needle just points randomly.

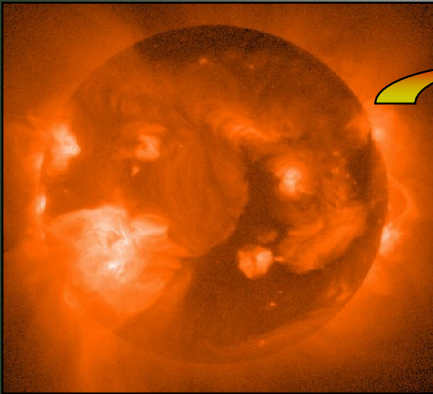
Luckily, there is an instrument called a 'Dip Magnetometer' (left) that is built to allow a magnetic needle to pivot freely in any direction, up or down. At the equator the needle points horizontally, but as you near the Poles, the needle points more and more down. In 1832 James Ross used this instrument in his search for the Magnetic North Pole. When the needle pointed straight down, he knew he was there!

To this day, the compass is still one of the primary tools for navigation and every ship and airplane carries one. Within the last 20 years though, a more accurate system to find both direction *and* location has been developed. This system uses information from many military satellites which transmit location information to Global Positioning System (GPS) units - electronic hand held tools which receive navigation information (right).

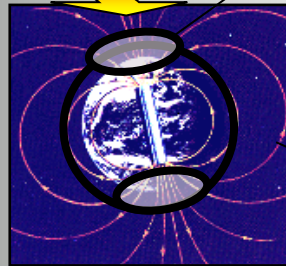
An even more traditional and trustworthy tool that the Rangers use to navigate is their intimate knowledge of the land. Not only do they know where they are but they also know what the terrain is like, where the thin ice is, where the best camping places are, and where the best food sources for survival are found.



The Northern Lights



Solar flare on the sun's surface spewed out plasma



When plasma spewed out from the sun follows the Earth's magnetic field line towards the Poles, the plasma particles collide with the Earth's atmosphere and create the Aurora

Magnetic field lines arc out into space from the Poles

The Pole is the place where all magnetic field lines come close together and head down from space, into the atmosphere and into the Earth's magnetic core.

Magnetic field lines attract electrical currents. Electrical plasma spewed out from explosions on the sun get caught in the Earth's magnetic field and travel along the magnetic field lines towards the Poles....but when the plasma particles reach the Earth's atmosphere, they collide with the atmosphere. The energy released from these collisions creates those beautiful things we call the NORTHERN LIGHTS!

The higher energy particles coming from the sun can penetrate deeper into the atmosphere and come within about 80km of the Earth's surface. When they collide with oxygen we see a pale green glow. The lower energy particles don't make it as close to the earth, they collide with oxygen about 240 km above the earth and a red glow results. When the charged particles collide with nitrogen, purple and blue colours result, but they are harder to see against the night sky

One The Inuit legend tells that each strand of light represents one soul and the moving dancing lights are actually the souls of the dead, playing a fun game of soccer, kicking a walrus head across the sky.



The Northern Lights, as seen from Space



Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger:

A Sovereignty Patrol to the Magnetic North Pole

Kigliqaqvik = "the place at the edge"

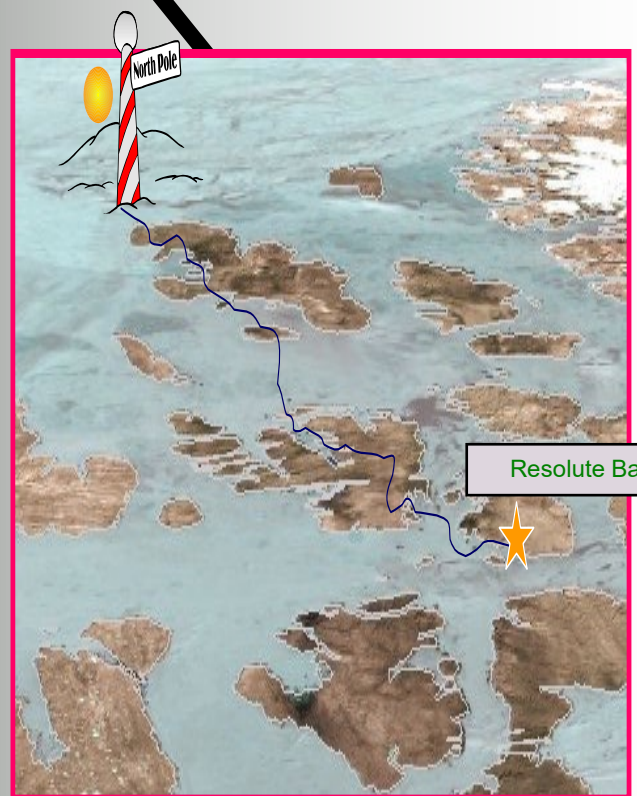


A sovereignty exercise

A celebration of a 60 years of
service to the nation

An experiment in military
deployment

An exploration to the edges of
the collective Canadian
consciousness





Welcome to Resolute Bay



Located on the South Shore of Cornwallis Island, in Canada's high Arctic, Resolute Bay, Nunavut is strategically located at the access point to the only deep water route through the Northwest Passage. With a population of only 250 (primarily) Inuit residents, it was the staging point for Operation Kigliqavik Ranger.





Meet the Team

The Leadership



Major Yves Laroche,
Commander, 1CRPG, CFNA



Captain Rick Reagan, CFNA



W.O. Kevin Mulhern, CFNA



W.O. Paul Burke, CFNA



Sgt. Eric LaPalme, CFNA

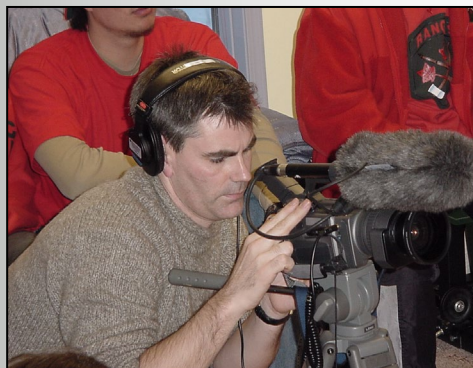


Meet the Team

The Press



Stephanie Rubec, Ottawa Sun/Sun Media



Ian Hannah, CBC Television, Toronto



Meet the Team

The Rangers



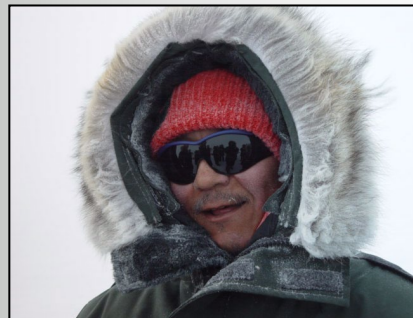
Rgr. Leo
Angootealuk,
Coral Harbour



Rgr. Paul
Guyot,
Ft. Simpson



Rgr. Melanie Howell,
Resolute Bay



Rgr. 'North Pole' Joe Amarualik,
Resolute Bay



Rgr. Bruce Inglis,
Ft. Chipwayan



Rgr. Colin Day,
Inuvik



Meet the Team

The Rangers



Rgr. Julyta Koonark,
Pond Inlet



Rgr. Lawrence Issakiark,
Whale Cove



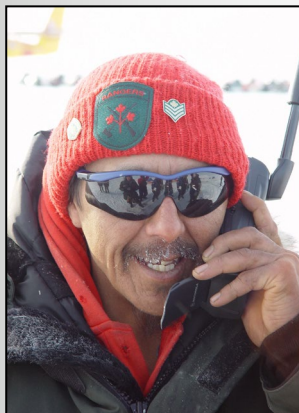
Rgr. Dan
Creswell,
Carcross



Rgr. Darrel Klemmer,
Tulita



Rgr. Johnnassie Inuktuluk,
Sanikiluaq



Rgr. Paddy Aqiatsuk,
Resolute Bay



Meet the Team

The Rangers



Rgr. Debbie Iqaluk,
Resolute Bay



Rgr. Julian Tomlinson,
Inuvik



Rgr. Laurent Kringayark,
Repulse Bay



Rgr. Dave Lundy,
Churchill



Rgr. John 'Mitch'
Mitchell,
Dawson



Rgr. Yves Legerrier,
Ft. Smith



Meet the Team

The Rangers



Rgr. Shane Oakley,
Haines Junction



Rgr. David Nivingalok,
Kugluktuk



Rgr. Allen Pogotak,
Holman



Rgr. Sam Palituq,
Clyde River



Rgr. Scott Odain,
Atlin



Rgr. Adam Olugut,
Chesterfield Inlet



Meet the Team The Rangers



Rgr. Levi Quanaq,
Igloolik



Rgr. Billy Qaqqasiq,
Pangnirtung



Rgr. Doug Stern,
Cambridge Bay



Rgr. Mark Wyatt,
Carmacks



Rgr. Gerard Maktar,
Arviat



Preparations



The picture above shows the kind of the personal gear required for an arctic expedition. Some items include caribou skins for sleeping on, a snow knife for cutting snow blocks and a harpoon rod for testing snow quality and hunting seals.



The Rangers of Resolute Bay built 35 komatiks (sleds) for the incoming Rangers to carry all their survival gear and fuel.



The Canadian Forces Northern Area logistics team did an outstanding job in bringing together all the people, gear and equipment needed and organizing every detail of the expedition.





Training

Rangers from across the North were selected to participate in this special sovereignty Patrol. Some had never been above the tree line or traveled in the High Arctic.

After mustering in Resolute Bay, Rangers received training on First Aid, emergency procedures, communications, arctic travel techniques, navigation, firearm safety and march procedures.





Training



The Rangers had excellent First Aid Training from the Canadian Forces Search and Rescue Technicians (SAR Techs).





Communications



Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern (above) tested the wireless digital satellite communications system that was identified for primary communications by the Patrol, however, a low-tech backup system was also in place.

Sitting in a copper clad room designed to reduce static interference, at the base camp in Resolute Bay, a Ranger (below) checked the backup communications system – a portable SBX 11 high frequency radio set.





Snow Machine Inspection



In the Arctic, lives depend on having your snow machine bring you safely home again. Snow machines are designed primarily for the southern recreational market and are not really designed to be the durable work tool that is required in the Arctic. As a result, they break down often. Since the nearest repair shops are usually thousands of kilometers away, Rangers have to be extremely skilled and creative in fixing their machines with whatever is at hand. In a world of endless snow and ice this can be a challenge. A piece of string, a nail or spare bolt, the lid off a can of Klick, and yes, even the handy mans secret weapon - duct tape - can be used to great effect to fix machines that would otherwise leave the rider stranded and in grave peril.



Loading Komatiks



The komatik carries everything a Ranger needs to survive for weeks in the Arctic. Large ones can haul up to 2000 lbs.

Although it may look rough and ungainly, a komatik is an effective low-tech solution to harsh arctic conditions where virtually everything breaks. The secret to these sleds is that they are bound together with rope instead of nails so they are flexible enough to take the constant pounding they receive when traveling over rough sea ice.

Although it may look haphazard, loading and tying down gear on a komatik so that it will stay on and remain undamaged is quite a practiced skill.





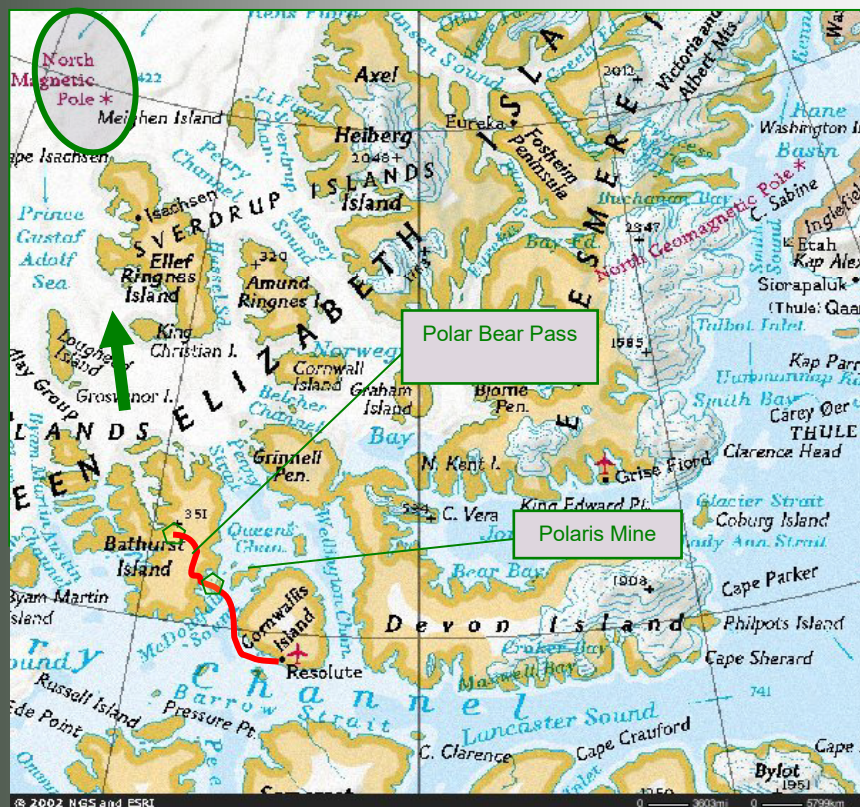
Departure Day

After 8 days of rigorous training and preparation, On April 10th, 2002, 36 riders rolled out onto the ocean and departed for the Magnetic North Pole.





The Route



Magnetic Pole Expedition Route

Day 1 - 2

Day 1: Bathurst Island

The Rangers departed Resolute Bay at 9:00 am on April 10, 2002, and headed northwest around Cape Martyr along the frozen coast of Cornwallis Island. Reaching the western tip of Cornwallis Island, they proceeded northwest onto the open sea ice of McDougal Sound. Passing within eight miles of Polaris Mine on Little Cornwallis Island, they paused only long enough to exchange a terminally ill snow machine with a new one from the Mine. At days end, they had traveled 138km reaching the shores of Bathurst Island. They set up camp in a bay beyond Markham Point on the southeast side of the island.

Day 2: May Inlet

From their camp on the east shore of Bathurst Island the Rangers were in for a 'Million dollar day'. It involved crossing the beautiful rolling hills and gorges of Bathurst Island and traversing the aptly named Polar Bear Pass, a national wildlife refuge. During the day, the Rangers assisted a crew of three adventurers attempting to get to the Pole by dogsled. Later they came upon a polar bear mother and cub feasting on a seal. Part of the day was spent searching for a safe route down into a narrow gorge that wound it's way into May Inlet, a deep fiord cutting into the center of the island. By the end of the day the Rangers had made 80km across diverse terrain, and set up camp at Dundee Bight on May Inlet.



Into the Arctic



A mile-long column of Rangers disappeared over the horizon.



Polar Bear Pass



Ranger Paddy Aqiatsuk, the lead Scout for the expedition, navigated his way through a narrow river gorge in Polar Bear Pass.



Polar Bear Pass





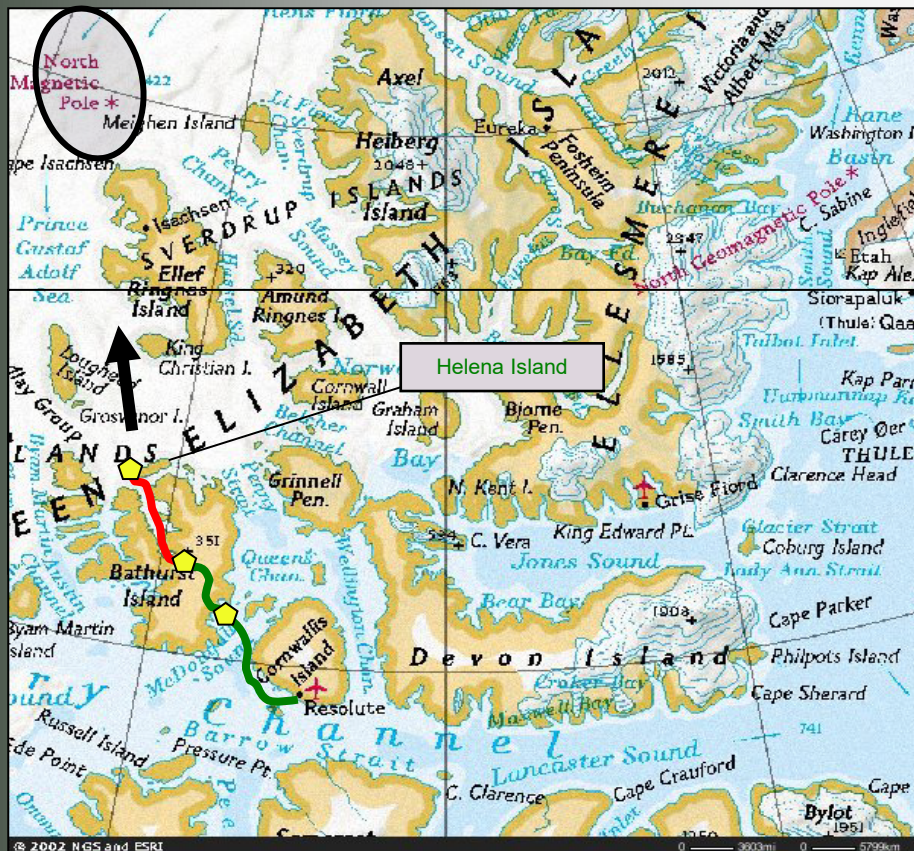
The Great Wide Open



Looking West, from atop a 300 foot cliff at midnight, a long pressure ridge (where two sheets of ice press together at their edges) can be seen stretching across the entrance to May Inlet on Bathurst Island. Pressure ridges are only one of the many obstacles that the Rangers navigated across to reach the Pole.



The Route



Magnetic Pole Expedition Route

Day 3-4

Day 3: Helena Island

The third day was spent in sunny weather with light winds and a temperature of 30°C traveling North 85km across the relatively smooth snow and ice of May inlet on Bathurst Island and north across Sir William Parker Strait to a re-supply point located on the West shore of Helena Island (a small island just North of Bathurst Island).

Day 4: Re-Supply

Day four was spent with re-supply at Helena Island. A Twin Otter landed on the sea ice beside the camp in the morning and the Rangers took on more rations and shipped out their waste.



Re-Supply Operation



Three re-supply operations were conducted during the expedition. Rations, equipment and replacement machines were flown in...





Re-Supply



...and all empty fuel drums, garbage and broken gear was shipped out.





Camping on the Ocean



The Rangers oriented their tents to shelter the doors from the wind. From this aerial view you can see how the prevailing winds carve the snow into parallel drifts. In whiteout conditions and with no compass, an experienced Inuit Ranger can use the 'feel' of the drifts under their machine to navigate great distances.



Camp Life



When camping on the Ocean, their canvas tents were most easily set up by lashing the tent ropes to the heavy komatiks. Tarps were anchored over top for additional wind protection.



Camp Life



Inside, the tents provide a much needed break from the biting arctic wind.



Camp Life



Ranger John Mitchell (Mitch) used a 'Ranger sized teaspoon' to fill a kettle with enough ice and snow to brew a pot of tea.





Camp Life



A hard working Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern (top) sent the daily Situation Report via satellite to base camp at the end of each day.



Ranger Shane Oakley (above) took a decidedly more relaxed approach and inspected the sleeping accommodations while Ranger Dan Creswell (right) enjoyed an evening coffee before the day's final chores.





Camp Life



A few caribou skins, a sleeping mat and a down sleeping bag provided comfortable beds for the Rangers.



Camp Life



This Ranger decided that just because it was -30°C and he was near the Magnetic North Pole didn't mean he couldn't stay clean. He just cut a few blocks of snow to make water, boiled his shampoo to unthaw it and he was all set for a 'good hair day'.





Camp Life



Ranger Debbie Iqaluk of Resolute Bay cooked a hearty breakfast for four on her Coleman stove.

The Coleman stove and lantern heated the tents to a balmy 3°C.





