

> -----Original Message-----

From: Fred Hannah

Sent: Thursday, November 07, 2002 10:58 AM

To: littlechick

Subject: **L-20 Beaver flights to H4**

Hello William Chick;

Warm regards to all personal of the AC&W squadron in Iceland. I have the highest admiration for you all of those that served our country in the remote corners of Iceland.

As a young Captain, I was assigned the task of flying the Dehaviland Beaver (L-20) from Kelfavik AB to H-4 from June 1959 to June 1960. I have many fond memories of flying in Iceland but there were a couple of flights that I shall never forget.

One bright early morning I took off from cleave AB with 5 passengers heading to radar site H-4. Our good weatherman forecasted a "no sweat" flight condition all the way. As we passed over Isafjordur about 20 miles south of H-4, the weather quickly closed in behind us. With no deicing equipment on the L-20 I decided the best options was to continue on to our destination. About 5 miles south of H-4 the weather surrounded us. The airplane started accumulating ice rapidly on the wings and windshield.

We were under H-4 radar surveillance and they reported that the ceiling at the 800 foot long gravel airstrip at the bottom of the hill was rapidly deteriorating to below 500 feet. We were more or less trapped. The aircraft was getting sluggish and required an increase in power and airspeed. I requested the radar controller to notify us when we disappeared in the main bang so I could turn west and start a decent out over the Denmark Strait waters. Some of the personnel also went outside to listen for our engine noise and when they heard us and lost us on the scope, he advised us and we turned and descended to 500ft altitude performed a 180 degree to the left and hopefully lined with the airstrip heading. I believe around 1000 feet, we hit a wind or air pocket that jarred the airplane real hard and I heard a loud groan from a sergeant that had just been released from the base hospital from having an appendectomy. I just gritted my teeth and hoped that he was okay. we finally broke out over the water about 1/4 mile out and saw a "bright light" on the beach airstrip. I corrected our heading and continued our decent with full power and flaps until touchdown. With a higher airspeed to keep from stalling the 800 foot runway became unusually short. With locked brakes we finally came to a stop just short of the end. Believe we had room to make a 180 or maybe the guys on the ground had to push us back to make the turn around (can not remember).

Taxiing back I noticed the little wooden operations shack on the right was on fire!

I then realized that this was the "bright Light" I had observed which allowed us to adjust our line up with the runway strip.

I spend the evening and that night with some great AC&WE troops. The only problem is that they sucker me into playing foosball with the loser having to drink a jigger of booze if you lost the game. Guess who never won? I believe a Captain Danny Kinkler was one of those bad guys who burn down the Ops building and put me to bed that night.

My warm regards to all you AC&W guys. Have a great reunion. It was a pleasure being associated with you.

Fred Hannah