

Antarctica Sun Times - *ONLINE*

February 9, 1997

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NSFA Completes 41st and Final Deployment

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

When Naval Support Force, Antarctica (NSFA) returns to homeport this year, its long commitment to exploration of the world's most southern continent will come to an end.

The one hundred-plus member command from Port Hueneme, Calif. has been making yearly deployments to the Antarctic since Operation DEEP FREEZE I during the 1955-1956 austral summer season. That year, 1,800 men aboard seven ships came to Ross Island with a mission to establish an airfield and base of operations.

The Sailors of NSFA succeeded in building McMurdo Station, thereby opening up the continent for long-term scientific research. Today, McMurdo is the largest settlement in Antarctica, with all of the infrastructure, buildings and comforts of a small town.

But, NSFA has become considerably smaller in recent years as private contractors have taken on a larger role in the United States Antarctic Program. Since the departure of the Seabees and the Public Works Department in 1993, NSFA's contribution includes, but is not limited to meteorology, air traffic control and communications.

Meteorology Division Leading Chief Petty Officer AGC Matt Young is currently on his fifth deployment and has seen the transition evolve over time.

"I wish we were still here, but our days are numbered," he said. "This is a civilian operation now."

Electronics Division Maintenance Chief ETC(SW) Charles Gagnon said NSFA was once a popular assignment.

"Sailors will now miss an opportunity to come down and support the program," he said. "A lot of people in the Navy asked to get assigned here."

Air Traffic Controller AC2 Dustin Barrett has been with NSFA since 1993. He said many people will miss the command's presence in Antarctica.

"I hate to see us leave," he said. "We've had a long tradition here."

After redeployment in February, only 23 NSFA personnel will remain in McMurdo as the last winter-over detachment. NSFA will formally disestablish in March, 1998, but the transition to civilian contractors is well underway.

A civilian contractor replaced NSFA's disbursing and Morale, Welfare and Recreation divisions in February. Contractors are set to take over the remaining command functions in October. An administrative staff will remain with the command until disestablishment.

Answers To Some Questions To External Review Panel

On behalf of the External Panel, I would like to thank you for your participation in the Town Meeting on January 1, and for the comments and suggestions that you submitted to the Panelists via e-mail.

Norm Augustine requested that I respond to the e-mails that can most rapidly be addressed by the NSF. I have selected those that are particularly informative and useful. These comments reflect the concerns of several members of the McMurdo community which have been anonymously passed on for review and where practical, for implementation.

Of the dozens of responses received, I will comment on some here to provide you some feedback to your most general concerns:

First, NSF and the Panel members are pleased that ASA has effectively addressed the concerns raised by members of the galley staff. A most important resource in the Program are the people that work in it, and NSF and ASA will strive to continue to be responsive to those needs.

Several comments were made about the need for professional counseling services to work with people in the community to cope with the pressures that come from the social and work stresses in our environment. We have begun the process of assessing that impact, and will include such professional services to the community next season.

A suggestion to redeploy winter personnel at WINFLY was suggested with the added airlift capability during WINFLY to increase the productivity of workers. We agree that the use of the C-141 during WINFLY does change our early season capability. We will give this suggestion careful consideration in balance with the need for an effective transfer of knowledge from the winter to summer personnel.

Since the beginning of the withdrawal of the Navy from the Program that will be complete in 1998, there was the perception that there was no reduction in the overall population in McMurdo. I would like to correct that perception.

The withdrawal of the Navy from support to the program, has been accompanied by an aggressive effort by management to reduce the overall population of McMurdo.

This has been effective. The McMurdo population over the last several years has been reduced from about 1200 persons to 1000.

To fully appreciate this change, one has to remember that McMurdo has also absorbed the 160 persons formerly housed at Williams Field. NSF expects this figure to continue to decrease through the completion of Navy's withdrawal in March 1998.

Of concern to the McMurdo community was the age and aging of some of the infrastructure in town. The panel members were impressed by the role of McMurdo station and its' importance to the support of the rest of the program.

I have seen some of the aging equipment, and know that many of the structures and all utility and used systems are 20 years or older. The needs of the town are therefore included in the panel's deliberations along with the needs at the South Pole.

It is clear that a balance must be established and then maintained which addresses the needs of support infrastructure, and the needs of science. ASA has developed a long-range facilities plan for McMurdo. We will facilitate its completion, and use it as a "road map" for a more balanced approach towards the replacement of equipment and facilities.

Members of the community were concerned that access to the Internet and software used in the Program was not up to current day standards. The panel and management agree that there is room for improvements in these areas.

Communication and computers, so necessary to address work requirements effectively need continuous review and updating. Members of the panel who have observed the change in the program over the years remark on the vast improvements in these areas, yet recognize that the pace of change in the technology make it difficult to keep up.

