

# **WELCOME TO THULE "THE TOP OF THE WORLD"**

Congratulations on your assignment to Thule Air Base, Greenland! You'll soon find out why so many people say this is the best isolated/remote tour for an Air Force member. While that may take some time for you to believe, it is a fact. Quality of life and the pride and professionalism of the base will soon show you why your new assignment will be a truly outstanding one. By thoroughly reading the following guide we hope you will find the information extremely valuable in assisting you in your transition process to Thule Air Base.

## **OVERVIEW**

As you travel through Baltimore/Washington International Airport on your PCS, carry this information package with you. Please don't travel in uniform unless directed to.

When you arrive at Thule, you will be greeted on the Flight line by the Base Commander, First Sergeant, Chaplain, Unit Commanders. Once inside the terminal you will need a copy of your PCS orders and your CAC. You will receive a number of briefings while your bags are unloaded. After you receive your bags you will be greeted by your sponsor.

Upon arrival, you will be scheduled for the Commander's Arctic Start newcomer orientation, which is normally held the third Tuesday of each month. At that time you'll receive more information from various base agencies.

**This guide is separated into the following areas:**

Page 2: [\*\*WHERE IS THULE?\*\*](#)

Page 3: [\*\*WHY DOES THULE EXIST TODAY?\*\*](#)

Page 3: [\*\*WHAT'S AT THULE: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONS\*\*](#)

Page 11: [\*\*WHAT'S THE WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENT REALLY LIKE\*\*](#)

Page 19: [\*\*THERE'S NOTHING TO DO HERE: WRONG!!!\*\*](#)

Page 23: [\*\*GETTING READY FOR YOUR PCS\*\*](#)

Page 26: [\*\*HELPFUL INFORMATION: WHAT TO BRING AND WHAT THULE DOES NOT HAVE\*\*](#)

Page 29: [\*\*HISTORY OF THULE\*\*](#)

## WHERE IS THULE?

Thule Air Base is the United States Department of Defense's northernmost installation - (76 32' North latitude, 68 50' West longitude) located 750 miles north of the Arctic Circle, and 947 miles south of the North Pole on the northwest side of the island of Greenland. It is approximately 550 miles east of the North Magnetic Pole.

Located between the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, Greenland is the world's largest island. The term Greenland is "Kalaallit Nanaat" in the Inuit language. It is a country within the Kingdom of Denmark and is inhabited by approximately 56,000 people. The arctic, referred to as a "cold desert," gets very little precipitation annually. The name "Arctic," derived from the Greek word "arktos," meaning "bear," refers to the constellation Ursa Major, or Great Bear, which appears prominently in the northern sky.

"Thule" is from the Latin word with the same spelling meaning "northernmost part of the habitable world." Greenland covers nearly 840,000 square miles; more than 80 percent is covered either by the ice cap or smaller glaciers. According to scientific measurements, the greatest thickness of the ice cap is about 6,500 feet. To a depth of about 60 feet, the cap is comprised of compressed snow; the top layers are dry and crusty, creating fine, powdered snow. This dictates that buildings be constructed off the ground or have air corridors separating the buildings from the ground. Otherwise the heat from inside the buildings melts the cap, and the buildings sink—a lesson learned the hard way during the life of Thule AB.

Thule is a land of contrasts. The perimeter of Greenland consists mainly of mountains. Glaciers flow down these mountains through deep valleys to the sea. The highest peaks, the Gunnbjom Mountains, on the eastern coast of the island rise over 12,000 feet. The Thule Defense Area, created by an agreement signed 27 April 1951, covers approximately 254 square miles. Thule is located in a coastal valley approximately four miles from the entrance of North Star Bay on Greenland's west coast. The bay is part of Baffin Bay which extends to the southern part of Ellesmere Island 140 miles west of Thule. The base is built on a broad and rather flat glacial valley floor between two bedrock ridges, North and South Mountains. The valley slopes gently to the east-southeast until it meets an ice cap, the Great Land Glacier, about 10 miles inland.

Thule is locked in by ice nine months out of the year. Each summer a Canadian Icebreaker ship, pushes through the ice in North Star Bay to clear a path for American, Canadian and Danish cargo ships. This marks the opening of a very short "port season," during which these ships bring in the installation's annual bulk resupply of fuel, food, cargo and construction material, The bay will be frozen again by mid-October, isolating the installation once again to air or dogsled access only.

There is no "local town." The closest Inuit (native Eskimo) village, Qaanaaq, is located 65 miles away. There is no "off-base" except for the bay, the ice cap and what appears to be thousands of miles of rocks and/or ice.

The Thule area is barren most of the year; although from June to September, the snow melts and arctic tundra plant life such as poppies, cotton, mosses, and a variety of colorful flowers bloom. The extremely cold climate means a limited variety of wild animals. Around the base you are likely to see arctic fox and arctic hares on a regular basis. Polar bears, seals and musk ox are also potential visitors to the area.

During the summer, several varieties of birds to include peregrine falcons will call Thule home. Unfortunately, the summer will also bring out swarms of mosquitos. Locals refer to them as the "Greenlandic Air Force"...so bring mosquito repellent. In southern Greenland, vegetation and wildlife are more varied and abundant. If interested, the community center has a collection of books that will tell you more about this region, the arctic and its people.

### **WHY DOES THULE EXIST TODAY?**

Simply put, Thule exists today as a result of agreements between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark specifically to address mutual defense. Strategically, Thule's "Top of the World" vantage point enables constant polar vigilance in the defense of North America. Thule AB supports the operation of the solid-state phased-array radar located at the 12th Space Warning Squadron (12 SWS) and part of the Air Force Satellite Control Network at 23rd Space Operations Squadron, Detachment 1 (Det-1). The 12 SWS site is located a few miles northwest of the main base. It provides early warning detection of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches from the Russian land mass and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launches from the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans against North America. Additionally, 12 SWS keeps track of polar orbiting satellites and objects. Det-1's mission is to expertly perform telemetry, tracking and commanding operations in support of U.S. and allied satellite programs in support of national security space.

Although the base population expands in the summer (with exercises, expeditions, contractors, and visitors), normal population is approximately 600 consisting of 400 Danish, 50 Greenlandic, 3 Canadians, and 140 American military and civilians. Because of its mission and inclusion as part of the NATO agreement, Thule Air Base is expected to remain a vital part of America's defense plan for decades to come.

### **WHAT'S AT THULE: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **821st AIR BASE GROUP (821 ABG)**

The mission of the 821st Air Base Group is to perform Air, Seaport and sustainment operations at Thule Air Base to enable missile warning and access to space for America and its Allies. It provides security, communications, civil engineering, personnel, services, logistics, and medical support to remote active duty units in a combined US, Canadian, Danish, and Greenlandic environment of 600 military, civilian and contractor

personnel. The 821 ABG operates not only the DoD's northernmost installation but also the world's northernmost deep-water Seaport as well as provides a unique platform for arctic training, international scientific research, and environmental programs. 821 ABG/CC is the Senior US gov't representative on the island of Greenland and is responsible for interfacing with Kingdom of Denmark and the US Embassy in Copenhagen on a wide variety of International agreements and mutual issues of Defense and Foreign Affairs.

### **821st SUPPORT SQUADRON (821 SPTS)**

The mission of the 821st Support Squadron is to provide support for remote active duty units in a combined US, Canadian, Danish, and Greenlandic environment of 600 military, civilian, and contractor personnel and enhance missile early warning, space surveillance, space control, and operational readiness by providing engineering, medical, communication, logistics, services and airfield operations support to the 821st Air Base Group and tenant organizations. Most personnel within the ABG serve as Contract Officer's Representatives (COR) for the contracts held by Greenland Contractors (GC) and BAE. The flights include communications, airfield operations, medical services, logistics, civil engineering and services/personnel.

### **821st SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON (821 SFS)**

The mission of the 821st Security Forces Squadron is to provide installation defense for remote active duty units in a combined US, Canadian, Danish, and Greenlandic environment of 600 military, civilian, and contractor personnel; provide security for two operational units that execute missile warning, space surveillance, telemetry, tracking, and commanding for US and allied satellites; and manage the installation Antiterrorism program in coordination with local Greenlandic and Danish police forces.

### **12th SPACE WARNING SQUADRON (12 SWS)**

The 12th Space Warning Squadron mission is to conduct continuous, real-time missile warning and missile defense vital to the security of North America; detect and track earth-orbiting objects in support of space situational awareness; care for and develop discipline and innovative Airmen. 12 SWS crews operate the Upgraded Early Warning Radar (UEWR), a phased-array radar which continuously reports attack assessments of sea-launched and intercontinental ballistic missile threats to North America, to the President, SECDEF, JCS, USSTRATCOM Missile Warning Center and NORAD/NORTHCOM. The radar simultaneously and automatically detects, characterizes and relays track data needed to support the engagement of Ground-based Mid-course Interceptors directed by JFCC-Integrated Missile Defense of ballistic missiles targeting North America. Additionally, the radar is used to detect, track, and identify earth-orbiting objects in support of Air Force Space Command's space surveillance mission.

