Hello! My name is Dr. Hugo Sindelar and I have the privilege of serving as your dispatch writer for the 2018 BGOS/JOIS expedition. I am currently a M.F.A student in Science and Natural History Filmmaking at Montana State University, and I am participating in this cruise as an intern with Ocean Media Institute (OMI). Before becoming a filmmaker, I completed a Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering, so I am excited to share the stories of science from this cruise with you. Enough about me though, let's jump in to today's activities.

Yesterday and today were all about travel from far and wide. The BGOS/JOIS expedition is comprised of scientists from many different institutions. Everyone on the cruise ended up in Yellowknife today, where most people took one of two flights to Kugluktuk, a remote village on the Coronation Gulf. My flight was on Canada North, where we headed to the back of the plane to board. As I walked onto the plane, I realized why this was the case, there were only about 10 rows of seats. They converted this aircraft into a half passenger plane/half cargo freighter. Apparently, Canada North’s flights are one of the main ways the village is resupplied during the summer flying season. They have to fly in enough food, medicine, etc. to keep the village going during the winter. That wasn’t the only surprise though. As we touched down in Kugluktuk, there was a decided “bounce” to the aircraft and the plane was enveloped in a whirlwind of dust. The runway in Kugluktuk happens to be made of dirt! I have flown into a few airports with dirt runways in the past, but never on a modern airliner.

After we landed, we were met by crewmembers of the CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent. We piled our luggage in one central area on the tarmac (or tardirt, if that is a word? Internet is spotty on the ship, so I can’t be held accountable if it isn’t). Then we were divided into groups of five and we made the quick five-minute helicopter flight to the ship. After all the scientists were onboard, the helicopter brought our luggage over via longline (a.k.a. hanging the luggage in a net about 50 feet below the helicopter). With the fine control of a master craftsmen, the helicopter pilot carefully placed hundreds of pounds of luggage on the aircraft deck.

Every day is precious on the ship, and the science team wasted no time setting up their labs and equipment. By the time I found some of my camera equipment amongst the countless cases of science equipment in the cargo hold (which is an adventure in itself, kind of a cross between playing Tetris, yoga, and weightlifting), members of the cruise had already set up numerous filtration stations, wet chemistry machines, etc.

After dinner (which is called supper and occurs at 4:30pm), we all got a quick familiarization tour and then most everyone headed back into the science labs to continue setting up equipment. We are currently at anchor, but tomorrow we will get underway on our 27-day journey. Stay tuned!

P.S. As part of my internship with OMI, I will be making a short film about this cruise, which will give you an inside look into the science, people, and stories of this expedition. Just a teaser for things to come. Until then you’ll have to tap into your imagination and follow along with the stories and pictures in these dispatches.