This issue will be addressed, and the priority will be placed in areas where there is a demonstrated contribution to increasing productivity or efficiency.

Several correspondents noted the problems with overheated buildings, and suggested that the Program implement energy conservation practices. With exception of some of the dormitories during the summer, which are difficult to balance with respect to heating and ventilation, the Program has practiced energy conservation. Examples are:

- A more efficient shuttle service to reduce individual use of vehicles.
- Replacement of the flash evaporators with reverse osmosis systems for water production.
- Development of the mobile Williams Field to replace what was a permanent summer station at that site.
- Wind generators at Black Island & solar heating at South Pole.

Each of these and many other changes have resulted in a net reduction in fuel usage that add up to hundreds of thousands of gallons of fuel saved. We welcome additional suggestions from the community to further increase these savings.

I could not address all of the good comments that the Panel received, but focused on those we perceived as the key issues that the community brought to our attention. We feel that the town forum is a good venue to hear about the community concerns, and will include them on a seasonal basis.

In the meantime, I urge you to continue to let NSF know your concerns and ideas through the Internet. Please address those comments to any of the following e-mail addresses:

csulliva@nsf.gov
echiang@nsf.gov
ddfischer@nsf.gov

Sincerely,
Dr. Cornelius W. Sullivan,
Director, Office of Polar Programs

ATO Maintains Strict Rules For Bag Drag

Antarctic Terminal Operations (ATO) asks McMurdo residents to follow certain procedures when redeploying.

Passengers should check the flight manifest board (outside the galley) for Bag Drag times 24 hours before departure. Flight manifests will appear 12 hours before departure.

Passengers should watch Channel 7 for a listing of flight departure times. Call x2819 for updated times one half-hour prior to the flight's transportation time at MCC.

All flights to Christchurch are on LC-130's which have a 52- passenger capacity. Each passenger is permitted 75 pounds of baggage plus a carry-on.

Wear ECW gear and bring all baggage and handcarry items to Bag Drag. Bring proper identification (passport/military ID) and fill out a customs declaration form.

A "Bellboy" baggage service is available from Derelict Junction 20 minutes before Bag Drag. Call 2347 for reservations.

Each agency in McMurdo has a Passenger (Pax) Coordinator to answer questions:

- NSFA - PN1 John Evans, x2629
- VXE-6 - YN2 Flarzell Byas, x2313
- NZAP - Peter Kiernan, x6710
- ASA - Tina Trevino, x2347
- NSF - Carey Collins, x2734

NSFA Selects 1996 Sailor Of The Year

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

Choosing a job that would be challenging was the start of a stellar career for this year's Naval Support Force, Antarctica Sailor Of The Year.

AC1(AW) Kelley Hawbaker, a 13-year veteran of the Navy, was selected as Sailor Of The Year due to her superior performance. As Tower Branch Chief she monitors workers and qualifies trainees. She also ensures the tower operates safely and efficiently.

As the Terminal Instrument Procedures Specialist, Hawbaker draws and designs all instrument approach procedures for all the runways, both at McMurdo and at the South Pole, a position she has done expertly for the past three years.

Of her selection Hawbaker said, "It's an honor, it really is. It's nice to get all that recognition."

Hawbaker quickly adds that recognition is not the reason for her outstanding performance. "This place comes first," she said, "and I love my work."

The native of Grimes, Iowa lives happily with her cat, Titus, a huge silver tabby. "He's supported my military career - unwillingly," she said laughing.

Her parents were very supportive of her naval career decision. "They love the Navy more than I do, and I love it," she said.

When her NSFA tour is completed in October, Hawbaker will transfer to Fallon, Nev., where she will be working at the approach control facility.

From The Editor:

In the past three years *Antarctica Sun Times* has grown from just a local McMurdo Station newspaper to one covering all of the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) with a world-wide distribution.

Three years ago this newspaper was still being published using the age-old cut and paste methods. Today we use state of the art desktop publishing software and digital cameras. Although local McMurdo distribution is still done via paper copies (everyone wants the TV schedule), world-wide distribution is done via the internet. An online edition is also available on the Naval Support Force, Antarctica home page at: www.asa.org/nsfa. There is even an electronic version on the McMurdo LAN.

Simply put, it's been a blast being a part of this evolution. Although technology has played a large part in this transition it has been my staff who have really made it work.

Four individuals: JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel, IC1 Doug Jarvi, JO2 Trevor Poulsen and JO3 Evan Ortiz were directly responsible for the improvements and new vision of this publication. Faced with a cut in manning this season they were stubborn and refused to cut back on services. As is often the case, the troops have inspired the boss.

One other individual deserves special recognition. Ms. Samantha Tisdell has spent a large number of her off-duty

hours writing articles which have significantly enhanced the *Sun Times*. She is one of the most gifted writers I have seen in my 18 years in journalism and simply a wonderful person with whom to work.