Administratively, the Operations Flight (DOO) provides direct support to the missile warning crews. The Operations Support Flight (DOU) provides all crew force initial,

recurring, supplemental training, and evaluation. Other flight responsibilities include hardware and software development, operational test and evaluation, and Crew Force Management (CFM).

### **COMPTROLLER (FM)**

The comptroller function at Thule offers a full range of services. TDY/PCS travel vouchers are computed and paid; allotments can be started, stopped, or changed; BAQ recertification's can be accomplished; and advance military and travel pay can be received. **THERE IS NO BANKING FACILITY or ATM MACHINE** at Thule, so you must take care of your banking needs before arriving. Personal checks are not cashed at finance; however, checks can be cashed at the Base Exchange and Consolidated Club. Additionally, each military member is encouraged to have a military Government Travel Charge Card for travel.

### **AIR FORCE POST OFFICE (APO)**

Here at Thule, one of the best means of communications due to our remote location from the rest of the world is through the Post Office. Even though we have reliable telecommunications throughout the base, these services are limited and sometimes undependable due to connections. The personnel at the APO provide immediate service in seeing your letters and packages are delivered in a timely matter. But even the APO has limitations that could slow the process. Some of them are the irregularity of incoming flights from the States and hold-ups at U.S. Customs offices. Mail has an average time frame of two to three weeks before reaching its final destination from here. For mail coming to Thule, a trend of seven to ten days is expected.

The APO provides a number of services to suit your needs while here at Thule. These services include the purchase of postal money orders, postage stamps, and parcel mailing. Since flights out of Thule are limited, we are unable to provide any express mail service. The hours of operation are varied throughout the week to accommodate incoming flights. For the most part, your needs are met and improvements are always looked at with high interest.

### **CHAPEL (HC)**

The Thule Chapel, or as our Chaplain likes to call it "First Church of Thule," provides a wide range of religious programs for the base community through a resident Air Force chaplain and contractors. Worship services and a variety of Bible studies and adult education forums are offered weekly. Laity-led advisory councils help design, develop, and carry out the many activities provided.

The Chapel sponsors the Airman's Ministry Center's (AMC) "Ice Cave"; an alcohol free environment where all Airmen can come together and enjoy free interlinked gaming systems (X-box 360, PlayStation 4, and Wii), free pizza and fellowship. The AMC is located

in the Community Center (Bldg 362) and is open Friday and Saturday. Occasionally, the AMC will host game tournaments such as Call of Duty Modern Warfare, Madden, Wii Sports, Blur, etc.

Other special activities include volunteer opportunities; confidential counseling; baptism; pre-marital, marital, and family counseling; marriage and family enrichment programs; and various referral resources. The Chapel also co-sponsors two significant base-wide functions: Armed Forces Day and Operation JULEMAND.

Armed Forces Day is held in the March/April timeframe on the frozen surface of North Star Bay. Danes and Americans participate with Greenlandic natives who travel up to 200 miles by dog sled to celebrate the day long activities that include mukluk hockey, craft sales and the ever-popular dog sled races. Services supervise the sports activities and provide a special meal at the Top of the World Club.

Operation JULEMAND (which means "Christmas Man" in Danish) is 50+ year humanitarian program organized and supported by the Thule AB personnel to give back to the Greenlandic community. Money raised goes to support programs for Youth activities as well as to purchase children's Christmas gifts for the Thule District villages. Functions are held throughout the year to support the purchase of these gifts, sports equipment, etc.

## **MEDICAL (SG)**

The hospital consists of a contract and military staff that together provides exceptional quality care. The scope of care includes primary care, 24-hour emergency services, general surgery, immunizations, laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, physical exams and limited dental care. Any active duty Air Force personnel requiring specialty care outside the hospital scope will be sent on a medical TDY to Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews AFB, MD. If you have special medication requirements, bring a six-month supply with you to Thule and request refills at the hospital one month in advance, due to the extensive supply chain lead times. **NOTE: Ensure you follow your PPC requirements and hand carry your medical and dental records.**

## **ASSOCIATE UNITS**

### **DETACHMENT 1, 23rd SPACE OPERATIONS SQUADRON, 50th SPACE WING**

Detachment 1 (Det-1) is a Remote Tracking Station (RTS) located approximately 3.5 miles NE of Thule main base. Det-1 reports to the 23rd Space Operations Squadron, 50th Network Operations Group, 50th Space Wing, Schriever AFB, CO. 50th Space Wing is one of four wings reporting to the 14th Air Force located at Vandenberg AFB, CA.

The people of Det-1 directly support space operations by providing telemetry, tracking, and command of satellites developed and deployed by the Department of Defense, other US Government agencies, and allied governments. It also provides data

distribution and routing systems to support external users' programs and other ground elements.

Thule Tracking Station (TTS) was originally designated by Air Force Systems Command as "Operating Location 5" (OL-5), 6594th Test Wing (Satellite) on 15 October 1961. Originally a classified location, TTS was declared operational on 30 March 1962. In its first configuration, TTS was nothing more than transportable antenna vans parked in an old bomb assembly building with a van-mounted generator providing station power. In 1964 the vans gave way to a permanently mounted antenna, and since that time, the bomb assembly building has become the home of TTS. TTS has belonged to two different major commands and has had five organizational designators. Its current designator, Det-1 under 23rd Space Operations Squadron became effective 1 October 2010. Since its inception, TTS has had 52 commanders, ranging in rank from first lieutenant to lieutenant colonel. Because TTS was originally envisioned as supporting the Polar Orbiting Geophysical Observatory, TTS adopted "POGO" as its AFSCN call sign. Although the Polar Orbiting Geophysical Observatory has long since been retired, the call sign POGO remains.

The facility operates two telemetry tracking and commanding antennas and one dedicated mission antenna. These antennas transmit commands to satellites and receive telemetry information back from them. Telemetry information is comprised of satellite state-of-health data and mission data. Initially, the antennas are pointed in the direction where the satellite will come into view. Once the antenna locks onto the satellite, it tracks the satellite as it moves through space, sending commands and receiving telemetry while gathering tracking data. The extreme northern location of Thule provides a nearly ideal position for communicating with polar-orbiting satellites.

## **CONTRACTOR ORGANIZATIONS:**

### **GREENLAND CONTRACTORS (GC)**

Greenland Contractors, which was formed as a joint venture in 1952, employs approximately 400 Danish, Greenlandic, and American personnel. It is the largest single organization represented at Thule Air Base. They perform a variety of tasks for the Air Force at Thule, including the operation and maintenance of all utility plants, pavements and grounds, engineering and planning, dining halls, recreational services, custodial services, operation and maintenance of vehicles, non-sensitive communications, fire protection, housing, supply, and medical services. Greenland Contractors has been represented at Thule Air Base since the company was formed in 1952 and as Operations and Maintenance contractor since 1 July 1971.

### **GE AMERICOM**

General Electric has a contract with DECCO (Defense Communications) for most of the communications in and out of Thule. The four employees, subcontracted from Lockheed-Martin, manage, maintain, and operate two satellite terminals. The mission

has been on base for many years (pre 70s). The first terminal was built on P-mountain in 1977 and was later moved to “J-Site”, 12 SWS, in 1983.

## **BAE**

Employing approximately 46 American contractors, BAE Systems manages, operates, maintains, and logistically supports the installation’s sensitive communications, PMEL, and 12 SWS UEWR radar.

## **HARRIS**

The Harris Corporation has approximately 24 employees at Thule, who manage, operate, and maintain mission equipment at Det-1.

## **GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITIES:**

### **GREENLAND HOME RULE/AIRPORT AUTHORITY**

The Greenland Home Rule/Airport Authority (GHR) representative is responsible for all Greenlandic passengers traveling to and from the Thule district. GHR also manages the Danish Post Office, Danish Bank, and Greenland Souvenir Shop (the Danish Mall where you can buy reindeer soap stone carvings, postcards, Danish stamps, currency, and more). During port season, they handle Greenland and Danish shipping activities for the base. One Greenland Air helicopter is the only aircraft permanently assigned to the base.

### **DANISH LIAISON OFFICER (DLO)**

Because Greenland falls under the Danish flag, there is a Danish Liaison Officer (DLO) and a Danish Police Inspector (DPI) on base. They work directly with the base commanders to ensure coordinated operations with the host country.

The DLO, a commander in the Royal Danish military, is Denmark's military representative here. He is the link between 821 ABG/CC and Joint Arctic Command Commander, who is stationed at Nuuk in the capital of Greenland. He assists the Base Commander in all matters pertaining to Greenland and Greenlandic and Danish authorities. He ensures, to some extent, that the USAF does not violate the 1951 treaty signed by Denmark and the United States. He is the liaison between the base population and base authorities and the Inuit population in the district (which consists of 4 villages and a population of about 900). He assists the Danish base population in all matters related to a normal society, i.e. tax, customs, social welfare, health care, and justice-of-the-peace functions (marriages. etc.). He acts as the Danish Police Inspector when the DPI is not on base. He checks entry permits and makes security checks on arriving/departing passengers on flights between Thule and Copenhagen. He assists the Base Chaplain during Danish/American religious services.