Camp Life

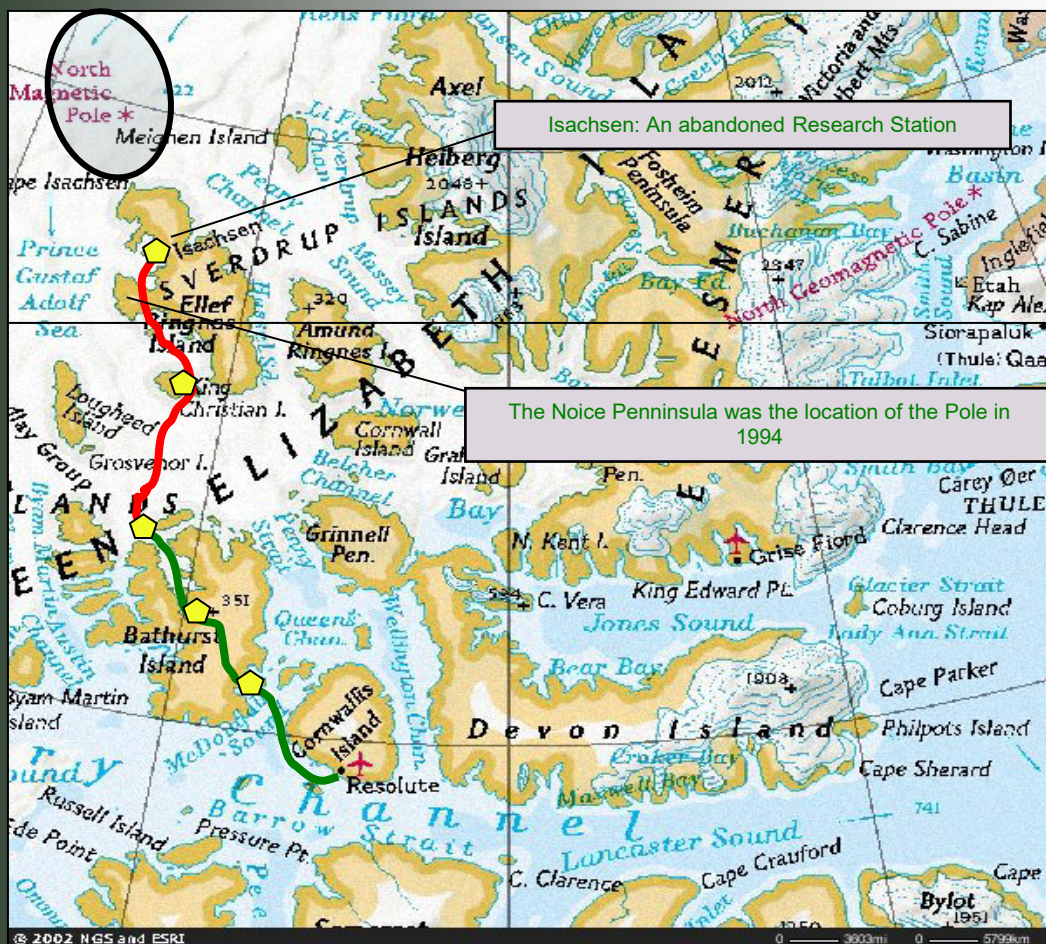


Many chores needed to get done while in camp. Ranger Paddy Aqiatsuk, made a makeshift garage out of a tarp and pulled his rough-running engine apart while other Rangers prepared their machines for the next day (below left) and repaired broken komatik cross peices (below right).





The Route



Magnetic Pole Expedition Route

Day 5 - 6

Day 5: King Christian Island

A great travel day! The team traveled 158 km north making their longest open ocean crossing of the journey. Leaving Helena Island in the morning they headed almost due north past Desbarats Strait and across Maclean Strait to King Christian Island. There was a lot of rough multi-year ice en route but luckily a recent storm had blown snow over the broken sea ice (some pieces the size of houses), making nice easy ramps for the snow machines to get over the tumbled, tortured blocks of ice.

Day 6: Isachsen

A long, hard and slow travel day with lots of rough ice around Thor Island just off the coast of Ellef Ringnes Island, the Rangers traveled till 9:00 pm, making 130 km and arriving at Isachsen, an abandoned weather and research station on the Noice Peninsula of Ellef Ringnes Island.



Obstacles



Rough, multi-year sea ice is another obstacle that Rangers had to contend with. The scouts are skilled at navigating their machines quickly through vast fields of rough ice.





Finding the Way



Each morning the Rangers met to review the map and identify the routes, daily checkpoints and destinations for the day.



Finding the way



Sometimes finding safe routes through the rough ice was challenging.



Teamwork



Teamwork is one of the key ingredients to the success of the Rangers and to enjoying life in the Arctic.





On the Trail





Coffee Break



After pounding and twisting across a rough ocean for hours, a stop for a warm drink was a welcome break. Any wise arctic traveler knows that keeping well hydrated is one of the secrets to keeping warm. The dry arctic air robs the body of moisture with every steaming breath and so experienced travelers will stop to re-hydrate often, even if they are not feeling thirsty.



Perhaps Ranger Sam Palituq (right) was thinking about asking for a Starbucks no fat, half-caff, half sweet, low foam extra hot mochaccino topped with a dash of cinnamon but he seemed content enough when he received a lukewarm cup of Jo, sweetened with 4 teaspoons of sugar, along with a few caribou hair floaties.



Land of the Midnight Sun

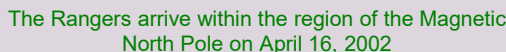




Getting Close



A Large Open Lead in the Sea Ice , hundreds of miles long



Tomlinson Photo Journal 78



Behind the Scenes





Sweet Success !

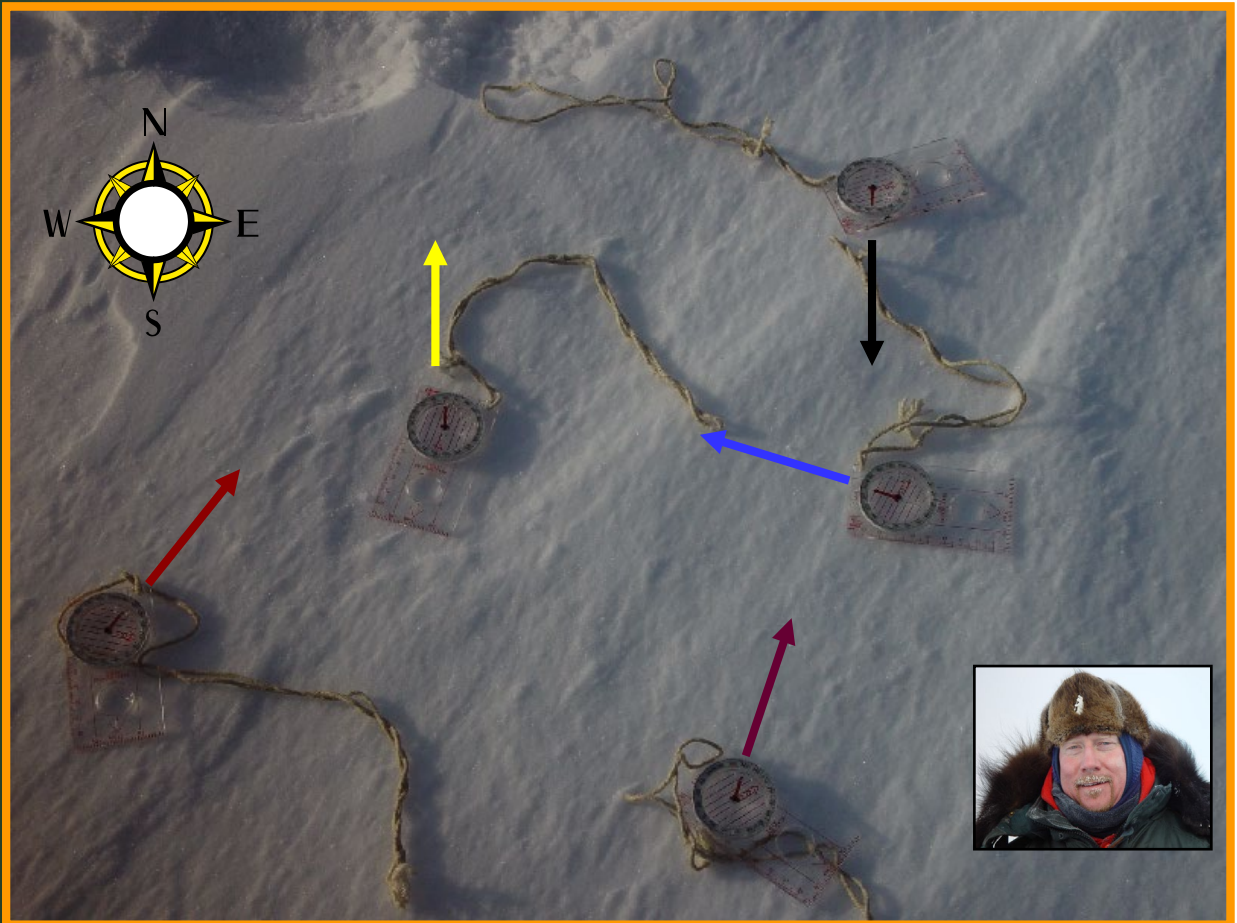


On April 16 at 4:30 pm, the Rangers of 1CRPG reached the southern limit of the Magnetic North Pole.

Having achieved their goal, the Rangers celebrated 60 years of service to the Nation and raised the Canadian flag at the Pole. Here, at the top of the world, they provided a clear demonstration of Canada's claims to sovereignty over land and sea in the high Arctic.



Confused Compasses



On reaching their destination, Ranger Julian Tomlinson of Inuvik did a fun experiment to double check that they have made it.

Knowing that the region of the Magnetic North Pole is the only place on Earth where compasses will not work, he pulled five compasses out of the depths of his warm green parka and laid them in the snow away from any metal objects. To his great delight, as the picture (above) shows, none of the compasses pointed in the same direction, confirming to him that they were indeed at the Magnetic North Pole!



One Cool Canadian



Ranger Johnnassie Inuktuluk of Sanikiluaq (above), was a very happy, proud Canadian as he cooled himself off at the Magnetic North Pole.





South Again

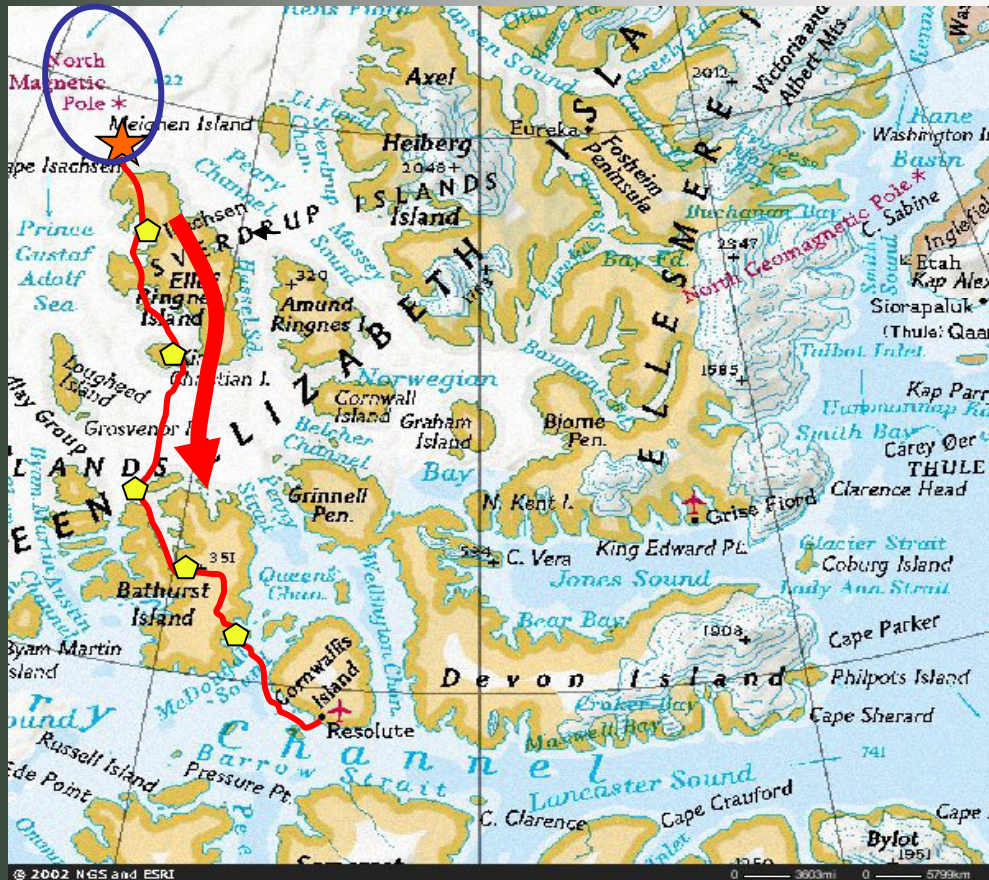


After a special celebration meal of Klik and Coffee (top), the Rangers enjoy one last look at the top of the world and then head for home.





The Route



Magnetic North Pole Route

Day 8 – 15

Day 8-15: Homeward Bound

After a fly-in visit from the Commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area and a satellite phone call from the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister of Canada, the team headed for home, retracing the route they had taken out.

They had their share of adventures on the way back including encounters with polar bears, caribou, muskox and a white out. Enroute they also received standby orders to prepare to assist with a rescue operation to extract some adventurers who were in trouble on the sea ice. Over the 15 day exercise, the Rangers covered a total distance of 1571 km demonstrating their capacity to patrol great distances in difficult Arctic conditions.



Cold and Caribou



Tough and adventurous, journalist Stephanie Rubec (left) of Sun Media slid into a traditional Inuit Caribou skin Parka after feeling the cold grip of hypothermia taking hold during her return from the Pole. Offering warm words of encouragement, Ranger Doug Stern (right) explained how a caribou skin parka made in the traditional way is still far warmer than any of the high-tech synthetic winter suits available.



Blue Ice Afternoon





Visitors



The day after the Rangers arrived at the Pole, the Commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area flew in to Isachsen Station to meet them. He brought some special guests including a Junior Canadian Ranger, a university researcher, and several TV and newspaper crews.



The Commander's Visit



Colonel Kevin McLeod, Commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, thanked the Rangers for their "outstanding efforts".



A surprised and smiling Ranger Levi Quanaq from Igloodik received a special Rangers' Long Service Medal from Colonel McLeod. Levi who was born and raised into the traditional Inuit life, still spends the majority of his days roaming the great wide open spaces, living off on the land and sea as his ancestors have done for millennia. Though more comfortable in his first language of Inuktitut, on this day he told a story in halting English about his 10 year old son:

"My son came to me one day and showed me a story had written for his teacher. His story was about my life as a Ranger. He told me how proud he was that I am a Ranger and said that when he gets older he wants to be a Ranger like me. I love my son and this made me very happy."



A Special Call



The day after reaching the Magnetic North Pole, the Rangers received a satellite phone call from the Minister of National Defence and the Prime Minister of Canada, congratulating them on the success of their sovereignty patrol .



Surprise Visitor



Ranger Debbie Iqaluk of Resolute Bay was excited to find that Major Laroche and Colonel McLeod had secretly arranged to have her son Pilapoosie (right), a Junior Ranger, come on the colonel's plane for a brief but happy reunion with his parents.



Fallen Soldiers



A moment of prayer. On this day the Rangers learned of the four Canadian soldiers killed in a friendly fire incident in Afghanistan.



Broken Machine



A terminally ill snow machine was diagnosed during the Commander's visit and a decision was made to ship it out on the plane.





Broken Ranger

Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern consoles a broken Ranger



On the re-supply operation during the Commanders visit to Isachsen Station, a Ranger was injured, slicing his finger to the bone while loading an aircraft.

In the Arctic, even seemingly small injuries to the extremities can have dire consequences. In the insidious and ever present cold of the Arctic, the body's protective mechanisms will sacrifice the extremities by diverting blood flow from them to conserve heat in the core, thus preventing healing from taking place and often causing greater injury.

Since an aircraft was conveniently available, the Ranger was evacuated to Resolute Bay for medical attention. Although he was deeply concerned about leaving his team mates, he understood the reasons. Happily he was able to rejoin the expedition during the last leg.



An Odd Discovery



Just south from Isachsen Station, the Rangers made an odd discovery on the shores of Ellef Ringnes Island...





An Odd Discovery



...an old U.S. military DC 3 transport plane sits half buried and broken. The Rangers decided to check it out and Ranger Allen Pogotak from Holman (below) practiced his wing walking.





Homeward Bound





Into the White Out





White Out



As visibility worsened, the Rangers checked their machines closely. No one wanted to be left behind in a whiteout.



Ranger Laurent Kringayark seemed to float in the sky. Invisible in the blowing snow and only 100 meters behind Laurent, 12 machines and their Riders waited for him to find the trail of the other machines.

In a complete whiteout everything becomes invisible, even the ground. All reference disappear, balance becomes difficult, and finding trails and determining direction are near impossible. It is a dangerous time to travel but sometimes must be done.



Tired Ranger



Ranger Mark Wyatt of Carmacks Yukon took a brief break from the storm behind the shelter of his sled box.



Hints of frostbite and thoughts of home showed on his face.



Offering Assistance



On their last re-supply flight, the Rangers responded to a radio request for assistance from an exhausted and inadequately prepared team of adventurers who had been unsuccessful in their bid to reach the Pole. Rangers are often called upon to help when people are lost or in trouble.





When in Rome...



The Arctic....the only place where you eat your meat raw and frozen ...and you cook your bread to unthaw it.





When in Rome...



Warrant Officer Paul Burke, easily adapted to arctic life, enjoyed a chance to test out traditional clothes and accommodations – a caribou suit and a ‘five star’ igloo.



The Midnight Sun



At this latitude for four months a year, the sun never sets.



Polar Bear

The Scouts spied something moving off in the distance...



'North Pole Joe' went to take a look...

Nanook!





CFNA placed fuel caches on the ocean for the Rangers.

Refueling

Ranger Adam Olugut refuels his machine from a 5 gallon jerry can during a break in travel.



An Example of Logistics:

Sergeant Jim Martin, the Canadian Forces soldier in charge of logistics for the trip, had a hard job but luckily he would have had some easy math to do when it came to calculating how much fuel would be required for the trek.

The snow machines gas tanks hold about 10 gallons of fuel and the machines get about 10 miles per gallon. This means they can travel 100 miles before refueling. The trek to the Pole and back was almost exactly 1000 miles, so they would have to fill up 10 times. This meant each machine would require a minimum of 100 gallons of gas. 35 snow machines were planning to travel so Jim needed to make sure 3,500 gallons of fuel were available for the team plus an additional 1000 gallons in case of emergencies. Bulk fuel comes in 45 gallon drums so Jim would have needed to order at least 100 drums of fuel for the expedition.

Fuel is delivered to Resolute Bay once a year from Montreal by ship during the ice free summer. This means Jim would have had to order the fuel almost one year ahead of time to make sure it was there for the Rangers!



Close to Home



The mile-long column of Rangers on their return, within site of Resolute Bay.



The Resolute Return



Ranger Melanie Howell of Resolute Bay was mobbed by excited children as she pulled to a stop in front of the community school.



Spontaneous hugs and high-fives greeted the Rangers at journey's end.



Tired but Happy





Ceremony and Celebration



Nunavut's Commissioner Peter Irniq (center) came to Resolute Bay to welcome the Rangers home and presented some special awards.





Feast



The Rangers were treated to a traditional feast of raw caribou (and Coke).



Future Ranger





The Trek to the Pole becomes a Memory





Consider this...

Some Outcomes of Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger:

Successful completion of one of the longest and most high-profile Sovereignty Patrols in Ranger history.

The Canadian flag was planted on a solid ocean at the Magnetic North Pole, providing another concrete demonstration of Canada's sovereignty over the Northwest Passage and waters of the Arctic Archipelago.

Sixty news stories and one television documentary about a uniquely Canadian theme, telling of the little known but highly successful institution of the Canadian Rangers, were presented to audiences across the country during the spring of 2002.

The operation created a forum for 29 Rangers from across the North to share and exchange their knowledge and skills.

Almost 1000 expedition images were collected for archiving and historical reference, along with a collection of 75 articles on Arctic sovereignty, the history of the Canadian Rangers and Operation *Kigliqaqvik Ranger*.

A research project was completed exploring the origins of Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic Archipelago and the role of the Rangers

Another experiment in 'Edventure' (web based adventure education) was completed, resulting in the development of several learning activities for students on the Rangers, the North Magnetic Pole, the Northern Lights, and the compass.



Where Your Compass Points



Two snow Inuksuit carved by Johnnassie Inuktukuk are the only monuments that mark the one-time place of the eternally roving Magnetic North Pole.

One day, a long time from now, you may stand and hold your compass in hand, look straight along the needle, and seek a point beyond the horizon. You may wonder what might lay over the next rise and ponder which path will bring you safely home. Perhaps then your mind will unlock the memory of seeing two small snow Inuksuit, locked within a frozen ocean, and you will know then that once, long ago, you saw the place to where your compass always points.

4

Participant Diaries: Selected Excerpts from Journals

1. From the Journal of Ranger Scott Odain

Scott Odain is a Ranger from Atlin B.C. He kept a fairly complete journal of the expedition. Scott had not traveled in the high arctic before and the following journal selections give a sense of what the trek was like for him.

April 3 Gearing Up

Today we started our day with drawing all our issued kit for the trip. Nice Kit, including goose down Snow Mantra jackets, snow pants, back packs, T shirts, sweaters, hats gloves, goggles, and Sorel boots. All the Kit we needed to keep us warm when we are ski-dooing at -30 with a wind. We also got cold weather sleeping bags and air mattress. Then we got to see our snow machines and new komatiks. I got a Yamaha Venture and a 16 foot Komatik that we pull on a 20 foot rope.

