

Berg!!!

In the early 1960s I was ending a tour at FLTWEAFAC, Argentia, Newfoundland (NFLD) being relieved by LT Jack Pingel. One day Jack and I decided to accompany the ICE PATROL that was charting the edge of the ice pack (Davis Strait) onboard a P3 out of Argentia. The flight was about 10-12 hours, leaving Argentia and RON in Thule, Greenland and returning to NFLD the next day

The forecast for the edge of the pack was 800-1000 FT overcast. After the P3 descended to 800 FT and we started to chart the edge of the ice pack, the ceiling gradually lowered to 200-400 FT. That put the top of the bergs above us. The radar operator was calling the bergs ahead of us and the P3 would slip and slide around the bergs until one showed up right in front of us. The co-pilot saw it first and yelled "BERG!!" and pulled back on the yoke. The engineer had his hands on the engine throttle and pushed them forward. We pulled 2.3 G's and missed the berg by about 50-80 FT. Jack and I were standing just in back of the engineer. Jack fell first and then I landed on top of him tearing up his knee and ankle, which he nursed for the next 3-4 months.

It probably wasn't too smart for two LT's to volunteer for ice patrol duty.

If we had been in a "Willy Victor" instead of a P3, we probably would have been a decoration on that 'berg'!

Submitted by CAPT Ace Trask, USN RET

Ed. Note: CAPT Jack Pingel, USN RET passed Feb.20, 2013