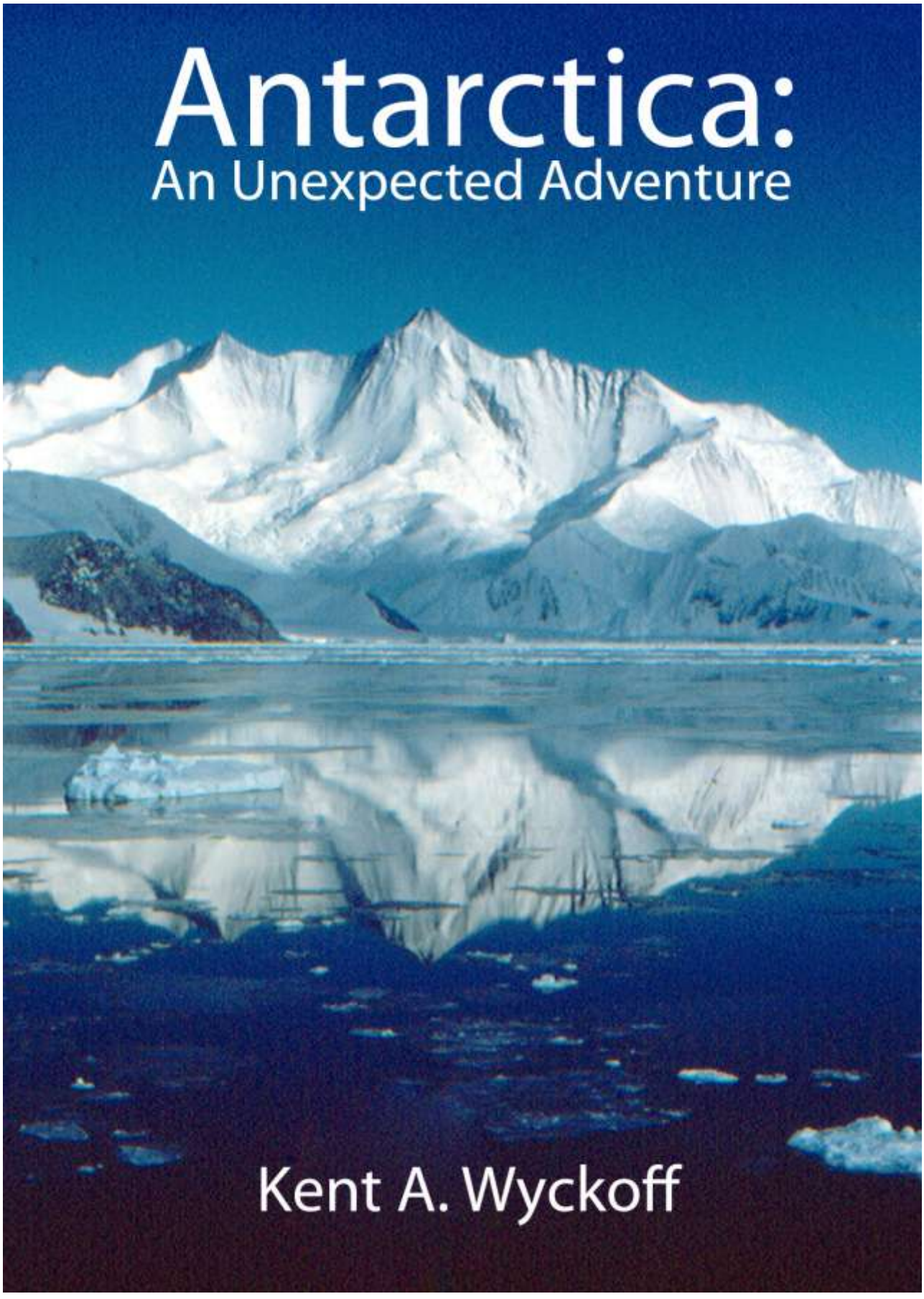

Antarctica:
An Unexpected Adventure
Kent A. Wyckoff

# A N T A R C T I C A

## An Unexpected Adventure

By Kent Albee Wyckoff






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4th Edition – April 2011

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Kent A. Wyckoff

(111, 252, 123, 31—for my Wyckoff Cousins)

Book design by Jason Wyckoff

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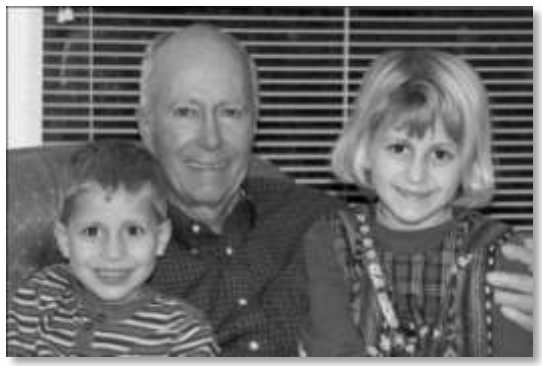
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# Dedication and Preface

I wrote this account of my sixteen months in Antarctica for a small audience: my wife Joan, who has for years urged and encouraged me to do this—*Thank You*, *with all my love*!; son Jason and daughter-in-law Kristi and their two children (our exceptionally gifted and wonderful grand-children!), Ella (seven and a half) and Miles (six); son Scott; two younger sisters, Linda and Shirley; cousins (especially Diane, who has kept after me for years about this) and other family members, and friends. Others who wish to read this are *most* welcome! (Especially—Cousins of the Wyckoff Association!) Jason arranged to host this on -line, and designed the web site; Scott helped me scan photos and other visuals; and he and Jason digitally "pushed" and adjusted many of my photos to at least marginal acceptability. Thanks (with love!) to both for helping 'ol Dad get this thing into shape!



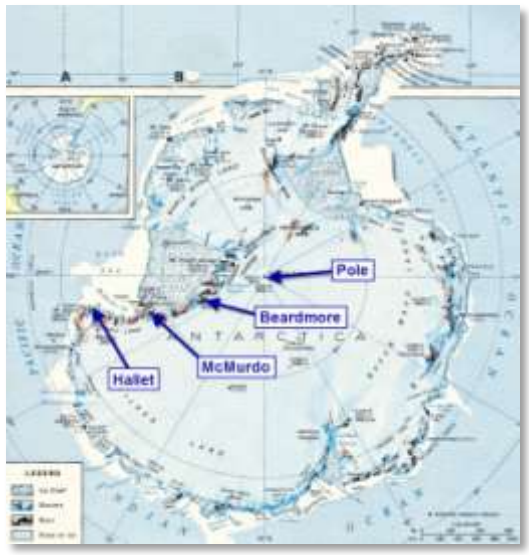
**Kent with Ella and Miles - 2009**

And it turns out that—surprising to me—I also wrote this for myself, as I discovered once I got started on the project. I was able to relive my adventure, and savor it to a degree I had not before; translating experience, and memory (such as it is), and photographs, into a written record. While I've tried to be as accurate as possible, I make no claim that this is any kind of historical document—there is bound to be a certain amount of "mis-remembering"—such as some dates and names. That I have as many names as I do is thanks to my Hallett friend Jennings (Will) Willey, of Catonsville, MD. THANKS, WILL!

Some may find this piece too long, too detailed, and too "gee whiz" in its account (*way* too many exclamation marks!), but I wanted to re-create for others, as much as possible, what *I* actually felt and experienced. Much of this is important only to me, but I wanted to get it *all* down "just for the record." Many historical and other details are from current and period materials, not only for my benefit, but also to provide some background for readers. So….

# How It Started

"How would you like to go to the Antarctic?" asked a professor of mine from the University of Denver. We had established a friendly relationship due to my frequent need for help with his physics course. He was a scientist at the Denver Research Institute, across the street from the University, so it was easy to pop over, get help, and have a short chat. Early in the summer, on June 28th, 1962, I decided to pay him a short visit without the need of asking for help. As soon as he saw me, he said he had been trying to reach me—and out of the blue, the question was posed. I was stunned!




The Antarctic?? The Antarctic!? I knew a little bit about the Antarctic. In high school I had done a term paper on the Antarctic; read in my National Geographic magazines about the International Geophysical Year (IGY) in Antarctica, begun in 1955; had perused Antarctic maps, with their intriguing place-names: Victoria Land, Queen Maud Land, Enderby Land, Adelie Coast, Bay of Whales, McMurdo Sound, and many, many more. And read about Paul Siple, the nineteen-year old Eagle Scout who accompanied Admiral Byrd to Little America in 1928; read Byrd's book *Alone*, about his attempt to winter-over, well, alone, at an interior base. I knew that Antarctica was the highest, coldest, windiest, and most remote continent on earth…and, I knew immediately that I wanted to go there!

When people hear about my "adventure", there are two common questions: Men ask, "were there any girls there?"; and more generally, "why would you want to go there?" Well, "no"; and, "why wouldn't anybody?"

As I write this in the early 21st Century, It's hard to remember, or understand I think, exactly how remote Antarctica really was in the early 1960's, not only geographically, but also in the consciousness of the average person. It was after all, only about fifty or so years since serious exploration of Antarctica had begun; just fifty years since wooden ships, dog sleds and man-haul sledges. As I write (finish!) this, it has been forty-five years since *I* was there. (Where *does* the time go?)