Resolute Bay is pretty flat and rocky. All the snow is blown off the ground so we drive our ski doo's on the rocks until we hit the sea-ice. Well, time for bed.

April 5 Learning to Ski-Doo in the High Arctic

Another day in Paradise at -26°C. We started the day like always at 9:00 with classroom stuff. We put some maps together and figured out the order of march for the trip. For some reason I got put as the mechanic as the very last person in the line.

We went for a practice ride today with our ski-doo's and partially loaded komatiks. We didn't even get 2 km before I broke down. My coil bolts fell out and the coil fell off. I stole a bolt from a different place and got going again. With 30 ski-doo's and pulling 16-foot komatiks with 30 feet of rope we are spread out for well over a kilometer between the scouts and me. The ice we were driving over today was rough. All broken ice from it always moving. Some pieces of ice that are sticking up are 10feet or more high and there are lots of snow drifts. We drove for about 35 km, half on the ice and half on the land. I'm still not used to driving over rocks all the time. We didn't see anything on the land and there aren't even Ravens up here.

I talked to an American hunter today who just came off the land from a polar bear hunt. He didn't get a bear but he said they seen lots – but didn't get close enough to shoot one with his bow. So I hope I will see a bear, but I'm the last one in the line. Maybe someone will kill a seal so I can see one of them. I think we are going shooting this weekend.

April 7 Travel in a Blizzard

Today was a better day because we got to go for a ski-doo ride. We ski-dooed to Griffith Island to do a shooting range and sight in our guns. It was -26°C with the wind chill of -42°C. We left in a small blizzard and could probably see 500yards. I could see about 7 ski-dooes in front of me.

When we got to where we were going to set up the range, it really started to blow and we could barely see. We only shot at 25meters because we couldn't see from 100 meters. It was hard to shoot in conditions like that. When I was shooting my eye kept filling up with snow and when I blinked, my eyelashes froze shut. We all set up our tents so we could hide from the blowing snow and cold.

On the way back we could barely see 2 sleds ahead so we tried to stay close so no one would get lost. About half way back (15 km), one of the ski-dooes throttle froze up and we had to fix it. By the time we got it fixed, we couldn't find the trail on the ice back to Resolute. It was blowing so hard a ski-doo track would be gone in about 5 minutes. There were 6 of us left behind and we couldn't see where we were going so we had to use the GPS to find our way home. Without the GPS I would still be out there lost. When a storm comes in you can't see the islands or even tell where you are on the ice. Everything looks the same out there and you can't even see where you are walking until you trip over something. From the time we left the hotel this morning to when we got back there were 3 foot high snow drifts all over. We got a slow day tomorrow so I guess I will relax before we leave on the 10th.

April 10 Departure Day

Well, we left in a blizzard at about -30°C with the wind chill but soon it cleared up to be a nice day. We only made it 25 km out of Resolute before we had our first breakdown. An Arctic Cat blew a piston so we called back and got a replacement brought up and were on our way again. At about 75 km out another Arctic Cat broke down, this time one coil went and he drove for about 25 km on one cylinder before we came to the Polaris mine where we rented one of their ski-dooes to carry on with the trip. It took us 11^{1/2} hours to go 140 km to our first camp. We are on a big island and tomorrow we are going to ski-doo over it for a short-cut.

April 12 Re-supply Point

It was another nice clear day at about -27°C. We only went about 85 km today to our camp. We are 350 km out of Resolute and are at our first 're-supply' point. There is gas here and a plane will bring us some more rations in tomorrow. We got to camp early at 3:30 pm so we set up and ate. After supper I went out seal hunting but didn't go too far before I blew the motor on my ski-doo, so I ordered another one and the plane is going to bring one in on Sunday. We are going to spend all day tomorrow here and get back going on Sunday. We are at Helena Island. The mountains here are pretty but I kind of miss the trees.

April 14 Ski-Doo Wrestling

We had a long day today. We left at 9:00 in the morning and got to camp at 8:00 at night. I was pretty tired. We went 150 km over rough sea ice and it was tough, especially riding on my new ski-doo – an old 'Tundra'. It was pretty rough riding and a little tippy. We had one disagreement and the Tundra ended up in a hole upside down. But now we have an agreement. It won't hurt me and I won't hurt it. We didn't see anything but ice and snow. It was a nice day though, about -25°C and clear. The sun is up almost all night now. Tomorrow is going to be another long day.

April 15 An Abandoned Weather Station

We are now 643 km out of Resolute. It was another long day. It was 11-½ hours on a ski-doo. Half on the ice and half on the land. We are at an old weather station called Isachsen. There are lots of buildings here but they are old so we are still in the tents. It's OK though. We have kerosene heaters and we leave the lantern on for heat. Tomorrow we are going to the top of this island and I think that's the end for us because the ice is not safe above. There is a crack 10 km wide and 300 km long!

(The following day the Rangers reached their furthest North Point, just beyond the Northern tip of Ellef Ringnes Island and within the southern limits of the magnetic pole region.)

April 18 Meet the Press

Today all the reporters and the Commander of CFNA came in. Also another plane came in to take back 2 broken snowmobiles and our garbage. Our CBC reporter also left on the plane. 2 VK540 Yamahas broke down so Eric gave his 'VK' to the C.O. and he got a 'Tundra'. We had one Ranger who cut himself with his knife, not too bad but bad enough to send him home to Resolute for stitches. He will wait there for the rest of the trip. When the Colonel and the camera crew came we all visited for a while, then they left and we carried on with our day. Filling up gas cans and getting ready for leaving for home tomorrow. There is an old crashed DC-3 about 5 km out so we skidooed over and saw it. I hope our trip home is good.

April 19-20 Rough Ride

Well I have to write for the past two days because we got in late on the 19th and 20th. The 19th we left Isachsen for King Christian Island. We decided to try to find a new route. That was a bad call. We got stuck in the pack ice and at one point we took 2 hours to go 7 km. We finally called it a night and stopped at 1:30 am. It was a long day and my back was killing me. It wasn't all that cold, maybe 20 but there was a strong wind that made it cold. We went 180 km.

On the 20th we got going at about 10:30. We are going from King Christian to Helena for our next re-supply. It was another long day and we didn't get into Helena until around 12:30am then we ate supper and went to bed at 2:00am. During the day we had a broken ski-doo that we had to load on a komatik and bring it with us. Later on in the day we broke a komatik and had to stop and fix it. We got separated from the main group when fixed the komatik and we arrived at camp an hour later that everyone so they all came over and helped us set up our camp. We went 170 km.

April 22 Closer to Home

It was a nice clear day today. The temperature wasn't too bad. We left Helena Island at about 10:00am and arrived at the head of Polar Bear Pass. The trail here was pretty good – only small snow drifts but big enough to make me lose 2 bolts out of my suspension, so I had to stop and fix it. Good thing we stole lots of bolts off the other ski-does so we have spares when we need them. Besides that, no one else broke down. Tomorrow we will go over Polar Bear Pass and to Polaris Mine. It will be a long day but one more day after we will be back in Resolute. I'm looking forward to a nice warm shower and food that doesn't come out of a foil package. I still haven't seen any wildlife and probably won't. A couple of guys seen a polar bear with 3 cubs one night while they were seal hunting. Only one baby seal has been killed so far and it was eaten pretty quickly. Well, I'm looking forward to getting home.

2. From the writings of Ranger Paul Guyot

Paul Guyot of Fort Simpson didn't keep a journal but he did provide a short fun written comment on the joys of having diarrhea in the Arctic....while attempting to learn how to tow a 22 foot komatik (sled) over rough sea ice.

'The 30 Mile Run(s)'

Well, that little expedition was a jolt of realization on how exactly to pull a komatik....At first, that komatik was doing pretty much what it wanted to back there – and I couldn't really tell either because the hood on our 'Snow Mantra Parkas' are too big and cumbersome to negotiate a sneak peak to the rear !

Speaking of the ‘rear’I was so ill...a stomach thing, indigestion, diarrhea BIG time, listless, pissless, nauseated, perturbed, freaked out, lonely, embarrassed, lots of gas, sore ass, no farts, lots of burps into my ‘no-fog-face-mask’ YUK!, fumigated, adulterated, bothered, depressed, tundra-ated, over-dressed, bouncing, jarring, twisting, bent all spent, can’t vent, sphincter shot, worn out, burnt out, tired, can’t hold liquid, no good, lots-a-asswipe, NEED A TOILET ON THAT KOMATIK !!

3. Some thoughts on traditional foods from Ranger Leo Angootealuk

Leo was one of my tent mates and I got to know him well. He talked a great deal of his family of his love of the land and of his desire for his children to learn to understand, respect and enjoy the land as he had been taught by his father. He talked of summer boating in Coral Harbour and of hunting sea mammals to feed the family. With his patience, willingness to teach and great sense of humour, he reminded me a great deal of my best friend from Gjoa Haven, who taught me to travel as the Inuit do – and who also happens to be a Ranger. While Leo didn’t keep a journal, he did provide some funny thoughts on army rations and the lack of traditional Inuit foods such as raw frozen caribou and char:

April 15

“We Inuit don’t like to eat these army rations for too long. We need our traditional foods for living properly on the land. Raw meat gives you everything you need and a belly full of fresh caribou keeps you really warm.....hmmmm (smiling)... I think if we don’t find any country food pretty soon, we’re gonna have to start eating all the white boys....(winks).”

4. From the Journal of Ranger Shane Oakley

Shane is from Haines Junction, Yukon. His journal contained just the raw notes of the things that caught his attention during the expedition and provides an example of the matter of fact way in which many Rangers approach the situations they find themselves in.

April 11 Bear Sighting

- 0930 we started across Bathurst Island. Saw one Caribou.
- Went over Polar Bear Pass and stopped at a Park Research Station.
- Had a rough ride down a creek bed. Lots of rocks.
- An idler wheel fell off Dan’s machine. Two guys went back to find it and Scott put it back on.
- Made it to Dundee Bay at 1900. Set up Camp.
- 1900 tried to catch up with Paddy, Debbie and Johnassie with Melanie. Hunted Seals. Paddy missed one.

- Johnassie came and got me and took me to see a sow and cub polar bear 200 meters up on the side of a cliff.

April 14 Bad Day

- 0900 off for King Christiansen.
- Broke the damn ridge pole.
- Had rough ice with lots of overturned sleds.
- Gas spilled all over our packs.
- Bad day. ☹️

April 16 Pole Day

- 10:00 left Isachsen for the Pole. Kevin's machine broke down 5 miles from the pole so he had to hitch a ride.
- Bet Doug that what turned out to be three 45 gallon drums on a hill 1.5 km away were muskox. I owe him a beer.
- Reached Pole at 16:35.
- Took lots of pictures.
- Left for Isachsen at 19:30.
- Got back to camp at midnight.

April 20 Lesson on Short Cuts

- 0930 we left for Christiansen.
- Had bad ice on 'short cut'...took twice as long.
- 'Short cuts' here are the same as at home.
- Arrived at 23:30.

April 22 Heavy Load

- 0900 left camp for Polaris mine to drop off borrowed machine and pick up new one for Leo.
- Pulling two komatiks from camp near King Christiansen. Very heavy. 18 five gallon cans of fuel plus two wall tents and camp gear.
- Tough pulling over Bathurst Island.
- A fox was running around camp 1km south of Polaris.... Joe got rid of it.

April 23 Bears and Home

- 5 hours from Resolute Joe and Paddy chased a polar bear within 100 yards.
- Very exciting.
- Whole town to see us come in.
- Very exciting.
- Good trip.

5. From the Journal of Ranger Julian Tomlinson

The journal provides some more detailed accounts, observations and reflections on life during the expedition to the Pole.

April 15 The Snowmobile that likes Coffee

Location: King Christian Island to Isachsen Station on Ellef Ringnes Island

Wx: Sunny, -30°C

Summary:

- 130 km traveled today with 50 km of rough ice around Thor Island.
- It was slow travel North towards low lying land and escarpments
- Finished travel at 9pm and set camp in the evening light

Like me, my snow machine just doesn't like getting going on cold mornings - especially not before a morning coffee.....thus I've taken to making two thermoses of coffee in the mornings – one for me and one for my machine.

For the last few days I've had to pour hot coffee over my carburetor to warm it up enough to where the machine will start (the snowmobile manufacturers would cringe if they read this but it works – would be nice if they made a snowmobile that actually works in the arctic). After a thermos of hot dark java (or preferably water) on the carb, followed by some repeated heaving on the starter cord, a few choice curses and a long warm-up smoke - where it rumbles, grumbles, coughs and spews blue fumes into the cold arctic air for 20 minutes or so, it's ready for another day of attempted murder. I'm convinced it's trying to kill me.....smashing, bouncing and bucking me over the tortured broken ocean, trying to toss my body into massive blocks of sharp blue ice or throw me off into the path of my unstoppable, thousand-pound komatik - which is always ready to run me over should I ever elect to fall off the machine. ... The other benefit of a second thermos is that on the warmer days where the machine hasn't needed its full allotment of morning caffeine, I've had an extra few cups to share with my traveling companions during breaks.

There was some rough ice for the first portion of travel today. Luckily the previous storm had blown snow over the tumbled blocks of broken sea, creating relatively nice easy ramps over them – Without this, it would have been much tougher travel.

Only a few people took tumbles and got stuck. Johnnassie from Sanikiluaq was hilarious – he rode his machine in some pretty creative ways, from holding himself horizontal on the seat like a flying Superman to running beside & jumping from side of the machine to the other - like the tricks cowboys do in the old western movies; to kicking his feet back easy-rider style like he's ridin' a big hog.

At one of our breaks we stopped on the Noice Peninsula on Ellef Ringnes Island, where in 1994, Larry Newitt of the Geological Survey of Canada was involved in a field expedition that last accurately located the Magnetic Pole. Since then I think its position and predicted path have only been measured using remote sensing. Since it is also pretty much the last piece of land before the Pole, I stopped for a special mission - and knelt to search the exposed ground for a few tiny and unique stones to bring back....to one special friend in particular.

(The most beautiful stone is now being incorporated into a ring for the girl I've asked to marry me – though I did hedge my bets by getting her a northern diamond as well.)

At the end of the day my komatik tow rope broke while I was traveling up hill and only half a kilometer from where we were to stop to camp at Isachsen Station. It only took a few seconds to fix but it is a bit of a trick to get a thousand pound komatik going again after it's stopped on a hill. Apparently Isachsen is an abandoned weather station but it seemed pretty elaborate to me. There are a whole bunch of odd shaped buildings, which are now windblown and empty, very forlorn looking but ...hmmm.....I wonder what other kind of work went on here??

We set up camp at the edge of the Station's drift-covered runway on a slope in soft snow – not my first choice of camping spots but since we were expecting a re-supply flight it was the most expedient location from a logistics perspective. Leo and I made a sleeping platform by digging out the cook area at the front of the tent, creating a cold sink to trap the colder heavy air down low by the door. The sleeping platform was up high in the warmer air. I was a little skeptical at first because of the soft snow but with a little patience the snow on the platform firmed up and turned out to be quite cozy.

I've found it a little challenging adequately assist our rookie arctic traveler Ian, the CBC TV reporter who's been sent along to film and produce a documentary. I think he's finding it pretty tough but to his credit he is plugging along. I just don't want him to do anything that will get himself or anyone else hurt. He is learning though... the problem is it's a steep learning curve and there is no room for mistakes out here.

April 16 The Magnetic North Pole

Location: Isachsen Station to the Magnetic North Pole Region

Wx: Sunny, -25°C

Summary:

- Refueled all jerry cans in the morning from our re-supply depot
- Reached Cape Isachsen at 4:30pm...the Southern tip of the Pole
- Planted the Canadian flag and Rangers flag
- Called in 'mission accomplished' to Canadian Forces Northern Area
- Celebrated and took photos
- Conducted some simple magnetic experiments with 5 compasses

After a late night, the day started early at 6:30am with the usual freezing tent and a shivering body holding a few strands caribou hair (taken from the skins we are sleeping on) – it's an odd thing to be holding at 6:30 in the morning but is all part of the normal morning ritual of waking up in a cold tent in the Arcticthe hairs are of course needed to light the stove! The procedure is simple: spray the caribou hair with naphtha fuel, place them in the tray of the coleman stove and then light the mixture. It burns well for about 60 seconds and is long enough to warm the generator nozzle of the fuel cylinder by holding it in the flames. This warms it up enough so that the fuel vaporizes properly so that the stove will work (the Arctic is the only place where you have to warm up the stove before it will start !). After melting ice for coffee, boiling tinfoil clad breakfast rations, sharing a bit of morning conversation with my tent mates and getting on four of my six layers of clothing it was 8:30am and time to go to the group leaders daily morning briefing.

WO Mulhern gave orders to refuel all jerry cans and take full loads of fuel for today's return trip to Cape Isachsen. This took several hours and we were ready to leave by 10:30am. For the first part of the day, travel conditions were pretty good. We traveled over a combination rolling hills and some sea ice travel, crossing the larger bays of the island. We had the usual number of machine breakdowns and riders get thrown from their machines but early in the afternoon, Darrell from Tulita who was riding the always unstable Ski-Doo Tundra was thrown off and didn't have time to move before his komatik ran over him, smashing into his back and then pinning him underneath with the sled runner on his chest. Mitch was the first on the scene and was able to lift the komatik up enough to allow Darrell to breathe till a couple more guys were able to move it off him. When I pulled up, I started First Aid with Mitch. I thought his back might be broken. He wasn't moving and said that he was having difficulty breathing. We got the boys to start setting up a tent to place him in if we needed and sent another fellow off to alert the Medic. We stayed with Darrell to make sure no one tried to move him. Surprisingly, within a few minutes, he was able to sit up and by the time our Medic, Paul Burke pulled in, Darrell was up and walking around under his own power. Luckily the Komatik had only knocked the wind out of him for a few minutes. It could have been worse. Soon enough we we're again on our merry way.

The reconnaissance flight photos that were taken over the Pole region prior to our trek showed a huge open lead in the ice, several hundred miles long just north of Cape Isachsen. Since large leads and unstable moving sea ice is not all that friendly to humans and snowmobiles, the decision was made to go no further than the sea ice just beyond the Cape – to just within the very southern margin of the magnetic pole region.

Cape Isachsen is a low flat gravel finger of land extending northward. By 4pm It was tough to tell when we had passed from the Cape back on to the sea ice again but we continued for a few more miles before we saw three pyramids of ice and snow the size of small houses, rising up over the broken grey/white seascape – the first evidence of more treacherous ice ahead, and as it turned out, it was our final destination. I was at the back

of the mile long column and watched ahead of me as the first Rangers pulled up and got the word from the lead that they were 'at the Pole'.

From that point on things happened really fast. Rangers leapt off their machines, ran up the tallest pyramid of ice, smiled, shook hands and raised their arms and voices in victory. The Canadian flag and Rangers flag quickly found their way to the top of the pyramid. My job as the expedition photographer didn't allow for much rest or reflection. I tried to capture the spontaneity of the moment. After numerous group shots my fingers were aching with cold and knew I was starting to get hypothermic.

After taking all the shots that people asked me to take, I was finally able to put down the camera and do a little experiment I'd been hoping to do. I had a few learning activities I wanted to do for my Edventure website that Aurora College helped me set up. Before I left for the trip, I read up on the Magnetic North Pole. I got curious about how a compass would react there. I also asked a lot of people - from pilots to professors - how they thought compasses would react at the Pole. There was not much agreement other than they would not work properly but many thought the needles would just spin around and around. The moment of truth....I laid the 5 compasses I brought with me in the snow, hoping to see them spin madly around....They didn't. I was still excited though because none of the compass needles pointed in the same direction. They just pointed randomly, completely useless. I took a few pictures and then showed a group of the Rangers who were curious. I ended up giving an impromptu lecture on the Earth's magnetism, the magnetic pole and the compass right there in the snow. We then got on with the more important business of filling our bellies with hot food which I definitely needed by then.

By 6:30pm we we're packing our sleds again for our return journey to this morning's campsite at Isachsen Station. Apparently the Commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area is dropping in for a visit the day after tomorrow. Kevin Mulhern wants us to travel back there tonight just in case the weather gets too bad to travel tomorrow.

As the final act at the Pole, Johnassie carved two small Inukshuk out of snow blocks and placed them on one of the pyramids - the only evidence of our presence (a few of the guys relieved themselves before we departed as well, signing their names in the snow - taking immense enjoyment in the joke that every compass in the world would now be pointed at their shaky bright yellow signatures).

The trip back was cold but I kept myself warm by singing at the top of my lungs to the accompaniment of a droning snowmobile engine. I also kept my fingers and toes moving constantly within the many layers of my protective gear and flexed and twisted large muscle groups to create body heat. These are tricks I've learned from traveling with my Inuit friends in the central arctic and I rarely get cold on long treks. On one of our stops I noticed Stephanie seemed to be getting hypothermic. Luckily a couple of other guys noticed as well and encouraged her to slide into a caribou skin suit and to move around to get the body generating heat.