The DLO also provides the radio link for Station Nord, a small meteorological station situated on a runway on the northeast coast of Greenland. He supplies them with various provisions as well as coordinates for their annual refueling missions. It is kept open year round by a five personnel crew from the Danish Armed Forces. The station is used as an emergency runway for both civilian and military aircraft and as a gateway to northern Greenland.

### **DANISH POLICE INSPECTOR (DPI)**

The Danish Police Inspector is the law for the approximately 1,800 people (Avanerssup Kommunia and all non-US military members of Thule Air Base) and 220,000 square miles of northern Greenland. He serves as a magistrate for the Ministry of Justice for the Kingdom of Denmark. (The Chief Constable is located in Nuuk,) He is part of the police in Greenland, but without the powers of a Justice of the Peace. He handles investigations and processes indictments for crimes. He is responsible for Search and Rescue in all settlements in the northern quarter of Greenland. He serves separation and divorce decrees, processes passports, and drivers' licenses for Danish nationals, serves as prosecutor in Greenland's criminal courts, and acts as a park ranger in the Wildlife preserves.

### **BASE SERVICES:**

#### **BASE EXCHANGE/BARBER SHOP**

Though small in comparison to a stateside exchange, you will find the AAFES Thule Exchange offers a wide selection of items. They have a variety of American and Danish food items as well as beverages, vitamins, personal care items, cleaning and laundry supplies, paper products, small electronics, DVDs and limited clothing items. Some military clothing items that will be available will be Tan T-shirts, boot blousing items, as well as Women's hair products (i.e. hairbands, clips, etc.) Other options available if you do not find them at the store are customer convenience orders, catalog orders and special orders. Check cashing is available for authorized military ID cardholders and limited to current AAFES policies. Debit card cash advances are offered as well, for a limited amount. All major credit cards are accepted as well as the Military Star card.

The AAFES Barbershop, located in the exchange, is able to handle most of your hair care needs from haircuts to styling to perms. Walk-ins are the only available option, no appointments.

### **COMMISSARY**

There is no commissary at Thule. The Exchange does offer a limited selection of fruits, vegetables and frozen food items. There is also a Food Warehouse in Bldg. 200 but its main function is to serve as support for the dining hall, Top of the World Club, and the BX. Individuals may order bulk food items but realize this is a warehouse not a regular commissary store.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

Thule has two (2) dining facilities located at 12 SWS as well as Det-1. We also have the Dundas Buffet Restaurant located on main base, and located within Dundas Restaurant there is a small Danish Deli with fresh cuts of meats, and other assorted grocery items. Meals are served three times daily, seven days a week. Midnight meals are provided for shift workers at 12 SWS and Det-1. Special meals are prepared on major holidays. The food service staff provides a wide variety of entrees, side dishes, short order sandwiches, and desserts to please the diverse population. NOTE: Dining Facilities & Dundas Restaurant does not offer a Gluten Free menu.

## **LAUNDRY/DRY CLEANING/TAILORING**

Thule Services also offers inexpensive and complete laundry (without starch), dry cleaning, and tailoring services with a centralized drop-off/pick-up point. Most items are ready within 2-5 days. You will be amazed at the quality and the price. Additionally, there are washer and dryer units located on each floor of the living quarters. There is an ironing board on each floor of the living quarters if you choose to iron your clothing. (Dry cleaning is so cheap you should never have to iron your own clothes again!)

## **LODGING**

The North Star Inn (Bldg. 100) provides quality service and outstanding living quarters to transient personnel. Sundry items, beverages and snacks are available. Due to the age of the facility, the bathroom and shower facilities are not located in the individual rooms but conveniently down the hall. Recommend bringing shower shoes for the short walk. There are private phones and computer hook-ups available in each room. The Inn is located two blocks from Dundas Buffet Restaurant. Each floor has microwave ovens, washers and dryers. A DV suite is located in building 105. Cash, checks, and Visa/Master Card are authorized for payment. Wi-Fi is also available.

## **WHAT'S THE WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENT REALLY LIKE AT THULE?**

### **WHAT WEATHER WILL YOU FIND AND WHAT WILL YOU SEE ONCE YOU ARRIVE AT THULE?**

One of the first things new arrivals notice at Thule is the clean, crisp air. Yes, it is cold up here, but because of the dry climate it may not appear as cold as it actually is. Remember that Thule is in the Arctic, so sudden, drastic weather changes will occur.

Here at Thule you should dress properly for the cold but also realize that you will go from a warm building to a warm vehicle (the majority of newcomers use the base taxi)

to a warm building. When the weather is too harsh (i.e. harsh winter storms, impassable roads, etc.) you are required to stay in your quarters. (The worst winter storm conditions can last up to three full days.) There are periods during the summer months that you will actually see people walking outside in shorts and short sleeve shirts. There are other days when only a windbreaker may be needed. Temperatures at Thule range from minus 30 to plus 50 degrees Fahrenheit. It has reached a high of 68 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer and has dropped to minus 47 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. Winds of 30 knots are common during arctic winters, sometimes peaking out at 100 knots or more. The dry, Arctic air is extreme: static electricity and dried out skin occur quickly and often during winter due to very low absolute humidity, despite what the relative humidity percentages may be for the day. Thule receives an average of 28.2 inches of snow and 4.4 inches of rain annually. The coldest temperatures hit at the same time as when the sun comes up over South Mountain (late February to early March).

For three months, beginning in late November, the sun is below the horizon, gradually changing from twilight to 24 hours of darkness. When the sun returns in late February you gain 20-40 minutes of daylight per day until late April when it remains above the horizon for 24 hours a day for nearly four months. The summer sun is very bright and dark sunglasses are highly recommended. In mid-August, you will witness the first sunset since April, and from that point on you receive 20 to 40 more minutes of darkness per day until November when again you have 24 hours of darkness with the darkest and shortest day of the year being 21 December. In the late spring, most of the snow from the shore of North Star Bay to the edge of the ice cap usually disappears. Tundra, base rock, and a thin layer of powdery dust remain. This marks the beginning of Thule's mud season.

During the "summer months" (15 May – 14 Sep) off-base travel is authorized (though always with a buddy) for "Thule Tripping." You will quickly learn that distances are deceiving. Mountain peaks and islands that are 15 to 30 miles distant look as though they are just a short walk away. Information is available at the Community Center about many off-base sites to visit and photograph.

During the winter season (15 Sep – 14 May) persistent high winds from winter storms moving through north Greenland blow snow from the ice cap and cause a local weather phenomenon known as "storm conditions." These storms are a deadly combination of wind, snow, and sub-zero temperatures. The wind is channeled into the valley where Thule is located. The valley amplifies the wind, and it increases in velocity. The loose snow is picked up by the high winds and can severely restrict visibility. \*\*During a storm in March 1972, the anemometer on a storm shelter (Storm Shelter #7) recorded the 2nd highest wind velocity ever on earth: 207 mph.\*\*

**Arctic winter storms are divided into these classifications: Normal, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, and Delta.**

Delta represents the most serious threat to life and property. Two factors (visibility and

temperature) are assessed to determine the applicable storm conditions. When any two of these three factors are present, the appropriate storm condition is declared.

- **Storm Condition Normal** - Business as usual.
- **Storm Condition Alpha** - Initial warning of a potential Arctic winter storm. No danger exists at this point; however, all personnel should prepare for Storm Conditions.
- **Storm Condition Bravo** - All pedestrian traffic will use the buddy system (two or more people traveling together). All personnel must stay on approved roads. If you are traveling alone in a vehicle, it must have a comm radio or use the buddy system.
- **Storm Condition Charlie** - All non-essential base facilities close. Return to Quarters. Pedestrian traffic is prohibited. Call the base taxi or use the base shuttle bus service if dedicated vehicles are not available.
- **Storm Condition Delta** - All personnel are restricted to the buildings in which they are located at the time a Storm Delta is declared. Absolutely No Pedestrian Or Vehicular Travel Is Permitted. Only emergency vehicles will operate during this condition and only at the direction of the Base Commander.