So how *did* an ignorant western Colorado kid get to the Antarctic?

# Some Background

My Dad was a peach farmer—as was his father—with an eighth grade education (nothing against him, just the facts); in rural western Colorado, what we called the Western Slope; Grand Junction area.



I'm going to indulge myself here, and "shoehorn" in some pictures of peach farm life that people have found interesting whenever I've described it—I may never get another chance. Peach trees at that time were pruned, and the small green peaches thinned—by stilt-walking men. The left photo is of me (in the big black hat) and my two younger sisters and, I think, Cousin Diane (on the right). The pruner is Fleet Beanland (it's his dog), a friend of my dad. The other photo is probably decades earlier. I think, on my grandfather's farm. I learned to walk stilts—it's like riding a bike—easy, once you learn how.

There was not much money, although we didn't "know" it; everyone was in the same situation. It was a time when most people (that I knew of) didn't travel much, and when they did, they drove. Dad loved to drive so we had many Sunday day-trips in Western Colorado and Eastern Utah. We went to Denver once to see Dad's two sisters, Gladys (Diane's mother) and Myrtle. A highlight was going to the top of Denver's only skyscraper—Daniel's and Fischer Tower—all of sixteen stories tall. But the best, as far as I was concerned was Elitch Gardens amusement park, complete with wooden double-race roller coasters! Another major trip was going camping in Yellowstone Park (*we* got to see bears—lots of luck now).

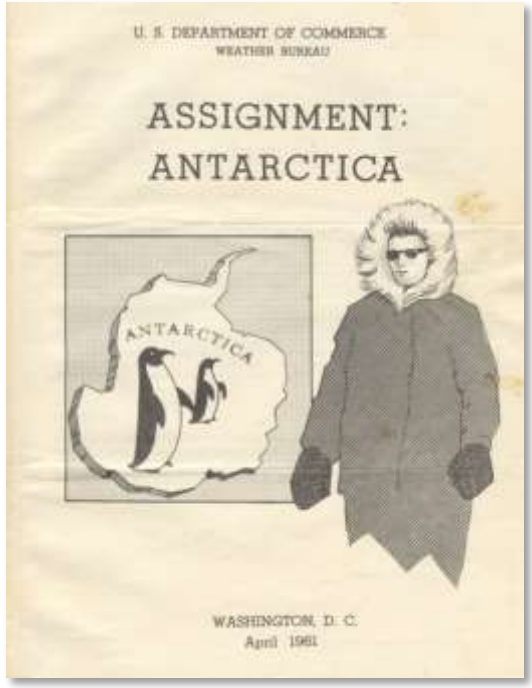


I was a sophomore in high school when television arrived in the Grand Valley, in 1954 (my mother won our big Philco TV in a raffle). There was one station (KREX), black and white, which transmitted for only five or six hours a day. There was one local newspaper, "The Daily Sentinel"; two (two!) local AM radio stations, KFXJ and KEXO. We had an eight-party telephone line—phone number 3R-4185 (three rings – answer the phone!). My schools through ninth grade had outdoor toilets.

So the outside world was way outside, and reading was my only way out—science fiction and fantasy (hours, lost in Asimov, Bradbury, Burroughs and Baum); true-adventure stories (the aforementioned Byrd and Siple, et al); science—(Asimov, again…and *Loren Eiseley*)—and my National Geographics. So in a big way, I was "primed" when adventure called (shouted!).

# The Opportunity

My professor explained that an old university friend of his, Dr. Glenn Dyer, head of Polar Operations Project (POP)—charged with staffing and administering Weather Bureau research stations in both the Arctic and Antarctic—needed another candidate for an Antarctic station. My answer, which I don't remember exactly, was essentially—*YEEEESSS*!!!—when an opportunity like this absolutely drops in your lap, it's no time to equivocate.




He gave me Dyers address, and that afternoon I long-handed a request for more information, with a strong affirmation as to my interest in the program, but without much real hope of anything coming of it. About a week later a large envelope arrived from the "U.S. Department of Commerce—Weather Bureau". Inside was an acknowledgement letter, and a booklet titled simply *ASSIGNMENT: ANTARCTICA*—that made my heart skip a beat! The letter was not encouraging, however—"…it may already be too late to consider your application for this year's program. However, we should prefer to have your application in hand…"

Inside the booklet was "Information Concerning U.S. Weather Bureau Antarctic Service". As I read the introduction, I began to get a bad sinking sensation. Phrases such as—"…exciting prospects for young geophysicists to pioneer…" , (well, at least I was young); "…studies in solar radiation and interactions, micrometeorology, tropospheric and stratospheric structure…", (out of luck there); and "…determinations of nuclear radiation…", (no way)—didn't help my state of mind. The application section stated that—"Any male citizen of the United States, who is 20 to 45 years old, and in perfect health may apply…" (I should be OK there). Then: "Antarctic Qualifications". I knew I was sunk—I couldn't meet the training and knowledge requirements—it appeared they were looking for people who were already trained scientists (and of course, in general, they were). But I sent off the enclosed application anyway—and it turned out that *optimism* was a good qualification.

On July 13th, I got a call from Western Union—I had a telegram (no, children, that's not some kind of email), from the Weather Bureau. I asked the woman to read it to me. They wanted to schedule me for my mandatory physical/psychiatric exam, in Oakland, California. Woo Hoo! Per instructions, I responded collect—whatever they wanted! Five days later, another telegram, scheduling my exam for August 8th—in Great Lakes, Illinois. Whatever they wanted!




In early August I got my government travel orders and vouchers for transportation to Great Lakes Naval Training Center, in Waukegan, Illinois, north of Chicago. My adventure was beginning—and I was going to get to *fly* there—in a jet plane! I had been up in a Piper Cub once with my Dad, when I was about eight or nine. I can still remember the thrill of the takeoff in the Boeing 707—the jet roar, and the thrust-back-in-my-seat sensation. Almost as exciting as an Elitch Gardens roller coaster!

The physical was standard military—nothing at all elaborate. Poke, prod, turn your head and cough; draw blood; check eyes, ears, nose, throat; do the cup thing. The Navy doctor was completely uninterested—in me or his job. I don't think he spoke to me or even looked at me the entire time—he was much more interested in the nurse. It took such a short time that I became concerned not everything had been done that should have been done, so at the end of the day I went back to the department and spoke to the nurse, who had been friendly. I asked her if everything looked complete, as this was very important to me. She said everything looked fine, which eased my mind.

The psychiatric exam was just as cursory as the physical—the psychiatrist asked me a battery of questions, and administered a Rorschach ink-blot test ("…no, *really*, it looks like a butterfly!"). Apparently I didn't appear to be mentally unstable, or a homosexual (an all-male environment after all), so I passed.

I had arranged my trip to extend to the maximum of three days allowed by my travel orders, and the since the exams took up only the second day, I had the entire beautiful and sunny third day to explore the Chicago lakefront and museums. Even in 1962, especially to a Colorado country boy, the city seemed magnificent. Flying back, with the plane mostly empty, I was feeling good—so good that I decided to order a drink with my

CLASS OF SERVICE
This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

# WESTERN UNION
## TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

SF-1201 (4-60)

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LT = International Letter Telegram

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is LOCAL TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination

759P CST JUL 13 62 KA933
K DVB638 GOVT PD TDDV PWS WASHINGTON DC 13 641P MST
KENT WYCKOFF (CALL 333-7220 AFTER 8PM)
4 SOUTH JACKSON ST DVR
IN CONNECTITN WITH APPLICATION FOR ANTARCTIC ASSIGNMENT ADVISE BY RETURN COLLECT TELEGRAM WHETHER YOU COULD BE AVAILABLE FOR MANDATORY PHYSICAL/PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION AT US NAVAL HOSPITAL OAKLAND CALIFORNIA DURING PERIOD AUGUST 6-10. TRAVEL ORDERS AND TRANSPORTATION REQUESTS WILL BE PROVIDED BY THIS OFFICE
E A WOOD U S WEATHER BUREAU .

DUPLICATE OF TELEPHONED TELE... 1962 JUL 13 PM ...7

WYB123-DN WBC8 C-WB 36
WASHINGTON DC 7-18-62 1515R
MR KENT WYCKOFF
4 SOUTH JACKSON STREET
DENVER 9 COLORADO
PHYSICAL/PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 8 AT US NAVAL HOSPITAL, GREAT LAKES, ILLINOIS. WEATHER BUREAU WILL PAY TRANSPORTATION COST PLUS $14 PER DAY EXPENSES. TRAVEL ORDERS AND MEDICAL FORMS WILL BE FORWARDED TO ABOVE ADDRESS
ERNEST A WOOD
POLAR OPERATIONS PROJECT
US WEATHER BUREAU WASH 25 DC
8 $14
TE 1517R

...ER, COLO. 13 5 8 62 ...NTER

CONFIRMATION COPY
This is confirmation copy of a message Telephoned
To 333-7220 Wyckoff
7-19 9:43A M

meal (remember in-flight meals?). It had suddenly occurred to me that, at age twenty-three, I could do that. I wasn't a drinker at all, and so with one drink (maybe two), and everything else that was going on, I was *really* flying high!