We didn't get back to camp until close to 1am and everyone was clearly pretty tired. The problem is you can't just call it a day. The tent, stove and bedding have to be set up. Machines have to be tended to and bellies have to be fed. Dizzy with hunger and fatigue, I know these are the times that it's important to suck it up and pitch in. It's also why I enjoy traveling with the Rangers so much. I've been in their company when we've been in some much more grim situations. Every time the guys have just smiled and got on with what's needed to be done without complaining - more often these are the times that the jokes and good humour comes out. I made the boys a big feed of rations and extra goodies and we got to bed by 3am. It was a little too rushed for me to call it a 'million dollar day' but it was a darn close.

April 20 Traveling Blind

Location: Somewhere on the Ocean to Helena Island

Wx: Shitty – windy with low visibility, -30°C

Summary:

- 161 km traveled today
- Felt tired for the first time, falling asleep while traveling on the machine

The visibility was low today. We were camped in a little flat spot ringed with rough ice, and had not made our previous day's target – the dangers of taking 'shortcuts'.

I took the Helena Island GPS points from Mitch and re-entered them into my GPS before we started today. Visibility was low and it would have been easy to get separated and lost - I wanted to ensure my unit had a solid end location fix for today. I passed the waypoints on to my tent mates.

I also discussed my travel plan with Mitch. My unit would travel as a group and I'd told my guys to look back often and keep the guy behind in sight so we wouldn't get spread out. Even though we were told to pass by stopped machines and let Scott and Eric's sweep unit at the back of the column pick them up, we agreed that if one machine stopped we'd all stop. We also agreed that if we came upon any stopped machines from other units we would also stop and wait for them. During our training before the trip I'd learned on our practice ride out to Griffith Island that in low visibility, it would be very easy for the sweep group to miss a stopped rider or miss the trail completely – during the practice ride to the Island, we traveled back in a whiteout and arrived in Resolute to find we had three missing riders!

The wind drained my energy today and for the first time I felt tired. Even singing half-remembered Beatles tunes at the top of my lungs didn't help. We stopped several times to help other riders. Danny got his sled pretty stuck in some rough ice and so did Billy when he stopped to help. We got them going again and a little later helped Laurent with rigging and tying down Paddy's broken machine for towing. My spare rope came in handy and I have one more 50' length that I brought with me. We got to Helena Island to our old re-supply camp at 10:30pm. It's very gusty under the hills here. Unfortunately, the wind is

the reason we're here - it's blown most of the snow off a patch of ocean, making a nice flat runway surface for the re-supply plane.

April 22 Million Dollar Day

Location: Helena Island to May Inlet

Wx: -25°C with a light tailwind for travel

Summary:

- A million dollar day
- A late 10am departure with an easy slow travel day
- One lengthy stop while Paddy worked on his machine

I was glad to leave Helena Island today. The cliffs above the camp caused the wind to blow and gust from all directions and for the past two days we'd had to keep shifting the tarp over our tent to new positions. Yesterday it made for a windy evening and at some points the tarp was flapping so loudly that we had to yell to have a conversation in the tent. The temperature there was also much colder. As soon as we moved into May Inlet we hit a radical temperature gradient. It was quite literally like walking out of a walk-in-freezer and into a warm room. We traveled over our old trail which followed a route through relatively smooth ice

We stopped at 5pm in a beautiful open valley near the entrance to Polar Bear Pass. It was an incredible evening with rich pink and purple light in the sky. As soon as camp was set quite a few of the guys went out to look around. Adam tracked a muskox while Allen answered all the Inuit guys' prayers for country food by tracking and killing a Peary Caribou. It was the smallest adult caribou I have seen and also had the whitest coat I have ever seen. Allen butchered it up and in true Inuk fashion, shared it with the whole camp, bringing meat to each tent. Everyone had a good feed of raw fresh meat and a couple of tents made caribou soup. After visiting a few tents I decided to get to sleep early. It was definitely one of those 'million dollar days'.

Operation Kigliqaqvik Ranger Expedition Diary

Ian Hannah

DAY 1



Ian Hannah gets ready for his trip to the Magnetic North Pole.

The first shot of the video was shot around 5:30 looking out my bedroom window. It was an early start. Everyone had been up at 5:00 getting prepared. I had my final shower and got dressed. My first layer was thick thermal underwear and a layer of socks. On top of that went a fleece jacket and trousers with a heavy-duty wool sweater. The next layer was bulky over pants and, off course, the large size parka with a full-face balaclava and a sheepskin hat. Finally, I put on a neoprene cover for my face to direct my breath away from my goggles (it was like breathing through scuba gear). I suddenly found that just bending down to pick up all the batteries, which had been charging, proved a challenge. I

waddled downstairs to get my boots. There was a bustle of Rangers picking up last minute items. I donned my large boots and headed outside.

There was a wind. Visibility was OK, about 3 Km, but like always, the thought of whiteout was in my mind. The forecast was for the wind to die down though. I loaded up my komatik with my gear, carefully placing the backup camera in the most secure position I could find. My main camera was carried in a small bag on the snow machine, in a carrier on the back. I filled the camera bag with the batteries and a couple of hand warmers to try and maintain the power.

I got Julian to check my komatik. He wanted it tied down even harder. I wouldn't know if I'd lost all my gear, until I stopped. The thoughts of arriving at camp without anything left made me pull so hard on the ropes that the marks on my hand lasted all day.

We left around 9:00. It was still windy. We went over sea ice, which is very bumpy. We traveled for 15 minutes then stopped to check our loads to ensure they were still secure. 1 hour later we stopped again. A snow machine wasn't running smoothly. They decided to send it back to town to pick up a spare. After that we got going. But it wasn't too long before we stopped again. This time Leo's machine had broken down. We had come to a halt on the sea ice 15 miles away from Polaris, the most northerly mine in the country. Using the sat phone, they called Polaris to ask for



The snowy landscape in Resolute Bay - the departure point.

a spare. I learned that the mine was closing down in the near future, and even stranger in the arctic wilderness, that it had a swimming pool and a nicely appointed gym!

The rest of the day was about figuring out how to travel in the arctic. I was very concerned about losing sight of the person in front of me. My inexperience showed as Julian became smaller and smaller in the distance. The goggles that were a necessity to protect against the wind and the bright light, began to fog up. The visibility dropped as ice formed on the inside. I was quite relieved when we stopped for a rest and I could catch up. I changed my goggles for sunglasses. The hand warmers in the camera bag were cold. They hadn't worked at all, although the camera still worked. I noticed that the LCD viewfinder was blurry, not just the picture, but the information as well. The cold was causing a lag in the LCD, so everything looked smeared. Focusing was going to be a big challenge as was monitoring audio.



My travel companions
Julian & Leo.

We traveled 139 km. That day I learned a lot. Riding on a snow machine on sea ice for 8 hours is physically exhausting. I constantly fought to keep the machine straight. The ice wanted to smash me left and right. I had to fight that tendency. My back was constantly jack hammered against the seat. This kept my body warm but my extremities got cold. We checked each other for the first signs of frostbite.

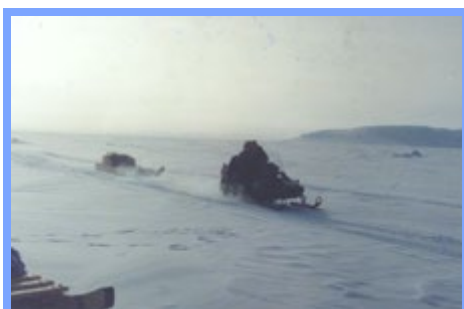
I filmed Julian and Leo setting up the tent. We slept on the sea ice with a layer of caribou fur between the ice and us. Despite the fact it was only about -8 in the tent I fell off to sleep quickly.

DAY 2

POLAR BEAR PASS

This was to be a shorter day. Polar Bear Pass is a Park. Just the name alone was exciting. I was really hoping it would live up to its name.

We traveled overland this time, which is smoother than sea ice, meaning I could get better speeds (up to about 35 km/h). The traveling was much harder due to the steep ridges and hills we had to navigate.



Towing the Komatik.

The komatiks weigh about 700 lbs and are attached on long ropes to the snow machine. When I went down hills there was a good chance they would catch up and smash into me, or spin me around. There was always a constant fear of getting hit by them, or falling from my machine and being run over, a very real danger. The guides search out the gentlest slopes but some were still very steep. Even at full throttle, I had trouble staying ahead of my komatik. It was a relief to get onto flatter ground.

Three hours into the park, we came across some adventurers heading to the Magnetic Pole. They were on skis and had a dog team. We helped them tow their sled up a hill. They seemed quite exhausted. They were the last people we would see.

Half way into the park there was one of those surreal things you sometimes get in the Arctic. In the middle of nowhere, there was a Park office complete with an outhouse. It was locked up and deserted and just outside was a caribou carcass, ravaged by bears. We stopped here for lunch. Someone broke off some frozen caribou meat which tasted great, much better than the rations we were living on.

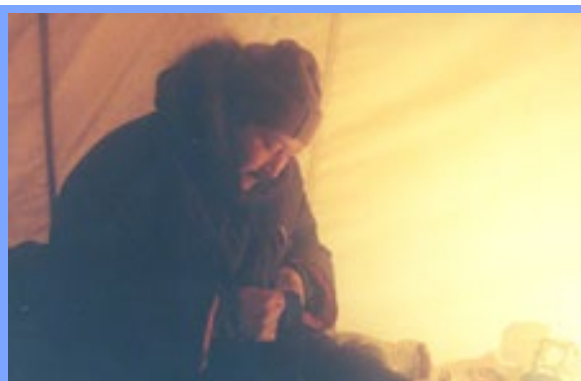
We continued down a river valley. The machines got stuck on the rocky bottom. We constantly had to pull each other's machine across the rocks, and then pull the heavy komatiks as well since they were often too long to navigate around some of the tight corners. It was exhausting work, but everyone was in good spirits and enjoying the amazing beauty of this remote region.

We arrived at the West Coast of Bathurst Island around 5:00 pm. I was tired, but like most thrilled by the beauty of the park and the journey. Repairs were started on several machines that got damaged on the rocky river bed. Some had lost wheels, in some the suspension was damaged. It's amazing to see how the Inuit can fix machines in -30, when my hands could not even touch metal at those temperatures without sticking.

DAYS 3 & 4

We left our camp at about 8:30. We were heading up a long inlet to our next site on the south west of Helena Island. It was all frozen ocean traveling, meaning very bumpy, hard ice. At one rest stop we saw some bear tracks. It looked like they were quite recent, but there was no sign of the culprit. Bears were only a worry if you had no means of self-defense (i.e. a gun). I didn't have a gun.

I was only slowly getting better with riding my machine. I hadn't quite mastered the get up on one knee, pull back the hood of your parka with one



Fixing gear in the tent.

hand and look over your shoulder while still traveling at 30 km over treacherous sea ice. The rangers performed this rather difficult action with ease. It was important to check if your komatik was in one piece. There was no way of telling other than the occasional look. The weather was good; temperatures were about -25 to -30.

I thought everything was going well as we arrived into camp that night, until Capt. Rick Regan casually asked where my komatik was. I thought he was joking, but to my disbelief when I looked behind me it was gone, with all my gear, clothes, cameras, gas.

He pointed to the "rear guard" who were just riding into camp. They were four of the Ranger's trainers and had the most demanding job of the trip. They fixed machines that broke down on route, tended to any medical emergencies, and picked up any komatiks that broke free. Fortunately, they retrieved mine. The rope holding my komatik had broken from its tie down. Just another reminder how small mistakes, or problems, can have very serious consequences.

Helena Island was small. Our camp was at the bottom of a steep cliff. We were going to be there for an extra day to give us time to fix and repair snow machines and get a resupply flight. A small ice land strip had to be set up. The following morning a twin otter gracefully landed with a new snowmobile on board, more food rations, and the company Commander Yves Laroche, who was warmly welcomed by all the Rangers.

During the day we had a chance to relax. Already the pace of the trip was tiring and a few hours to relax were most welcome. Some of the Inuit Rangers decided they wanted country food, a euphemism for fresh meat. They were to go seal or caribou hunting. I thought this would be a great opportunity to get some footage of this so I went along.

Without towing big komatiks, the snow machines raced along like speeder bikes from Star Wars. They were masters of the machines. I was not. It wasn't too long before they had blasted out of site over incredibly steep hills and valleys, across narrow ridges with huge drops to one side. I realized I was alone. In the distance I could hear the diminishing sound of their engines. Being alone in the middle of the arctic is not a particularly nice feeling. What I was dependent on suddenly became very fragile. What if my engine quits? What if I can't find my tracks back? What if the wind comes up and blows snow over the tracks? The terrain in front of me was even harder looking than the terrain I had just struggled through. It wasn't safe for me to continue. I wasn't quite sure of the etiquette of turning back. I wanted to tell the rest of the hunt party that I was turning back, so they didn't have to worry that I had gone missing. Just as that thought occurred Leo, popped up over a cliff edge to check if I was ok. I let



Taking out the garbage...

him know I was heading back. He casually said just follow your tracks back, and zipped off over the precipice.

I turned my machine around and traced my route back, listening for any sounds in the engine which would signal a failure. I had no weapon waiting by and a broken snow machine in polar bear country wouldn't be a recipe for a fun evening. The cliffs seemed steeper and more dangerous on the way back, ...alone in the arctic no one can hear you swear....

DAY 5



Camp in the morning.

We started early. We were told that today was going to be a tough ride. It was all sea ice, but this time the ice was really rough. For most arctic travelers, large leads (plates of ice compress creating huge ice walls) can be a daunting prospect. That morning I expected to hear some trepidation about the journey ahead, but it was quite the opposite. Spirits were high. The days of rest had helped. Everyone was relishing the challenge ahead.

It was a fast start leaving Helena. The ice was smooth. We got up to a good speed. My little one cylinder tundra screamed loud as we got up to 35 km/h. I was feeling pretty good.... then I fell. I hit an ice rock. I wasn't ready for it. I was thrown from my machine landing hard on the ice. I remember hearing the sound of my Snow machine engine dying down as it ground to a halt. That noise was being replaced by a whoosh. My 700 lb Komatik was racing at 35 km/h towards me and I needed to roll to get away from it. Just as that thought passed through my dazed brain, it hit me. I don't remember exactly what happened but I found myself pinned between the runners. I heard the shouts from the people behind as they rushed up to help. All of sudden several hands were pulling and digging to get me out. As I was dragged out, I was quite winded and didn't feel too good. I sat for a moment just to figure out what was broken. My leg had taken most of the impact, and it hurt. I tried to stand up, but felt the pain right through my leg. The medics had arrived and wanted to know if I could walk. I could despite the pain. I was OK and so relieved. I didn't want to come so far, and have to get evacuated out. Taking media along on these kind of extreme trips is a risk for the Rangers and I didn't want to betray their confidence in me by being a burden or slowing them down. After about ten minutes of stretching and walking I felt I could ride again. I climb back on my machine and continued, a tad more cautiously.

As we approached the rough ice you could see huge boulders, partly covered in snow and partly shimmering blue, a stunning site in the distance. It was very hard for me to stand up, a necessary maneuver to drive my snow mobile through the rough conditions. Every time I lifted myself the pain shot through my damaged leg. There was no point in thinking too much about it, because I wasn't going back.

The guides found routes through the boulders, sometime small narrow crevasses only one snowmobile wide. Many times we got stuck and had to get off and pull our machines through by hand. I wanted to shoot this but there was no time, or place to pull over. I was on a march.

Several times I saw snow machines rise up over huge rocks of ice then spin back down tumbling on to the riders. The Rangers would rush to help.

Progress was slow and exhausting. When we stopped for lunch the mood was subdued. I was especially tired, knowing we still had another five hours to go. Getting into camp that night was a relief. We camped on sea ice. A soft blue glow from the ocean several feet below illuminated the tent. I decided to check my war wound. I could see black from my waist down. It was a good bruise. After dosing myself up with painkillers I fell asleep. I didn't even notice the temperature in the tent was still well below zero.

DAY 6

An early start on another long day. We left King Christian Island at 8:00am and we have nearly 200 kms to cover. The ice didn't look any better than the day before. Our target was Ellef Ringes Island, one of the most northerly islands in the world. It was clear that the extreme temperature and constant pounding was taking its toll on the equipment. Snow machines were more difficult to start. The generators we brought with us had failed, meaning only battery power remaining for me. I had to be very judicious in my shooting.

I could stand a little easier today, making the ice travel somewhat better than the day before, but the conditions slowly got worse. At one point the convoy stopped, unable to navigate through the ice fields. We climbed a large boulder of ice to see if there was a way through, and even our guides looked concerned. I couldn't see what they could. It seemed like we were trapped in a circle of angry ice teeth, every way seemed impenetrable. Paddy, one of the guides, took off to scout a route. It wasn't long before he returned



Stuck in the ice.

and the convoy moved slowly in single file, twisting through ice as hard as concrete. Many, many times we got stuck. Our komatiks got wedged among the boulders. We shortened our ropes to help the maneuvering. It was exhausting work. Even at -30 we were sweating, and our bulky gear made everything that much harder. At that point I saw the advantage of traditional Caribou fur, warmer but much lighter than the parkas we had on. The day was slow and exhausting, even to the experienced. It was a relief to make land, where the going was much faster.

Time became almost impossible to judge. I couldn't see my watch. I just saw how the sun moved from right to left, and the light became softer. We had been traveling for 12 hours when we saw our destination.

It's a surreal sight to be in the most remote part of the world and then to see buildings and civilization. As we rounded a hill we saw just that. Isachsen is an abandoned weather station, standing at the top of the world. It had once been home to up to 150 people. There were buildings and research platforms on huge wheels. There was a large runway. I wanted to explore,

but we were all so tired we just pitched our tents and rested. Tomorrow we were to make the magnetic pole, and that day was going to be even longer.

DAY 7



Preparing for the final leg.

The plan was to make for the area of the magnetic pole and then return to Isachsen. We still had to pack everything up and take it with us. The wind that came up overnight told us why. The weather had been remarkably kind to us. That day, however, there was the first sign of a change. As the wind bit through, we double-checked each other for signs of frostbite. A couple of people had little white patches that they quickly covered up. Most of the crossing was to the island's most Northern point, Cape Isachsen. After that point the open water prevented us from going further, but that was far enough. The area of the Magnetic pole was within that region. We would be there. It was a long ride, much like polar bear pass, lots of ridges and steep hills to navigate. I kept thinking of how few people had ever seen this place. How absolutely beautiful it was – huge cliff faces, strange stone outcroppings carved by the climate, deep valleys next to the ocean. If it was a warm climate those islands would probably be some of the busiest tourist destinations in the world. Fortunately, the arctic keeps people away and only a few are truly lucky enough to see it.

The ride was easier than the preceding days, but cumulative toll finally broke the back of a snow machine. The suspension just gave way. We abandoned it, and picked it up on our return. Shortly after, we stopped again. This time someone had been thrown from his machine and was hit by the komatik. I knew how that felt. The medics rushed to his aid. He was winded and sore, but okay, and in true fashion, not going to let a small thing like being run over by a 700lb-sled stop him. We kept going. It had been a full 7-hour day of travel when I finally saw the convoy come to a halt. We had arrived in the area of the magnetic pole. There was nothing there, no dramatic cliff overlooking open water, no huge outcroppings of ice, not even a pole, just a few ice boulders to climb. It didn't really matter. We had made it and elation shook off the tired, cold feeling. I forgot the last 7 days of struggle and reveled in the success of everyone making it.

I filmed most of the celebrations. I used thin glove liners on my hands while shooting so I could still operate the camera controls. It was after about 10 minutes of excitement that I realized I could no longer feel my fingers. I knew this to be an early sign of frostbite, so I quickly put my hands inside my parka to thaw them out. During the thaw, feeling slowly returned. My hands were in agony. There wasn't really much I could do. I began to shoot again. There were only two hours spent there, enough time to boil water for lunch and take some pictures.

We had to do the 7-hour journey back again. The elation of making the pole had worn off. I was feeling tired. It was late, probably about 11 p.m. The sunlight was low, making the light very soft. I couldn't tell if there were bumps ahead of me, and it was very disconcerting. The wind had come up, blowing snow over the tracks and making following even harder. My hands that had been okay in my mitts before were now cold, despite the constant movement involved in driving a snow machine. I was getting cold. As we approached Isachsen, I passed several rangers who had run out of fuel. They had to scramble to the back to untie their extra fuel tanks. It was after midnight when the patrol finally made it back to camp. We had been traveling for over 14 hours, and we were exhausted, frozen and happy. We pitched our tents and slept. The next morning I awoke. My hands seemed frozen and unable to move. My body ached all over. One finger was infected due to a combination of frostbite and being in a warm moist mitt for several hours. It didn't matter. The elation from the day before came back, all the hardships had been worth while.



The Rangers reach the Magnetic North Pole.

There is so much more to write and tell. I left the patrol a day later. They still had the return journey, and a storm finally hit them on the way back.

