

April 10, 2020

Lock Haven Native Spends Air Force Tour in Frozen Greenland

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, J. Gleim, Museum Curator)



Photo of Barrett, gentleman on photo's left.

Charles D. Barrett (1940-2018) of Lock Haven, Pennsylvania joined the Air Force in the early 1960s. He was discharged in 1963 as an Airman Second Class. He re-enlisted and served again until 1967, when he was discharged as an Airman First Class.

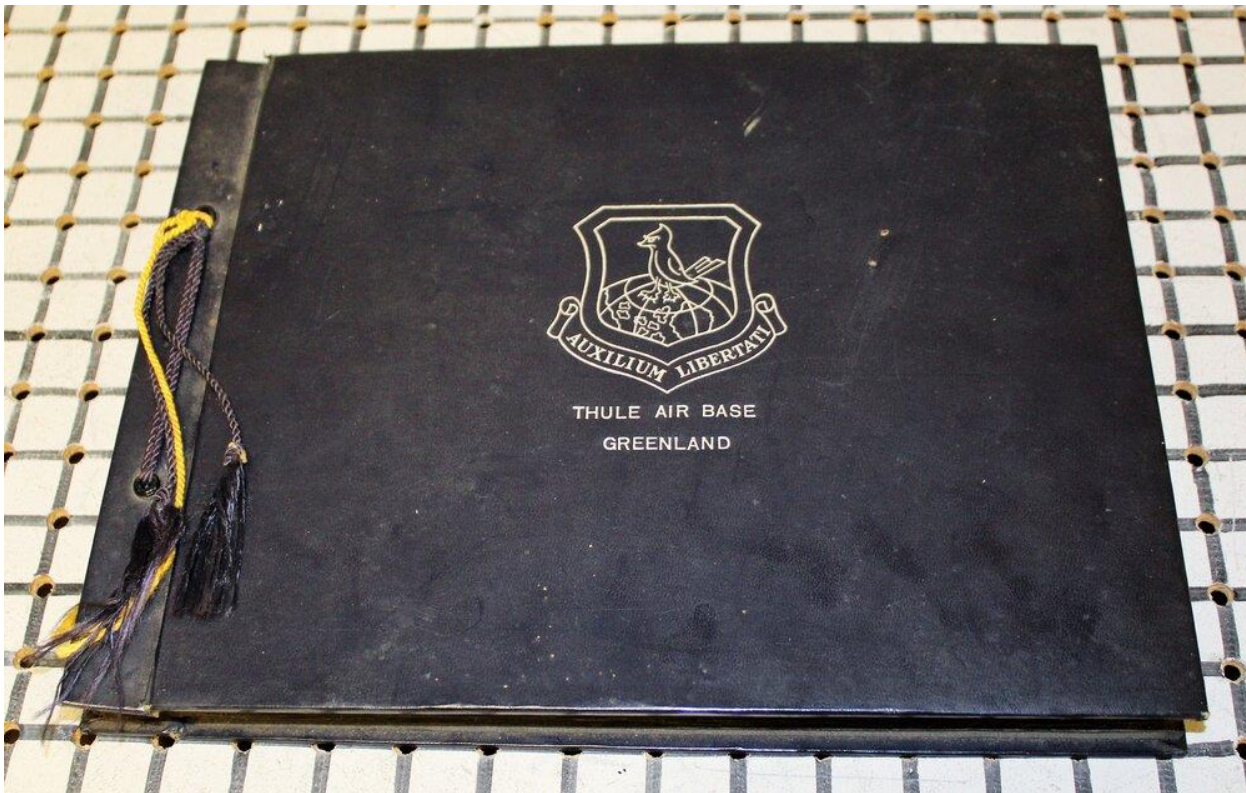


Photo of scrapbook, exterior.

During his first stint in the Air Force, Barrett was sent to Greenland where he served at Thule Air Base. Completed in 1953, Thule Air Base is the US Armed Forces' northernmost installation. The base was established as a Strategic Air Command Station and in 1959, the airbase was the main staging point for the construction of Camp Century.

Carved into the ice, and powered by a nuclear reactor, PM-2A Camp Century was officially a scientific research base, but in reality was the site of Project Iceworm, a top secret United States Army program during the Cold War designed to build a network of mobile nuclear missile launch sites under the Greenland ice sheet. The camp operated from 1959 until 1967. Its personnel were officially stationed there to test Arctic construction methods and carry out research.

Scientists based at the camp drilled the first ice core samples ever used to study the earth's climate, obtaining data still cited today.



Photo of scrapbook, interior.

Barrett's collection includes a photograph album that captures images of what life was like on a very remote American military installation, including photos of the heavy ice and snow, Greenland's native inhabitants, and the primitive camp buildings. Also included in the collection is a hand-drawn map, made by Barrett. The map provides a humorous illustration of how Barrett felt about his remote appointment and eagerly counts down the days until his tour is over.