After my physical, with nothing better to do, I went back to my regular routine—and waited. A month dragged by, and I was getting nervous—again. I was sure something had gone wrong and I wasn't going to be accepted. One of my roommates, Bob (Mac) McLaughlin, tried to reassure me: "Kent, it will be all right—people aren't exactly standing in line to go to the Antarctic". Well, I was! It didn't occur to me for quite some time that, given the friendship between my professor (I wish I could remember his name) and Dr. Dyer, I probably had a lock on the job all along.

Then about ten o'clock one morning, another call from Western Union—the telegram read, "EXCEPTED APPOINTMENT AS MET TECH...GS-9 APPROVED.…SALARY $6435 PER ANNUM PLUS… $2800 ANTARCTIC ALLOWANCE…" (not bad money for the time, and I would have gone for free!) "NECESSARY YOU REPORT WASHINGTON, D. C. SEPTM 14. …REPLY BY WIRE COLLECT…" I was absolutely elated! I HAD to go down to the Western Union office to get a copy of the telegram, so I could convince myself the whole thing was real—and so I could read it and reread it and…

I had to move fast. This was Tuesday, and I had to be in Washington that Friday!—just three days to clear out of my apartment, get rid of my car, and quit my part-time Post Office job. When I rushed over to see the Post Office time-keeper that afternoon to tell him I was quitting effective immediately, he asked why. I proudly said "I'm going to the Antarctic!"…he was *not* impressed.

My sister Shirley came over from Grand Junction, and took my '52 Plymouth, packed with all my "stuff", back home. (Something I could do in those days). I gave her the car, as I wasn't going to need it any time soon. I could only phone goodbyes to my parents, and it would be over a year and a half before I saw them again.

YDD036-

JY070-

WJA079-DN WBC 5 C-WB 58

WASHINGTON DC 9-11-62 1215R

MR KENT A KYCKOFF

4 SOUTH JACKSON STREET

DN

EXCEPTED APPOINTMENT AS MET TECH EQUIVALENT TO GS-9 APPROVED. SALARY $6435 PER ANNUM PLUS APPROXIMATELY $2800 ANTARCTIC ALLOWANCE. TOUR OF DUTY APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR. TRAVEL ORDERS AND INSTRUCTIONS WILL FOLLOW AIRMAIL. NECESSARY YOU REPORT WASHINGTON, D. C. SEPTM 14. PLEASE REPLY BY WIRE COLLECT WHETHER APPOINTMENT ACCEPTABLE.

J J DAVIS

CHIEF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT DIVISION

U S WEATHER BUREAU

WASHINGTON 25 DC

GS-9 $6435 $2800 14

JEL 1216R

GSA TELETYPE CENTER SEP 11 10 49 AM '62 DENVER, COLO.

CONFIRMATION COPY

This is confirmation copy of a message Telephoned

To 333-7220 Mr. Wyckoff

On 9-11-62 At 10:48A M.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE

Extension 4-4131 Ext. 384

Tel. By Florine Burke

CONFIRMATION COPY

WBC DN 38 C-WB/REVERSE CHARGES 17/

DENVER COLO 9-11-62 1120T

CH PERSONNEL MGMT DIV U S WEATHER BUREAU

ATTN J J DAVIS WASH DC

RE UR WIRE 9-11-62. ACCEPT APPOINTMENT. WILL LEAVE AS SOON AS ORDERS ARRIVE BY MAIL. CAN REPORT WASHINGTON DC SEPT 14

KENT A WYCKOFF 4 SOUTH JACKSON

1A

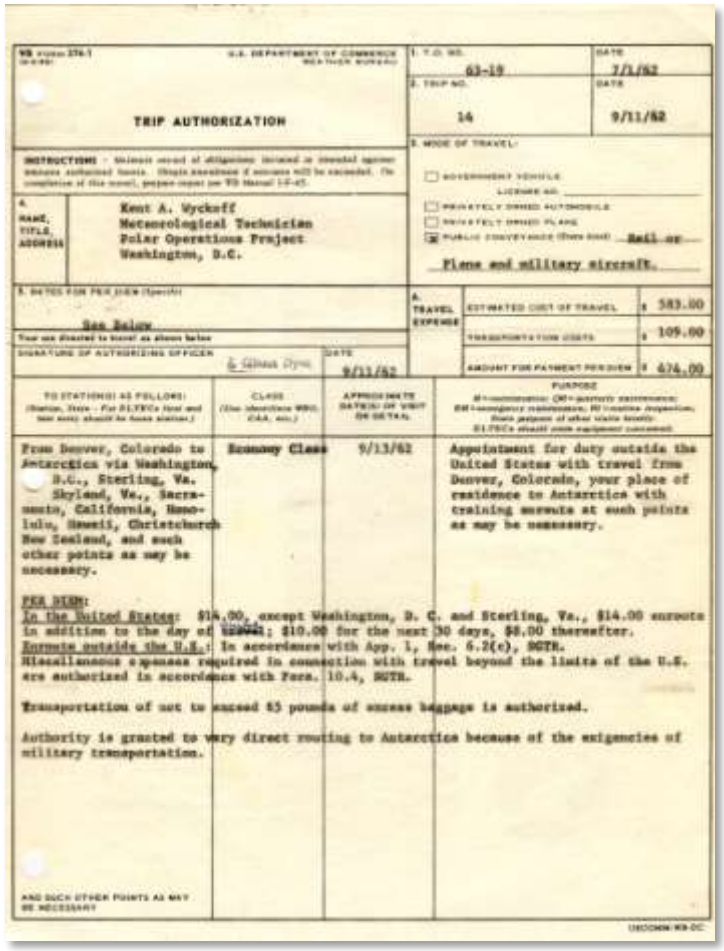
BBB 1132T

GSA TELETYPE CENTER SEP 11 11 35 AM '62 DENVER, COLORADO

# Getting Ready

My trip authorization arrived the next day, and that got my heart pumping hard again—his thing was *really* going to happen. It read "…authorization to travel from Denver, Colorado to Antarctica via Washington, D.C.; Sterling, VA.; Sky land, VA.; Sacramento, CA; Honolulu, HA; Christchurch, New Zealand; and such other points as may be necessary… with training en route at such points as may be necessary"—heady stuff for someone who had barely been out of his home state!

Why the sudden rush, when they seemed to be taking their sweet time so far? The Southern hemisphere spring was approaching—fall here, spring there. "October, November and December are the busy months in Antarctica—station re-supply, personnel rotation, summer science programs, etc. Station populations would commonly double, triple or more during the summer season. For example, at McMurdo Station—the primary logistic facility from which air operations re-supplied the inland stations—the population would swell from about 150 winter-over personnel to as many as one thousand". (*Manual for USARP Personnel, 1963*) That's why the rush…and I still had to complete Weather Bureau training.



TRIP AUTHORIZATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WEATHER BUREAU

1. T.O. NO. 63-19 — DATE 7/1/62
2. TRIP NO. 14 — DATE 9/11/62

3. MODE OF TRAVEL:
☐ GOVERNMENT VEHICLE
LICENSE NO.
☐ PRIVATELY OWNED AUTOMOBILE
☐ PRIVATELY OWNED PLANE
☒ PUBLIC CONVEYANCE (Rail or Plane) Rail or Plane and military aircraft.

4. NAME, TITLE, ADDRESS
Kent A. Wyckoff
Meteorological Technician
Polar Operations Project
Washington, D.C.

5. NOTES FOR PER DIEM (Specify)
See Below
You are directed to travel as shown below

6. TRAVEL EXPENSE
ESTIMATED COST OF TRAVEL $ 583.00
TRANSPORTATION COSTS $ 109.00
AMOUNT FOR PAYMENT PER DIEM $ 474.00

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZING OFFICER: L. Gilman Dyer — DATE 9/11/62

| TO STATION(S) AS FOLLOWS: (Itinerary. State - For D.C.'s (but not both) should be home station.) | CLASS (Use abbreviations MSC, CAA, etc.) | APPROXIMATE DATE(S) OF VISIT OR DETAIL | PURPOSE (If conference: OFFICIALLY sponsored; Meeting, Inspection, State purpose of other visits briefly. D.C.'s should cover assignment concerned.) |
|---|---|---|---|
| From Denver, Colorado to Antarctica via Washington, D.C., Sterling, Va. Skyland, Va., Sacramento, California, Honolulu, Hawaii, Christchurch New Zealand, and such other points as may be necessary. | Economy Class | 9/13/62 | Appointment for duty outside the United States with travel from Denver, Colorado, your place of residence to Antarctica with training enroute at such points as may be necessary. |

PER DIEM:
In the United States: $14.00, except Washington, D. C. and Sterling, Va., $14.00 enroute in addition to the day of [illegible]; $10.00 for the next 30 days, $8.00 thereafter.
Enroute outside the U.S.: In accordance with App. 1, Sec. 6.2(c), SGTR.
Miscellaneous expenses required in connection with travel beyond the limits of the U.S. are authorized in accordance with Para. 10.4, SGTR.