I owe so much thanks to so many people who helped me, especially in tent group nine. I was truly a rookie when I started, but through the help and accommodation of the Rangers, I made what for most rookies would have been impossible, possible.

5

Newspaper Stories

Rangers Embark on Sovereignty Patrol: Canada's Claim on Arctic Waterways is in Jeopardy

Adrian Humphreys
National Post
March 29, 2002

A patrol of Canadian Rangers, the mainly aboriginal Canadian Forces reserve unit, will trek to the magnetic North Pole next month, asserting Canada's sovereignty in an area increasingly coming into international dispute.

The journey from remote Resolute, on Cornwallis Island, to the bleak Arctic ice off the coast of Isachsen Cape, where the fluctuating magnetic North Pole is currently located, will see 34 Rangers from the northern territories travel approximately 2,000 kilometres over 16 days by snowmobile.

"From the edge of the land we will try to go as far as possible on the ice in the direction of the magnetic pole and at some point, on the Arctic Ocean, we will face a big wall – basically ice that is not passable on snowmobiles – and then we will turn around and come back," said Major Yves Laroche, commander of the Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups in the North.

"What is important for us is to do the patrol on the Canadian land and we are using the magnetic pole as our target."

Canada's claim on ice-packed Arctic waterways is increasingly in jeopardy as climate change has thinned ice cover, increasing the number of foreign ships entering the area.

Ecotourism cruises for wealthy Americans and Europeans have been using the Northwest Passage since 1995 and international commercial shipping will likely increase, said Dr. Rob Huebert, a specialist in marine law and a director of the Centre of Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary.

Sovereignty patrols such as this trek help build Canada's claim to the area if an official dispute is lodged with international agencies, he said.

"All of these patrols add to your case – you want to show effective control over the area as soon as possible," Dr. Huebert said.

"We start creating a more robust governmental ability to operate in the North. If we wait until shipping starts going through it, it is too late."

Loss of control over the waterways could lead to increased smuggling, immigration violations, the spread of new or exotic diseases, environmental damage and changes to the lifestyle of the Inuit living along the coast, he said.

This expedition – called Operation Kigliqavik, from the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge" – commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Rangers.

The group was formed during the Second World War when the government saw an urgent need for coastal patrols after a Japanese submarine shelled British Columbia.

When the Cold War saw rising tensions between the West and the Soviet Union, Canada's arctic neighbour, the government saw another good reason to have a northern presence tied to the Canadian military, prompting an expansion of the Rangers across Canada's Arctic and sub-Arctic areas.

The Rangers continue regular patrols, usually ranging 300 kilometres out from their home communities.

The national threat, however, has changed significantly, said Major Laroche.

"It's not like the risk was 10 or 15 years ago. The job has changed, but on a regular basis we have to show the Canadian flag to everybody today to say that this is Canada," he said.

At the magnetic pole, which they expect to reach on April 18 or 19, the Rangers will have a target shooting competition, likely the first sustained gunfire the area has seen.

According to the Geological Survey of Canada, the shifting magnetic pole will leave Canadian territory in as few as three years.

Four Yukoners to Join Rangers' Polar Odyssey

Whitehorse Star

April 2, 2002

Thirty-four Canadian Rangers from across the North, including four from the Yukon, will meet in Resolute Bay, Nunavut this month to begin an historic trek to the Magnetic North Pole.

The Rangers, along with five regular army staff members from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (1 CRPG) Headquarters in Yellowknife, will train in Resolute Bay before departing on April 10 and heading to the pole.

Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers, the patrol will take more than 16 days and cover more than 1,700 kilometres.

The four Yukoners are Ranger Cpl. Dan Cresswell, Carcross; Sgt. John Mitchell, Dawson City; Ranger Shane Oakley, Haines Junction; and Master Cpl. Mark Wyatt of Carmacks.

The expedition is called Kigliqavik Ranger - from the Inuktitut word for the place at the edge of known land.

It will be the first time Rangers from the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut have ever come together in a combined operation.

Each of 1 CRPG's 59 patrols nominated one member for their superior land skills and from those nominees, 30 were chosen by lottery to participate in the patrol, the Rangers said in a statement last week.

In Resolute, participating Rangers will be issued clothing and equipment, then undergo three days of intense training prior to the start of the patrol.

The expeditioners, mounted on snowmobiles, will leave Resolute and travel in the direction of the Magnetic North Pole.

Their route will cross Bathurst Island and Maclean Strait and continue to Ellef Ringnes Island to the Isachsen Peninsula and finally to Cape Isachsen.

The Rangers will then make the final push across 230 km of sea ice to the area of the pole, planning to arrive there April 18. Kigliqavik Ranger will assert Canadian sovereignty in a remote area of the Arctic.

The schedule has them back in Resolute on April 25.

Canadian Rangers have a long history of contributing to the development of Canada as part of the Reserve and the Canadian Forces.

The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers were formed in 1942 following the shelling of British Columbia by a Japanese submarine.

The role of these Rangers was coastal surveillance and immediate local defence in an emergency situation, pending the deployment of Regular Force troops.

Following the end of the Second World War, their role was expanded to include other remote and coastal parts of Canada. They were renamed the Canadian Rangers in 1947.

The primary role of the newly-formed Canadian Rangers was to conduct surveillance of the coastlines in sparsely-settled areas of the country.

The Rangers of 1 CRPG continue to perform this role, reporting any unusual sightings to Ranger headquarters in Yellowknife.

Patrol Heads to the Pole: Rangers take 16-day trek to assert sovereignty at magnetic north pole

Miriam Hill

Nunatsiaq News

April 5, 2002

The Canadian Rangers are embarking on the longest, farthest and costliest sovereignty patrol this month to assert Canadian sovereignty in the North and commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Rangers.

Thirty-four Rangers, the mostly Aboriginal Canadian Forces Reserve unit from across the North, will leave Resolute Bay April 10 and make their way more than 1,700 kilometres toward the shifting magnetic North Pole. Right now, the magnetic pole is located off Cape Isachsen, which is on Ellef Ringnes Island. The trip is expected to take about 16 days.

The expedition, called Kigliqavik Ranger, from the Inuktitut word for place at the edge of known land, will be the first time Rangers from the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut have participated in a patrol together.

Capt. Conrad Schubert explained that in order for Canada to assert its sovereignty over a landmass, it is obliged by law to show it is doing something in the area claimed by Canada.

“If we don’t have anyone who lives there or any sort of economic activity or regular activity of any sort, one of the ways we can assert our sovereignty in every area of Canada is by providing a federal presence,” he said. “That could be the RCMP, sometimes it is, or it could be the Department of National Defense,” which includes the Canadian Rangers.

Sovereignty patrols are increasing in importance as climate change has resulted in thinning ice and more foreign commercial ships entering Canadian waters. If an official dispute were ever lodged internationally, any sovereignty patrol conducted in the area would help Canada’s case.

Sixty Rangers submitted their names for the \$700,000 expedition and 30 were chosen by lottery. Four Rangers from Resolute who know the area are also on board. Schubert said the average age of a Canadian Ranger is 33.

“We will be relying on skills of the Rangers, particularly those who come from the east [Arctic] and are most familiar with travelling on sea ice because a lot of the Rangers, something

less than half, come from the NWT and the Yukon and have never travelled on sea ice,” Schubert said.

“They are used to travelling below the tree line so for them it’s a different thing entirely for them up there.”

The Rangers will train for three days in Resolute, making sure all the equipment works, before setting out on the trek. Each will be fitted with a parka, snow pants, boots, rifle and a rented snow machine. The qamutiit they will pull were built in Resolute with lumber brought up on last year’s sealift. All the necessary foods will be dragged by sleds and re-supplied at three points in the journey.

Schubert said there is a minimal threat from predators as the area is fairly popular for polar bears, but the Rangers will do what they need to do to stay safe.

“The greater dangers are going to be things relating to the snow machines — that they get into an accident, they may cross ice that isn’t sound,” he said. But all precautions have been taken to ensure the safety of the unit.

“It appears to be the best time of the year based on atmospheric conditions,” Schubert said. “There’s enough light, it’s not as cold, it’s outside the normal blizzard season and the ice is still sound.”

Once the group reaches the magnetic North Pole on April 18 or 19, they will participate in a rifle-shooting competition before beginning the trek back to Resolute.

Push to the pole: Rangers set out on trek to Magnetic North

Terry Halifax

Northern News Services

April 5, 2002

Inuvik - A group of 34 Rangers will begin a patrol of 1,700 kilometres to the Magnetic North Pole next week.

The expedition, called Kigliqavik Ranger, will take 16 days to complete and is the first time Rangers from Nunavut, the Yukon and NWT will work together on a patrol.

The purpose of the trek is to exert Canada’s sovereignty and commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Rangers.

Julian Tomlinson is a Ranger and recreation leaders instructor at Aurora College’s Inuvik Campus. He will operate the communications for the trek, beaming back daily updates as the team travels along.

“We’ve got satellite phones and lap top computers,” he said. “The theory is, I’ll be able to file photos and e-mail reports and they’ll update it through the Canadian Forces Web site, so people will be able to follow along with what we’re doing and all the crazy stories of the day.”

He says they have a couple back-up systems if the new technology fails.

Tomlinson will write daily updates on the trek as well as feature profiles on individual Rangers, but as an educator has other interests in the project.

“I’ve been experimenting with something I call ‘Ed-venture,’ where we bring classrooms into remote places and create learning activities through the digital communications,” he said.

While at the pole, he plans to do some experiments and educational activities with magnetism, compass declination and the aurora borealis.

“I’m going to post the information on the college Web site, so students can log in and learn about the expedition and also have an opportunity to do some basic science and some fun learning activities,” he said. “That’s the theory.”

Has travelled on previous expeditions where he’s done similar experiments with education.

In 1998, he took a trip along the Arctic coast to Fairbanks, Alaska where they did some classes at the University of Alaska, as well as providing the college here with daily updates via satellite phone.

On the success of that trek, Tomlinson took his second trek to Nunavut in 2000. Northern knowledge and environmental sciences were shared with students across the planet. “We hit over 4,000 students in classrooms, face-to-face along the way and we were linked with students from around the world,” he said. “We were sitting in a computer lab in Gjoa Haven, talking with kids from Greece and Washington D.C.”

“It was amazing.”

Tomlinson calls himself a “computer moron,” and relies on some technical support that he says will help him through the tough spots.

The group are expected to reach the pole around April 16.

Guyot embarks on a month-long Rangers anniversary trip

Derek Neary

Northern News Services

April 5, 2002

Fort Simpson - Paul Guyot is representing the Fort Simpson Rangers on an expedition to the Magnetic North Pole to commemorate the Canadian Rangers’ 60th anniversary.

Guyot is one of 30 Rangers selected from across the country who will partake in the 28-day enhanced sovereignty patrol. They will be accompanied by up to a dozen members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The travellers were due to fly from Yellowknife to Resolute Bay Tuesday. From there they will use snowmobiles to reach the Magnetic North Pole, which is approximately 320 kilometres northwest of Resolute Bay.

However, the patrol party will have to make frequent detours around crevasses on the sea ice, Guyot said.

“A lot of these Rangers that have been chosen will be Inuit. Thank God, because I won’t be passing any of those guys,” he laughed.

“They know how to read the snow and everything. That’s their land.”

Three food and fuel drops have been scheduled along the way, he said.

The participants will be outfitted with parkas, snow pants, mukluks, a fur hat, mitts and a No-Fog mask for safe snowmobile operation. They will likely stay in circular, insulated tents, he said.

“I would think the trip is going (to involve) brutal weather,” said Guyot, who has been with the Rangers for three and a half years.

“But the camaraderie and the teamwork is what I’m looking forward to.”

In an interview last Thursday he said he planned to pack very little.

“Typically my experience out in the bush is that you bring all these clothes and you never wear it. You don’t change very often out there, and you all end up smelling the same,” he joked.

Rangers Mark 60th Year with Polar Trek: Inuit Troopers' Patrol Will Also Assert Sovereignty

Canadian Press
The Gazette (Montreal)
April 9, 2002

Resolute, Nunavut - A thin red line will begin to stretch from this remote Arctic community toward the North Magnetic Pole on Wednesday, celebrating a unique military institution and reinforcing Canadian sovereignty when it may be increasingly challenged.

The Canadian Rangers, in their traditional red pullovers and ballcaps, will celebrate their 60th anniversary this week by travelling 850 kilometres past polar bears, through face-freezing cold and over iffy sea ice to the place on the Arctic Ocean where compasses point straight down.

"I'm looking forward to it," says Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk of Resolute, the guide for Operation Kigliqavik and a Ranger for 14 years.

Created in 1942 to keep watch on Canada's Pacific coast during the Second World War, the Rangers have evolved into the military's arctic eyes and ears.

Now, nearly 4,000 Rangers from almost every northern community in seven provinces and three territories lend local knowledge and on-the-land smarts to regular patrols throughout some of the most remote areas on earth.

Armed with almost indestructible Lee-Enfield rifles and travelling on snow machines, they keep an eye out for foreign airplanes or ships and monitor unmanned radar stations. They're a big part of local search-and-rescue efforts.

And they also give Canada crucial ammunition in disputes about northern sovereignty.

Although no one disputes Canadian ownership over Arctic islands, the United States and some European states consider the Northwest Passage between them to be international waters.

Canada argues that the sea ice is an extension of the land and Ranger patrols such as Operation Kigliqavik are intended to be demonstrations of that.

"It's all about sovereignty here," says Cpt. Rick Regan, deputy commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

"The Rangers are the ones letting us know what's going on in our own back yard."

So far, sea ice has limited the usefulness of Arctic waterways. But thinning ice cover may bring sovereignty disputes forward.

Tourists in icebreakers have been cruising the Northwest Passage since 1995 and many speculate commercial shipping will also increase.

"It does strengthen (our argument), as long as it's part of a cumulative picture," says Rob Huebert, a marine law specialist and a director of the University of Calgary's Centre of Military and Strategic Studies.

But more than that, he says the Rangers provide good role models and productive opportunities to communities that can use both.

"The kids really look up to it," says Sgt. Darrel Klemmer of Tulita in the Northwest Territories, who has been a Canadian Ranger for five years. "It gives them a positive role model."

Rangers are often leaders in their home communities and patrol leaders are elected by their comrades.

"You've got to be well respected to lead the patrol," Klemmer says.

Operation Kigliqaqvik brings together Rangers from 28 different northern communities from east to west, their largest operation ever.

While there are huge differences between the forest and bush of the Mackenzie Valley and the treeless tundra of the High Arctic, Klemmer says the Rangers are finding lots in common.

“You get 30 different Rangers together and they’ll have 60 different ways of doing the same thing.

“But we talk about our families and our communities and tell stories of the old ways. Everybody has hunting in common. Everybody likes to hunt.”

Says Ranger John Mitchell of Dawson Creek, Yukon: “The Rangers are one of the things that link the whole North.”

They link northerners with the south, too. “People don’t realize how far we are from the nation’s capital,” he says. “The Rangers make you feel more like you’re a Canadian.”

Joining the Rangers is also an opportunity to serve the local community.

“I like to travel and I like to help people that need help,” says Aqiatasuk, who has been involved with a number of search-and-rescue operations.

But Klemmer says it’s also a chance to serve the nation.

“We don’t want other people intruding on our land without us knowing about it.

“This is Canada. This belongs to us.”

Intrepid Rangers to leave for Pole: Operation Kigliqaqvik: \$750,00 trip demonstrating sovereignty in North

Adrian Humphreys

National Post

April 9, 2002

A two-metre-long Canadian flag will begin a long journey to the magnetic North Pole tomorrow, lashed to a snowmobile and carried by Canadian Rangers, the mainly aboriginal Canadian Forces unit that patrols the desolate Arctic.

The patrol, which has been two years in the planning, will both celebrate the anniversary of a unique military unit and reinforce Canadian sovereignty at a time when it may be increasingly challenged.

Operation Kigliqaqvik – from the Inuktitut word for “the place at the edge” – will leave its base camp in Resolute Bay, a hamlet of 250, tomorrow for a round-trip journey of close to 2,000 kilometres expected to last 10 days.

The journey marks the 60th anniversary of the Rangers, the mainly Inuit reservists whose only uniform is their red

pullovers and ballcaps and only weapons are the outdated – but nearly indestructible – Lee Enfield rifles.

It is expected to cost about \$750,000, including scheduled satellite telephone calls to the Rangers when they reach the pole from Jean Chretien, the Prime Minister, and Art Eggleton, the Minister of National Defence.

“That’s the cost of moving around in the north. There are no seat sales up here. Everything here becomes very expensive,” said Captain Rick Regan, deputy commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

“There is a cost to sovereignty and to covering the ground and this is part of it. The whole point of this is to show the flag here. This is demonstrating sovereignty in the North.”

Sergeant John Miller [*sic*: Mitchell], a Ranger from Dawson City, Yukon, who is on the trek, described his comrades in the Rangers as “sovereignty soldiers.”

The group was formed during the Second World War when the government was desperately organizing coastal patrols after a Japanese submarine shelled British Columbia.

During the Cold War, the Rangers, made up mostly of aboriginals who patrol from their far-flung communities, became the eyes and the ears of the Canadian Forces in the Arctic and sub-Arctic.

And in recent years, the patrols of the remote and sparsely-inhabited areas along Canada’s northern islands have become the front line in Canada’s bid to assert its sovereignty in an area increasingly coming into international dispute.

As climate change thins Arctic ice, there has been an increase in international shipping through the Northwest Passage, a route winding through Canada’s northern islands.

That could lead to a dispute over Canada’s claim to the waterway. Being able to show extensive use and care of the area would bolster Canada’s claim in an international court, said Dr. Rob Huebert, a specialist in marine law and a director of the Centre of Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary.

“This is all about showing the flag. In this case, we are showing it quite literally,” said Capt. Regan. Many Rangers are also taking small flags for their communities or territory that they intend to plant in the ice.

There are nearly 4,000 Rangers from almost every northern community in seven provinces and three territories, lending their local knowledge to regular patrols throughout some of the most remote areas on earth.

They keep an eye out for foreign airplanes or ships and monitor unmanned radar stations and have become a valuable aid to local search-and-rescue efforts.

Operation Kigliqavik, involving Rangers from 28 different northern communities, is the unit’s largest operation ever.

Sergeant Darrel Klemmer, of Tulita in the Northwest Territories, says the Rangers are finding they have one thing in common: a certain patriotism.

“We don’t want other people intruding on our land without us knowing about it,” says Sgt. Klemmer.

“This is Canada. This belongs to us.”

Canada to assert sovereignty in North

Estanislao Oziewicz

Globe and Mail

April 9, 2002

A mainly aboriginal Canadian military unit will embark on a historic expedition to the north magnetic pole to raise the flag over a region where climate change is testing Canada’s assertion of sovereignty.

The 1,700-kilometre patrol by snowmobile, two years in the planning and expected to cost at least \$750,000, will be made by 34 rangers of the 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group. Tomorrow,

they will leave Resolute Bay, Nunavut, and head for Cape Isachsen, now at the edge of the constantly wandering magnetic pole.

There are 3,500 rangers - army reservists - who provide a military presence in remote, isolated and coastal communities.

“Every time there is a formal presence of a federal organization, we demonstrate sovereignty,” said Major Yves Laroche, commander of the group and expedition leader.

The United States and some European states consider the Northwest Passage international waters. Canada has always said the sea ice is an extension of the land.

Most countries attempting to traverse the Northwest Passage seek Canada’s permission. However, local officials were caught off guard in 1999 by the arrival of a Chinese ship in Tuktoyaktuk. The incident was a demonstration of Canada’s limited surveillance powers and ability to assert its ownership of the territory, says a report by Robert Huebert, associate director of the University of Calgary’s Centre for Military and Strategic Studies.

“Yes, this [trip] helps promote sovereignty,” Dr. Huebert said. “I’m in favour of anything that improves the ability of the military, especially the rangers, to operate. They have a utility way beyond sovereignty.”

The expedition is far from a public-relations exercise for the rangers, celebrating their 60th anniversary. Two issues brought Canada’s claim over the Arctic archipelago to the fore: the international political landscape in the North since the demise of the Soviet Union and the melting of the ice sealing the Northwest Passage.

Major Laroche said that with the end of the Cold War, the main threat is no longer a Soviet invasion but plane crashes. Each year there are 85,000 flights over the Arctic.

Dr. Huebert’s report also noted that in 2001, the U.S. Navy held a symposium on surface-vessel operations in the Northwest Passage, an indication that the United States is looking at the area more closely.

Dr. Huebert said the second issue is the increased shipping through the thinning ice of the Northwest Passage.

Problems include navigation rights, smuggling, environmental degradation, the spread of diseases and changes to the lifestyles of northern natives.

Dr. Huebert said he is uncertain of the importance an international court might place on a ranger sovereignty patrol if there were an international dispute, but a patrol is nonetheless useful domestically.