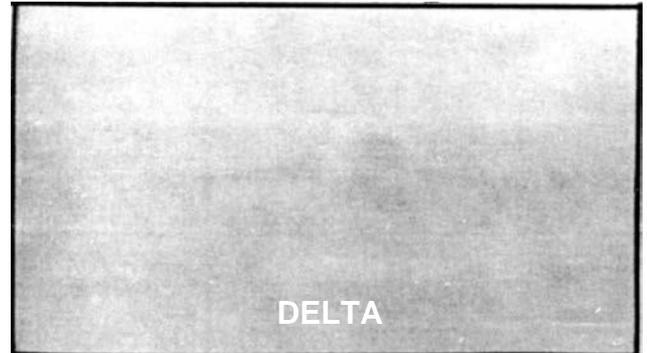
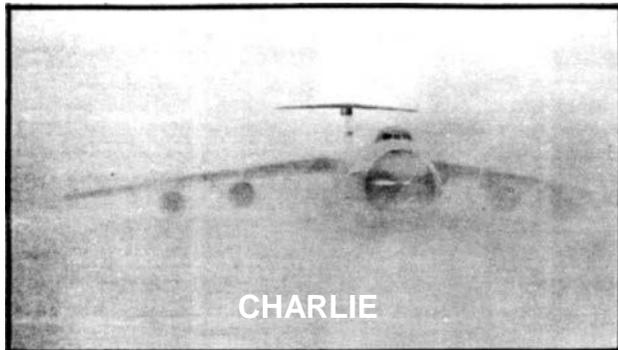
All year long, Thule weather is like weather in many northern states: unpredictable. It can rain, sleet, snow, and be very sunny and relatively warm all in one 24-hour period. **Always be prepared, and expect the unexpected.**

For your protection, storm shelters (phase shacks) are located at short intervals along the roads leading to off-base worksite locations. Each shelter is heated and stocked with emergency food, water, bedding, and a telephone. They are for use by anyone caught in a sudden storm condition. However, these shelters are for emergency use only.

<b>Storm Condition</b>	<b>Winds</b>	<b>Visibility</b>	<b>Location of Personnel?</b>	<b>Allowed to Travel?</b>
<b>ALPHA</b>	Hazardous Weather within 12 Hrs	> N/A Mile	<b>No restrictions</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BRAVO</b>	<b>&gt;20 Knots</b>	<b>&lt; 1 Mile</b>	No restrictions: Must use buddy system and radios	Non-essential restricted to main base
<b>CHARLIE</b>	<b>&gt;35 Knots</b>	<b>&lt; ½ Mile</b>	<b>Dorm/shelter</b>	Remain in shelter; Movement must be approved by the SOC
<b>DELTA</b>	<b>&gt;50 Knots</b>	<b>&lt;100 Yards</b>	<b>Dorm/shelter</b>	Rescue operations only; Must be approved by the SOC



STORM CONDITIONS  
Thule AB, Greenland



### **ARCTIC SURVIVAL GEAR**

The full complement of survival gear clothing will help prevent hypothermia for a short period of time, even in a storm condition. It is intended to extend your outdoor survivability only long enough for you to seek proper shelter promptly. During storm season, personnel assigned vehicles must keep their gear in their vehicles at all times. Personnel proceeding off base during this period must also carry the Arctic Gear at all times. During dark season, wear of the parka with its' integrated reflective material is advisable to remain visible to vehicle drivers. It is important to practice "donning" and "doffing" your arctic gear just as you would chemical warfare gear. The wrong place to learn how to wear your gear is when you really need to wear it.

## **FROSTBITE**

Even in summer months, frostbite can be a danger here. Wind chill greatly increases the potential for frostbite. In the winter, exposed skin can be frostbitten in less than 1 minute. If the symptoms are ignored and untreated, it can result in permanent nerve and muscle damage, up to and including the need for amputation. Once again, practice donning and doffing your arctic gear—be prepared!

## **ARCTIC ENTRANCES**

Be careful when entering or exiting buildings. Snow and ice accumulate, including residual snow and ice left from people cleaning their feet, on the gratings. This applies to the stairs as well as the ground around the entrances. Be especially careful where there are tile floors, water tends to make them very slick. To help combat this, be sure to keep arctic entrance doors closed at all times.

## **WORMHOLES**

No there are not giant arctic worms here at Thule. What happens is the sun melts the top layer of snow and ice during the day, and then freezes during the night. You can't tell from looking whether there's snow, water, ground, or just open space underneath it, or how high it is. Sticking to the roadways is your best option.

## **SAFE VEHICLE OPERATIONS:**

### **BLINDING SPRING**

As the sun begins its transition from the dark season, it is low on the horizon. Glare from snow, reflection off other vehicles, and direct light can be blinding. If this happens, STOP IMMEDIATELY!!!! Keep a pair of dark sunglasses with you at all times during this period and all through the light season. Put them on and wait for your vision to return to normal. Also, the reflection from headlights off ice and snow in the dark season can be a similar hazard.

### **SEAT BELTS**

Simply stated, WEAR THEM. No more than three people will ride in the front seat of any vehicle, and only on bench seats. No passenger may ride in a vehicle unless they occupy a fixed seat and are properly wearing a permanently installed, functional safety restraint device. This obviously precludes individuals from riding in the beds of pickup trucks. Properly wearing seatbelts is a proven deterrent from injury and even death.

### **SPEED LIMITS**

The speed limit on base is 25 MPH (40 KPH) maximum, but lower in some places (such as the dining facility, base gym, and the flight line). Citations for violations are written by

the Security Forces, and can cause you to lose your driving privileges for a week, month, or the rest of your tour. Remember that these speed limits are not a minimum speed to drive – they are the maximum. When road conditions are less than optimum, or during the dark months (when it is REALLY cold), remember to reduce your speed accordingly. The roads here are hard packed earth and gravel. When they get wet, you slide. Often, what appears to be packed gravel and sand roadway is actually that type of material spread over the surface of packed snow or ice for traction.

Stopping distances triple in these conditions, so increase your following distances accordingly. Never lock your brakes. They should be applied until just before the point where they lock up, and then held. Although this requires a little getting used to, it is a much-preferred method to pumping the brakes, and will stop the vehicle sooner. Be familiar with the type of vehicle you're operating and if it has anti-lock brakes.

### **ONE-WAY STREETS**

There are two one way streets on Thule: in front of the base gym and Greenland Contracting Headquarters. Use extra caution while driving, backing, and walking in these areas. Newly assigned personnel and TDY folks sometimes miss the signs.

### **DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Watch for traffic signs; they are small and often difficult to see because of the high winds we experience here. Ensure all passengers have their seatbelts on before moving the vehicle. All traffic must yield to pedestrians crossing the roadway. This does not mean swerving into the other lane to avoid them, slowing down just enough to miss them, or intimidating them by speeding up. It means coming to a complete stop, if necessary, until they completely clear the roadway. Any time you enter fog, rain, snow, or other visibility limiting factors, turn on your headlights. You may not see any better, but you will be seen.

### **ROAD CLOSURE SIGNS**

There are signs on the roads going to North and South Mountain, 12 SWS, and Det-1. There are beacons on top of these signs that flash during storm conditions. The main road signs have smaller individual lights for the individual roads. If these lights are flashing, that road is closed and you may not use it.

### **GOING TO 12 SWS**

The weather conditions change rapidly, and a trip up the hill on a dry road under clear blue skies can turn into a slippery mess with 50 MPH winds and icy, wet roads in under an hour. Couple this with your return trip being downhill, and it will get nasty. Slow down, go back, or find a storm shelter. Vehicles have been totaled from rolling over.

## **TRAVELLING DURING STORM SEASON**

All travel off base during the winter storm season is accomplished in accordance with Thule Air Base Instruction (TABI) 91-101. Basically, this instruction ensures that you “plan your hike,” and you “hike your plan.”

## **STORM SHELTERS**

Storm Shelters are emergency shelters on the roads to 12 SWS and North and South Mountains. Should you be out on these roads and a storm suddenly comes up on to your party, don't take an unnecessary chance by trying to make it back to the base. There is a phone in each shelter which is connected directly to the operator. Let the operator know where you are and wait out the storm. You can find these buildings even during storms by the reflective arrows along the road near, and pointing to, the shelter.

## **FLIGHTLINE DRIVING**

The speed limit is 15 MPH (24.1 KPH), except near an aircraft (within 50 feet) when it is 5 MPH (8 KPH). Don't drive between aircraft and nearby buildings during loading and off-loading operations. Driving on the flightline is for official business only, and is authorized only when the driver has completed a flightline driving course and receives certification from BaseOps.

## **SUMMER FOG**

When the temperatures change dramatically in the summer (and it does), fog develops over North Star Bay and will move into the Thule AB Valley. This fog can be so dense as to obscure the entire roadway. Should this happen to you, STOP! Pull to the edge of the road only if you can do so safely. Leave the motor running, with the headlights and emergency flashers on. Do not attempt to leave the vehicle, as you could be struck by another vehicle whose driver cannot see you. Wait until the fog has lifted enough for you to safely operate your vehicle to your destination.

## **SURVIVAL TIPS:**

### **SAFETY RULES**

Know the hazards of your work center. These can include equipment, chemicals, work conditions, or any other threat to your well-being. Your supervisor is required to brief you upon initial assignment to the work area, and whenever these conditions change. NOTE: Please make sure to bring your AF Form 55 or a copy of whatever way your previous unit tracked your Safety, Fire Prevention, Environmental, & Health Training. Not bringing this could result in needing to re-accomplish the training.