Transportation of not to exceed 65 pounds of excess baggage is authorized.

Authority is granted to vary direct routing to Antarctica because of the exigencies of military transportation.

AND SUCH OTHER POINTS AS MAY BE NECESSARY

I left for Washington, D.C. Sunday afternoon, excited about another jet plane ride, to Chicago; changing to a turbo-prop for the D.C. leg. Leaving Chicago, it was getting dark, with bad weather approaching, and since turbo-props fly lower than jets, instead of flying over the weather we were flying through it—or should I say between it. I was glued to my window as the deepening twilight barely illuminated the storm clouds as the plane banked and turned through

virtual canyons of towering lightning-lit thunderheads. The Weather Bureau soon taught me these were, mundanely, cumulonimbus.

I was a rather naïve, ignorant guy at that time (*hey!*—some people say I really have made progress!), so I have to relate the following: I arrived at National Airport late Sunday evening, and realized I hadn't thought about getting a hotel room—(advance planning was not yet in my skill set). I got a taxi (another first!) at the airport and explained to the cabbie that I had to get something near the Weather Bureau. He said, "No problem—I'll help you find something". Off we went. He stopped at several hotels; at each one he would hustle in to see if they had a vacancy, but no luck. Finally: success. The cabby carried my enormous, iron-bound, heavy old trunk into the hotel, and stated the fee. I counted out exact change and handed it to him with a hearty "THANK you!" He looked at what I had handed him, and responded with a sharp, "thank YOU!", and stalked off. It was some time before it began to dawn on me that, maybe, just maybe, I should have tipped the poor fellow.

The first few days at POP headquarters consisted of orientation, and paperwork.—such as where to send our checks (me, to my mother—she worked as a bank teller in Grand Junction, so I figured the money would be in safe hands); death and injury waivers (which gave me pause—but not much); and arranging for my U.S. passport. I also got my station assignment—Cape Hallett, in northern…Victoria Land! Looking at my maps in high school I couldn't have imagined…

From the "Manual for U.S.A.R.P. Personnel, 1963", Section 3.3—"Hallett Station is five meters above sea level on a glacial moraine called Seabee Hook. The station is supplied by surface vessel, and by a few flights made annually during October, to a sea-ice runway at Hallett from McMurdo… the station has a tenuous hold on one corner of the large Adelie penguin rookery… Hallett Station is noted for its winds, which have been known to reach 100 miles per hour. The wind-blown gravel abrades buildings and equipment, and extensive snow drifts are formed in the station area." It sounded interesting.

The next stop was Sterling, Virginia, for Weather Bureau training. The facility was situated near another small town, Herndon, Virginia, which accounted for its informal designation, the Sterling-Herndon Institute of Technology. There I learned the basics of weather observation: cloud types, how to estimate cloud layer heights, calculating dew points from dry- and wet-bulb thermometer readings, procedures for preparing weather balloons and radiosondes for flight; data handling and coding, etc.

While at Sterling, we Weather Bureau guys were issued our cold weather gear for U.S.A.R.P. 63 (for United States Antarctic Research Program). "Guys" is somewhat redundant because (as mentioned before) ALL

personnel going to Antarctica were men; there were no women on the entire continent at that time, and for some years to come.

The approximately forty pieces of equipment included: *Hand Wear*—three kinds each of gloves and mittens; *Headgear*—three types; *Body Wear*—thermal underwear, wool shirts and pants, insulated vest, anorak (a large hooded wind breaker), parka with liner; *Footwear*—three kinds of boots, including bottle-boots and mukluks (a nylon boot-shell with removable fleece liner), socks and boot liners; *Miscellaneous*—duffel bag, belts, suspenders, goggles, sewing kit, etc. Did I mention there was lots of wool stuff?

I wore glasses (near-sighted), so I had to get an eye exam for prescription double-gradient sunglasses—for the prevention of snow blindness, a real concern. (The early explorers suffered terribly from this condition—they weren't sure what caused it, and couldn't reliably prevent it.)

USARP parkas and anoraks were international orange—Navy personnel had parkas of plain olive-drab. I wondered why "they" thought we civilians needed that extra visibility. The designation "USARP", by the way, had become a noun, applied to us civilians by the Navy men; as in "just a bunch of USARPs"…it was not necessarily complimentary.



As soon as I got my first Weather Bureau check, I had another duty to accomplish before starting my journey—buy a camera. I had never owned one, and had no idea what to look for. But I went into a Washington, D.C. camera shop to get *something*. I came out with a Kowa single-lens reflex, for about ninety dollars, and several rolls of Kodachrome slide film—and immediately started banging away. While I didn't keep a written diary of my trip (and I very much wish I had), I have essentially a photo diary—I took twelve to fifteen hundred photos, including Hawaii and New Zealand.

It was about a year and a half before I saw any of my photos—not the best way to start a photographic record. My reaction to the results ranged from delight to…great disappointment. Many of my Antarctic photos were way under-exposed, almost black, due to my general inexperience, especially with the camera's external light meter—it read the



combination of direct and reflected light too high--think ice and snow. (See my thanks to son Scott, above.)

It was an inexpensive camera, but in a way, a good one for Antarctica. It had a lot of internal "slop" (it sounded like a small explosion when the shutter was tripped, what with all the machinery flying around inside) which seemed to make it less susceptible than more expensive cameras to freeze-up in very cold conditions. It probably helped that I always kept the camera underneath my parka, bringing it out only for picture opportunities. And I *always* had it with me.

# Getting There




**Yea! Going south for the winter!**

Antarctic departure day!—exciting to finally be on the way. Our plane for the trip to New Zealand was a four-engine Military Air Transparent Service (MATS), DC-6, propeller driven—no more jets for me for quite some time. On board were summer-only scientists, winter-over personnel headed for various Antarctic stations, and other, mostly civilian (I think) service people—like my friend Frank, a summer-season warehousing specialist headed for McMurdo. When Frank and I were in D.C. sightseeing, he and I climbed to the top of the Washington Monument via the internal stairs—you could do that then…and that was another thing *I* could do then.

And it was a year and a half before I shaved again.

First stop, McClellan Air Logistics Center (now defunct), Sacramento, California. We over-nighted at the base BOQ (Bachelor Officer Quarters). The next morning, on to Hickam Air Force Base, Honolulu, Hawaii. We were slated to stay at another BOQ. But, unfortunately (boohoo) the BOQ was full, so about a half-dozen of us were bused to the Maui Surf Hotel, a few blocks off of Waikiki Beach. It was near midnight when we got off the bus, and I was absolutely struck by the mild fragrant balmy air. Our next-day departure was delayed, so we had the entire day to explore Waikiki; to enjoy seeing and experiencing Hawaii for the first time. We did some guy-shopping (nothing too intense)—I bought a (tasteful) Hawaiian shirt, which I still have (whether I still fit into it is another question).



**How d' you like my new shirt?**

We left Hickam later that evening, heading west over the Pacific. Our prop-driven plane had to make several refueling stops on the flight to New Zealand; the first: Canton Island, a small coral atoll two degrees south of the equator, about midnight. We were allowed off the plane for about an hour to stretch our legs, and as I was wandering around in the hot and humid night air, it didn't occur to me what a contrast that would be compared to what I would be experiencing some days later.

Second stop: Nadi (pronounced Nandi) Fiji, about dawn. Again, we were able to leave the plane, for about two hours, to get something to eat—only box lunches on a MATS flight. There was a surprisingly large (it seemed to me) commercial airport, with shops that were opened for us. The natives sported the "typical" bushy Fiji Island hairdos—later to be known in the U. S. as Afros. They had a newspaper that claimed to be "The First Newspaper in the World"—the Fiji Islands are just a few degrees west of the 180th meridian, the International Date Line. I wished later that I had picked up one for a souvenir—and I should have; I never got back to Fiji.




Almost straight south was our last warm-weather stop: Christchurch, New Zealand, about mid-way down the eastern side of New Zealand's South Island. At POP I had heard staff people making references to "Chee-Chee"—I soon learned this was USARP-speak for Christchurch—CHCH is their international airport designation.. We were quartered in a small boarding house that was contracted-for by Deep Freeze, for personnel coming and going to and from the Ice. ("On the Ice", or "the Ice" are terms that have been used since the earliest days of Antarctic exploration, and were simply short-hand ways of referring to the Antarctic continent, and not intended as anything pseudo-heroic). Christchurch looked as I imagined a "typical" British town might—lots of "quaint" cottages, shopping streets, flower gardens—even a river Avon winding through it! The next afternoon several of us, after a morning of exploring the town, entered a small food shop, and I was struck by a peculiar smell—I later learned their "chips" (French fries), were fried in mutton fat.