Polar trip marks Rangers’ anniversary

Stephanie Waddell

Whitehorse Star

Yukon, Wednesday, April 10, 2002

An expedition for Canadian Ranger in the North to the North Pole is “all about sovereignty,” says Cpt. Rick Regan, deputy commanding officer of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (CRPG), which was scheduled to get under way today.

The trek will see 34 Canadian Rangers, five of those from the Yukon and northern B.C., and five army staff from 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group in Yellowknife, head to the magnetic North Pole to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Canadian Rangers. There, the Canadian flag will be planted in the ground.

While the event marks an historic anniversary, it also can be seen as marking a new era. Expedition Kigliqavik Ranger will be the first combined operation of Rangers from the three territories. Kigliqavik is Inuktitut for “place at the edge of known land”.

“There’s a real mix of people,” Regan said in an interview Monday from Resolute Bay, where the Rangers were training for three days before they were to leave for the pole this morning.

In every community, people have a way of doing things a little differently. With such a wide range of communities represented both above and below the tree line, there can be a wide range of views on a number of different issues that might come up on the expedition.

“That’s the largest challenge,” Regan said.

Overall, though, most Rangers are willing to listen to one another and learn new ways of doing things that they may not have thought of before, he pointed out.

“There’s a real exchange going on,” he said.

Yukon and northern B.C. Rangers on the trip are: John Mitchell of Dawson City, Shane Oakley of Haines Junction, Mark Wyatt of Carmacks, Dan Cresswell of Carcross and Scott [Odain] of Atlin, B.C.

During his time in Nunavut for the training, Mitchell has noticed the lack of vegetation in the 250-person hamlet community located 600 km North of the Arctic Circle.

“(There’s a) noticeable absence of trees,” he said in an interview Monday.

Normally, Rangers would bring a lot of their own gear to any treks or operations they might take; this time, though, the Rangers are dealing with issued materials to go to the North Pole.

“We’re shaking out the bugs,” Mitchell said of the items.

Like Regan, he commented on the relationship with those from other parts of the North. While there’s a lot of listening, there’s also a lot of story swapping happening.

“There’s a whole camaraderie,” he said.

As a Ranger in Dawson, Mitchell is accustomed to spending a lot of his free time on Ranger activities and expeditions, but in his 12 years with the Rangers, he’s never been on a trek like this.

“This is a first for Canada,” he said.

During the preparation, the group has had to deal with constant wind and low visibility, weather conditions they may have to deal with on the expedition. Regan said the 850-km trip could end up being up to 1,100 km if weather conditions makes them divert from the original route.

The expedition could take four to five days.

The Canadian Rangers were first formed in 1942 as the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers after the shelling of B.C. by a Japanese submarine.

At that time, the Rangers’ role was coastal surveillance and immediate local defence in an emergency pending deployment of the regular forces.

After the Second World War, the role of the Rangers was expanded to other remote and coastal areas of the country and in 1947, they were renamed the Canadian Rangers.

The primary role of the Canadian Rangers is to conduct surveillance of the coastlines in sparsely-populated areas.

Historic Trip For Rangers: Expedition to Magnetic North Pole Begins

Stephanie Rubec

Toronto Sun
April 10, 2002

Resolute Bay, Nunavut. Loaded down with tonnes of fuel, food and winter camping gear, Canadian Rangers leave this isolated community today for an historic expedition to the magnetic north pole.

The long convoy of 30 Rangers will snake into polar bear territory on snow machines towing heavy sledges. The 28 men and two women will sleep on Arctic islands during the 850-km trek, pushing forward up to 16 hours a day over six days through blowing snow and unforgiving terrain that includes rocky land and heaving ocean ice.

The trek is being made “to raise the profile of the Rangers” on their 60th anniversary, Capt. Rick Regan, the unit’s deputy commander, said yesterday.

Reserve Unit

The Rangers, a reserve unit, comprises members from 140 mostly isolated communities in Canada’s north, Atlantic and western regions. Those participating in the magnetic pole expedition are exclusively from northern Canada.

There are 3,500 Rangers fanned across the country, and a recruiting program to boost those numbers to 4,800 by 2008 is under way.

The Rangers are considered some of the Canadian Forces’ most experienced extreme winter weather soldiers. They patrol their communities for the Canadian Forces, and lead rescue and recovery missions.

Rangers are sworn in after a 10-day training session on firearms and first aid. They also have to prove they can live off the land.

Regan said the expedition to the pole – 3,565 km northwest of Toronto – by 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group is the largest ever undertaken by the military.

Tonight the expedition will set up camp on Bathurst Island before pushing through Polar Bear Pass where the predators gather to hunt in frightening numbers.

“It’s good to keep your rifle accessible,” Sgt. Eric Lapalme said yesterday, noting that hungry polar bears are not afraid of humans and never far away.

Supply Drops

The expedition will pick up more food and fuel at two supply drops along the way.

Upon reaching Cape Isachsen, commanders stationed at Resolute Bay and the scout team leading the Rangers will decide whether ice and weather conditions permit the expedition to move on to the pole.

To mark their success, the Rangers will have a firing exercise and medal ceremony. They also expect a satellite phone call from Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

Dave Lundie, a Ranger from Churchill, Man., said he took a leave of absence from his job as a community college coordinator to join the mission. “I was so excited I barely slept,” he said. “I’ve been really anxious for this.”

Sun Media will next report on the expedition when it reaches the magnetic North Pole.

To the Pole! Rangers from all three territories set out on anniversary trek to Magnetic North

Kevin Wilson
Northern News Services
April 10, 2002

Resolute Bay - The Rangers are on the move.

Operation Kigliqavik Ranger was to begin today. It is a landmark trek to Magnetic North.

A group of 29 Canadian Rangers from all three territories are on an epic eight-day voyage that will take them from Resolute Bay to the Magnetic North Pole and back.

Kigliqavik Ranger is the largest, most far-reaching patrol ever conducted by Ranger personnel.

Following two days of near blizzard conditions, the weather was expected to clear in time for today's schedule start of the expedition.

Environment Canada forecast sunny conditions with highs reaching minus 23.

"It's looking pretty good right now," said Capt. Rick Regan, deputy Commanding Officer of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

He added that the patrol spent Sunday and Monday training on sea ice south of the hamlet.

Travelling on snowmachines, the Rangers expect to reach the Magnetic North Pole on April 18.

The patrol has a two-fold purpose—to assert Canadian sovereignty in the high Arctic, and to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Rangers.

"This expedition kind of started 18 months ago," said Regan.

Fuel, hard rations, shelter and other supplies were sealifted to the community last year.

"We're completely self contained, if need be," said Regan.

For Ranger Sgt. Darrel Klemmer, Kigliqavik Ranger is the opportunity of a lifetime.

The 39-year-old Tulita resident was selected locally for his superior land skills, as was one Ranger from each of 1 CRPGs 59 patrols.

The slate was narrowed down to 30, chosen by lottery.

"It's my first time beyond the trees," said Klemmer.

"I expected it to be much flatter," he added.

Each snowmachine will tow a qamotiq carrying 400 kg of gear. The voyage will carry the patrol across Bathurst Island and Maclean Strait, then continue to Ellef Ringnes Island to Cape Isachsen.

The final push is a treacherous 230 km trek across sea ice to Magnetic North.

Provided the weather co-operates, Regan said the ice will present the biggest challenge.

"We're expecting very rough ice in some areas," creating tough slogging for heavily-laden snowmachines, Regan said.

The cost of Kigliqavik Ranger is conservatively estimated at \$750,000.

Sgt. Peter Moon, a public affairs spokesperson for the Rangers, said it's money well spent, "when you consider it would cost \$40,000 a day to keep an aircraft in the air," to provide overflights in the high Arctic.

Moon said the patrol is gelling together well.

"It's a very disparate group...there really is a sense of excitement," he said.

Patrol Sets Out on Sovereignty Mission: Canadian Rangers stake their claim on magnetic North Pole

Miriam Hill
Nunatsiaq News
April 12, 2002

Resolute Bay found itself awash in a sea of Ranger red and Forces green this week, as 28 Canadian Rangers descended on the community before heading out on a sovereignty patrol to the magnetic North Pole.

A 34-member expedition set out Wednesday by snow machine, attempting a more than 1,700-kilometre trek toward the shifting magnetic North Pole. Right now, the Pole is located off Cape Isachsen, which is on Ellef Ringnes Island. The trip is expected to take about 10 days.

In order to keep control over lands claimed by Canada, it is necessary for Canadians to show something is being done in the area, from waving a Canadian flag to engaging in rifle practise, both of which will take place at the magnetic North Pole. This sort of patrol is important as an increasing number of foreign ships have been entering Canada's northern waters and the expedition is a way for Canada to flex its muscles.

The trip is costing about \$750,000 and Rangers are expecting satellite phone calls from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Defense Minister Art Eggleton once they reach their destination.

The expedition, called Kigliqavik Ranger, from the Inuktitut word for place at the edge of known land, will be the first time Rangers from the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut have participated in a patrol together.

Deborah Iqaluk, 43, a Ranger from Resolute, is one of two women involved in the expedition.

"I'm just one of the Rangers," she said, in a phone interview, adding she's been involved in a sovereignty patrol before, north of Devon Island. "They needed female Rangers on the patrol, so I said, 'Why not?' I guess they asked to prove that women are allowed in the Rangers and we should be recognized somewhere along the way."

Iqaluk wasn't too concerned about anything the day before the group was to set off.

"I live up here," she said. "It's just another cold area."

Her partner, Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk, did the route last year as part of a reconnaissance mission and will act as a guide on this trip. He said he will be watching for dangerous ice conditions and open water.

"There are some challenges, but we're confident we can deal with it," he said.

The Rangers will be bringing food and other supplies with them on qamutiit built by Resolute Rangers and hauled by the 34 snow machines rented in the community.

"It's been very good for the community, people are helping out, so I guess they like it," he said.

Aqiatasuk has been meeting with the visiting Rangers every day and says they are impressed by the barrenness, open space and lack of trees.

Capt. Rick Regan, the deputy commanding officer of the 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, said this patrol, which also commemorates the 60th anniversary of the Rangers, has a different flavour, thanks to the inclusion of people from all across the North.

After 18 months of preparation, this week the Rangers honed their skills in the area outside Resolute, trekking 15 kilometres away, setting up camp and testing their equipment.

"We have 28 Rangers from 28 different communities and no two tie their toboggans, or qamutiiks, the same way," Regan said. "I think there was initially some concern of folks coming

from other ends of the Arctic, which can for all intents and purposes be the other end of the world compared to the conditions here. We've pretty much worked that out and people are very enthusiastic and keen about doing the trip. It's really a once in a lifetime opportunity."

For Iqaluk, who has a son in the Rangers and one in the Junior Rangers, the trip will be interesting, but not necessarily the opportunity of a lifetime.

"My best friend thinks I shouldn't go because I'll be gone too long," she admitted, laughing.

Northern Rangers keep flag planted

Editorial

Edmonton Journal

April 13, 2002

You should sleep better tonight, knowing a unique group of northern Canadians have their ears to the tundra on your behalf – and Canada's.

This week, celebrating their 60th anniversary, the Canadian Rangers are setting out on a journey from Resolute, in Nunavut, over snow and sea ice to the North Magnetic Pole, asserting Canada's sovereignty by virtue of being there.

The Rangers, who draw their members from the remote communities of Canada's north, have been patrolling the Arctic since 1942, initially to watch for enemy activity off our Pacific coast.

In the years since then, they have turned into a critical element of national policy, providing an on-the-ice presence to back our claim to Arctic sovereignty.

Probably no other nation has anything like them. Certainly no force is more colourful than the Rangers with their red pullovers and ballcaps, sporting Lee-Enfield rifles. Not surprisingly, they are said to be great role models for northern kids.

And for the rest of us, too, for whom the vast Arctic exists mainly as a challenge to the imagination.

Rangers' polar patrol progressing well

Peter Moon

Whitehorse Star

April 17, 2002

The Canadian Ranger sovereignty patrol to the Magnetic North Pole is on schedule and making good progress.

"We're right where we want to be and when we want to be," Capt. Rick Regan, deputy commanding officer of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, said in an interview last Sunday.

"So far, it's been an outstanding experience and a once-in-a-lifetime adventure for everyone," he said. "The Rangers, who come from across the territories, are working well together, despite the language and culture differences, and learning from each other."

The historic patrol, which includes several Yukoners, left Resolute Bay, Nunavut, last Wednesday and spent Sunday travelling from Helena Island to King Christian Island.

The patrol consists of 29 Canadian Rangers from the three territories and four soldiers from the headquarters of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group in Yellowknife. They are travelling by snowmachine and carrying their supplies on komatiks, or Inuit sleds.

The patrol has two purposes: to confirm Canadian ownership of lands in the area and to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the forming in 1942 of the Canadian Rangers, part-time soldiers and members of the army reserve.

The patrol was joined Sunday by Maj. Yves Laroche, the commanding officer of the Arctic's 1,300 Canadian Rangers, who operate out of 59 communities. He reached the patrol by air and landed next to their camp on the sea ice.

"This is not a picnic at all," he said. "This patrol requires a lot of Ranger knowledge and skills. Getting to the Pole will be a great achievement, an achievement for Canada and the Ranger program.

"It is a test of the skills of the Rangers, their endurance and their organization.

"The biggest challenge is working in an area that they do not know, with Rangers from different cultures, which means they must adapt and work together."

The patrol, called Operation Kigliqavik Ranger (after the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge of known land") expects to reach the area of the Magnetic North Pole by the end of the week.

The writer, a former Globe and Mail reporter, is the public affairs Ranger for the operation.

Chretien, opposition leaders pay tribute to soldiers killed in Afghanistan

Bruce Cheadle
Canadian Press
April 18, 2002

Ottawa - Canada has been reminded of the precious cost of defending rights and freedoms, Prime Minister Jean Chretien said Thursday as he and parliamentarians of all stripes paid tribute to the Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

MPs stood for a minute of silence to mark the tragedy. Flags on Parliament Hill flew at half mast.

Chretien rose first in the House of Commons to express his sympathy to the families of the four soldiers killed and the eight injured in a "friendly fire" incident overnight Wednesday night near Kandahar, Afghanistan.

About 800 Canadian troops are in Afghanistan rooting out elements of the al-Qaida terrorist network.

"At times like these, we grasp for words of comfort and consolation, but they are just words," Chretien told a sombre House.

"They can never do justice to the pain and loss that is being felt this morning in Edmonton by mothers and fathers, by wives and children who have received the worst news we can imagine.

"All we have in our power today is to tell them, as a nation, that they are in our thoughts and prayers."

The prime minister planned to phone the families of the dead soldiers later Thursday.

The Canadians died when they were mistakenly bombed by a U.S. warplane during a night training exercise. Chretien called the incident a "horrible accident" and promised the government will find out what happened.

“I want to ensure the families and the people of Canada that these questions will be answered.”

Chretien said U.S. President George W. Bush called him Wednesday night to offer “his most sincere condolences” to the families and promise a full investigation.

Chretien praised the Canadian Forces for their “valour, daring and skill.”

Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson issued a statement saying the deaths touch all Canadians personally.

“We know that our soldiers are courageous and prepared for the trials and risks of conflict,” said Clarkson.

“Their mission is to serve justice and do what is right . . . Nevertheless, what has happened to members of the Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry in Afghanistan is a shock to all of us.”

Posted on the home page of the PPCLI Web site, a banner bears the regimental crest and the words “In memory of the Canadians killed by American friendly fire 18-April-02.”

John Reynolds, the Canadian Alliance interim leader, told the Commons the soldiers “made the supreme sacrifice in defence of all we hold near and dear as a nation.”

He told the families “we are very, very proud of those loved ones you have lost.”

Alliance Leader Stephen Harper issued a statement “extending our heartfelt prayers for the safety and security of our personnel.”

Bloc Quebecois Leader Gilles Duceppe expressed sympathy to the families and friends of the victims.

“We are with them,” he said.

NDP Leader Alexa McDonough said the first Canadian combat casualties in 50 years served as a reminder of “an experience those of us who grew up in the latter half of the last century had believed, had hoped would never be visited again.”

Outside the Commons, McDonough said her party’s position is that Canadian troops should not be fighting alongside the U.S. in Afghanistan.

“We feel that the situation in Kandahar is not one that we should be sending our troops into, period.”

Conservative Leader Joe Clark expressed condolences to the families, then went on to question whether the troops were adequately equipped and properly commanded.

“Did the arrangement whereby American commanders direct Canadian troops have any impact on these casualties?” Clark asked the House.

Some MPs squirmed uncomfortably at Clark’s queries.

“I was absolutely shocked,” Reynolds said outside the Commons. “Today is not the day to ask questions in the House . . . Today is the day to offer sympathy to the families.”

At the end of the tributes, Reynolds walked across the floor to shake Chretien’s hand.

Tributes and condolences came from as far afield as the Arctic Circle, where members of the Canadian Rangers are celebrating their 60th anniversary by trekking to the magnetic North Pole.

“Rangers are members of the Canadian Forces, they’re soldiers, they’re part-time soldiers, and for them to find out that this has happened is like a blow to the family,” Sgt. Peter Moon, spokesman for the Rangers, said Thursday by satellite phone from Cape Isachsen, nearly 3,000 kilometres north of Edmonton.

“It’s a damper on a very happy occasion.”

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein said the tragedy “just brings home the horrors of war and the risks that these soldiers put themselves in.”

“All Albertans feel for the families of the soldiers, both those who were killed and the eight others who were injured,” said Klein. “And it hits home especially since those soldiers were from here in Edmonton.”

Premier Gary Doer offered the collective condolences of the province of Manitoba.

“Knowing that the mission would be dangerous is one thing,” he said. “Having this happen is quite another.”

Magnetic N. Pole Reached: Patrol Braves Ice, Bitter Cold

Stephanie Rubec

Toronto Sun

April 18, 2002

Cape Isachsen, Nunavut. Canadian military reservists have conquered the magnetic North Pole, braving -50C windchill, polar bears and shifting sea ice.

On Tuesday, 34 Rangers in a convoy of snowmobiles roared into the pole zone on Cape Isachsen at the northern tip of Ellef Ringnes Island in the high Arctic.

The Rangers had ridden for six hours from their base camp at the former Isachsen weather station under a cloudless sky before spotting two ice peaks at 4:45 p.m. that mark magnetic north.

Rangers leapt off their snowmobiles and rushed up the giant ice mass to cheer the end of their gruelling six-day, 735-km push from Resolute Bay.

Others took out their compasses to watch the needles shift direction.

Hometown Hero

The magnetic poles mark the tips of the Earth’s magnetic field. They are several hundred kilometres from the North and South Poles, which mark Earth’s rotational axis.

“I’m going to be a hero when I get home,” said David Nivingalok, 21, of Coppermine, Nunavut. “There’s going to be tons of people at the airport.”

Satellite Images

A plan to push on to the centre of the magnetic pole zone, located 200 km out on the sea ice, was aborted when satellite images showed the pack ice was riddled with open water.

The Rangers took advantage of nearly 24 hours of daylight to rumble back to their base camp, arriving at 1 a.m.

The \$750,000 sovereignty patrol marks the 60th anniversary of the Rangers, a part-time reserve unit in the Canadian Forces founded in 1947 as a first line of defence against Russian infiltrators into North America during the Cold War.

The patrol was the largest and longest in Ranger history.

There are 3,500 Canadian Rangers in 144 northern communities.

The communities each elected a representative to participate in the patrol.

To reach magnetic north, the Rangers spent gruelling 12-hour days threading their way through narrow ravines and across dangerously buckled sea ice.

Arctic patrol reaches 'the edge': Rangers Awed by Sights at Magnetic North Pole

Canadian Press
Whitehorse Star
April 19, 2002

From the top of the world, they climbed on to a big hunk of ice, whooped and hollered, waved flags and took photographs.

More than 30 Canadian Rangers, who act as the military's eyes and ears in the Far North, reached the edge of the magnetic North Pole on Tuesday after a journey of more than 800 kilometres over bad ice and severe cold.

"Spellstruck," Sgt. John Mitchell said yesterday on a satellite phone from Cape Isachsen, nearly 3,000 kilometres north of Edmonton.

"Wow, you didn't know something like this ever existed. It's so different, it's hard to explain, it's beautiful and yet it's a very harsh land and yet the people up here adapt to it really good."

Mitchell, of Dawson City, Yukon, is taking part in Operation Kigliqavik, from the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge of known land."

Thirty Rangers and two soldiers travelled 850 kilometres on snowmobiles pulling sleds laden with tents and other supplies to get as close as possible to the magnetic North Pole.

On Tuesday, they had to stop 14 kilometres north of Cape Isachsen, which is about 80 kilometres from the magnetic pole.

"Because of the ice conditions we didn't push further. There was a big opening of water," said Maj. Yves Laroche, commanding officer of the patrol.

However, because the magnetic pole wanders around in all directions by up to 200 kilometres a day, it's believed the Rangers did reach the pole, said Sgt. Peter Moon, spokesperson for the patrol.

"It's a great achievement and there's been nothing done like this," Moon said.

