

Sir Hubert Wilkins, Explorer, 70, Dies

Expert on Weather Extremes Flew Over Polar Ice Caps

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — (P) — Sir Hubert Wilkins, 70, famed Australian-born explorer of the North and South poles, was found dead in his hotel room.

He was last seen Sunday cleaning his auto. Dirt on his hands and the fact he was wearing his overcoat indicated he had collapsed on going to his room.

Medical examiner Dr. Irving Weisenfeld, expressed the opinion death was due to a heart attack.

Informed of his death, Lady Wilkins, the former Broadway actress Susan Bennett, burst into tears in her New York apartment. She left immediately by train for Framingham.

Sir Hubert had been living here for 16 years in connection with his work with the Quartermaster Corps. He had an office in nearby Natick where he was a geographer for the Army's Quartermaster Research and Development Center.

One of his greatest interests was in helping in preparations for the present International Geophysical Year.

Sir Hubert, educated in Australia, spent five summers and portions of 26 winters in Arctic regions. He was an authority on extreme cold and hot climates.

He proved the feasibility of flight over the ice caps of the polar wastes.

Asked once to figure how many countries in the world



HUBERT WILKINS

he had visited Sir Hubert replied: "72."

An authority on submarine exploration, Wilkins said that with the upper end of a submarine's snorkel electrically heated, "there are practically no places where you can't penetrate the ice at will, and the snorkel used as an elevator can bring up anything from a man to an aircraft."

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WILKINS flight of 2,100 miles from Alaska to Europe across the polar ice caps was hailed at the time as the greatest of all Arctic flights.

In 1931 he took an Arctic cruise in the original *Nautilus*, a Navy submarine, in an attempt to reach the pole under the ice.

The *Nautilus* had an inglorious Arctic career. It finally reached Spitzbergen after recurring breakdowns and tows. It was evident that it would never reach the pole but a short experimental trip was made under the ice. Wilkins finally got permission of the Navy to sink the sub.

The Navy's atomic powered *Nautilus* crossed the pole under the ice this year.