

With a Pistol? Ned Nusunginya Bags Polar Bear at Kaktovik

A flurry of excitement hit the tiny village of Kaktovik on Barter Island last Saturday. It happened at the airstrip and close to the village.

A polar bear had wandered in and it was shot, as far as we know, by the old Ned Nusunginya and, presumably, with a pistol!

"While we were getting ready to take off somebody hollered, 'There is a polar

bear!' I looked out the window and there it was about 200 yards away," said Harold Kavealook, Training Instructor at the Bureau of Indian Affairs day school at Kaktovik.

Kavealook said he had seen Ned on a sno-go a few minutes before he boarded the plane for Fairbanks. He said Ned was carrying a pistol.

"The plane flew off just as Ned started herding the bear with his sno-go," said Kavealook.

The plane doubled back to see what had happened.

"The passengers saw the bear lying flat on the ice of the lagoon just north of the village. About 200 yards from the village," Kavealook said.

Old Ned Nusunginya is one of the original dogteam mail drivers in Alaska. Back in 1920's he drove mail from Barrow to Kotzebue, a distance of about 350 miles one way.

If our readers at Kaktovik would accomodate us, we would like to know:

Did Ned shoot the bear with a pistol?