Created in 1942 to keep watch on Canada's Pacific coast during the World War II, the Rangers have evolved into the military's Arctic eyes and ears.

Now, nearly 4,000 Rangers from almost every northern community in seven provinces and three territories lend their local knowledge and on-the-land smarts to regular patrols throughout some of the most remote areas on Earth.

They also give Canada crucial ammunition in disputes about northern sovereignty. While no one disputes Canada owns the Arctic islands, the United States and some European states consider the Northwest Passage that runs between them to be international waters.

Canada argues that the sea ice is an extension of the land and Operation Kigliqavik is a demonstration of that.

Wearing their traditional red pullovers and ball caps, 29 Rangers and two soldiers climbed aboard snowmobiles last week and headed out from Resolute, Nunavut, towards the North Pole to celebrate their 60th anniversary. The trip brought together Rangers from 28 different northern communities from east to west, their largest operation ever.

They saw only one caribou on their trek, and despite -40 C temperatures, everyone fared quite well except for some minor frostbite, said Laroche.

"We had some winds, it's very cold, but not really bad weather, not yet. But we cross our fingers, you never know, we hope it stays like that," he said.

The patrol expects to be back in Resolute on April 24.

Rangers Reach the Pole: Final Push Stopped by Open Water

Kevin Wilson

Northern News Services

April 19, 2002

Resolute, Cornwallis Island - While the land was less than co-operative, the Magnetic North Pole was more than obliging.

The troops of Operation Kigliqavik Ranger reached the “edge of the known world” early Wednesday morning, capping off a near-flawless trip from Resolute northwest to the Magnetic North Pole, north of Bathurst Island.

The 28 Rangers from across all three territories made their final push across the sea ice before being stopped by open water.

“They left terra firma and struck out on the ice,” said Col. Kevin McLeod, Canadian Forces Northern Area commanding officer.

McLeod was preparing to meet the troops Thursday morning after flying into Resolute one day earlier. “They’ve performed extremely well,” McLeod said.

“From all accounts, they’ve used their skills and their abilities to get along in a very fabulous manner.”

The Rangers were hindered by a “lead”, a crack in the sea ice hundreds of kilometres long and more than a kilometre wide.

After obtaining a Global Positioning Satellite reading of 78° 47' N, 103° 31' W, the patrol returned to their last camp on Cape Isachsen to await McLeod’s arrival.

At approximately 11:30 a.m., Environment Canada notified the patrol they had indeed reached Mag North.

The location of the pole fluctuates daily, courtesy of changes in the Earth’s magnetic field.

“Environment Canada said they were well within the limit,” said McLeod.

Qigliqavik Ranger’s two-fold purpose is to assert Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic, and to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Rangers.

The patrol set out from the hamlet of 250 people on snowmachines. Each machine towed 1,000 kilograms of supplies on qamutiks. Several snowmachines were damaged en route to the pole, but the troop’s familiarity with the machines kept the mission on target.

“Some of these rangers are the best mechanics in the world,” said McLeod.

He added that troops were in high spirits as they prepared to make the arduous 850-kilometre trek back to Resolute.

Rangers reach magnetic North Pole: Sovereignty mission

Adrian Humphreys

National Post, with files from The Canadian Press

April 19, 2002

Canada’s sovereignty soldiers, mounted on battered snowmobiles and battling frostbite, made it to the edges of the magnetic North Pole yesterday in their bid to assert Canada’s claim to the far Arctic reaches.

More than 30 members of the Canadian Rangers, a mainly aboriginal military unit that acts as the eyes and ears of the Canadian Forces in the remote areas of Canada, reached the fringes of the area the pole covers by yesterday morning, after eight days of gruelling travel.

They accepted congratulations over a satellite telephone link from both Jean Chretien, the Prime Minister, and Art Eggleton, the Minister of National Defence, and were greeted by Ranger officials who arrived by plane.

Until yesterday, the success of the venture was in doubt, as a rift in the sea ice left large and dangerous gaps in their path, said Major Yves Laroche, commander of the Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups in the North.

"When we got nearer, the ice was good so we went a little further than we were expecting.

"Unfortunately we didn't have boats with us, just our snowmobiles, so we had to turn around," Maj. Laroche told the National Post on a satellite phone call from the pole.

While the Rangers, who were picked from Ranger Patrol Groups from 28 different northern communities, were at the pole, they climbed a small iceberg, shouted triumphantly and posed for photographs.

"Wow, you didn't know something like this ever existed. It's so different, it's hard to explain, it's beautiful and yet it's a very harsh land and yet the people up here adapt to it really good," said Sergeant John Mitchell, of Dawson City, Yukon.

The patrol, dubbed Operation Kigliqavik, from the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge," celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Ranger reserve unit. Two years in the planning, it cost an estimated \$750,000.

Canada's claim on ice-packed Arctic waterways is increasingly in jeopardy as climate change has thinned ice cover, increasing the number of foreign ships entering the area.

As one race ends, another begins in Canada's North

James Hrynyshyn

Calgary Herald

April 19, 2002

Canada's latest bid to assert its claim to the Arctic fell just short of its mark this week when open water forced a fleet of snowmobiles to turn back before reaching its goal of the magnetic North Pole.

Organizers, however, consider the \$750,000, 1,600-kilometre round-trip trek a successful display of national sovereignty. "They could have gone further, but then it might have become a search and rescue," said Peter Moon, an organizer of the expedition by the Canadian Ranger Patrol.

Moon and 29 other Rangers from the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are now on their way back to expedition's base in Resolute, Nunavut.

Open water in the High Arctic is not unusual, even in April. But what happened this week does serve as a reminder of the challenges that climate change has brought to Canada's claim to the region.

The United States and Europe do not recognize Canada's sovereignty over Arctic waters, and the Northwest Passage in particular. Until now, the debate has been academic, but interest is growing as the region warms and the ice thins.

A recently declassified report from the U.S. navy's Office of Naval Research calls for increased resources in the Canadian Arctic in response to the increase in commercial and military traffic through the passage expected to result from climate change. "Scientific models consistently suggest that seasonal sea lanes through the formerly ice-locked Arctic may appear as soon as 2015," says the report.

Ottawa's position is that "Canada's sovereignty over internal waters would be undiminished should the extent of ice-covered waters be reduced in size," says Reynald Doiron of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The main point of the Ranger Patrol's Operation Kigliqavik, after the Inuktitut word for "the place at the edge of known land," is to reassert Canada's claim to those waters.

The expedition reached 79 degrees north latitude, a point about 70 kilometres shy of magnetic north, at about 5 p.m. on Tuesday. Because the pole wanders by dozens of kilometres on a daily basis, expedition leaders can claim they reached the general vicinity of the pole, if not the precise location.

The group spent the next couple of days near an abandoned U.S. air force weather station on Ellef Ringes Island, celebrating the Ranger Patrol's 60th anniversary. The patrol, made up primarily of northern aboriginal hunters trained by the Armed Forces, is Canada's eyes and ears in the vast Arctic wilderness and was created to bolster the country's sovereignty in the region.

But the Canadian Forces aren't content to rely on the occasional snowmobile patrol. Planners at the Department of National Defence are interested in using more sophisticated technology to help keep watch on the Arctic.

Tests of new "over-the-horizon" monitors are planned for next year on the east coast of Baffin Island, said Lt.-Col. Rory Kilburn, chief of staff for Canadian Forces Northern Area in Yellowknife. High-frequency surface wave radar under development at the Defence Research Establishment in Ottawa is designed to spot ships hundreds of kilometres away.

Also on DND's northern wish list are underwater acoustic monitors, a new ship-tracking satellite and robotic surveillance airplanes. But Kilburn admitted it won't be easy to find the money for such multimillion-dollar projects.

Canada's Power Rangers; Their Mission: The Magnetic North Pole

Stephanie Rubec

Toronto Sun

April 21, 2002

Cape Isachsen, Nunavut. Number of times my snowmobile flipped over: Two.

Wildlife I spotted: Caribou, Arctic fox, musk ox carcass and raven – no polar bears.

Number of times the komotik sled I was towing got stuck or tipped: Too many to remember.

Snowmobiling in the Arctic should be declared an extreme sport.

The land itself is challenging, punctuated by colossal snow drifts and huge chunks of sea ice pressed skyward by colliding ice plates. Add to that poor visibility caused by blowing snow.

Then latch a six-metre-long komotik sled carrying up to 450 kilos of camping gear and food onto a snowmobile.

Bring the speed up to 45 km/h and you've got an inkling of the difficulties faced by the Canadian Rangers on Operation Kigliqavik, their sovereignty patrol to the Magnetic North Pole.

The patrol, which began April 10 and wraps up with their return to Resolute Bay this week, is the longest and largest of its kind since the Rangers were founded 60 years ago.

The Rangers' northern-area division spent 18 months planning the sovereignty patrol at a cost of \$750,000 to mark its 60th anniversary.

The reserve unit was founded to protect the Canadian North after a Japanese submarine shelled the northern British Columbia coast during World War II.

But despite all the hardships that the high Arctic threw at the Rangers during their 735-km patrol to the Magnetic North Pole, they succeeded in reaching their goal on Day 7 without anyone getting hurt or sick.

But it wasn't a joyride. My lurching Polaris 340 snowmobile, christened the "Red Rocket," did a number on both my lower back and shoulder blades and turned my hands into swollen claws.

Bouncing through ice floes feels like dirt biking through an obstacle course. Snowmobiles thrust into the air during successions of unforgiving bumps and jerked from side-to-side continuously.

To avoid falling off, you quickly learn to throw your weight back and forth, sometimes riding with both feet on one runner.

It's punishing on joints, especially elbows and knees.

"It feels just like the Yukon but without the trees," quipped Dawson City Ranger Sgt. John Mitchell as he easily manoeuvred through the treacherous terrain.

Surprisingly, the gruelling terrain sometimes lulls drivers to sleep, jolting them awake whenever a particularly vicious bump threatens to throw them over the windshield.

To protect against frostbite, which can happen within minutes here, Rangers were issued neoprene face masks and ski goggles with their green down jackets, snowpants, fur hats and black leather mitts.

Despite the gear, my eyes both froze open and shut. The contact lens in my right eye froze to my eye ball. My lashes froze together in large clumps of ice.

The manufacturer of the army-issued boots might claim feet will stay toasty until -70C, but with the bone-numbing windchill, my toes froze repeatedly.

Only the seal-skin mitts borrowed from Warrant Officer Paul Burke guaranteed that at least my hands would never get cold.

Some Inuit Rangers and Cambridge Bay Ranger Doug Stern, a former Toronto resident, opted for traditional caribou clothes to fight off the cold.

While on patrol, Rangers are citizen soldiers who also act as police, wildlife and environmental officers – reporting on illegal hunting, suspicious sightings like ships and submarines and keeping an eye on expeditions.

"It's all about showing the flag," said Cpt. Rick Regan, the Rangers' deputy commanding officer.

As the Rangers pushed toward the magnetic north during exhausting 12-hour days, the terrain kept getting rougher and the obstacles more difficult to surmount.

"This is the hardest snow I've ever seen," said Fort Smith Ranger Paul Guyot, noting that even heavy polar bears rarely left tracks. "The vastness of this place is phenomenal and the wind never quits."

At the halfway mark, the Rangers took a rest day to let Resolute Bay Ranger Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk set up a mechanic shop under tarps to overhaul the snowmobiles.

By the patrol's fifth day, komotik sleds and snowmobiles were flipping every 100 metres or so, requiring Rangers to scramble off their machines and help push them out.

The snow saved many from injury, including myself when my 300-kilo snowmobile flipped onto me and pinned my leg to a large chunk of ice.

On Day 6, it took six hours of tough snowmobiling from a deserted weather station on the west coast of Ellef Ringnes Island to reach Cape Isachsen, an area of the Arctic that is the northern tip of the Earth's magnetic field, several hundred kilometres from the geographic North Pole.

Cape Isachsen was as close as the Rangers could safely travel without venturing onto the dangerously thin Arctic ice.

After spending two hours celebrating their success, the Rangers embarked on an exhausting late-night trip back to the former Isachsen weather station, made possible by the almost 24 hours of daylight that signals spring in the North.

That leg of the patrol was the most draining for the Rangers, who were already worn out by the quick tempo of the mission and a lack of sleep.

With temperatures dipping below -50C, the Rangers struggled to keep warm and stay awake, pushing into camp at 1 a.m, cold, exhausted, but exhilarated.

The heavy responsibility of sovereignty

Editorial

Northern News Services

April 22, 2002

There's a lot riding on the shoulders of a few Rangers.

It's ironic these days when the mighty American military is talking about continental defence. They will rely on satellites, high-flying planes and other high-tech sensors to keep terrorists and others from infiltrating our shores – from Mexico to the Arctic.

All well and good. But that doesn't diminish the importance of the women and men in red who have been the guardians of the North for the last 60 years. If anything, it makes the Rangers' role more essential to Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic.

With their .303 rifles, ball caps and sweat shirts these "citizen soldiers" have been Canada's eyes and ears in the North, patrolling on snowmachines for decades.

And for the past two weeks, 29 Rangers from around the NWT, Nunavut and Yukon have been taking part in one of the most ambitious sovereignty patrols in Canadian history, making their way from Resolute to the Magnetic North Pole and back.

A publicity stunt?

Perhaps.

But such a trek to uninhabited territory – and publicity that comes with it – does help establish Canadian ownership to the Arctic and reinforces the Rangers' importance.

Overflights and satellite surveillance are important, but nothing beats a person on the ground for accurate intelligence gathering. Rangers are perfect for the job. They live in the North and understand the land and the climate.

When full-time soldiers come to the Arctic, they turn to Rangers for advice.

They mean as much, and more to their communities.

The Canadian military understands this and has been working to expand Ranger ranks. It's building upon a fine tradition for which all Northerners should be grateful.

Staking a claim: Rangers from all three territories ride to Magnetic North to celebrate 60 years of standing on guard ... and remind the world who's in charge of the High Arctic

Kevin Wilson
Northern News Services
April 22, 2002

Yellowknife - Vampire Four, a Canadian Forces Twin Otter, dips its wings as it approaches the airstrip. A remote weather station sits on the left of the strip, a newly-erected tent city to the right.

Like a bug trapped in amber, the wreckage of a U.S. Air Force DC-3 can be seen lodged in the ice as the Otter prepares to land. More reassuring are two lines of men and women, standing behind snowmachines, awaiting the airplane.

Lee-Enfield rifles at the "stand easy" position, 29 Rangers and five support crew await the arrival of the commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, Col. Kevin McLeod.

"Rangers, Atten-TION," cries out warrant officer Kevin Mulhern. Fresh from successfully reaching the Magnetic North Pole, the members of Operation Kigliqavik Ranger have camped near the airstrip.

The commander's visit caps off the arduous journey by the troops from all three territories. Yukoners, NWT residents, and Nunavmmit worked together to travel 850 kilometres across Cornwallis Island, through Polar Bear Pass, over sea ice and King Christian Island, Ellef

Ringnes Island, and finally to Cape Isachsen.

Marking the 60th anniversary of the irregular military force, Kigliqavik Ranger also asserts Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic. The waters south of Resolute where the troops trained is expected to be part of an open Northwest Passage some day.

The Rangers' commanding officer, Maj. Yves Laroche, flew in midway to lead the troops to the pole.

Surprise reunion

McLeod quickly dispenses with the formalities, and has a little fun.

Unbeknownst to Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk and his partner Ranger Debbie Iqaluk, McLeod has brought their son, 15-year-old Pilipoosie from Resolute.

The surprise has been kept under tight wraps for days, with Ranger spokesperson Peter Moon threatening anyone with death if they so much as breathe a word about it.

Debbie, staring straight ahead during the landing and the inspection, doesn't see her son until McLeod tells her he has "a little surprise."

After the embraces and the inspection are over, Debbie says she "had no idea. I was just standing there, and then I saw him, and just went, 'Oh there's my baby,'".

McLeod gathers the troops in close and congratulates them on a job well done.

"You've done it with professionalism, panache, and lots of style ... I can't tell you how proud I am," he says.

The team looks weary but exhilarated as they relax on a glorious Thursday. The temperature is hovering around -25 C, with just a hint of wind.

The four occupants of one tent are a cross-section of the three territories. Lead scout Joe Amarualik and Melanie Howell are both from Resolute. Shane Oakley is from Haines Junction, Yukon. Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern is a “reg force” soldier based in Yellowknife.

“You want a pancake?” asks Howell, working in cramped quarters on a Coleman stove.

Mulhern makes a crack about her cooking.

“Sometimes, it’s a very tense tent,” Howell says with a chuckle.

McLeod ambles out of the tent, the beneficiary of one of Howell’s blueberry pancakes. The troops have plenty of flour, pancake mix, bacon and other foodstuffs. Rather than the easier-to-prepare field rations, Howell and her colleagues are feasting on the real stuff so there’s less to carry on their qamutiks.

Despite the wisecracks, they are tight. Rank isn’t closely observed here. There is no staff tent, no officers tent. Nor is there a Nunavut, NWT or Yukon tent.

Maj. Yves Laroche, Commander of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, has been to hot zones in Haiti and Bosnia. He says the bonds formed when troops perform challenging tasks are lifelong.

“People will have these friendships for life,” says Laroche.

For Laroche, Kigliqavik Ranger is a bittersweet assignment. He’ll soon leave the commander’s post for a position in Valcartier, Que.

“It was a very, very hard decision to make. If I had to play the game again ...” he says before trailing off.

His affection for the Rangers is evident.

“These are the true citizen soldiers and they are truer Canadians than anyone south of 60,” he says.

Ranger Paul Guyot from Fort Simpson is still marveling at the rollercoaster ride that got him to nearly the top of the world.

He was selected by his local troop in Fort Simpson for his superior skills on the land, but nearly had to be medevaced out of Resolute after becoming ill.

“I was really, really not feeling very good,” he says of an affliction he tactfully agrees to call “tummy trouble.”

Unable to keep any food inside him, the community nurse recommended against going. Dejected, he agreed to stay in Resolute to help with logistics.

“I didn’t want to compromise the trip in any way,” says Guyot.

Miraculously, he recovered after sitting down to a heavy meal of fried fish, after being unable to hold down even biscuits.

He celebrated his 46th birthday at Magnetic North.

Hours later, as McLeod prepares to take his leave, a sundog appears in the sky. Starting with points on either side of the sun, it soon extends to three more points, appearing like a halo in the sky.

Debbie Iqaluk, fresh from one last embrace with Pilipoosie, looks up. “That’s a good sign,” she says, delighted.

Guarding the Passage

James Hrynyshyn

Northern News Services

April 22, 2002

Yellowknife - It comes as no surprise that Operation Kigliqavik Ranger should encounter open leads on its way to Magnetic North. Open water is not usual for the High Arctic, even in April.

But it does evoke the challenges that climate change has brought to Canada's claim to the region.

The United States and Europe do not recognize Canada's sovereignty over Arctic waters. Until now, the debate has been academic, but interest is growing as the region warms and the summer ice melts.

A recently declassified report from the U.S Navy calls for increased resources in the Canadian Arctic in response to the increase in commercial and military traffic through the passage. "Scientific models consistently suggest that seasonal sea lanes through the formerly ice-locked Arctic may appear as soon as 2015," says the report.

Ottawa's position is that Canada's sovereignty would be "undiminished" in the even of a year-round Northwest Passage, and Operation Kigliqavik's main purpose is to reassert Canada's claim.

Planners at the Department of National Defence, however, are interested in more sophisticated strategies.

Tests of new "over the horizon" monitors are planned for next year in Clyde River, says Lt. Col. Rory Kilburn, chief of staff for Canadian Forces Northern Area. High-frequency surface wave radar under development at the Defence Research Establishment in Ottawa is designed to spot ships hundreds of kilometres away.

"They are hoping to test the concept and make sure they can pick up contacts over towards the coast of Greenland," Kilburn says. If it works, stations will be built at each end of the Northwest Passage, possibly within a decade.

Also on DND's Northern wish list are underwater acoustic monitors, a new ship-tracking satellite and robotic surveillance airplanes.

Canada may have some breathing room, however, thanks to similar climate trends on the opposite side of the Arctic Ocean. "I would be looking for a passage to open in the summer by Russia first and not one by Canada," says climatologist Andrew Weaver of the University of Victoria.

Rangers May End Odyssey Tonight

Whitehorse Star

April 24, 2002

The Canadian Rangers who approached the North Pole last week are making their way back to Resolute, N.W.T., planning to arrive as early as this evening.

On April 16, 30 Rangers and three headquarters members of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group went as far as reliable ice and good judgment could take them.

Last Thursday, the members of the Kigliqavik Ranger expedition to the magnetic north pole spoke by satellite phone and received the praise and thanks of Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Defence Minister Art Eggleton.

The expedition left Resolute April 9 and headed north more than 800 km in seven days, ending on the sea ice more than 10 km north of Ellef Ringnes Island and a couple of kilometers south of a broad open stretch of Arctic sea that had opened in the path of the patrol.