## **UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE**

Thule was once host to over 10,000 military members, including Army personnel assigned to Nike-Hercules missile sites. Mortars and ground-to-air missiles were part of their equipment, and they practiced with them regularly. As with any ordnance, all of it did not detonate. In 1993 one such five-inch mortar was located intact and was destroyed. Should you find anything that even remotely resembles any type of ordnance, do the following:

### **DO NOT TOUCH IT, OR ATTEMPT TO MOVE IT IN ANY WAY.**

As there should be more than one in your party, post a guard to keep others away from it as well, and contact Security Forces, inform them of your find, and follow their instructions.

No matter how neat you might think it would look polished up sitting on your desk or chest of drawers, many of these items are live and VERY UNSTABLE. Leave them alone as they can hurt, maim, or even kill you.

## **WALKING**

While at Thule, it's recommended that you walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic. Although contrary to stateside standards, this will enable you to watch for vehicles and to get out of the way should they not see you. If you are out walking after dark, wear something bright and preferably reflective such as a parka as an outer garment. This will enable drivers to see you more clearly.

***THERE IS NOTHING TO DO HERE: WRONG!!!***

As mentioned previously, despite its "geographically challenged" location. Thule offers a wide variety of services and has plenty to keep you busy for more than the length of your tour. The following facilities are available (you will be given the current operational hours in your newcomers packet) and if we do not offer a program, service, or product you would like, just ask!!!

## **BOWLING CENTER**

The Bowling Center and Fitness Center are collocated in Bldg. 608. The Bowling Center has 8 lanes and a small snack bar (Cash Only). Programs include leagues, tournaments, and open bowling. Yes, you can bring your own bowling ball. (However, since house balls are available, services is not responsible for any damages that may occur to your ball.) Lockers are available for rent.

## **CONSOLIDATED CLUB**

Thule offers membership at our "all ranks" club (Bldg. 236) to all who live at Thule. Called the "Top of the World" (TOW) Club, it offers a full service restaurant, lounge, game/slot machine room, delivery service, check cashing, and ballroom with a light/sound/video system. The restaurant is open various hours throughout the week for lunch and dinner. On the weekends they offer lunch and dinner.

For special events, the club sponsors many different types of functions: special dinner meals, live entertainment, DJs, and AFE bands. Throughout the year special events, dinners, and parties take place. Your annual membership brings discount certificates and access to membership nights. The club accepts Visa/Master cards.

## **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES CENTER**

The Community Activities Center Bldg. 362 offers a wide range of activities for Thule residents. It features a video movie library with several thousand titles, a free 40-person theater, a free game room (pool, foosball, pinball machines, video games, air hockey, 6 in 1 Sports simulator, etc.), free hot coffee and hot chocolate bar, reading area, board games, an Internet-café with Wi-Fi and 4 computers for customer use. You can purchase beverages and snacks from Thule's own "Café Cool. Whenever special guests (explorers, scientists, etc.) visit Thule they often give presentations at the center. During the winter season, you'll be able to experience a variety of monthly tournaments. In the summer many special programs and tours are provided. For private parties you can rent the Pavilion (only during summer season) located near North Star Bay or Igloo Inn Bldg. 367 (all year round).

If you like to read a good book, the Community Center is also home to a small library. It offers English books, both fiction and non-fiction together, with a collection of Danish and Greenlandic titles. We offer you the possibility to check up on what's happening by reading over 10 magazine subscriptions currently available at the library.

## **CREATIVITY ROOM**

The Creativity Room located in Bldg. 362 currently offers engraving, digital photo shop with digital photo auditors, digital photo printing, scanning, digital camera support, and a CD burner for use. Individual attention is always available. Supplies are available for purchase. There is an engraver to make plaques for gifts (going away, quarterly awards, etc.) As well as a Lapidary room for you to cut and polish a different variety of rocks from around the area you find.

## **FITNESS AND SPORTS CENTER**

Arrive at Thule ready to stay fit! The Fitness Center is one of the best equipped facilities in the Air Force and is the hub for year-round programs in physical conditioning; both organized group activities and self-directed programs. This facility is open 24-hours a day. During unmanned hours, you are allowed to use the cardio equipment, nautilus equipment and basketball courts; however, the "buddy system" must be used if entering

the free weight area. The sauna and endless swimming pool are off limits during unmanned hours. The main floor offers basketball, badminton, volleyball, tennis, aerobics, ping pong, soccer, and many other sports. It has a racquetball/handball/squash court, a spinning court, a rock climbing wall/cross fit room, and an aerobic room.

The second floor area includes many types of electronic cardiovascular equipment: treadmills, bikes, Stairmasters, and rowing machines. You will also find a fully equipped nautilus room and a superb Cybex free weight room. Both the men's and women's locker rooms have saunas. Lockers are available for those who utilize the gym regularly. Outdoors, we have a softball field and a 9-hole golf course. No need to bring your golf clubs but beware everything about the course is "rough" since we have no grass...just rocks and dirt. Sports tournaments are held throughout the year. In addition, a fully equipped mini-fitness center is available at 12 SWS and Detachment 1 sites. **NOTE:** There is no outdoor or indoor track available at Thule.

## **OUTDOOR RECREATION**

In addition to enjoying the scheduled outdoor activities, stop by Bldg. 362 and use the equipment rental checkout to rent mountain bikes, skis, snowboards, hiking and camping supplies, sports equipment, and grills. Tell a friend where you are going, and take a buddy or two to enjoy the splendor of the Thule wilderness. Depending on the season, you may wish to go cross country skiing to the Bay, hiking up Mt. Dundas (with 3 or 4 friends) or even mountain biking the 13 miles to the 12 SWS site. There are plenty of scenic sites to visit, take photos, or simply relax away from the main base.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

Throughout the year there are a variety of special programs to make your tour more memorable. There is the annual polar bear swim in North Star Bay (complete with certificate of participation), 9-hole golf tournaments, fun runs, picnics, tournaments (racquetball, pool, Mukluk hockey, basketball, volleyball, softball, etc.), numerous bus tours, and hikes to various sites around Thule. Participate in the annual Greenlandic Day, Operation JULEMAND events, Armed Forces Day, and much, much more. You may simply sign up at the front counter of the Community Activities Center for a variety of Services-sponsored tournaments, programs, and scenic tours.

## **TOURS**

Because of the lack of transportation, the rugged terrain, and the arctic climate, recreational activities are generally limited to the immediate area of the base. During the summer months, Services provides guided tours to some of the outlying areas of interest. Tour sign-up sheets are kept at the front desk of the Community Activities Center.

## IN ADDITION

During your tour, you will undoubtedly go "Thule-Tripping," that is, to join others and see what else is on the base, as well as travel off base. Services will provide you with numerous tour opportunities and a Thule map of sites. A separate Services guide will detail those various historical and picturesque points to visit, learn about, and capture on film or video.

Points to visit include base facilities (mentioned above), DeLong Pier, Signpost, Crescent Lake, Nike Hercules Batteries - A, B, C and D (launch and control), 12 SWS, DeLong 1, North Mountain, South Mountain, P (Pingarsuit) Mountain, and Camp Tuto. In addition there are numerous memorials and scenic sites: the polar icecap, the waterfall, Dundas Mountain, Dundas Village, Dundas Beach, Fox Valley, Glacier Point, Sparum Lake and Camp Century's Ice Bridge, just to name a few. During Armed Forces day, you may even get an opportunity to take a dog sled team ride out on the frozen bay.

And of course you can take the time to talk with members of the various expeditions and survey teams that use Thule as their main base, i.e., NASA, Polar Associates, Area/Iceshelf (underwater exploration team), geological survey teams, Peregrine Foundation, etc.

Or you could volunteer to assist with capturing even more of Thule's history and records or help with Chapel activities. If necessary, you could pass the time as a referee, umpire, coach, scorekeeper, aerobics instructor, carpenter, and computer graphics artist, line dancing instructor, amusement machine repair person or even a DJ.

With a wide and unending variety of activities, both programmed and unprogrammed, you will find that there is more than enough to keep you busy on your tour.

## WHICH ACTIVITIES WILL YOU DO?

As you think about your tour, begin to determine what you want to do at Thule. Examples:

Read a book a month; go to the fitness center and really get into shape; improve your bowling average; learn to play Danish pool; run the Thule Marathon; learn to Thule Box; hike to the glaciers (12 hour round-trip); help in the Dundas community activities; participate in the Dundas golf tournament (the worlds northernmost tournament); go mountain bike riding; win at TOW club bingo; go backpacking or camping; take a college course; find unique rocks and use them for a gift; ride a dog sled during the Armed Forces Day events; join intramurals; take Danish language lessons; improve your pool game, ping pong, pinball, foosball, or air hockey talents; take recreation center guided tours; help with chapel activities; do several self-tours - North Mountain/South Mountain/Dundas/ Glacier Point/Nike Launch sites/P- Mountain/Camp Tuto); build a model; engrave a plaque; improve your golf game; dine (not eat) at the TOW club; read about the Inuit culture; attend aerobic classes; work at the TOW, BX, or Services; etc. (more ideas being created weekly... **there is a lot to do at Thule!!**)

## GETTING READY FOR YOUR PCS

So now that you have all this great information about your upcoming Thule adventure, what do you need to do? To make a positive transition, we suggest you read the following, then make a list of things to bring, people to contact, and things to ask your sponsor.

