

The landfall

The arriving ships are making landfall at the sight of the imposing mountain Kingittorsuaq, or in Danish Hjortetakken (The Antler's Prong). The promontory gives the seafarers a beautiful welcome to Nuuk, the capital of Greenland.

Today, the ships operate using electronic maps and modern navigation equipment. However, in times past, sailing along the coasts of Greenland could be difficult. Often the entrance to the settlements was hidden behind thick sea fog, and the coast is filled with hidden rocks and skerries.

The capes with characteristic mountains like Kingittorsuaq were essential for the navigation of the past. Nuuk, which previously by the Danish government was named Godthaab, was until the last century counted as very hard to navigate because of the frequent sea fog in the Davis Strait. The approach to Nuuk is also filled with clusters of small islands and reefs.

The altitude of Kingittorsuaq are 1,188 metres. The mountain top can be seen from

the sea up to 150 kilometres away. One of the first reports about the voyage to this place was written by the British Captain James Hall. His ship arrived in the waters just off the Kingittorsuaq In May 1612.

A result of the visit was the naming of the sites by the Englishman. Kingittorsuaq he named Mount Hatcliffe.

The arms of the current Godthaabsfiord he named Lancaster River and the Balls River. James Ball wrong-ly believed that the fiords were large rivers. Later the Danish and Icelandic colonizers gave the sites new names, just as the existing Greenland Self-government now has named the sites using Greenlandic names.

Despite modern navigation equipment, it still can go wrong. On this picture from August 2012, the ship Arctic Hunter appears in front of Kingittorsuaq to pick up containers on the Russian ship Vega Sagittarius. The Russian ship had collided with a reef just outside the fiord.



Kingittorsuaq, august 2012