

# A WOMAN MAKES HER MARK IN A MAN'S DOMAIN

By RUSSELL OWEN

## Louise Boyd, Who Has Often Known Arctic Adventure, Goes North Again

THE only woman polar explorer in the United States will sail from New York in two days on her sixth trip to the Arctic, and if the ship-

men discover her this time it will be the first occasion on which she has attracted their attention when going north. Rare among her kind, Louise A. Boyd dislikes publicity; she is well known among

geographers, and men of science visit her at San Rafael, Calif. At intervals since 1926 she has been making polar storms in the stout small Norwegian sealers which she pilots through the pack ice around northern islands or off the east coast of Greenland. She surveyed much of that coast which had never been properly charted before, and did so well that the British Government named it after her. Her home in San Rafael is all one does not do such things without having adventures; so far she has kept these to herself.

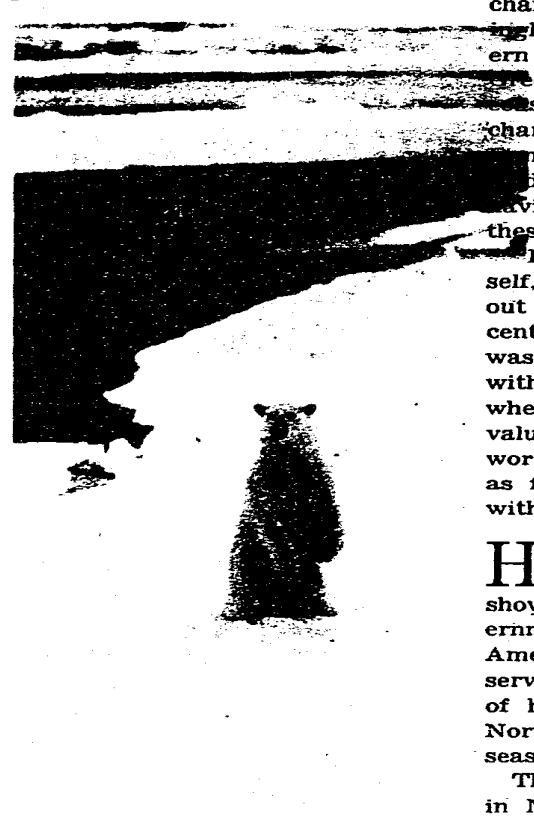
"I haven't wanted to talk about my life out that I could do the job," she said recently. "I had to learn first whether I was suited for leadership, particularly with a group of men; and, second, whether I could contribute anything of value. I think I have produced something worth while, of which I can be proud, as for the men, most of them go with me each voyage. We get along fine. I like the pleasant things most women enjoy even if I do wear breeches and boots on an expedition, even sleep in them at times. I have no use for masculine women. At sea I don't bother with my hands, except to keep them from being frozen, but I powder my nose before going on deck, no matter how rough the sea is. There is no reason why a woman can't rough it and still remain feminine."

MISS BOYD is not quite sure why she became an explorer. She had never seen snow until she was in her teens, but she was brought up to ride and shoot her early outdoor life in the California hills. The care of her father's home, and she did not have the time to roam far until she was over 30. But she dreamed of making some sort of career because she could not bear being idle. Arctic fascinated her, and she read every book she could find which told of exploration and adventure in the north. When she was free to do as she wished she headed north like an eider duck.

That was in 1926, the year that Amundsen and Ellsworth flew from Spitsbergen to Alaska in the Norge. One of the vessels which went to Spitsbergen with supplies for the airship was a little sealer called the Hobby, one of the rolling boats ever launched. When the airship left, the Hobby went back to Tromsø, Norway, to be refitted for a voyage to Franz Josef Land. "Some American man wants to see ice," said the captain of the ship and was sick every foot of the way.