## Gallery: Christchurch









**Victoria Square**

We expected to leave for the Ice right away, but were informed that there would be a delay of about a week, due to storm damage to the Antarctic-support picket ship in the mid-Southern Ocean—it's a long way from New Zealand to the Antarctic continent, and of course (for you younger readers), there were no weather or communications satellites then. This ship kept station at about 60d S latitude, 170d E longitude (about half-way down the route); and provided critical radio relay, navigation, and especially important, weather information. Unless weather prospects looked good all the way down, planes didn't leave; and if conditions deteriorated, were turned back.



**Three for Hallett, Two for Byrd; Kent, ?, ?, Ray, Gene**

More bad news—ha! Five of us rented a car, appointed one to be the drive-on-the-left driver, and another (whoever was the front passenger), to be the "stay left!" guy—when crossing the many short one-lane bridges out in the countryside, the natural inclination would be to veer right coming off the bridge.

We headed over the Southern Mountains toward Greymouth (about 160 miles), on New Zealand's west coast. The eastern side was arid, desert-like, but immediately upon crossing the low divide at Arthur's Pass (elevation, about 3,000 feet), the climate became rainy and the vegetation dense and dark green. We arrived after dark in the small town, and only got rooms in one of the few hotels because a party of birders failed to arrive. Pretty basic lodging—my bed was like a hammock, the toilet was down the hall, and the revelers in the downstairs bar were whooping it up all night long; way, WAY past legal operating hours. (I would soon wish for a toilet that was just "down the hall".)

# Ice Bound



**…then pack ice...**

True, real, actual departure for Antarctica was on a balmy early spring October evening (southern hemisphere, remember). We boarded the *Phoenix*, a prop-driven Lockheed C-121 Super Constellation ("Super Connie"—know to the Navy as an R7V-1) for the nine-hour, twenty-three hundred mile flight to McMurdo Sound. We had only to fly almost straight down the east 170th meridian to reach McMurdo Station, passing over Cape Hallett, my eventual destination. (The first land-fall south of New Zealand, Cape Adare, ninety miles north of Cape Hallett, was the site of the first wintering-over on the Antarctic continent—one Carsten Borchgrevink and his nine men, in 1899.)



**…and finally, white-shrouded mountains.**

I was sound asleep when we passed the PSR (point-of-safe-return, approximately over the picket ship) about two A.M.—but was awake in my window seat as the early Antarctic dawn revealed first ice-dotted ocean, then pack ice, and finally, white-shrouded mountains.

We had been *firmly* instructed, before leaving Christchurch, to have all necessary cold weather garb with us in the plane cabin. During the latter part of the trip, the cabin temperature was slowly lowered so we could comfortably don our gear—we had to be prepared for the cold as soon as we deplaned. Williams Field, the sea-ice landing strip (eight-plus feet thick! and suitable for wheeled aircraft, like



THE PHOENIX
(R7V-1 NAVY 31624)

Welcome aboard the Phoenix 6. This aircraft is an R7V Super Constellation attached to Air Development Squadron SIX with a home base at NAS Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The aircraft was assigned to VX-6 in August of 1958 and was named the Phoenix after the ancient mythical Egyptian Fire Bird. The ancient Egyptians believed the bird always returned to the site of its departure. The Phoenix first deployed with VX-6 for Deep Freeze IV making this operation its fifth year. The record of 8.5 hours between McMurdo and Christchurch for piston powered aircraft made by the Phoenix, on October 14, 1962 during Deep Freeze '63 has yet to be bettered.

Being the first of this type aircraft in Antarctica operations, its main use has been in transporting high priority passengers and cargo. This aircraft is also configured for high altitude photo-mapping and releasing sonobouy weather transmitters, increasing the utilization of the aircraft. The following are some of the facts of the Super Constellation which may be of interest. Fuselage length 116 feet, wing spread 123 feet, maximum gross weight 145,000 pounds, maximum cruise airspeed 300 mph and powered by 4 Curtis Wright 18 cylinder engines developing 3250 horsepower at maximum power. The aircraft can be configured to carry 98 passengers plus crew on an overseas flight or up to 108 passengers plus crew on a domestic flight. Our squadron's passenger load is between 60 and 65 for the Antarctic flights.

At the completion of Deep Freeze 63 the "Connie", as it is affectionately called, will have transported over 15,000 persons and 3,000,000 pounds of cargo. As of mid-October 1962 the Phoenix has completed sixty accident free round trips to McMurdo. Your safe conduct is handled by a normal Connie crew of 13 men. The few safety of flight rules which were explained to you earlier must be adhered to by everyone. "Safety is paramount: performance with service is our motto."

We hope you enjoy your flight,

"THE CONNIE CREW"

our Connie), was several miles from the base proper—and we would have to wait for mail and light cargo (including our personal baggage), to be off-loaded.; and transportation would be in unheated vehicles; possibly open sledges. Leaving warm Christchurch in wool pants, wool shirt, and long underwear was uncomfortable, but I soon (very much!) appreciated it.




While I felt very excited and more than a little dazed by all of the travel and events of the last few days, what I mainly felt was COLD! It was probably only about minus twenty degrees Fahrenheit, but after Hawaii and New Zealand, and with a constant sharp wind producing a bitter wind-chill, it was quite a shock to *my* tender system. But, as someone said, "many are cold, but few are frozen"—so I survived. As a "transiting personnel", I was bunked in a Jamesway hut; a canvas sided, insulated Quonset-type hut, in which the heater wasn't working until late in the evening. I slept in all my clothes that night.




Even in 1962, McMurdo was a big, sprawling base, whose summer population (as mentioned before) could approach 1,000. It is situated on the low volcanic hills of southern Ross Island, at the western edge of the Ross Ice Shelf, on the shore of the Ross Sea, in the so-called New Zealand "Ross Dependency". As you might guess, someone named Ross figured extensively in the early history of the area. Sir James Clark Ross first explored the area with his two wooden ice breakers Erebus and Terror, in 1840-41. Mt Erebus—Antarctica's only active volcano—with its constant plume of steam, looms, as they say, over the station (at 12,450 feet in height, it definitely looms); 12,000 ft. Mt. Terror is nearby. Cape Hallett is named after the purser on the Erebus; McMurdo Sound after Lt. Archibald McMurdo, the commander of the Terror. To the discoverer go the naming rights.

Why did McMurdo become the location of choice for early exploration, and almost all of U.S. Antarctic operations? A check of the map explains it: Not only is there a convenient jumping-off place (New Zealand), but also the sea extends further south than at any other location.



**Williams Field; the Connie; Observation Hill**



**Busy downtown McMurdo**

We stayed in McMurdo for a few days—long enough to do some sightseeing: the church, Chapel of the Snows; gym; "Playboy Club, Antarctic Division" (wishful thinking); the nuclear power plant building. ("Nukey-Poo" was completed in January, 1962, and was, at that time, supplying most of the power for McMurdo Station. It was decommissioned in 1972, and removed from the continent over the next several years.)

The coastal stations—Wilkes (straight down from Australia), Hallett, McMurdo,—were primarily re-supplied by ice-strengthened cargo ships, escorted by ice-breakers; inland stations—Byrd, Eights, Pole—by air from McMurdo. Previous summer's inland resupplies were by air drop from C-124 Globe Masters. The 1962-63 season was the first using turbo-prop C-130 Hercules'. This was especially crucial at Pole station—the combination of high altitude (nearly 10,000 feet), and a snow ski-way, made it difficult for reciprocating engine-aircraft to operate effectively.




**You wish!**

# Hallett & Company

Hallett bound! Headed north in a ski-equipped Navy R4D, twin-engine prop, also known as a DC-3, a World War II "workhorse". Cape Hallett is about 380 miles, and a flight of four to five hours from McMurdo, on the coast of the western Ross Sea. Early in the summer, planes could land on a cleared ice strip on frozen Moubray Bay, a sea-arm on Cape Hallett's western side. This strip was also available for emergency landings for flights on the McMurdo/Christchurch run.



