

A summary of the rescue mission on November 17, 1924.

Autumn 17 November 1924 in the morning the weather was unusually calm. When it started to lighten up, the residents of the settlement agreed to pick up supplies on the island of Illutalik, which is approx. 10 kilometers from Killiit.

A hundred years ago, summer was used to gather supplies for the coming winter. The catches were stored in depots built of sod and stone. In 1924, only umiaq (wife boat) and qajaq (kayak) were used as means of transport for the villagers.

On the umiaq, there was the coxswain Èba (Eberneser) Schmidt, and in addition to her, there were 8 rowers in the umiaq, including Ole Schmidt's sister Lucie Schmidt.

The umiaq was returning with supplies from Illutalik and had just stopped at Akulliit. After fetching water in Akulliit, the owner of the umiaq decided to continue the journey home to Killiit despite the increasing storm.

A little over halfway to Killiit, they were overtaken by the strong storm, and they were in danger of capsizing if the wrong sea came. The residents of Killiit could see the umiaq when it was on top of the high waves. Ole Schmidt and his older brother Isak decided to sail out with the kayak to try to save the crew despite the mother's protests, as she did not want to lose her sons besides her youngest daughter who was with the umiaq. The brothers otherwise encouraged the other hunters to come out and help the umiaq. Instead, they only became the ones who went out to try to save their little sister.

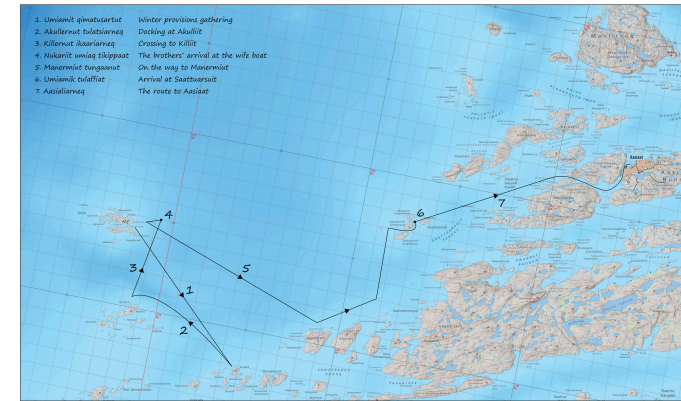
The autumn storm is notorious for being life-threatening for the hunters, where black clouds can suddenly come with snow and sleet as well as high waves. The villagers finally saw the two kayaks reach the umiaq and then everything went dark as the storm increased in strength.

The brothers fought with the crew against high waves, where water constantly entered the umiaq. They otherwise tried to get south towards Manermiut, but it had been impossible to steer the umiaq, so they eventually sailed towards the open sea. At one point, Isak had lost his balance and capsized with the kayak. In addition to having to hold on to his umiaq, Ole had overturned his brother's kayak. When the storm subsided, Ole attached his kayak to his umiaq and came up to help row. Then the crew was so discouraged and had difficulty rowing. After that, Isak managed to secure his kayak and got up to the umiaq. His clothes were drenched and the kayak half full of water.

Most of the crew could not row from exhaustion. The little sister was lying on the bottom of the umiaq with her head on the lap of her older brother Isak and was breathing her last. When they finally arrived at Saattuarsuit (Susanne Islands) there were 3 who had already died.

When they got ashore, the brothers made sure to wrap the survivors in skins and then covered them with snow. The deceased were laid on the snow. Then the brothers agreed to come to Aasiaat to get help. Isak was very debilitated after getting wet and could hardly walk. On the way to Aasiaat, Ole hit his brothers body when he gave up rowing, so he could continue. Isak could no longer row when they were off Aappalaartoq. When they arrived, Ole ran to the nearest house to get help. Isak was then carried into Aqaluartaaq's house and was later admitted to the hospital.

The medical boat Serfaq went to Saattuarsuit to pick up the survivors and deceased. When the medical boat returned to Aasiaat, it had the umiaq in tow and there was a mournful and silent atmosphere. During the night there were 2 more deceased. The survivors were admitted to the hospital.



Ole otherwise wanted to return to Killiit, but Isak had agreed that they would come with the medical boat to Manermiut the next day, where they could go home from there.

In the journal Grønland, this was written about Ole Schmidt upon his return:

When they approached Killiit, they could see that many people were gathered on the mountain called "Arnap qaqqaa", which is a lookout point for the villagers. Ole fell further and further behind... the hunter who for so many hours had striven so hard, had accomplished so much, had struggled both physically and spiritually, had found himself between life and death and had seen death and dying more than anything else the hunter who, when his brother capsized and could not get up again, had helped him up with the greatest caution and all his lucidity preserved, and who had comforted the umiaq crew.... who rowed to Aasiaat at the same time as he helped his brother to row on... the prisoner about whom the brother had said to his wife: "If Ole hadn't been with me then, I too would have perished".... Ole, who had always been so strong... He could do no more as they approached the settlement and the family. Not because he was knocked out, but it seemed as if only now he was gripped by the enormity of the events...he stopped rowing, put his oar in front of him and bowed his head...maybe he now felt too small to have taken part in so great a deed, in so great a service, now that it was all over? On 10 February 1926, King Christian the 10th had sent medals for noble deeds to the brothers. In addition to that, the Ministry of the Interior had sent a letter on 15 March 1926, in which it was stated that the brothers Ole and Isak Schmidt each received a check for DKK 200 from the Carnegie Foundation.

The umiaq surviving crew:

Èba (Ebaneser) Schmidt born 8/11-1874

Amajut Schmidt born on 8/4-1907

Tabithe Schmidt born on 3/9-1905

Anigne Johansen born on 25/7-1905 (artist Alibak Johansen's elder sister).

Died of exhaustion and cold:

Lucie Schmidt born on 21/3-1898 (Ole's little sister)

Tekla Johannessen born on 8/11-1898

Julie Schmidt born on 26/4-1905

Sofie Martinsen born on 23/12-1902

Thomas Jeremiassen born on 2/2-1907

OLE SAMUEL SILAS LARS SCHMIDT
AASIAAT

Ole Samuel Silas Lars Schmidt
05.01.1893 - 18.09.1961
Born in Killiit (Vester Ejlande).

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