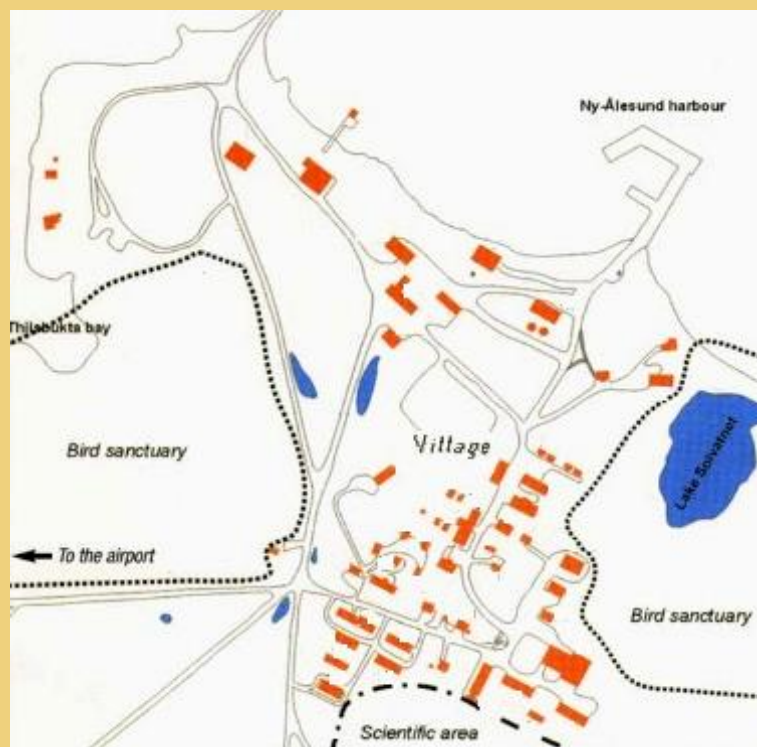


Norway-Svalbard

NY ALESUND

this town also began as coal-mining place, as the other villages, in 1917. conditions were harsh. after years of on and off, a heavy fatal accident in 1962 lead to the end of all mining activities. the former coal train is nowadays just an historic memorial... yet this was not the end!



in fact ny alesund is a very small town, with an all-year permanent population of about 30, and a summer population of about 120. it has basic facilities, like a shop, a post office, and even one hotel., named "northpole".



ny alesund is actually the northernmost settlement in the world, and unique in two regards:

<1> several attempts to fly over the north pole started in ny alesund, and it were roald amundsen together with lincoln ellsworth and umberto nobile who did fly over the pole on march 12 in 1926, in the airship "norge", which had been designed by nobile in italy.



amundsen and nobile, who was a highly ranked general in italy, did not accept each other, and finally nobile built a further airship, named "italia", for a purely italian adventure.

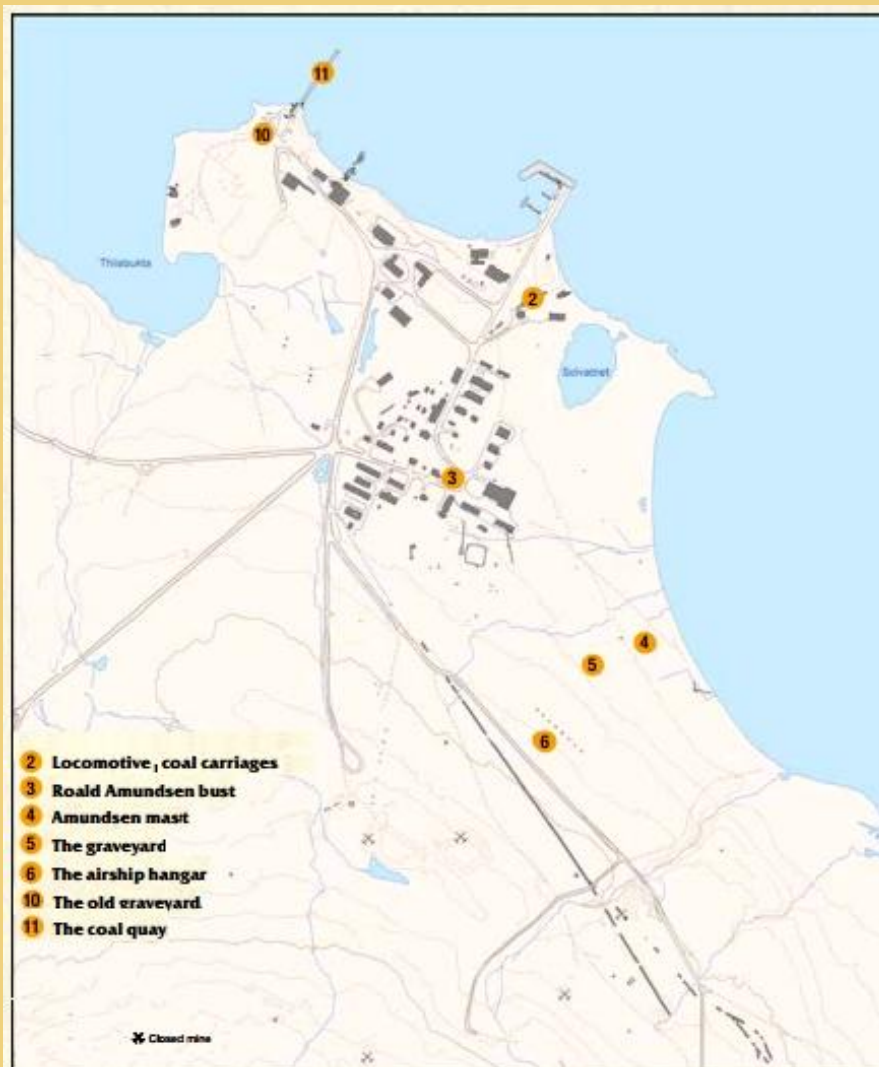


it left, under the command of general nobile, ny alesund on 23 may 1928 to indeed reach the north pole - however, it crashed when flying back. after a huge international rescue action, 9 people were found and salvaged by the russian icebreakewr "krasin", including nobile himself.



sadly so, a french airplane heading for ny alesund to participate in the rescue operation, broke down while over the sea and was never found ; one of the five people on it was- - roald amundsen.

<2> in ny alesund are sixteen permanent research stations, which are based on institution from ten different countries, including india and china. most of them operate year-round. it is this which has finally made ny alesund a permanent city.





the "amundsen mast", used for airships, still stands, and there is a memorial statue for roald amundsen in the middle of the town.