**An out-of-place photo of a DC-3; Queensland Airport, S.I., NZ**



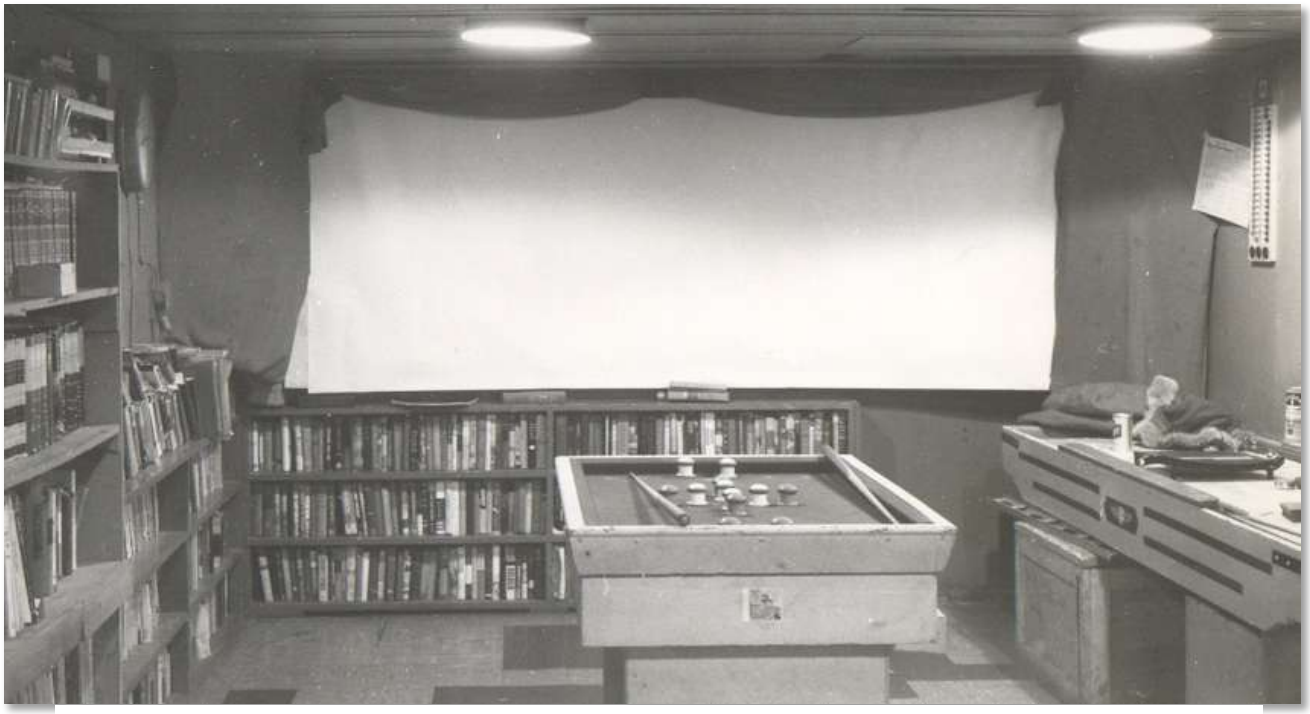
**Ray**

We arrived in absolutely splendid weather! Bright sun, and clear blue skies all the way down to the horizon. That's the amazing thing about the Antarctic; the cold dry dust-free air gives the ability to see the horizon as a sharp, clear line. And the incredible mountains! On the western coast of Moubray Bay, directly across from the station was the Admiralty Range, and to the south, the Prince Albert Range (as I later learned the names). The flat, triangular face of 12,000 ft. Mt. Herschel (after the British astronomer) dominated the ranges, seeming to rise straight out of the bay. The mountains to the north marched out of sight down to the horizon, to the south they melded into the vast range of the Transantarctic Mountains. Our tiny plane, and we few people, seemed lost in the grand view. It probably helped that I was seeing all of this for the first time, but I have never since encountered such a spectacularly vivid scene, and….I was out of film.

Interesting (to me) historical aside: Mt. Herschel was first climbed in 1967 by New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary—the first person to climb Mt. Everest, in 1953. Darned adventurous, those Kiwis.

We arrived on October 20th—one day after my 24th birthday. The camp—a combined U.S./New Zealand base, situated on a low glacial moraine named Seabee Hook (*not* named by Captain Ross), and the site of an Adelie penguin rookery—looked more than a bit scruffy. Hallett was one of the original six IGY stations; built in 1956 (the year I graduated high-school); partly to provide communications support and weather reporting for the air route between New Zealand and McMurdo. There were 11 or 12 international orange buildings; seven on either side of a "main street", with the rest scattered around in close proximity. This count did not include Quonset and Jamesway huts, small scientific buildings, and our weather balloon inflation shelter.

All of the main camp buildings—called T-5's—were constructed of prefabricated, insulated panels about four inches thick, held together with pound-down clips. They were meant to be put up in a hurry. Most of the buildings were built on top of two-foot tall open girders, designed to prevent drifting snow from building up. It didn't work. Outside doors were rather like freezer doors, and opened into anterooms for stomping and brushing off snow, and hanging parkas. They also acted like a sort of air lock to help keep warm air in when the doors were opened. Here also were the jet heaters, which, via flexible insulated tubes, heated the rest of the building.



**The...Rec Room; and the...Library**

The main street buildings: (all support personnel were Navy, so Navy nomenclature prevailed)

- Galley, including a walk-in freezer (You'd think, what with all that ice…)
- Generator and "water making" building
- Small Navy dorm
- Meteorological and recreation building (met/ rec); the former, my domain
- Head; toilets—(non-flush, honey-bucket style, and you'll thank me that I don't have more to say about that), wash basins and shower—pull on, release off—for water conservation; and a washing machine and clothes dryer
- Dorm, (where I slept), and infirmary (fortunately, rarely used);
- New Zealand scientific building and dorm.
- Other buildings off main street buildings included communications (comm), more dorms, and small scientific out-buildings housing cosmic ray and ozone instruments.



(FJW)

**Hallett by Helicopter – icebreaker, the Edisto**

Our summer population was about thirty to forty people, most of whom (beyond our winter-over party) were biologists and zoologists using the newly constructed biology building, studying the Adelie penguins, Antarctic petrels, skua gulls, and other rookery wild life (lichens, moss, fungi, algae).



**A storm of petrels**

Our winter-over party was eighteen-strong: nine Navy support, six U.S. civilian and three New Zealanders (NZARPs). We had a generally friendly camp, but there was a subtle (occasionally overt) and perhaps inevitable division between military and civilians. After all, *we* were USARPs (and NZARPs). The way the Navy guys looked at it, they did all the *real* work (generally true, they were "support" after all), and we civilians did whatever nonsense it was that we did. But we did all get along pretty well—we later had seven months of isolation to get through together.

As a group, we six U.S. civilians were probably the tightest (five actually; Gene was, in a way, the odd-man out), although we by no means isolated ourselves. We also hung around with the youngest two of the three Kiwis, and several of the Navy people.

The USARP nominal "boss" was the station scientific leader, **Harry Freimanis**. I've tried to dredge up something, *anything*, to say about him—to no avail. If you ever read this, Harry—sorry. (I know he had a beard—and, he was a nice guy).

**Gene Levy** was my boss, but he certainly was not bossy. He was a gentle guy, with a dry sense of humor—you had to listen closely. During the summer he would post the scheduled movies for the evening—always a double-feature. One of the westerns he described as having a cast of thousands—"all cows". Gene was like the boy we all had in class who always wore his gloves and his rubbers, like his mother told him. Once it started to get cold, even though the met/rec building was virtually across the street from the galley, and next door to the head, he would always put on his parka, button and zip all the way up, and put up his hood for the "trek". But he was well liked by everyone, and only got a gentle ribbing from the guys.



**Left to Right: Ray, Kent (not really sleeping), Will, Barney, Gene, Harry**

**Ray Price** was our Weather Bureau electrical technician (elec tech), responsible for repairing and maintaining all of the electronic equipment, especially the radio direction-finding gear that was so crucial to our weather mission. Ray was also the station weight-lifter. There was a weight set, and a crude "home-made" weight bench tucked into a corner of the inflation building. Ray, and several of the summer Navy guys were already lifters, and he taught me—nothing fancy; bench presses, squats, curls, etc. I went to the Ice a skinny one-hundred thirty pound guy; (in my university ID picture, it looks like my shirt is hanging off of a pipe rack), and left there at one-hundred eighty-five pounds, and with *shoulders!* Plenty of good 'ol Navy beef, butter and dehydrated potatoes probably helped.



**Butter anyone?**

Ray kept a journal he titled "My Antarctic Log"—which seemed rather juvenile to me at the time, but now I wish I had kept one. (Although friend Will opines that most Antarctic journals peter-out after only a few weeks—that would have been me)



**Barney and ice cave**

One of the real scientists on-station (I have to confess that I was basically a data-gatherer) was **Elwood E**. "E squared", "Barney" **Barnes** (the only guy I ever knew with *two* nick-names), from the University of Maryland. He ran the cosmic ray research program, though still a student at the university. He was always ready for a trek up the peninsula, or some other outdoor adventure. His equipment was located in one of the small scientific buildings a ways away from camp, and he set up a bunk in his equipment hut rather than stay in one of the dorm buildings.



**Will**

One of my best friends at Hallett was **Francis Jennings Willy III** (just "Will" to everyone). He ran the ozone physics program, and was also from the University of Maryland. Barney and Will each arrived on- station not knowing the other was going to be there. Due to a late departure for the Ice—he arrived on-station after Christmas—Will had to take an ice-breaker from McMurdo to Hallett. The bay ice was already too soft to safely land a plane. He didn't mind as he got some great pictures during the (month long!) journey from McMurdo through the ice pack. His ozone equipment building was even further away from the main camp than Barney's; and he also, especially during the winter, and even more especially, during blizzards, bunked at his hut—sometimes not coming in for meals. (I spoke to him recently, trading stories, and he allows that he probably had pretty good "snack stash" laid by, to tide him over.)



**Mmm, Hallett Cocktail; or iced tea**

He was a very sociable guy (who could always be relied on to greet everyone at breakfast with a cheery "Merry morning!"), often inviting me and a few others out to his hut to shoot the breeze, and generally just hang out. The "hanging out" was lubricated with medicinal brandy, generously supplied by Doc. (There seemed to be a rather large amount for our small station, and I never learned what exactly the medicinal property of medicinal brandy was). But one of the small bottles in half a can of Coke made a great "Hallett cocktail".

