

MR. HAGERTY: (after the President and others had left)  
All right, gentlemen and ladies, one other thing that I think you should know, this mission that the Commander went on was one which the President himself was very personally interested in, and we have been following this boat for some time.

I think the easiest thing to do now is to have the Commander run over for you people very quickly what happened from the time he first got word of the mission.

COMMANDER ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Hagerty.

I am a little bit dazed right now, because 14 hours ago I was submerged, 72 hours ago under ice, and only five days ago, at the North Pole. Things are moving too fast.

Right now, the NAUTILUS is steaming toward a Western European port with my extremely capable Executive Officer, Lieutenant Commander Frank Adams in command. The only bad thing about being called down here to Washington is I am a little bit afraid that by the time I get back to the ship, they may find out how totally dispensable I am, and I will be out of a job.

I was brought into discussions on the possibility of making a trans-Polar voyage in January of this year. The NAUTILUS, as perhaps you know, made some preliminary excursions under the ice over on the Greenland Sea side last September, the maximum penetration reaching a point within 180 miles of the Pole. We had some difficulties on that trip, but we learned a tremendous lot which benefited us during this trip just completed.

I was told to prepare the ship in secrecy for a possible trans-Polar voyage. The operation was not set up to be executed until considerable deliberations on the feasibility, part of which included an initial familiarization set of operations conducted by the NAUTILUS up in the Bering-Chukchi Sea areas in June. To set the stage for the possible trans-Polar crossing, the NAUTILUS sailed from her home port in New London, Connecticut, in April of this year, through the Canal, out to the Pacific. While out there, for a considerable period of time, we worked with the Pacific Fleet units, demonstrating our capabilities to the anti-submarine forces out there. On the 8th of June we sailed from Seattle up through the Aleutian Chain and up into the Chukchi Sea, to explore the ice conditions and to make some preliminary excursions underneath the ice, to determine suitability or possible suitability of a cruise all the way across the basin. So we had, in 1957, gone a considerable distance in this direction (indicating), which served as an excellent piece of groundwork. In June of this year we were a fair amount over the distance up in this direction -- (indicating). Following that preliminary investigation, the ship returned on schedule to make the first visit of a nuclear-powered ship to Pearl Harbor. We remained in Pearl Harbor for some three weeks -- approximately three weeks -- demonstrating to Pacific Fleet units in that location the capabilities of the NAUTILUS.

While we were in Pearl Harbor, the Navy set up a series of aerial reconnaissance flights to keep a check on ice conditions to determine for this first crossing the optimum time for our departure from Pearl Harbor. We departed Honolulu on the 23rd of July, and sailed at a rapid speed, submerged, up to the Bering Straits. The transit from Honolulu to the Bering Straits was made at an average speed of almost 20 knots, over a distance of some 2900 miles.