
THULE
AIR BASE
The top of the World

1
00:00:00,220 --> 00:00:03,900
Operation IceBridge: What (and who) it takes to keep a mission flying

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00:00:06,900 --> 00:00:08,420
In 2016, Operation IceBridge was joined by Dr. Piers Sellers,

3
00:00:08,440 --> 00:00:10,630
a NASA earth scientist, astronaut, and manager,

4
00:00:10,650 --> 00:00:12,440
who came north to connect with the mission and its partners in the high Arctic.

5
00:00:12,460 --> 00:00:15,300
As we return in 2018, we remain grateful to the late Dr. Sellers,

6
00:00:15,320 --> 00:00:16,970
the NOAA crew who provided us a safe and successful field season,

7
00:00:16,990 --> 00:00:17,730
and the men and women of the U.S. Air Force in Thule who maintain

8
00:00:17,750 --> 00:00:19,370
an invaluable base of operations for our science missions

9
00:00:22,160 --> 00:00:24,710
NASA's Operation IceBridge operates out of one of the world's harshest climates

10
00:00:24,730 --> 00:00:26,660
Northwest Greenland (750 miles north of the Arctic Circle)

11
00:00:29,590 --> 00:00:34,390
So here we are at Thule Air Base, and this was put here originally in the fifties

12
00:00:34,410 --> 00:00:38,430
as a Cold War, you know, forward outpost - bombers and all that stuff

13
00:00:38,450 --> 00:00:45,160

And since then, it's come back to being a scientific base, for us anyway, for NASA at least

14
00:00:45,180 --> 00:00:47,540
and a few other military applications as well.

15
00:00:49,490 --> 00:00:54,670
The United States works closesly with its Danish counterparts to support missions like Operation IceBridge

16
00:00:54,690 --> 00:00:59,980
It's a huge collaborative effort. We do very little without the work with each other.

17
00:01:00,000 --> 00:01:02,680
Because we have an airfield and we have a port and we have a lot of facilities here

18
00:01:02,700 --> 00:01:06,060
We have a lot of infrastucture and it's fairly unique this far north

19
00:01:06,080 --> 00:01:09,320
anywhere in the world, and so as a result of that, we allow

20
00:01:09,340 --> 00:01:14,180
NASA, the National Science Foundation, as well as reserachers from around the world

21
00:01:14,200 --> 00:01:17,220
get access to the high Arctic.

22
00:01:17,240 --> 00:01:19,220
The United States Air Force provides critial support to NASA's efforts in the Arctic.

23
00:01:19,240 --> 00:01:23,180
So on the aircraft operations side, having a hangar is really important

24
00:01:23,200 --> 00:01:25,540
and the Air Force has been able to provide us with that hangar space

25
00:01:25,560 --> 00:01:27,840
It's important for both the aircraft, that it stays warm

26
00:01:27,860 --> 00:01:29,660
and doesn't have to start up from a cold state

27
00:01:29,680 --> 00:01:32,580
and also for the scientific instraments - we don't want them to get cold

28
00:01:32,600 --> 00:01:36,310
to possible cause any damage to them.

29
00:01:36,330 --> 00:01:39,370
We love the different missions that come through here

30
00:01:39,390 --> 00:01:43,180
be it the NASA missions or a lot of the National Science Foundation missions

31
00:01:43,200 --> 00:01:47,530
When IceBridge comes up here probably one of the biggest things that I do

32
00:01:47,550 --> 00:01:51,250
is we make sure you guys get the fuel you need for the aircraft

33
00:01:51,270 --> 00:01:55,220
and then any kind of passenger or cargo movement that you guys need to

34
00:01:55,240 --> 00:01:58,470
send up here to conduct your operations.

35
00:02:00,200 --> 00:02:05,660
For air traffic control, there's significant, some challenges, some new experiences

36
00:02:05,680 --> 00:02:11,230
we get when we get different type of aircraft outside of our typical C-17, C-130 military aircraft.

37
00:02:11,250 --> 00:02:15,640
The simiple part of it is pretty much making sure the targets on our scope don't touch

38
00:02:15,660 --> 00:02:20,700

We seperate you guys, we have quite a few rules that we have to abide by

39
00:02:20,720 --> 00:02:23,500
Once you get into the habit of it, it gets fairly simple

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00:02:23,520 --> 00:02:27,120
My job here is to keep the NASA mission going, keep you guys safe

41
00:02:27,140 --> 00:02:28,990
by providing air traffic control services