Of the Kiwis, **Doug Sutter** was older and, although friendly, was rather aloof from the rest of the station people. One of Doug's pieces of scientific gear exactly didn't endear him to the Navy people, especially the comm guys. His "ionosonde" was an antenna array and transmitter, which, every fifteen minutes around the clock, sent a broad- spectrum radio wave toward the ionosphere, measuring the extent and frequency of the reflection. As the wave swept up the frequency spectrum, it disrupted communications signals, and induced pulses of very annoying static in the intercom system that extended throughout the station. **Len Wylde** ran seismology; and **Brian Maine** did ionosphereic analysis and VLF measurements.



**Doug**




Kiwis, like Aussies, can have a very colorful ways of expressing themselves. Being a literal-minded sort, I was often puzzled by Brian's frequent phrase "More fun than a box 'a birds". It made a lot more sense once I realized that "birds" referred to girls. He also instructed me as to meaning of "pom(e) or "pomy": (relic of colonization)—i.e. "Prisoner of Mother England".

The nine Navy personnel:

- **Lt. E.E. Fitch,** station leader and doctor (specialty, obstetrics—true!)—called "Doc", of course. Doc was a really great guy, but didn't have much to do—the station basically ran itself. He had only to make daily reports, hang out—and drink. (No offense—just fact).
- Three radio (comm) guys, **G.H. Damschroeder, E.G. Cox, G.E. Mallory**
- **E.C. Allison**, diesel mechanic
- **R.J. Reine**, carpenter, mechanic and all-around handy-man
- **C.F. "Julie" Julian**, "water maker"—operated the distiller, and other duties
- **L.A. "Slick" Sly,** medic—but with other duties as you will read
- **Ted J. "TJ" Miller,** the sole cook for the winter (during the summer "high season", a second cook shared the load)

TJ was an irascible sort, and apparently liked Antarctic duty since he had previously wintered over at Pole (as had Damschroeder). He cooked six days a week—including bread, cookies, pies, cakes—and, for each guy's birthday, a large birthday cake, with hand-squeezed decorations. I missed both of mine, October 19th, 1962 and '63, as these coincided with my transit times. But I lived with the disappointment. TJ was also the camp barber, although not much in demand.








**"Just a little off the bottom, please TJ"**

He and his summer assistant did a remarkable job of providing Thanksgiving and Christmas feasts. On Sundays we did what men have always done when the cook is off—ate leftovers, and took turns with light cooking. I don't remember any culinary masterpieces.



**Holiday Feast**



**Holiday Feasters (Pilots, summer "bios" and winter-overs)**

# Regarding Penguins

As said earlier, the station was located on an Adelie penguin rookery. On my first evening there, I saw my first penguin; one that had strayed onto main street, seeming to look confused and lost, maybe a little bit like me. He (she) squawked and waved flippers at me. Since I had never seen one before, my first sight of the little fellow made me laugh—it was just too perfect a welcome to my new home.

The penguins were just returning from their winter sojourn in the Southern Ocean, and it was quite a hike (possibly as much as fifty or sixty miles). In they would come, single file, tottering along on their short little legs; and sometimes, when the going got rough, flopping down to propel themselves on their bellies. With the rookery virtually outside our back door, it was easy to see the whole summer cycle—nest building (nothing but pebbles allowed); mating, (jokes about penguins with foot prints on their backs); parents feeding chicks by regurgitation (not after MY lunch, please); and, really hilarious, watching an almost full grown chick chasing a parent pell-mell around the rookery, demanding another meal; or, better yet, TWO chicks giving chase.

Penguins are, of course, flightless birds, which makes them fairly easy prey for the skua gulls, which are superb fliers, and aggressive and fierce defenders of their own chicks and nests. The Adelie's eggs are the first targets, then later, chicks. Either, left unattended, or momentarily unguarded by parents drawn away by aerial harassment, were quick prey for the ever watchful skuas.

The camp was divided into two friendly factions, depending on which bird people identified with: the skuas "yea", penguins "nay" group; vs. the penguins "yea", skuas "nay" people.



**Attack skua—guarding a chick**

In early spring we were fortunate enough to see several small groups of emperors heading out towards the sea. A cry would go up, and we would all hustle out to gawk, take pictures and gently harass the big birds: someone threw a crucifix over the neck of one, which was fairly amusing. They seemed to be about as bemused about us as we were about them. After they had their fill of us, all would turn as a group and trudge slowly away.



In the fall, as the days were getting shorter *very* fast, it was time for the newly fledged chicks to enter a new environment—the sea. Some were still spotted with chick-down, and an unfortunate few would never survive—they weren't far enough along in their fledging to avoid freezing before they could get into the water to join their fellows. The parents had already left for the winter, and the chicks were eager to be on their way, but were like children hesitant to take the first plunge off a high dive. They would huddle in nervous groups along the edge of the ice until, finally, one youngster got up enough courage (or fell, or was pushed), to start the headlong group-dive into the ocean. And none wanted to be last; so the "tail-end charlies" would hang back, to huddle-up with new arrivals and start the whole process all over again.



## Gallery: Regarding Penguins



**Mixed company: Adelies and emperors**



**Regal**



**The three wise...**



**Patience** (KAW)





**Notice the chicks?**



(KAW)

**Solitude**

# Talk about the Weather

The summer meteorological schedule was fairly demanding, with three-hourly weather observations (obs) around the clock, seven-day-a-week, and two balloon/radiosonde launches a day. The obs didn't take long—a short jaunt outside to record cloud cover, type of clouds, sun/cloud ratio; temps (current, minimum, maximum), and wet-bulb temperature (for calculating dew point), from thermometers housed in two "cotton-region" shelters; then inside for air pressure, wind speed and direction. Wind direction almost always oscillated around due north—the effect of katabatic, or gravity, winds; cold dense air pouring and accelerating off the polar plateau. (For a fascinating account of life at the "windiest place on earth"—Commonwealth Bay, Adelie Land, see Sir Douglas Mawson's *The Home of the Blizzard: Being the Account of the Australian Antarctic Expedition 1911-1914*—then, they didn't know what caused the gale-and hurricane-force winds they experienced nearly daily).

Obs data was condensed and encoded into a short string of five-digit numbers, then called over to comm to be tapped out in Morse code to McMurdo and points north.

Three of the summer guys were experienced Navy meteorological technicians (met techs), and because of my lack of real experience, I really needed the on-the-job-training they provided. They, plus Ray and I made a team of five to run the 24/7 met operation. I'm not exactly sure what Gene did, but it seemed to involve a lot of paper work (and standing around). So, there were two M/T's for each 12-hour shift, (one balloon launch and four obs for each team), plus Ray.



**Summer weather staff.**
**L to R: Tony, Monroe, Kent, Ray, "The Artist", Gene**

With 24-hour sunlight, "day" and "night" were defined by McMurdo, which were, in-turn, defined by Christchurch. Also, *very important*, "day" was when meals were served—there weren't enough people on-station to require 'round-the-clock meal service. Ray, as our only electronic technician, pretty much needed to be present at each balloon launch. So he would help with both the morning and evening launches, sometimes "working winds", and spend his time in

between doing maintenance and repair, as necessary—which gave him plenty of time for his weight lifting. But he didn't do obs.

The twelve-hourly balloon launches were more lengthy and involved. The radiosonde was a smallish white box with an eight inch tubular tracking-antenna housing extending down from the bottom of the box, and small paired arms, standing out at 45 degrees from each top corner, that held the hygristor (humidity sensor), and thermistor (temperature sensor). A water-activated battery was immersed in warm water for a timed period, to begin the charging process, and then installed into the sonde. The whole thing was then inserted into an air-tight box containing dry- and wet-bulb thermometers, to calibrate the sensors. The on-board barometer was calibrated from the station barometer.

During balloon ascent, switching between temperature, humidity and pressure was accomplished by a very ingenious mechanism: As the sonde was carried to higher altitude/lower pressure, a small swing-arm attached to the center of the barometer cell wiped across a small circular-arc printed circuit board, contacting inter-digitating fingers, alternating relaying temperature and humidity information, which was then traced onto a continuous paper strip, monitored by an audible signal. At certain switching intervals the contact point would encounter a third finger, signaled by a higher pitch. The operator immediately had to press a lever which would record, on another paper strip, a time-stamp and the elevation- and azimuth-angles of the radio-detection antenna. Profiles for air pressure, wind speed and direction for the balloon assent (this latter procedure called "working the winds") could be derived from this information.



