

Antarctica Sun Times - *ONLINE*

January 19, 1997

The Antarctica Sun Times is published by the U.S. Naval Support Force Antarctica, Public Affairs Office, in conjunction with the National Science Foundation and Antarctic Support Associates. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Navy, NSF, ASA, DON, or DOD, nor do they alter official instructions. For submissions please contact the Antarctica Sun Times staff at extension 2370. The Antarctica Sun Times staff reserves the right to editorial review of all submissions. The Antarctica Sun Times-Online is published in McMurdo Station, Antarctica

New Plaque Honors Expedition Participants

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

A bronze plaque honoring four participants in Operation HIGH JUMP was unveiled at a ceremony outside the chalet on Jan. 11.

The dedication took place exactly 50 years from the date the survivors of a plane crash in West Antarctica were rescued. The plane, a PBM-5 Mariner, was one of three twin-engine amphibious aircraft aboard USS Pine Island, a Navy seaplane tender.

Code-named George One, the aircraft left Pine Island on Dec. 30, 1946 on an aerial reconnaissance mission over the Walker Mountains. The nine-member crew included Pine Island's commanding officer CAPT Henry Howard Caldwell, three other officers and five enlisted men.

After encountering a heavy cloud cover, the pilot decided to head back to the ship. At that point, the fully-fueled keel of George One caught the edge of an unseen mountain and exploded. The crash proved fatal for three crewmembers: ENS Maxwell Albert Lopez, RM1 Wendell Keith Hendersin and MM Frederick Warren Williams.

The survivors found shelter and food in the plane's wreckage and waited for their rescue. Pine Island sent out another Mariner to locate them, but the heavy cloud cover brought 13 days of delays. Finally, a clear day came on Jan. 11, 1947 and the six survivors were saved.

The crew members of George One and Pine Island were participants in Operation HIGH JUMP, Task Force 68, Byrd Antarctic Expedition IV. The operation was the largest-ever expedition to Antarctica and included 17 aircraft, six helicopters, 4,700 men and 13 ships (seven from the Atlantic Fleet, five from the Pacific Fleet and a Coast Guard icebreaker).

The task force departed the United States on Dec. 2, 1946 and arrived at the ice edge near Roosevelt Island on Dec. 29. The flag ship arrived in homeport on April 14th, 1947, concluding the expedition.

Operation HIGH JUMP had many missions. One of them was to train personnel and test materiel in Antarctica's extreme cold weather environment. Another was to extend U.S. sovereignty over the largest area possible. A third was to gain a broader understanding of the continent with aerial photography and mineral research.

In all, Antarctica claimed the lives of four Sailors that summer season. The plaque is dedicated to those men, including Seaman First Class Vance Woodall, who was fatally injured while operating a tractor on the continent.

McMurdo Station Manager Al Martin, Commander, Naval Support Force, Antarctica CAPT Hugh Smith and Navy Chaplain LT Mark Smith spoke at the ceremony.

"The placement of the plaque in Antarctica will facilitate the long overdue recognition of the contribution made by Task Force 68," Martin said, reading a letter from Don Leavitt, National Coordinator, Operation High Jump.

"Out of the original 4,700 members of the expedition, I was able to locate about 600 still living," Leavitt said. "And out of those 600, 115 showed up at the reunion."

Participants in Operation HIGH JUMP commissioned the plaque in October in Norfolk, Va. for their 50th anniversary observance of the beginning of the expedition.

Research Ship Comes To Town Before Next Cruise

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer was the second ship to dock at McMurdo Station's ice pier this year. Palmer arrived Jan. 8 and departed Monday for its fifth of eleven cruises in the Southern Ocean this season.

The ship was named after the first person to discover Antarctica. Nathaniel B. Palmer, an American seal trader who sighted the continent on Nov. 16, 1820.

Palmer is operated for the National Science Foundation by the contractor, Antarctic Support Associates (ASA), on a long-term charter from Edison-Chouest Offshore of Galliano, La.

With a length of 308 feet and weight of 6,200 tons, Palmer is the largest vessel operated for NSF in the Southern Ocean. The other NSF-commissioned vessel, R/V Polar Duke, has a length 219 feet and is currently operating near the Antarctic Peninsula.

Palmer has over 5,500 feet of laboratory space which includes room for numerous computers, electronic measuring instruments, aquariums and storage facilities for soil and water samples. Crewmembers and scientists also enjoy two-person cabins aboard the spacious vessel.

Seven ASA employees and 20 crewmembers supported a team of 30 scientists on Palmer's most recent cruise. This was one of many cruises dedicated to geological, biological, chemical and physical oceanographic research.