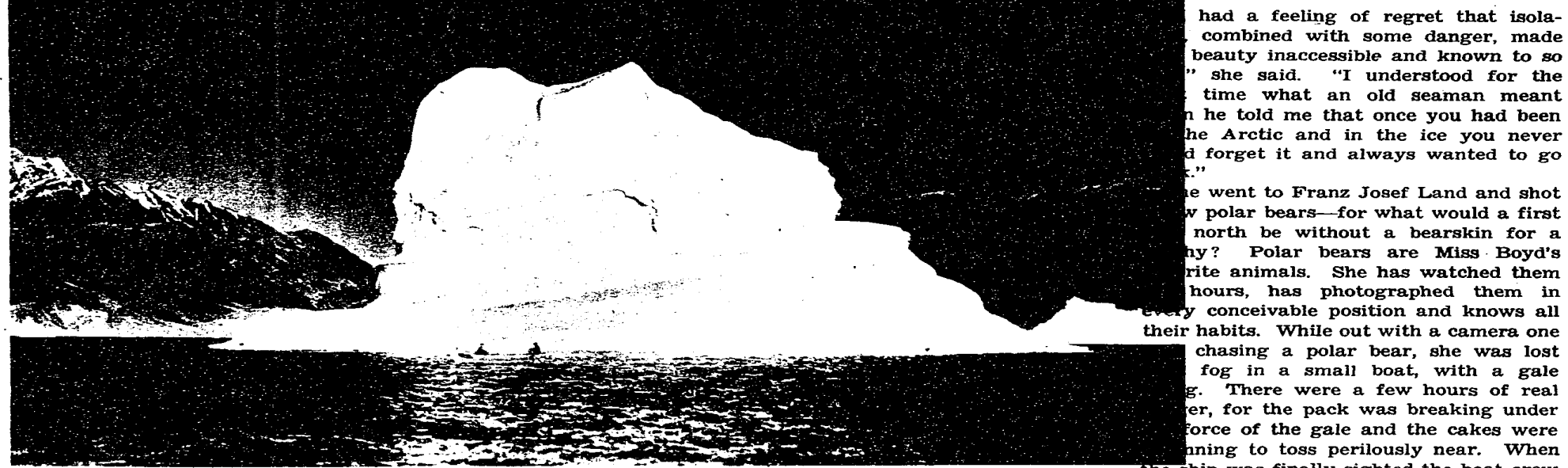


Louise A. Boyd—"There is no reason why a woman can't rough it and remain feminine."



For hours the edge of the pack was hidden by fog. From behind the curtain came the growl of cakes pounding together, the swish and roar of waves breaking in surf; then suddenly the ship was into it, grinding its way through the floes to the peace of the interior. There the ship ran through open leads, like lakes or tiny rivers, only to hit solid ice and ram through it again. When the fog lifted and the sun shone on the white floes Miss Boyd was where she had wanted to be—inside the pack; and to one entering it for the first time it is a fascinating experience.

had a feeling of regret that isolated combined with some danger, made beauty inaccessible and known to so she said. "I understood for the time what an old seaman meant when he told me that once you had been in the Arctic and in the ice you never forget it and always wanted to go back." She went to Franz Josef Land and shot two polar bears—for what would a first north be without a bearskin for a trophy? Polar bears are Miss Boyd's favorite animals. She has watched them for hours, has photographed them in every conceivable position and knows all their habits. While out with a camera one chasing a polar bear, she was lost in fog in a small boat, with a gale blowing. There were a few hours of real terror, for the pack was breaking under the force of the gale and the cakes were beginning to toss perilously near. When the ship was finally sighted the boat crew discovered that they had passed the Hobby and were rowing away from her. "And it was cold in that (Continued on Page 20)



Members of one of Miss Boyd's expeditions reconnoitering an iceberg. Center—Miss Boyd making a photographic log of one of her trips in the Arctic. Top—An inquisitive polar bear looks the camera straight in the eye.

Louise A. Boyd photos

# A WOMAN EXPLORER MAKES HER MARK

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open boat!" Miss Boyd exclaimed. "I wished I had my chamois underthings, for my legs nearly froze. When we got aboard I made a cocktail and remembered somebody had told me to put cayenne pepper in a drink if I really wanted to warm up. I did, and it nearly choked us. The men said they would make their own drink next time, thank you, and called mine the 'Boyd Hell Cocktail.'"

**W**HEN this woman explorer came south that year she had determined that her career lay in the North and that she would go back as many times as she could. But her first bit of real exploration had to wait, for the next time she went to the Arctic the airship Italia, piloted by Nobile, had just crashed on the ice north of Spitsbergen.

Miss Boyd again had the Hobby, and was planning to go to Spitsbergen, Jan Mayen and Greenland. Amundsen had flown north in a French airplane to hunt for Nobile, whom he despised, and had vanished. Norway, with Sweden, Russia, Italy and France, was organizing a search, and wanted to send airplanes to hunt over the ice pack for the famous discoverer of the South Pole. Miss Boyd offered the Hobby, at her expense, to the Norwegian Government, and two airplanes, with two famous Norwegian aviators, Riiser-Larsen and Lutzow-Holm, were added to

the equipment and personnel of the little Hobby.