We certainly hope that you have enjoyed the *Sun Times* and from it have gained a better understanding of USAP and the people who make up the program.

For us, it's time to move on. So, borrowing a phrase from the broadcast world, this is *Antarctica Sun Times* signing off.

Sincerely,
Brady Bautch
Senior Chief Journalist, U.S. Navy, Managing Editor

AROUND USAP

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

McMurdo Station - The station suffered a power failure Monday when the DC system that provides power to controls that run the generator engines blew some fuses. This left three operating engines and two others with electrical control problems. The sixth engine will be down until the replacement block can be installed. Station personnel were asked to conserve energy where possible.

A second power failure occurred in Bldg. 155 Monday evening when equipment associated with backup generators overheated.

Ship's off-load began immediately upon the arrival of the cargo ship M/V Greenwave in McMurdo on Monday night. The off-load and the following on-load are expected to be completed by next Sunday.

Antarctic Development Squadron SIX (VXE-6) completed several camp close-outs during the week. The final flight to Vostok was completed on Tuesday, delivering personnel, fuel and food. Also closed-out was the camp at Prince Albert Mountain where geologists had been working since the beginning of January.

The New York Air National Guard completed the final mission to Byrd Surface Camp on Wednesday, closing the camp down permanently.

PHI personnel completed helicopter operations last Monday. On Tuesday they winterized and packed away the last two helicopters.

The Coast Guard helicopter detachment redeployed to the USCGC Polar Sea on Jan. 31, after spending a month operating out of McMurdo Station.

The National Science Foundation exercised the second option to Antarctic Support Associates (ASA) contract. This will extend ASA's Antarctic operation to March 31, 2000.

South Pole - According to the South Pole Weekly Report, the station galley crew served a Super Bowl loyalty dinner consisting of New England Surf and Green Bay Turf, which was followed by a well attended viewing of the Super Bowl tape.

The station experienced several power outages which were linked to over usage because of colder weather. Typically, the station experiences an increase in power use toward the end of January. However, power use will drop as the population at the Pole decreases.

Minnesota Family Reunites In McMurdo

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

Where do you go when you want to escape a Minnesota winter? Antarctica, of course.

Flying south, way south, has become a family tradition for some Minnesotans. The Majerus family, for example, has sent eight of its members to the frozen continent since 1980.

Nick Majerus has been to McMurdo Station eleven times over the past sixteen years. A sheet metal worker from Rochester, Minn., Nick got a job at the Metal Shop as sheet metal foreman, a position he still holds.

"It's actually warmer here than it is in Minnesota," he said. "But, I come here mostly because my job is challenging and I like the people I work with."

Nick's brother, John, has spent six consecutive summers at McMurdo since the 1991-1992 season. John owns a modern 8,000-bird turkey farm in Altura, Minn. The automated business lets him travel to McMurdo where he's a welder at Facilities Maintenance and Construction (FMC).

Nick's daughter, Michelle, and John's daughter, Nicole, followed in their fathers' footsteps after hearing so many good things about "sunny" McMurdo. Michelle is a firehouse dispatcher currently on her fourth season, while Nicole is finishing up her first season as a janitor.

"My family came down and it seemed a fun thing to do," Nicole said. "But, I'm not looking forward to going back home and all the snow in Minnesota."

Nicole's uncle Raymond (her mother's brother) is an 11-year veteran of the ice. His wife Renee has been to McMurdo three times, while his brother Duane has done three winter-overs.

But that's not all. A second cousin once spent a summer at South Pole Station in the 1980's and John's wife is considering deploying with her husband and daughter Nicole next year.

Ironically, the Majerus brothers see more of one another 9,000 miles from home than they do in Minnesota.

"The advantage of being down here is that I actually see John more here than at home," Nick said.

NFSA Sailor Earns Tech Of The Year Honors

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

Naval Support Force Antarctica (NSFA) member ET1 Kevin Cahill was recently selected as Commander, Naval Air Forces Pacific, Air Traffic Control Technician of the Year.

Cahill is the navigational aids work center supervisor at McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

Cahill earned this prestigious award for outstanding performance on the job which included preventative and corrective maintenance on all navigation equipment at McMurdo and South Pole Stations.

One of his many noteworthy accomplishments this year was the removal of the Air Search Radar at McMurdo's ice runway. The task required hundreds of man-hours, much of it done outside in sub-zero temperatures.

"I think it's really an honor to be singled out for this award," Cahill said. "I was very happy to be nominated to represent NSFA and when I found out I was selected, I was ecstatic."

Cahill credits much of his award-winning success to his co-workers.

"The people in my division are all true professionals," he said. "We have some of the finest technicians here that I have ever worked with in my 17 years in the Navy."

Cahill has completed two deployments with NSFA and will return to Antarctica once again for winter flight operations in August.