The first cruise of the season, departed Lyttleton, New Zealand Aug. 29 and was the continuation of a long term series of projects studying carbon flux at various sites around the globe.

The second and third cruises took Palmer to the ice edge near McMurdo and back to Lyttleton. These voyages continued the carbon flux study and included water column measurement.

Palmer scientists studied algal blooms in the Ross Sea on their latest cruise to McMurdo.

The carbon flux study will continue next month in the Ross Sea until the ship returns to the station Feb. 10.

VXE-6 Selects Its Sailor Of The Year For 1996

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

He's a 15-year veteran of the Navy, father of three and the Leading Petty Officer of the largest production

workcenter in the command.

AMH1(AW) Richard "Mickey" Burns is also the Antarctic Development Squadron-SIX (VXE-6) Sailor Of The Year and Wing Sailor Of The Year for Helicopter Tactical Wing Pacific.

Burns, a native of Wallington, N.J., is responsible for the Airframes work center. He manages two separate deployment sites, with seven people working for him in McMurdo Station, Antarctica and another nine people in the Airframes work center in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The Airframes work center maintains structural and hydraulic systems on seven LC-130 Hercules aircraft.

"We take care of all the metal on the aircraft, and the flight controls, the landing gear, all the skin repairs, all the hydraulic systems," Burns said.

Burns was selected as Sailor Of The Year because of his superior performance as a leader and manager. His effort to coordinate work among several work centers and his genuine concern for subordinates, including their training and advancement, were also factors for his selection.

The first 14 years of Burns' career was spent on the east coast, homeported in Jacksonville, Fla. He completed several deployments over the years, including one aboard the USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67) where he participated in both Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Burns expressed surprise at his selection. "I'm still trying to get over the fact that I got it," he said, smiling. "This is the first time I've ever been selected for anything. It's an honor."

His wife, ACC(AW) Diana Burns, is also deployed to McMurdo Station with Naval Support Force, Antarctica and is happy for her husband.

"I'm very proud of him," she said. "It just nice to see him recognized for all his hard work."

AROUND USAP

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

McMurdo Station - Personnel onboard the USCGC Polar Sea conducted fueling operations at Marble Point on Friday, Jan 10. Because they were able to top-off the tanks this year, Marble Point won't require refueling next year.

The New York Air National Guard returned to the continent last Sunday to augment VXE-6's flight operations. The Guard will remain until Feb. 8.

In a move to save both fuel and maintenance time, the water tanks in Bldg. 126 were drained and cleaned and will not be in operation over the winter. In past years, the tanks have remained in use, and a total of eight furnaces had to be fueled and maintained throughout the winter.

VXE-6 flight operations continued to Byrd Surface Camp, which is located 800 miles from McMurdo on the West Antarctic Ice Sheet. ASA personnel are removing everything, as the camp is being permanently disestablished. Currently, all the structures are being demolished and shipped back to McMurdo via LC-130s. A few things will be left behind, one is a Jamesway with a survival cache. The site can still be used for twin otter operations.

South Pole - VXE-6 is continuing refueling operations to the South Pole. Currently, the station is using approximately 13,000 gallons of fuel per week for both station use and the Antarctic Muon and Neutrino Detector Array (AMANDA) project.

The primary objective of the AMANDA project is to discover sources of very high energy neutrinos. The project

involves positioning detector strings at a depth of 2,000 meters in the ice. Currently, the Polar Ice Coring Office is conducting drilling operations in support of the project.

R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer - The Ship departed the McMurdo Station Ice Pier early Monday morning, to begin another research cruise. It is scheduled to arrive back at McMurdo Feb 11.

This cruise will continue research and sample gathering for the Joint Global Ocean Flux Study, that is tracking carbon flow through its organic and inorganic pathways. A total of 44 projects make up the study.

R/V Polar Duke - The ship arrived at Hugo Island on Wednesday, Jan. 8. Personnel went ashore to repair an automatic weather station. With work completed, the ship departed for Palmer Station arriving later that day, where the crew began cargo off-load operations.

The ship departed Palmer on Saturday, Jan. 11 and immediately began water sampling. Researchers are looking at temperature, salinity and transmission of light through the water, and what sediments or life the water contains. They are also conducting bioacoustic profiling for detection of krill swarms.

SCIENCE PROJECT UPDATE

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

The Antarctic Automatic Weather Station Climate Program: 1995-1998 (S-283M)

Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), which are located in remote areas of Antarctica, are used to measure surface pressure, air temperature, wind speed and direction, and at some sites humidity. These data will be used to establish long-term climate records for certain sites and provide meteorological information in support of aircraft operations and research.