### UNIFORM

The Uniform of the Day is ABU's. You will be issued Arctic ABU combat boots for the winter season but recommend bringing an additional pair you don't mind getting dirty during the muddy conditions in the summer. Although on a remote, be advised that Thule is a very popular installation for Distinguished Visitors. There are numerous formal event opportunities such as DV dinners and banquets that include Dining-In, Dining-Out, Annual Award's, Senior NCO Induction, etc. For that reason, you will need not only your service dress uniform but also your mess dress or semi-formal uniform. You should also bring at least one civilian semi-formal outfit for the holiday party and other dinners. **NOTE:** There is not a clothing sales store at Thule. Please make sure that all uniform items fit and are updated prior to your arrival or bring projected rank/ribbons with you. Don't forget to bring your white shirt for the semi-formal uniform.

### ARCTIC CLOTHING

During your first week you will be issued "arctic gear" consisting of a parka, mukluks, long underwear, outdoor winter pants, gloves/mittens, mask, wool socks, arctic bomber hat, etc. Civilians may receive limited arctic gear. Also bring a civilian winter coat, gloves, light jacket for summer, a good pair of hiking boots, sunglasses, and civilian attire for special functions. Please bring a minimum of one reflective belt with you. All personnel are required to wear highly visible reflective material during all hours of darkness or poor visibility, to include fog, rain or snow.

### DENTAL

There is no dentist residing on Thule. However, a Danish dentist comes up quarterly for one week and can be seen on an emergency basis. (Recommend getting your dental needs taken care of before you leave your current base!)

### EDUCATION OFFICE

Please ensure your education records are up-to-date prior to departing your current duty station. When you arrive at Thule, make sure you transfer your education center to Peterson AFB. Currently, Thule doesn't have an education center and doesn't have the capability to provide CLEP/DANTES exams.

## **EMERGENCIES**

If a family member has a need to contact you at Thule, the commercial telephone number to the Thule Base Operator is (719) 474-3840 or DSN 629-3840. The calling party will have to ask the operator for your extension and the purpose of the call, as all calls go through a central switchboard. Keep in mind that if you need to depart Thule for any emergency situation, it may take up to a week due to the once a week rotator flight and seating availability.

## **LEGAL SERVICES**

Legal services are not available at Thule Air Base, although notary service and powers of attorney are performed by a designated individual. You should complete all necessary powers of attorney, wills, etc., prior to arriving at Thule. You can receive limited telephonic legal assistance through the legal office at Peterson AFB. If you participate in the dependent care program, please bring copies of all powers of attorney with you.

## **MAILING ADDRESS**

Once you have your orders, email a copy of them to your sponsor, and he/she will get you an APO box number so you can let everyone know your new address. Once on station you will complete the official paperwork. Your mailing address will be:

**(Rank/Name)**  
**PSC 1501 Box XXXX**  
**APO AE 09704**

## **PHONE CALLS**

Due to the remote location of Thule everyone has DSN access in his or her dorm rooms and the ability to dial any toll free number. There is a stateside number that family and friends can call that will reach the base with each dorm room assigned an extension. Due to the generosity of the US, limited free phone cards are available through the Chaplain and/or First Sergeant.

## **PAY**

While stationed at Thule you will gain \$150.00 Arctic Duty pay, \$250.00 family separation pay (if you have dependents) and keep BAH for your family. All enlisted personnel will receive BAS. Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) is another benefit that you will receive during your tour here. The amount is based upon your Rank/TIS.

## **PETS**

Pets (of any type) are not authorized at Thule.

## **RADIO**

We currently receive 1 FM station 97.1.

## **INTERNET**

As with many things here at Thule AFB, the Arctic environment presents unique challenges to getting the internet. What can an incoming member of Team Thule expect for personal internet service? There are two options. First, each dorm has wireless access in their dayrooms provided free of charge. If you bring your laptop or other networked personal digital device, you can set up a "DormNet" account and be able to have limited internet access from your dorm room as well. DormNet is typically able to fulfill most web-surfing needs, but if not, you can always buy a private line from the local telecommunications company...Tele-Greenland. Typically you will pay around \$100 and will be able to use 9 Gigabytes each month and you will pay around \$200 and be able to use 20 gigs a month. No matter which path you choose, keep in mind that internet service here at Thule is slower and many of the internet-dependent services we use in the US and Europe are not available.

In your office, you will find the internet is not as fast as you are used to at other bases. You should do as much of your annual training CBTs in ADLS as close to your departure date as possible. If you are filling a COR position here at Thule you should also plan on completing your COR training prior to your arrival at Thule.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

We highly recommend bringing any electronic devices that will help you pass the time at Thule. However, if you decide to bring any wireless electronic devices from the states (i.e., cordless phones, cell phones, walkie-talkies, wireless keyboards/mice, etc.) please ensure it has the European Conformity (CE) label. All outlets in the dorms are 120V (Same as in the States). **NOTE:** Due to the limited internet service at Thule, it is recommended that you install any updates for your electronic devices prior to your arrival.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

You may have a vehicle as part of your job. All Thule AB vehicles, except for a few Security Forces patrol vehicles, are standard transmissions. If you do not know how to drive a "stick" consider learning before you arrive, otherwise you will find the free base taxi (24 hrs a day) or shuttle bus service to be convenient, friendly and efficient.

## **TV CHANNELS**

We currently receive ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX channels from either Boston or Detroit. In addition, we have Armed Forces Network (AFN) channels, 24-hour Commander's and information channels (latest weather and announcements), a Canadian channel and a variety of stations from Denmark.

## **HELPFUL INFORMATION: WHAT TO BRING, WHAT THULE DOESN'T HAVE**

### **MILITARY CLOTHING**

Thule does not have a military clothing sales store. Be sure to bring a sufficient supply of ABUs and accessories for your duration. If you anticipate getting promoted during your tour, be sure to pick up some extra rank insignias. The Base Exchange can order items for you, but it can take up to six or eight weeks for items to arrive. Although stated earlier...just to re-emphasize, we wear all uniform combinations at Thule, including mess dress or semi-formal wear (with white shirt) at various events. Ensure you bring ALL combinations, you will use them.

### **CIVILIAN CLOTHING**

You will find several opportunities for social events where you may need to wear a coat and tie or suitable ladies' attire. Use common sense to bring your attire. During the summer, it does get extremely muddy; bring an old pair of boots. Even though you may not think so, there will be several opportunities for you to wear short-sleeve or T-shirts and shorts, if nowhere else, in your quarters. Don't forget to bring a swimsuit (and water shoes) for the Polar Bear Plunge.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

The BX does have a variety of items. Be advised, a television and DVD player may **NOT** be provided in your room, so you may want to ship one of your own. The authorized size for shipment of a personal television is not to exceed 32". Additionally, consider the following list of items that may make your tour more comfortable:

Alarm clock; Stereo (with coaxial or antenna adapter); camera; CD player; binoculars; personal hygiene articles; if there are any special vitamins that you need/want; hobby items; musical instruments; second set of eyeglasses or reading glasses (if applicable); posters; room ornaments; comforters; sheets and pillow cases (furnished, but nice to have your own); makeup; books; mountain bike (if you aren't particular, there are plenty available to rent from Outdoor Rec); padlock; PDG and SKT materials; special spices; small backpack; video game consoles (online play is practically non-existent); board games; pictures of family and friends.

### **Family Visits**

While you are staying here at Thule, your family can visit you here as long as they possess a valid DoD CAC. Please contact your sponsor for further information on this subject.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

Bring your travel Passport if you have one, you may want to go to Europe while you are stationed at Thule. Additionally, bring your military ID, stateside driver's license, current eye wear and a supply of contact lenses (if applicable), your immunization records (these are online now), and (limited pharmacy) a 6-month supply of special medications (including birth control, if applicable). Two pairs of sneakers; due to the mud and snow, outside shoes are not allowed to be worn in the fitness center.

For those that will be here during the holidays, don't forget room decorations. Consider bringing your favorite or a new, first-run movie to share on the movie channels. Your dorm room will be your home for the next year, so we encourage you to bring whatever you think will make your stay here more comfortable.

If you are not sure whether to bring something, it's always a good idea to call and ask. When planning what to ship, keep in mind that all shipments to Thule go by air via McGuire AFB. Military personnel are entitled to 10% of their full JTR weight allowance. Civilians are authorized shipments IAW JTR, Volume II. If your TMO shipment is picked up about 30 days prior to your departure, there's a good chance it'll be waiting for you.