From then on, until cold weather made a longer stay dangerous, Miss Boyd was in the midst of the search for Amundsen, familiar with every detail of the hunt, and scanning the cold, gray waters, like every one else on board, in regular watches. For days the Hobby was in storms which threatened to tear the planes from the low deck and wash them overboard. Icicles hung from the wings and propellers. But nothing was ever found of Amundsen's plane except a pontoon, and that was months later.

Miss Boyd's contribution to the search was so valuable that Norway presented her with the Order of St. Olaf, First Class. She is the only foreign woman to have received that honor. The French Government made her a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and the French Navy, through the Minister of Marine, gave her a miniature of the medal set with diamonds, with the inscription, "Hommage, Reconnaissance de la Marine Française à Miss Boyd, 1928."

**R**EAL work began for Miss Boyd in 1931 when she chartered a larger ship, the Veslekari, and went to the east coast of Greenland. She discovered a large glacier not seen before, and made the first penetration of Ice Fjord, which is far inland, by ship.

On her next expedition, in 1933, she went under the auspices of

the American Geographical Society, with the particular purpose of studying glacial marginal features in the King Oscar Fjord and Franz Josef Fjord region, which is the largest fjord area in the world. It had been explored by the Danes and Norwegians but had not been mapped in detail. Her work in the Ice Fjord region was so thorough that Denmark named that part of Greenland "Miss Boyd Land." She did not know of the naming until she found it on a map. Last year she went back to Greenland to complete her work.

Miss Boyd has become an expert photographer and surveyor, and many maps have been drawn from her carefully planned photographs. She decided that inasmuch as photography interested her more than any other subject, she would confine her work to that and to the leadership of the expedition. She mounted a sixty-pound aerial camera on an Akeley tripod in order to get more accurate results at a distance. It looks like a whale gun. But, naturally, she has acquired a working knowledge of several other subjects, and on her last trip she installed in the Veslekari a powerful sonic depth recorder, which enabled her to make records of the ocean bottom in the area between Jan Mayen and Bear Island, which geologists say are the most valuable yet charted in that section.

One of the mysteries of the ocean floor in that little-known  
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# WOMAN MAKES MARK IN ARCTIC

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part of the world—geologically speaking—has been whether there is any connection between Greenland and Europe such as a sunken mountain chain. Miss Boyd did not find this, but she did find, in water where ordinary soundings had previously indicated depths of many hundreds of fathoms, a ridge with precipitous sides which comes near the surface. Around it swirled currents which will be studied on her voyage this Summer. She also will try to enter the ice pack far north and attempt to work her way over to East Greenland at a latitude higher than that at which any ship has ever reached the coast. Soundings there would complement those made by Nansen's ship, the Fram, and by the Russians during their polar drift, and would be very valuable.

That will be a dangerous trip, because the ice pressure along the northeast coast is frequently tremendous, but all voyages to the East Greenland coast entail risk. Last year she ran into the worst ice conditions she and her captain had seen, and once the ship was lifted above the pack by pressure. The Veslekari also went to the rescue of a survey vessel that had run aground on an uncharted reef, and later went aground herself. The unexpected always happens on the east coast.

**T**HE most startling experience of Miss Boyd's, and one she likes to relate, was on the Hobby. She had carefully stowed her clothing—woolen underwear, socks, shirts and sweaters—in some drawers under her bunk. In one of the drawers she found some sticks about a foot long, which looked to her like Christmas candy. She asked the mate about them.

"No, not candy, that's dynamite," said the mate, and asked her if she smoked. "If you do, for Almighty's sake don't do it in your bunk, or let any ashes or fire fall into those drawers."

She told him that she never smoked in bed, and he looked relieved, asking her to let the dynamite stay where it was so he would know where to look for it.

"It's a good safe place for it," he said.

The dynamite was there the next year, during the Amundsen search, and one day there was a fire in the galley over the fuel tanks. When Miss Boyd heard of the fire she ran to her room, grabbed the dynamite, which was wrapped in her underclothes, and put it in a pail in the bow, clothes and all. When the fire was nearly out the mate rushed back toward Miss Boyd's cabin.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"For the dynamite."

"Listen," said she. "That dynamite and I are buddies. When I went out it went out with me. We look after each other, we do. My clothes are protecting it from the snowstorm."

Fire and dynamite, running aground, icebergs, pressure that squeezes the ship till it groans, storm that sweeps the decks and floods the cabins; climbing glaciers, wading icy streams, handling a camera with frost-bitten fingers—those are the shifting experiences in the life of a woman who would rather go exploring in the Arctic than anything else, and who comes home to run a community chest and grow flowers in her California gardens.