Unable to go around or over the water and concerned that a gap might open in the ice behind them, the patrol abandoned plans to stay on the ice overnight. It travelled south to Cape Isachsen and established camp at midnight. At its furthest north, the expedition reached only the edge of the area of the magnetic pole before being stopped by the sea.

The expedition, whose chief purpose was to assert Canadian sovereignty over a seldom-visited part of the Arctic, has been a success despite not reaching the centre of the magnetic pole.

Chretien and Art Eggleton called the patrol to speak with the Rangers and offer congratulations.

Chretien spoke with Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern, Sgt. John Mitchell of Dawson City, Sgt. Darrel Klemmer of Tulita, N.W.T., Sgt. Aqiatuk and Junior Canadian Ranger Iqaluk, and expressed his delight with the patrol's success.

Eggleton called a few minutes later to share his greetings and discuss the loss of four Canadian servicemen suffered in Afghanistan.

"We are happy for the Rangers and sad for our soldiers in Afghanistan," he said.

Col. Kevin McLeod, the commander of Canadian Forces Northern Area, arrived from Resolute in an Air Force Twin Otter from 440 squadron to share the moment with the patrol and offer his own praise to the most northerly members of his command.

McLeod presented Cpl. Levi Qaunaq of Igloodik, Nunavut, with the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 years' service as a Canadian Ranger. He said the location of the medal presentation was unique in the history of the Canadian Forces.

When the Commander's Twin Otter left an hour later, it also medivaced out Klemmer, who suffered a deep cut to his hand while preparing equipment.

Klemmer was taken to the nursing station in Resolute, where he received stitches for a wound that had exposed the bone. Deeply disappointed, he will remain in Resolute and assist at the base of operations there.

The patrol marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Rangers in 1942. The patrol will travel almost 2,000 kilometres in 16 days, making it the longest sovereignty patrol in Canadian history.

"This sovereignty patrol is a continuing example of the service and dedication of the Canadian Rangers over the past 60 years," said Eggleton.

"It illustrates their unique skills and vital contributions, not only to their own communities, but to Canada. Canadian Rangers, who are masters of operation in Canada's harshest environment, are an invaluable component of the Canadian Forces."

The expedition is called Operation Kigliqavik Ranger, from the Inuktitut word for the place at the edge of known land.

This article was provided by the Canadian Forces in Yellowknife.

Polar Expedition Called a Boost to Sovereignty

Stephanie Waddell

Whitehorse Star

April 26, 2002

An expedition that took Canadian Rangers from across the North to the edge of the magnetic North Pole was about gaining a sense of sovereignty.

"It's always been a national thing, you know, to wave the Canadian flag here," Sgt. John Mitchell of Dawson City said in an interview Thursday from Resolute Bay, Iqaluit.

"And I think what everybody, that I'm getting a sense of, got was a sort of personal understanding of sovereignty as it pertains to them. You know, it became a personal thing."

Mitchell was one of the 30 Rangers on the snowmobiling trek to the magnetic North Pole, which left from Resolute Bay on April 9.

The trek, Kigliqavik Ranger (which means "lace on the edge of known land") was to assert Canadian sovereignty over an area of the Arctic that is seldom visited.

"We got 40 per cent of Canada sitting up here north of 60; we've got more than our share of natural resources for the country here; we've got some of the unique flora and fauna that you can't find anywhere else in the world, and vast areas of some of the most beautiful country, and I think any country in the world would be proud to have any of the above and we got the whole works here," Mitchell said.

Beyond that, he continued, there are the people - some of the most unique, interesting and independent ones to be found in the world.

After departing Resolute on April 9, the group covered more than 800 km. north in a week, ending on sea ice more than 10 km north of Ellef Ringnes Island and about two km south of an open stretch of Arctic sea.

The patrol members abandoned plans to camp on the ice for the night because they were unable to go around or over the water, and there was also concern that a gap might open behind the patrol. Instead, the expedition travelled south to Cape Isachsen and camped there.

When the group reached the most northern area on the trip, it was on the edge of the magnetic North Pole.

On April 18, Prime Minister Jean Chretien and National Defence Minister Art Eggleton called to congratulate the troops on their expedition.

The prime minister spoke with Mitchell as well as Warrant Officer Kevin Mulhern of Yellowknife, Sgt. Darrel Klemmer of Tulita, N.W.T., Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk of Resolute Bay and Ranger Deborah Iqaluk of Resolute Bay.

While Eggleton shared greetings with the Rangers, the defence minister also told the troop about the Canadian soldiers who died in Afghanistan in a "friendly fire" incident.

"We are happy for the Rangers and sad for our soldiers in Afghanistan," Eggleton said.

The Rangers' trek was the first time Rangers from across the North (1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group) have come together in a combined operation.

There were four Yukoners, 10 Rangers from the Northwest Territories, 16 from Nunavut, one from northern Manitoba, one from northern B.C. and one from northern Alberta involved in the expedition. There were also five non-commissioned officers who worked out of the base camp.

On Sunday, a banquet will be hosted in the Rangers' honour.

Rangers return in style: Operation Kigliqavik Ranger returns to Resolute two days early

Kevin Wilson
Northern News Services
April 29, 2002

Yellowknife - Operation Kigliqavik Ranger is over.

The 33 Canadian Rangers and staff completed their 1,700-kilometre round trip from Resolute to the Magnetic North Pole Wednesday afternoon, two days ahead of schedule.

"We stopped just outside of town," after camping the night before near the Polaris Mine, said warrant officer Kevin Mulhern, Kigliqavik Ranger's mission commander.

The troops rode their snowmachines across Resolute Bay in a long line before dropping off their qamutiks behind the South Camp Inn.

The troops then unfurled Canadian, territorial, and Ranger flags, and paraded through Resolute in four lines. "It was amazing, the response we got, especially when we came up to the school," he said.

The four troops from Resolute who acted as guides were mobbed by throngs of students from Qarmartalik School.

The Rangers set out from Resolute April 10, on a mission to assert Canadian sovereignty in the High Arctic and to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the irregular military force.

Among those riding along for the last leg was Ranger Sgt. Darrel Klemmer, who had to be flown out after slicing his open his finger.

Although he had reached the pole with his comrades, he was bitterly disappointed at not finishing the mission.

"I missed being with them," he said. The Tulita resident had been loading a damaged snowmachine onto a supply plane when the accident happened.

"I cut some stuff off with my knife, and it went almost to the bone," he said.

Ranger Sgt. Paddy Aqiatsuk, one of four from Resolute who acted as guides, said his fellow troops handled themselves well in unfamiliar territory.

"I was actually kind of surprised for the treeline boys," he said. "I didn't think they would do as well as they did," he added.

The troops will spend the next few days resting up in Resolute before heading home. A gala community feast, attended by Nunavut Commissioner Peter Irniq was planned for Sunday.

Resolute Recruits: Military Reserve Unit Wants New Young Rangers

Stephanie Rubec
Toronto Sun
April 29, 2002

Resolute Bay, Nunavut - They're the MacGyvers of the Canadian Arctic.

Strand any Canadian Ranger on an ice floe north of 60 with their military issued .303 rifle and they can live off the land indefinitely. Throw in a needle and some dental floss – which no Ranger would be caught dead without – and they'll sew up a fur outfit to ward off the most chilling arctic wind.

The 3,500 Rangers living in remote and northern communities across Canada are the Canadian Forces' toughest cold-weather soldiers whose survival skills rival the world's most elite forces. They're a military reserve unit founded 60 years ago to protect Canada's northern and remote borders.

The reservists consider themselves citizen soldiers, wildlife, environmental and police officers. They make up the biggest active military unit in the Canadian Forces. The Rangers' red-hooded sweatshirts and cap have become something of a status symbol in Canada's north. In Resolute Bay, about 40 of the town's 200 residents are Rangers.

The Canadian government depended on Rangers heavily during the Cold War to guard against possible infiltration by the Soviet Union. However, when the Iron Curtain dropped, so did the Rangers' relevance until 1995 when a U.S. ship sailed through the Northwest Passage without Canada's permission. That's when the international shipping industry began eyeing the waterway as a possible shortcut between Europe and the Orient and threatened to dispute Canada's ownership claims.

Radar on Northern Border

The Rangers keep an eye on foreign ships by maintaining the North Warning System, a radar set up on Canada's northern border. Col. Kevin McLeod, Canadian Forces Northern Area commander, said Rangers are updated on international flight routes since 1999 when Russia opened its airspace causing about 100 planes a day to fly over the pole and the Canadian Arctic to get to the U.S.

McLeod said the Rangers will be first on the scene of an Arctic plane crash since it will take military search and rescue crews located in Trenton, Winnipeg and Comox at least six hours to fly in.

Rangers are also kept busy by the influx of diamond mining companies eager to tap into the Arctic's natural resources, but not always ready to recognize Canada's ownership of the area. "What we ask them is to know their backyards very well," McLeod said.

Melanie Howell is an anomaly within the Canadian Rangers.

In a community where you're not considered a local unless you've lived there for at least two decades, Rangers instructors were surprised that the former Toronto resident was invited into the Resolute Bay patrol by Ranger Sgt. Paddy Aqiatasuk.

"It's not normal that they recruit someone from outside the community," Laroche said.

Earlier this month in Resolute Bay, Howell was issued her .303 rifle in a bright red carrying case stamped with the Ranger logo. At just over five feet, Howell is dwarfed by other mostly male Rangers, but she doesn't get special treatment. She maintains her snowmobile, pulls a heavily loaded komotik sled, helps put up heavy canvas tents during patrols and contributes to cooking meals and setting up heaters and stoves. She's also expected to do her share of labour on a sovereignty patrol, including pulling out stuck snowmachines and heavy sleds.

Learned Some Inuktitut

Howell, the only Caucasian woman on this month's Magnetic North Pole sovereignty patrol, is originally from Tennessee. She attended McGill University for two years and then travelled both the U.S. and Canada looking for a city to call home. In 1999, Howell shelled out for the costly air ticket to Resolute Bay to visit her older sister who was working there as a cook.

“I knew I was coming for at least six months,” said the soft-spoken 27-year-old. But the petite brunette with the sparkling blue eyes fell in love with Resolute Bay, and took a federally financed air traffic services course. “This is a right fit for me right now,” she said.

Howell has learned some Inuktitut and adopted the Inuit’s vibrant facial expressions that often eliminate the need for words.

In January, Howell accepted Aqiatasuk’s invitation and joined the Rangers.

Unlike other soldiers in the Canadian Forces, the Rangers get a lot of breathing room. They pick their new recruits and can vote out those who don’t fit in.

Maj. Yves Laroche, the Canadian Rangers’ northern division commanding officer, said new Rangers undergo a security check and are dismissed if they’ve committed a major crime such as assault or a weapons offence. Military instructors evaluate new recruits during an initial 10-day introductory session where they learn advanced first aid as well as rescue and recovery skills.

Rules are also laid out for the sovereignty patrols Rangers conduct at least once a year. On those patrols, Rangers travel as a group up to 300 kms from their communities to look for anything or anyone unusual. Rangers tell anecdotes of spotting submarines or strange ships in the Arctic Ocean, poachers and expeditions gone awry.

Laroche said the Canadian Forces are actively recruiting Rangers to boost their numbers from 3,500 to 4,800 by 2008. Rangers are only paid during sovereignty patrols. Salaries range from \$2,000 to \$3,500, depending on rank, for each annual patrol.

Laroche said since the majority of Rangers are middle-aged, recruiters have been tasked with rejuvenating the ranks.

“Our Rangers are getting older and there are not a lot of young people joining,” he said, adding that Rangers must be at least 18 and retire by 65.

Almost there: Ranger Paul Guyot beams with pride after trip to the Pole

Derek Neary

Northern News Services

May 3, 2002

Resolute - Paul Guyot won’t soon forget his most recent birthday.

He spent that day, April 16, on the doorstep of the Magnetic North Pole with a select few Canadian Rangers as part of a 60th anniversary sovereignty patrol.

“It was just unbelievable,” he said. “It was great to be part of a historical trip.”

Technically, the Rangers didn’t quite make it to the Pole.

They were obstructed by open water that stretched 32 kilometres in length by four kilometres in width. But they weren’t dismayed.

While in the vicinity of the Magnetic North Pole, halfway up Ellesmere Island, the Rangers contacted Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Defence Minister Art Eggleton.

After spending about three hours on site, they began to head back to Resolute.

From the air, the convoy of 35 snowmobiles and komatiks was a sight in itself, stretching nearly a kilometre in length, according to Guyot.

Riding a Polaris 340 touring snowmobile, he logged 10 to 13 hours of travel per day alongside his fellow Rangers.

There were two food and fuel resupply sites and at night the excursionists slept in double-walled canvas tents to fend off the frigid weather.

“It was freezing. It was cold, cold, cold,” Guyot said, adding that his thermometer only registered to -30 C so it was rendered useless.

“I couldn’t believe how this weather is here. You stop your machine for five minutes and then you have to restart it using the choke. The wind cools off metal so quick.”

Everything takes a little more effort in such a wintry environment, but Guyot said there were few complaints.

“My view of the Inuit people, one word sums it all up and it’s tough,” he said.

Even upon their return to Resolute two days ahead of schedule – a return trip of 1,550 kilometres – the Rangers’ spirits were still soaring, according to Rangers’ spokesperson Sgt. Peter Moon.

“They became school kids leaping off their machines, cheering, patting each other on the back, hugs,” he said.

Then they immediately tended to the matter of personal grooming.

“They fought to get the bathtubs and the showers,” Moon laughed. “Some of them I can’t recognize today, except you know who was on the patrol because they’ve all got frostbitten noses and cheeks and windburn.”

Due back in Fort Simpson this week, Guyot is planning to return with Arctic ice that he chiselled and packed in styrofoam in a plastic bag.

There may also be a surprise in store for his son, Stephan, who asked his dad to check and see if Santa Claus had any leftover presents for him at the North Pole.

All is Well at the North Pole: Canadian Rangers return from sovereignty mission

Miriam Hill

Nunatsiaq News

May 3, 2002

Cpl. Joe Amarualik has been having some trouble sleeping since he returned from guiding nearly 30 Canadian Rangers safely to and from the magnetic North Pole.

“There was so much quiet around the building because of the walls, it was kind of hard to sleep for some people including myself,” he said from his home community of Resolute Bay. “It was quiet and warm, after two weeks of living in a tent and hearing everything.”

Amarualik, 30 Rangers and three headquartered members of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group left Resolute April 9 on snow machines, and sped toward the goal of reaching the magnetic Pole and helping assert Canada’s sovereignty in the North.

Seven days and 800 kilometres later, the motorcade of snow machines stopped about 10 kilometres north of Ellef Ringnes Island and a couple of kilometers south of an expanse of the Arctic sea which opened in front of the patrol. They reached the outer edge of the Pole before deciding, in the interests of safety, to return to Cape Isachsen and set up camp at midnight.

The patrol answered satellite phone calls from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Defence Minister Art Eggleton, who offered their congratulations and thanks for the mission. To maintain its sovereignty in far-reaching places, the Canadian government must prove Canadian interests are using the space. This patrol, which marked the 60th anniversary of the Rangers, was the largest in terms of participants and kilometres covered.

It was by far the largest group Amarualik has guided, too.

“Leading this many people for such a great distance was challenging,” he said. “I felt a tremendous amount of responsibility to keep them all safe.” The weather cooperated most of the way, he said, except for the wind and brief whiteout conditions on the return trip.

Levi Qaunaq, of Igloolik, had a smile on his face the whole way back to Resolute, thanks to a surprise presentation by Col. Kevin McLeod at Cape Isachsen. Qaunaq was awarded the Canadian Forces Decoration for 12 years of service as a Ranger. The location of the medal presentation was unique in Canadian Forces history.

Qaunaq said he has actually been a Ranger for 15 years, and was thrilled and shocked to be singled out.

“I was overwhelmed,” he said in Inuktitut. “So touched that I was in tears.”

Emotions ran high at the Pole. Commissioner Peter Irniq, in Resolute Sunday for a community feast, mentioned in his speech the actions of Johnassie Inuktuluk, of Sanikiluaq, “who, in great excitement and joy at arriving at the pole was moved to climb an iceberg and raise his parka and shirt to the skies.”

The mood continued when the Rangers returned to Resolute on April 24, two days ahead of schedule.

“The community came out, there were people at the beach, people where we were going to park and people all over town,” Amarualik said. “The best part of our trip was reaching our objective, the magnetic North Pole. But for me the best part was when my feet touched the beach in town.”

Rangers began leaving the community on Monday and Amarualik said it made him feel sad to see the people he spent so much time with leaving.

“After hanging around with them I sort of feel alone now,” he said, adding the community will feel smaller after they’ve gone.

Canadian Rangers on guard for thee in the high Arctic

Alex Strachan
Vancouver Sun
October 5, 2002

Well it may not look like much, but it belongs to you. It’s pitch black six months of the year, and the sun never goes down the other half. Bears with paw prints the size of a Sasquatch roam the ice, looking for something warm-blooded to sink their teeth into, and the few people who live there – well, they may sing a nice song about the spirits of their ancestors and all, but deep down you get the feeling that their idea of Valhalla probably includes a comfy couch and a TV the size of a narwhal, with Don Cherry butting heads with whomever between periods on Hockey Night in Canada.

Still, you never know just who might put their mitts on the place and who knows what resources may lie under the ice?

Last April, a hardy band of Canadian Rangers set out on a 1,000-kilometre, eight-day trip on snowmobiles across the barren terrain from Resolute Bay to the Magnetic North Pole. The Rangers are military volunteers, many of them Inuit, who are expert in northern survival. They roam the high north to assert Canada’s sovereignty over the Arctic. Videographer Ian Hannah’s account of the expedition, *Operation Kigliqavik: Place at the Edge of Known Land*, debuts this

weekend on the season opener of CBC News Sunday, and it's a fascinating journey. Anything mechanical breaks down at the slightest hint of Arctic cold. Little more than four hours out of Resolute Bay, the snowmobiles come to a dead stop while the sled dogs hunker down and watch. The Inuit are patient. It's a mixed group: Leo Angootealuk is a sergeant in the Rangers and an Inuit from Coral Harbour; Melanie Howell, an Anglo Ranger from Resolute Bay, could pass for a young tour guide in Gastown. Days into the trek, the Inuit decide they've had their fill of army rations and go looking for "country food" – seal meat.

Their objective – the Magnetic North Pole – won't make anyone forget Mt. Everest or the Himalaya massifs when they eventually find it and stake Canada's claim. "Just a chunk of ice," someone says, "and as cold as they said it is. ... A milestone in the middle of nowhere." Someone else fiddles with a digital radio and gets the weather forecast: The trip back is going to be worse. Have fun watching at home, and if it's raining outside, turn up the heat.

CBC Sunday Morning airs at 10 a.m. on CBC-TV. Ian Hannah's 25-minute documentary Operation Kigliqaquik will air some time during the two-hour program.

Rangers will receive medals

Editorial

Whitehorse Star

January 21, 2003

Thirty-nine Canadian Rangers who participated in the expedition to the Magnetic North Pole last April will receive the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal from the Governor General's personal allocation to mark their achievement.

"This is a wonderful gesture by the Governor General that will be greatly appreciated by all members of this historic patrol," Maj. Stewart Gibson, commanding officer of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, said in a statement.

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson gave medals from her personal allocation to recognize the achievement of the expedition, which was the longest and largest sovereignty patrol in Canadian history.

Included with each medal is a letter from the Governor General thanking the recipient "for the support you have given me as Commander-in-Chief and for the loyal and dedicated service you provide Canada."

The medals will be presented over the next few months to members of the patrol by the commanding officer and members of the headquarters staff of 1 Canadian Ranger Patrol Group.

The Rangers involved in the expedition came from across the North to meet in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, and covered 1,700 km of sea ice and rough terrain to reach the pole and mark 60 years of service to Canada.

The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal commemorates the 50th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne.

Operation *Kigliqaqvik Ranger*

The Canadian Rangers' Expedition to the Magnetic North Pole, 2002

Julian Tomlinson and P. Whitney Lackenbauer

In 2002, Canadian Rangers undertook one of the most ambitious patrols in their proud history. Often lauded as the “eyes and ears” of the Canadian Armed Forces in the Canadian North, the Rangers set their sights on the Magnetic North Pole. Operation *Kigliqaqvik Ranger*, named after the Inuktitut word for “the place at the edge of known land,” covered more than 1,600 kilometres of rough sea ice, pressure ridges, rocky river valleys, and breathtaking expanses of tundra. Each Ranger on the patrol drove a snowmachine that pulled a sixteen-foot *komatik* (sled) laden with up to 675 kilograms of supplies. As this volume reveals in stories, photographs, diary excerpts, and newspaper articles, the Rangers endured wind chill temperatures below minus fifty degrees Celsius, near whiteout conditions, and twenty-four-hour sunlight. This volume celebrates their collective achievements and highlights the mental and physical toughness, perseverance, and esprit de corps required of participants in Arctic military operations.



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