## **HELPFUL NOTE**

When talking with your TMO office, ENSURE they are aware that your household goods are to be air-shipped from McGuire AFB, NJ. to Thule AFB (DO NOT ADDRESS SHIPMENT TO GREENLAND!) Most shipments will arrive within a short time of your arrival. Once here, the Thule TMO folks rush to ensure you get settled in as quickly as possible. Also, follow all PPC requirements on your orders and contact your gaining unit commander if your losing base doesn't/can't comply prior to your departure.

## **WHAT THULE DOES NOT HAVE**

Currently, Thule doesn't have or offer the following:

- ATM machine/bank
- A CATM range (follow your PPC requirements)
- Fast internet
- Any major fast food outlets (McDonalds, Taco Bell, Burger King, etc.)
- A clothing sales store (we now have a few items like stripes, t-shirts, etc.)
- Paved roads or sidewalks
- An 18-hole golf course (but we have a fairly rough 9-hole course)
- A view of the "Northern Lights" (as we are about 500 miles too far north to see them (and if/when we do see them, they are the "Southern Lights"))
- Bees or snakes!!

## **FLIGHT TO THULE**

Your flight to Thule will originate at Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport. This is a once a week contracted flight through ATI. **All passengers must check-in Wednesday night NLT 2300L** for the 0100L flight. While waiting for the flight, make sure to check in with the USO who will be happy to provide a wide variety of support during your wait. As far as the flight, you are only authorized 2 pieces of luggage and a carry-on. Anything else and you will pay for it out of pocket.

## **ARRIVAL AT THULE**

Once you arrive at the Thule terminal, you will be greeted by the 821 ABG Commander, First Sergeant, assorted Thule personnel, and your sponsor. You will be instantly aware of the positive attitude and support that is waiting to assist you in your transition to Thule. When the folks say they are there for you, they really mean it! Once your bags arrive, your sponsor will take you to Greenland Contractor Headquarters to receive your meal/room access card. Relax and enjoy your first evening at Thule. In your room, to see what is currently happening at Thule, turn on the TV to channels 106-119. Until your household goods arrive, the BX has a variety of items (towels, toiletries, etc.) for purchase rather than carrying these items in your valuable baggage space.

## **HOUSING**

Military personnel live in 3-story dormitories. Senior NCOs and officers have 2 rooms and a private bath as well as a stove in the common area of each pod. Airman/Junior NCO living in bldg. 101/103 are situated in either a 2 person pod (2 rooms/private bathroom per person) or in a quad pod (1 private room/bathroom per person). The transit/permeant dormitory, bldg. 99, you have a private room but there is a shared bathroom between the rooms. There is a community kitchen and day room on each floor. You may want to bring your own bedding, sheets, towels, bedspreads. Most rooms have Full XL beds, some have double beds. It is recommended you bring your favorite pictures and decorations to make your room more personal during your stay.

## **IN-PROCESSING**

The 821st Air Base Group (821st ABG) is a geographically separated unit under the 21st Space Wing, Peterson AFB, Colo. Your sponsor will bring you to MPS/unit CSS and FM for in-processing. You will need to bring all records and documents you hand carried from your losing base. Other items to have ready when in-processing include copies of orders, Government Travel Card receipts, and Phase I & II paperwork (CORs). Ensure that your security manager from your losing organization releases you from JPAS.

## AND THEN

- Get your post office box number (or key if you already know your box number)
- Get your arctic gear
- Join the TOW club (pay your annual membership and start getting discounts)
- Find the BX and laundry drop off/pickup
- See your first "archie" (Arctic Fox)

## HISTORY OF THULE

Around 325 BC the seafarer Pytheas of Massalia discovered an island six days sailing north of England which he called Thule. It is generally thought that the island is present day Iceland. At that time, Thule meant the northernmost known island. But with increased geographical knowledge, the name eventually moved further north. The farther northern island "Ultima Thule," became synonymous with cold wilderness. It is generally believed that the first settlers came to Greenland about 4000 years ago.

Around 985 AD the first northerners came to Greenland and settled down on the west coast between Julianehab and Godthab. Greenlanders have lived in the settlement now known as Dundas for the past 900 years. Actual proof of this has been found in the so-called "Commers Midden" just north of Mt. Dundas (named after an English nobleman, Lord Dundas). Commers Midden was excavated in 1913-14, 1937, and again in 1946. More than 10,000 artifacts that date back to the 10th century were taken to the Danish National Museum. Even Norse relics were found.

The first European to arrive in the area was William Baffin, for whom Baffin Bay was named in 1616. While in the area, Baffin named several places, such as Wolstenholme Fjord, Smith Sound, and Wolstenholme Island. Thule had few other visitors until the late 1800s. The first group of Europeans to spend the winter in the area was the crew of the ship, North Star. The bay (and our lodging facility) is named after this ship. Between 1849 and 1850, several other expeditions took place. Between 1892-1909, Robert E.

Peary started using the area as a base for his North Pole expeditions. He established a close relationship with the Greenlanders by taking care not to violate the existing culture.

Knud Rasmussen, a famous Danish explorer, began the Danish Literary Expedition in this area in 1903-04. Rasmussen returned to the area in 1906 and again in 1908 to begin a mission station in the Thule area. In 1909 the ship Godthaab, anchored in North Star Bay, and the first two buildings (a missionary and a storehouse) were built. The Danish flag has flown in the area ever since.

In 1910, Rasmussen and his associate, Peter Freuchen, came to the area to Cape York (Kap York Trading Post) Station. On the suggestion of Freuchen, Rasmussen named the village which grew up around the post "Thule." At that time, the area north of Mt Dundas, called Uumanaq by the Greenlanders, was still inhabited. Freuchen became the first trading post manager and held the position until 1920. The post served many purposes, such as providing a base for scientific expeditions

and providing equipment and food for the native Greenlanders. The first Thule expedition set out in 1912 across the ice cap to north Greenland and back. During the second Thule expedition, 1916-18, Rasmussen mapped out the northernmost coast of Greenland geographically, geologically, botanically, and ethnologically. From 1919-24, three more expeditions took place. The fifth expedition took Rasmussen on his famous great sled journey, traveling by dog sled across Canada and Alaska to Siberia. Rasmussen returned to Thule each summer from 1926-1929. The station was now growing. A hospital was built in 1928-29 and a pre-fabricated house, the Knud Rasmussen House, was built in 1929 and was later used as a school. In 1929-30 a Church was erected. In 1928 the Thule Law was born; it was signed by Knud Rasmussen on 7 June 1929 and ratified by the Danish Government in 1931. The Danish government took over the Thule district in 1931 and named Rasmussen to represent the Danish state. In 1933, two settlements were founded in the Thule district, Siorapaluk in the north and Savigsivik in the south. Rasmussen died that same year, and the Danish government took over his responsibilities.

On the anniversary of Germany's occupation of Denmark, 9 April 1941, "The Agreement relating to the Defense of Greenland" was signed in Washington by Danish Ambassador Henrick Kauffman and Secretary of State Cordell Hull. It was approved by President Roosevelt on 7 June 1941. In the agreement, the US agreed to take over the security of Greenland. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the allies established weather stations at Narssarssuaq Airport, Sondstrom (Blue West-8), Ikateq (Blue East-2), and Gronnedal (Blue West-9). In 1943 the Army Air Corp set up weather stations, Scoresbysund (Blue East-3) on the east coast around the southern tip of Greenland, and Thule (Blue West-6) to be operated by Danish personnel. The weather stations gave the allies a strategic edge over the Germans in battle planning and provided a decisive factor in D-Day. Based on a good weather forecast from Greenland.

General Eisenhower scheduled the landing in Normandy despite the strong winds in the English Channel. Based on the Greenland weather reports, he knew the winds would die the following day, so the Invasion was on!

In 1946, a combined Danish-American radio and weather station was established in the Royal Greenland Trade Department Building at Pituffik (present day Thule Air Base). Pituffuk is translated as "Place where they tie their boats." By all rights, Thule Air Base should have been named Pituffik Air Base after the original site. The Navy built a new and much larger weather station. The Army Corps of Engineers built a 4,000-foot airstrip on the south side of the valley. In the following year the Thule airstrip was used as a jump-off point for exploration and a supply point for construction of airstrips and weather stations on the Canadian side of the straits (Eureka, Resolute, and Isachsen).

The first Transport Command aircraft landed on 9 September 1946. The East Reconnaissance Group (Project Nanook) flew B-17 mapping and photography missions from Thule's primitive facilities. From 1946-50, several houses, a power plant, a radio station, and a dirt runway were built at what is now called "Dundas Village." Dundas Village and the Inuit Village of Qaanaaq are protected by Denmark and specifically excluded from those areas under Air Force control.