Dr. Charles Stearns and his field team will install, deploy and service AWSs at various locations on the continent, including Cape Crozier, Mt. Erebus and the South Pole.

Continuation Support of High-latitude Geomagnetic Pulsation Measurements (S-102)

For this project, data from magnetic pulsation sensors will continue to be collected and analyzed. This research will help scientists to understand the mechanism by which energy is transferred from the solar wind to Earth's Magnetosphere, which is the part of the upper atmosphere that extends out for thousands of miles and is dominated by earth's magnetic field.

Currently, this data is being collected in the Arctic and the Antarctic and is being used in conjunction with similar data from a number of satellites. Sensors in Antarctica are located at McMurdo Station and the South Pole.

NSF Grantee Photographs Homo Antarcticus

by Samantha Tisdal

Most photographers flock to Antarctica to capture on film its otherworldly landscapes and startling forms of native fauna. But Jim Barker, a National Science Foundation (NSF)-sponsored Artist and Writers grantee, came here to document a non-indigenous species largely ignored by modern-day Antarctic Anselms -- the common human being.

"I've had a long interest in Antarctica, and am an avid student of its history," said Barker, who has been on the Ice since early October, "but I always thought that to come here was out of the realm of possibility."

Hope came in the form of Barker's long-time friend Dave Rosenthal, a painter and recent Artist and Writers grantee. "Rosenthal described the place and the people to me," Barker recalled, "and I developed an idea for a

project here -- the place is well documented, but nobody's ever really photographed the people."

NSF liked Barker's project proposal, and soon he was on his way. Three months and 300 rolls of film later, the photographer probably has a more well-rounded picture of the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) than most anybody else around, having spent substantial time not only at McMurdo Station, but also at the South Pole, Lake Hoare, the Taylor Valleys, Siple Dome, the Nathaniel B. Palmer research vessel, and even the summit of Mt. Erebus.

While he is fortunate to have witnessed firsthand so many aspects of the program, Barker admits sometimes feeling overwhelmed at the scope of the project he has tackled.

"Coming to a place like this, which is extraordinarily different from any other community of people anywhere, it takes a while to get your grounding," Barker explained. "First impressions can be valuable, yet they can also be flippant. It took me a long time to get a feeling for the people and the imagery here, to become engaged with the project emotionally, to pull myself in."

Not only did Barker have to get a feeling for the people here; the people had to get a feeling for him. A stranger with a camera can be unsettling. But Barker's manner seems to put his subjects at their ease.

"People here have actually been quite open," he said. "At first they're a little surprised for the camera to be pointed at them. So I just hang around, watching for moments when people by their positions most convey who they are. It takes a while....I try not to rush into it."

Barker works almost exclusively with black-and-white film, and uses natural light whenever possible. When shooting in dark areas, he uses fast films and special developing techniques, rather than resorting to a flash. "The lighting conveys so much of the mood," he explained, "and a flash just ruins everything."

Barker's last project, a book on the Upik Indians of Alaska entitled "Always Getting Ready," features photos which span a 13 year period of intimate contact with a Upik community.

Having spent only one brief summer season in Antarctica, it's no wonder Barker is reluctant to predict the shape his work will take once he returns home later this month and tries to put it all together.

National Geographic is interested in Barker's work here. But beyond that, he doesn't have any firm answers.

"A lot of people ask me if I will do a book, but I'm uncertain," he said. "I'd like to get the kind of depth so that people who have been coming here for a long time would agree with my images and perceptions. I'm just not interested in cranking out books -- I have a personal sense of aesthetics and I like to feel like I've really 'got it' before I put it out there."

USAP PERSON OF THE WEEK

by JO3 Roland Ortiz

People from all over the world come to Antarctica every year. Custodian Rivka "Riki" Levinson a native of Tel Aviv, Israel is one of them.

Levinson lived in Israel until she met her husband in 1987.

"Once we were married, we moved in November 1988 to Jacksonville, Florida," Levinson said. "I worked at Mayport Naval Base, in the galley."

They eventually moved to Denver, Colo. where her husband got a job with Antarctica Support Associates (ASA).

"We've been living in Denver for the past five years," she said. "Occasionally, I baked for a vegetarian restaurant in Denver."

This is Levinson's first season in McMurdo. Her husband has made six deployments with ASA.

"I came down this season with my husband; he works for ASA in warehouse management," she said.

"My job consists of cleaning bathrooms, showers and cleaning the chapel," Levinson said. "I hope next year I can come back as a shuttle driver."

The Levinsons plan on returning to Denver and wait for their son's arrival from Israel. He will visit them for two months during the summer.
