Byrd Has Explorer's Fondness for Solitude in Wild Places

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Washington, July 16.—(*AP*)—That Commander Richard E. Byrd is temperamentally as well as intellectually fitted for the life of an explorer is emphasized in stories told by acquaintances here.

For one thing, he enjoys solitude, and during several summers, before he made himself a national hero by crossing the north pole in an airplane, he lived on a wild, desolate island in the Potomac I river. Like Robinson Crusoe, he had his man Friday, but only for a few days, to dig holes for posts which supported a platform for his tent.

The retreat is appropriately known as Snake island. Although small, it remains in its natural state, with trees, shrubs and flowers growing wild in abundance. There Byrd did his own cooking, living alone with his friends, the birds and snakes, feeding and protecting them. He appeared particularly fond of the snakes, and fed poisonous water moccasins regularly, showing irritation when intruding hikers from the mainland attempted to kill them.

When not making friends with the wild creatures he would explore the river in a row-boat or spend hours in the water swimming. Those who at infrequent intervals caught sight of him observed that he never fished and that he resented intrusion. His tent was pitched on the most inaccessible part of the island, protected by cliffs, and the difficulty of approach gave him the freedom he sought, to think, probably, of the flights he was to make over the pole and across the Atlantic.



Commander Richard E. Byrd

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