In the spring of 1953 the Greenlandic Village of Thule, located at the base of Mt Dundas, was moved 65 miles north to Quaanaaq, on Red Cliff Peninsula. Although the Inuits were not thrilled with leaving their home, it is said that the noise and smells from the planes and ships had frightened away many of the polar bears, musk ox, seals, narwhals and fish that had previously called the area home and were essential to the Inuits cultural survival. Upon departing, the people of Thule demanded they take the name with them so depending on the map you may see two Thule's listed in northern Greenland. When traveling to Mt Dundas, you will still see long forgotten houses and two cemeteries in what is now called Dundas Village.

In 1963 the area was given official status as the 17th municipality of Greenland, the Thule municipality. **The northernmost community in the world.**

## **CONSTRUCTION BEGINS**

Construction of a worldwide system of modern air bases was one of the Air Forces most important tasks following World War II. The US studied the possibility of establishing a major operating base in Greenland when it became clear that round trip flights of planes carrying atomic bombs between US or Canadian bases and European objectives were impractical. The shortest route from the US to the Soviet Union's most important industrial areas was over the North Pole, and Thule is at the precise midpoint between Moscow and New York.

Thule became a key point in the whole American military strategy. Strategic Air Command bombers flying over the Arctic presented less risk of early warning than using bases in England. Defensively, Thule could serve as a base for intercepting bomber attacks along the northeastern approaches to Canada and the US.

A board of AF officers made a recommendation to pursue a base at Thule in November 1950; it was subsequently supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and approved by President Truman. To replace the agreement entered into during WWII between the US and Denmark, a new agreement with respect to Greenland was ratified on April 27, 1951 (effective on June 8, 1951). At the request of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the agreement became a part of the NATO defense program. The pact specified that the two nations would arrange for the use of facilities in Greenland by NATO forces in defense of the NATO area known as the Greenland Defense Area.

Thule AB was constructed in secret under the code name Operation Blue Jay. Construction for Thule AB began in 1951 and was completed in 1953. The construction of Thule is said to have been comparable in scale to the enormous effort required to build the Panama Canal. The Navy transported the bulk of men, supplies, and equipment from the naval shipyards in Norfolk, VA. (\*\*The library, North Star Inn and Thule Museum offer two videos, "Operation Blue Jay" and "Camp Century," that better explain how the base was built and the events that have taken place in this region.\*\*)

On June 6, 1951 an armada of 120 ships sailed from Norfolk, VA. On board were 12,000 men and 300,000 tons of cargo. They arrived at Thule on July 9, 1951. Construction took place around the clock. The workers lived on board the ship until quarters were built. Once they moved into the quarters, the ships returned home.

The base was initially designed as a forward base for staging SAC bombers and tankers. It was designed and built to house 12,000 personnel (during the peak period it housed approximately 10,000 with personnel living at Camp Tuto, 12 SWS/J-Site, Camp Century, P-Mountain, in Nike Sites, and at Cape Atholl). It was built with a 10,000 foot (by 200') runway and a fuel storage capacity of about 100 million gallons (the largest in DOD--built to support mid-air refueling of the B-47 bombers).

The agreement set aside 339,000 acres, and when Thule was first built, this is how it looked: main base 2600 acres, 82 miles of road, 38 fuel tanks, 10 hangars (6 are 28,000 sq. feet), 122 barracks, 6 mess halls, a gym, service club, Officers' club, hobby shop, library, base exchange, post office, theater, chapel, and hospital. There were also 63 warehouses, a laundry, a bakery, two primary power plants, and 4 auxiliary power/heating plants. Buildings were built using Arctic (Clements) panels. Most buildings were built in 60 days in 1951. The 1000-foot pier (DeLong Pier) was constructed from 8 barges towed from the Gulf of Mexico placed on caissons and stabilized alongside a rock-filled causeway.

On August 18, 1951, the new airstrip was inaugurated with a visit from the Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt S. Vandenberg. Operation Blue Jay was completed in a short 104 days. On October 23rd, the last construction crews left Thule but 400 men were left behind as a caretaker force through the winter of 1951/52. The next spring a major part of the workforce returned to expand the base. In November 1952, when the AF took control, Thule was considered operational. By fall 1953 the bulk of the construction was complete.

On July 1, 1951, the 6622nd AB Squadron of the Northeast Air Command arrived and air operations commenced on September 11, 1951. The first fighter interceptors assigned to Thule were four F-9ABs and began operations on September 11, 1952. From 1953 to 1959, the base's other main mission was to function as an operations base for SAC strategic bombers, supporting SAC B-36s, B-47s, and KC-97s. In 1957, SAC activated the 4083rd Strategic Wing at Thule, consisting of B-36 bombers. During 1963, the US Army installed two 75mm and four 90mm anti-aircraft guns in a ring around Thule, for air defense.

In 1957, Air Defense Command took control of the base and initiated the 74th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. The FIS was deactivated in March 1960 leaving Thule without interceptor protection for the first time since September 1952. This deactivation was rescinded by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in June 1960, and the 332 FIS was assigned to Thule in August 1960. They flew supersonic, all-weather F-102 Delta Daggers.

In 1957 and 1958 four Army Nike Defense System Batteries were constructed (two on North Mountain and two on South Mountain) under the code name "Rising Star." These Surface to Air missiles (SAMs) were linked together with the air interceptors and a control and warning system. Each location had two areas: launch and control. They were closed down in July 1960. Battery A was demolished in 1990, but two buildings still stand at A launch located at Dundas Village. Battery B was demolished on an undermined date, and the debris at the launch site was pushed into the underground silos. Battery C is still largely intact. It probably represents the best remaining example at Thule. The barracks and mess hall still stand, but the storeroom is gone. The three launch structures are still intact. On one stairwell, a soldier's art work still survives. It is the depiction of a goose and refers to the Goose Air Defense Sector to which the battery belonged. C Control has been demolished. All that remains is the concrete bases of the radar. Battery D, D Launch is located on South Mountain, overlooking North Star Bay; the launch structures are still intact as is the watch tower.

In 1958 and 1959 additional construction consisted of five new barracks, a dining facility, the Airmen's club, two BOQs, a technical library, and two warehouses. In 1959 and 1960 the base common water and sewage distribution mains were constructed. Up to that point all water delivery and sewage pickup was accomplished by truck! In 1960 the over-the-road, heated, and insulated pipe line system was completed. Replacement value of buildings was valued at over \$2 billion.

The base activated as a part of the Northeast Air Command (NEAC) in January 1952 and transferred to SAC in 1957. On July 1, 1960 the ADC officially assumed command at Thule. By 1960, the addition of long-range aircraft to the SAC inventory eliminated the need for Thule to operate as a forward support base, and the mission turned from a SAC forward operations base to air defense.

In 1961, a Ballistic Missile Early Warning Systems (12 SWS) radar was constructed at J Site, 13 miles north east of the base. 12 SWS was developed by the Raytheon Corporation in order to provide North America warning of a transpolar missile attack from the Russian mainland and submarine-launched missiles from the Arctic and North Atlantic Oceans. The fixed antenna, 400 feet long and 1,654 feet high, was larger than a football field turned upright. It was during this period that Thule reached its maximum manning, about 10,000 personnel.

Starting in July 1965, there was a general downsizing of activities at Thule. The host unit, the 4683rd Air Wing, along with the 332d Fighter Interceptor Squadron, was deactivated. In January 1968, the population of Thule was 3,370. In 1976, the first female was assigned permanent party to Thule, and in 1982, Thule became a SPACECOM base.

The old mechanical 12 SWS radar was upgraded to a solid-state, phased-array system in June 1987 to make the operation more effective and efficient. Information from this site is transmitted to the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Post at Cheyenne Mountain, CO. Information is then passed to National Command Authorities.

Another Thule mission dates back to 1961 when the Air Force established a satellite command and control facility (OL-5) to track and communicate with US satellites in polar orbit. Now known as Det-1, it is part of the Air Force Systems Command worldwide satellite command and control network. Det-1 is one of nine worldwide satellite tracking stations and constitutes the common user portion of the Air Force Satellite Control Network (AFSCN). This network directly supports space operations by providing telemetry tracking and commanding to satellites developed and deployed by DoD, other US government agencies, and allied governments. It also provides data distribution and routing systems to support external users programs and other ground elements.

Because of its northern location, Thule also provides support to a wide range of logistical resupply operations and arctic scientific studies. Whether its missile warning, satellite control, aviation support, or arctic studies, Thule plays a key role in America's national security. Thule also provides logistical support to Danish Station Nord as well as Canada's CFS Alert and Eureka.

As you can see, the mission has changed from one of SAC alert to the primary mission of supporting 12 SWS and Det-1. Today, Thule AB is the Department of Defense's northernmost installation, the world's northernmost deep-water Seaport and the Air Force's guardian of the "Top of the World" vantage point which enables constant polar vigilance. As you can see, there is a long and esteemed history involved in Thule and we are excited about you joining this exclusive north of the Arctic Circle team.

