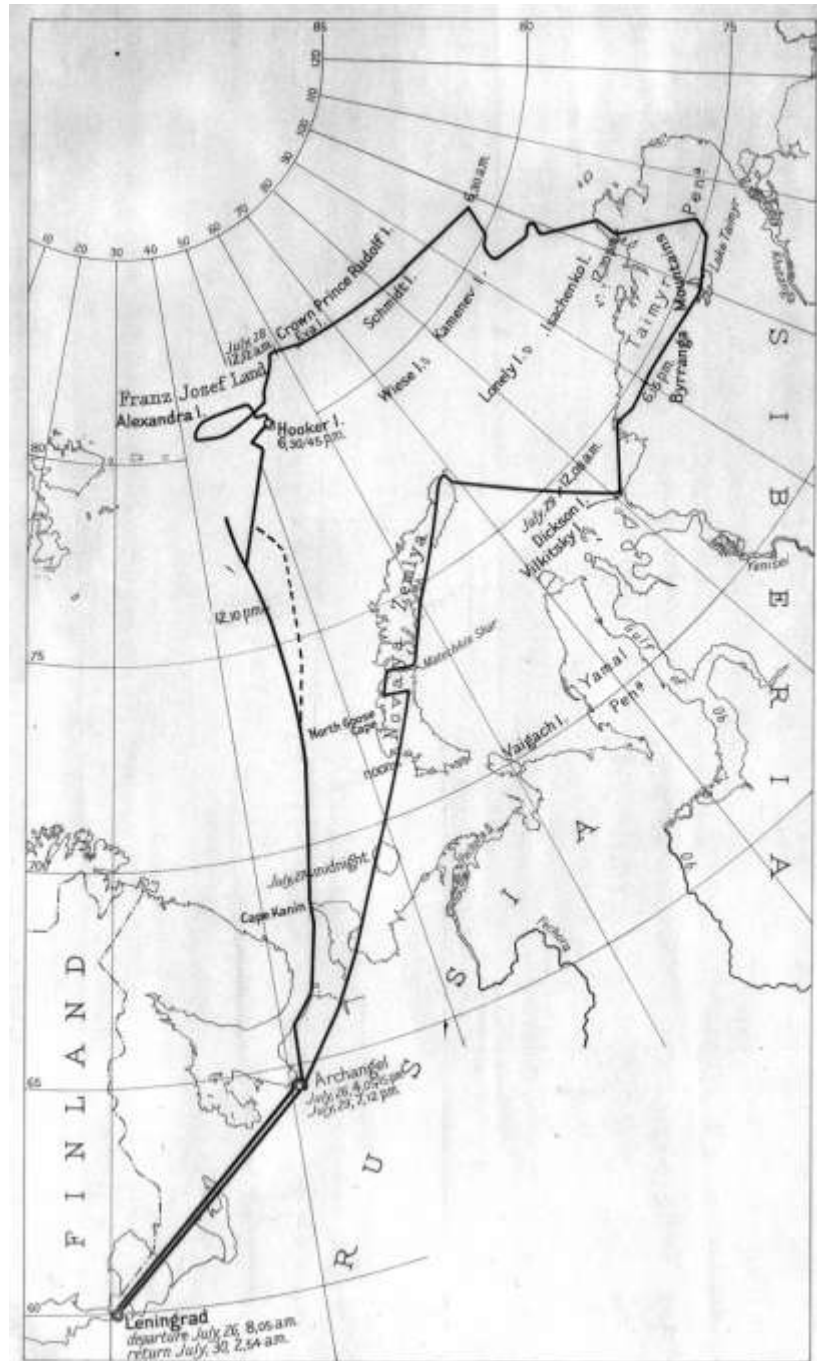


The Graf Zeppelin's Polar Flight

July 24 – 31, 1931

The Flight



Map of the Graf Zeppelin's flight to the Arctic Circle

Source: airships.net

Friday, July 24, 1931 – First Stage: Friedrichshafen-Berlin

The *Graf Zeppelin*, under the command of Dr. Hugo Eckener began its polar mission with an 8 hour flight from Friedrichshafen to Berlin's Staaken airfield.

Saturday, July 25, 1931 – Second Stage: Berlin-Leningrad

The *Graf Zeppelin* flew over Sweden, Estonia and Finland on its way Leningrad.

Sunday, July 26, 1931 – Third Stage: Leningrad to Franz-Josef Land

The *Graf Zeppelin* flew from Leningrad to Arkhangelsk, a Russian port city where the Dvina River flows into the White Sea. In the evening it crossed the Arctic Circle between the Kola and Kanin peninsulas in the White Sea.

Monday, July 27, 1931 – Third Stage: Leningrad to Franz-Josef Land (continued)

In the late afternoon of July 27, the *Graf Zeppelin* LZ-127 landed on the water just off Hooker Island in Franz-Josef Land. The Soviet icebreaker *Malygin* rendezvoused with the airship here and mailbags, containing about 50,000 pieces of collectible philatelic mail. In 1928 the *Malygin* had taken part in the search for Umberto Nobile's polar expedition in the airship *Italia*. Umberto Nobile was in the boat which rowed out to the *Graf Zeppelin*.



One of the post cards in the mail from Leningrad to Germany via the Arctic Circle.



German postage stamp commemorating the polar flight

Monday, July 27, 1931 – Fourth Stage: Franz-Josef Land to Berlin

The *Graf Zeppelin* departed from Hooker Island to begin its mission of mapping Franz Josef Land and other Arctic regions.

Tuesday, July 28, 1931 – Fourth Stage: Franz-Josef Land to Berlin (continued)

Shortly after midnight the airship reached ship reached Prince Rudolf Island. At a distance of nearly 500 nautical miles from the North Pole, this was the northernmost point of the expedition. Later in the day the mission continued to the Taimyr Peninsula and Dickson Island, at the mouth of the Yenisey River. There they parachuted a gift of food, mail, and newspapers.

Wednesday, July 29, 1931 – Fourth Stage: Franz-Josef Land to Berlin (continued)

The day began with more mapping. In the afternoon the *Graf Zeppelin* began its flight back home.

Thursday, July 30, 1931 – Fourth Stage: Franz-Josef Land to Berlin (continued)

In the wee hours of the morning the *Graf Zeppelin* flew over Leningrad and continued on to Berlin, where it landed at the Templehof airport in the evening.

Friday, July 31, 1931 – Fifth Stage: Berlin to Friedrichshafen

Following a 2-hour stop in Berlin the night before, where the success of the mission was celebrated, the airship continued on to Friedrichshafen, arriving in the morning.