**Marking the data recorder strip**

Meanwhile, one or two met techs would traipse over to the inflation shelter to begin the balloon inflation process. This was a small building set somewhat apart from the rest of the camp—away from buildings, poles and other obstacles—to provide a clear northerly path for the balloon during early launch—and (as mentioned before) *any* degree of wind would



**Working the winds**

ALWAYS be towards the north. The balloon could be inflated with either hydrogen or helium, but since the helium was extremely expensive, due to the weight of the tanks and the distance it had to be shipped, we (almost) always generated our own hydrogen for the fill. (The electrical system in the inflation shelter was fitted to be safe for an explosive atmosphere.) The hydrogen generator was a large welded steel tank that looked somewhat like the old coal-fueled furnace we had in the basement at home in Colorado, except larger. We would mix a measured amount of aluminum chips and a white crystalline compound, (sodium hydroxide?) together in a pail in a set ratio and pour the dry mixture into the generator using a large funnel. The next step was to tightly screw a large plug into the filler neck to create an air tight chamber. The generator outlet ran to the inflation shelter—a plywood structure directly adjacent, about 10 ft square with a 15 ft ceiling—in short, somewhat larger than a fully inflated balloon. The generation process was started by means of a trickle valve, allowing a controlled amount of water to contact the mixture in the tank. This started a chemical reaction which released hydrogen, monitored by a pressure gauge. When the balloon was inflated to the desired degree, it would pull up a weight-gauge attached between the balloon neck and the shelter deck. The supply hose was shut off, the balloon neck tied off, and the radiosonde attached with a twenty-five foot lanyard. This was to prevent radio signals from the sonde's antenna from being distorted by reflections off the balloon. When Ray had acquired the radio signal with the dish in the Radom atop the met building, the launch bay doors were opened and the balloon and radiosonde carried out and released—making sure not to release the sonde until the lanyard slack was taken up—a tricky coordination when first learning to do the routine.



**Up, up, and away**



During high winds, to try to avoid the balloon being broken by buffeting against the shelter doors, the release involved a mad dash out of the shelter, with a quick fling of the balloon and sonde, to try to get the whole thing airborne as quickly as possible. Under those conditions, we would tie a ratcheting release mechanism between the balloon neck and sonde to allow for a gradual payout of the lanyard as the balloon gained height. All that remained for the inflation team (which might consist of just one person) was to "blow the generator", to get rid of the residue of the generation process. More water was flowed into the tank, building up hydrogen pressure again, monitored by the gauge. At a certain point the exhaust lever was quickly thrown over, blowing the residue to the outside. (Not, as we now know, an environmentally sensitive practice.)

Sometimes, despite our best efforts, the winds were too strong for the balloon to gain altitude quickly enough, and the whole ensemble would be dashed to pieces against the sea ice and bergs as it raced away almost horizontally. This required us to start the whole process over again, from scratch. We couldn't use the generator again so soon, as it was too wet inside to be able to get a controlled generation—then we could use the precious helium. We did have another hydrogen generator; a complicated arrangement of piping, tanks, gauges, etc., which used ammonia gas flowed over a catalyst, but no one knew how to use it. Ray tried once to get it working, but was only able to flood the inflation shelter with the dangerous gas, so that was abandoned. Often, the second launce try also failed, so we would give up for that shift. Sometimes, when we felt the winds were just too strong, we didn't even try for a launch—although Gene never really approved of that.



**Kent ready to launch Will's ozonesonde**

Once we had a successful launch, with acquisition of the sonde signal by Ray in the Radom, (in a high-wind launch this might take some minutes, with a consequent loss of data), it was time for the hour to an hour-and-a-half job of tracking the balloon ascent. Monitoring the balloon ascent required two people: one to monitor and mark the continuous paper strip recording the data flow of temperature, humidity, and air pressure; and one to work the winds. Working winds involved converting the raw azimuth and elevation angle information (as mentioned before) from the tracking antenna data tape, into wind speed and direction, in a continuous profile from ground level to balloon burst, which could occur as high as 100,000 feet. In winter we rarely reached that height, due to extremely low upper atmosphere temperatures. We always wanted to reach the "trope"—the tropopause, the boundary between the troposphere (the lowest atmosphere layer) and the stratosphere—as indicated by a several degree *rise* in air temperature Balloon burst was indicated by sudden signal jitter, as the antenna lost sonde transmission. All of the data—temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind direction and speed, for specifc intervals of the ascent—was reduced to a large field of five-digit numbers, then legged over to comm for transmission to McMurdo. About once a quarter we sent up specialty sondes, measuring ozone levels, and heat economy (radiation) profiles.



# Miscellaneous Notes on Life at Hallett

One beautiful early summer day, Len (one of the Kiwis) and I decided to take a walk out onto the sea ice behind the peninsula, just to see what we could see. We watched the always amusing lines of penguins marching in from the sea toward the rookery; found a Weddell seal and her new pup (she wasn't bothered much by our presence as long as we didn't get too close); climbed tabular ice bergs; took hero shots of each other; and in general had a great time in the bright sun, pretending to be OAEs (Old Antarctic Explorers). Heading back to camp, I checked my watch—it was two a.m. I was surprised it was so late (early?)—I was still getting used to a *circling* sun. (Just a note about the term "hero shot". This was strictly self-mocking—none of us thought we were any kind of hero—but a *little* posing never hurts.)





**Len on the lip --**
**of a tabular iceberg cravass**

Camp water, in the summer, came from two sources—a small glacier on the camp-side of Hallett Peninsula; and distillation of sea water. Previous summer-support had set up a trough arrangement at the bottom of the glacier to collect melt water, which was funneled into a tank trailer and periodically hauled back to camp. Julie, the "water-maker" operated the second-source equipment, the distillers, using sea water pumped from the bay through a canvas hose. All of our water was stored in iron tanks, which supplied the galley, wash basins, shower and washing machine in the head. The storage tanks were unlined, and had become quite rusty inside. This was not a health problem—it just converted all our "whites" (long underwear mostly) into "browns".



**2 AM hero shot**

About *the*… "hero shot"—not my doing! But I was complicit. One of the Navy met techs, an artistic type—he did the mural you see in several of the galley shots—did not own a camera and asked if he could borrow mine to bang off some pictures around camp. *He* suggested the shot, did the set-up—found the fur-trimmed parka, the scarf. At the last minute he said, "Take off your glasses!" Well, OK. (When I got back home, one of the first things I did was to get contact lenses.) I have to say, I'm happy with the result. Then it was his turn to "hero-up". He repaid the favor of the loan my camera by providing me a number of copies of…the "shot".



**Hero shot**



**Not a hero shot**

One would think that of any place in the world, the Antarctic would be a place of silence. And that would be true if it weren't for the camp generator, and in summer, the rookery. Especially in the early summer, night and day, the rookery was a place of raucous, almost never-ending, calling, squabbling, squawking din. But, at least these were the sounds of nature. The generator (two actually, alternated periodically for servicing) however, produced a year-long constant background muttering. All for the good of course, as these sustained our survival in a rather high degree of comfort. Reading some of the accounts of the early explorers, (*true Home of the Blizzard*; Cherry-*Journey in the World*, et al;—you these small, *truly* isolated for sometimes several years at of disaster; surviving only by and an extraordinary degree of reading accounts of their bitter cold, gale- and OAEs)—Mawson's Gerrard's *The Worst* are struck by how groups of men lived a time on the edge constant vigilance, team work. (After sledging treks—hurricane-force winds, frostbite, snow blindness, hunger, scurvy, exhaustion—and death—you really want to go take a hot shower!)

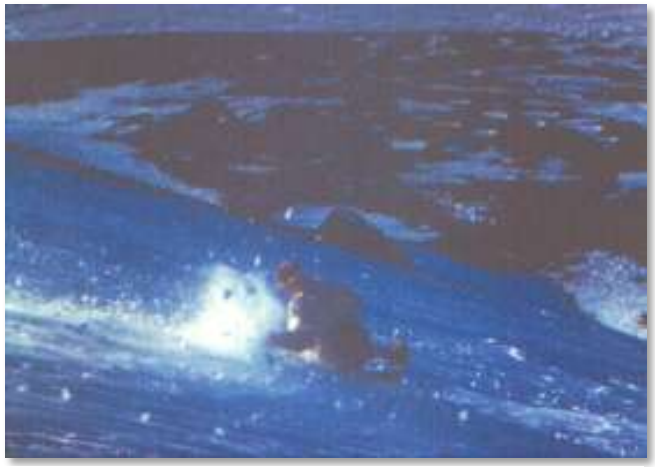


**Having a few drinks; mural by "the Artist". L to R: Mallory, Will, Slick, Kent, Ray**



I have already mentioned the amazing view (described as one of the most dramatic in all of Antarctica). Due to the way Hallett Station was situated in relation to its surroundings—located as it was at the tip of Seabee Hook, in turn at the tip of Cape Hallett, looking eight to ten miles across Moubray Bay to Mt. Hershel, with the mountain ranges extending left and right away from its flanks—we had a front row view of the ever-changing elements of the scene: wind-driven clouds, and tide-driven ice (summer only, of course); behind us the cape, an arc of the Southern Ocean to our right (north); to our front, across the bay, the mountains—all now front-lit, later back-lit and everything in between, as the sun, the *primary* element, spiraled up and then down through the Antarctic seasons.

On a still summer day, standing close to the shore of Moubray Bay you could hear the gentle grinding and rustle and shush of the tide-borne ice: mostly brash, but also the larger growlers and bergy bits. Farther out, towards the center of the bay's channel, imbedded in pack ice and against back drop mountains, smallish tabulars glided silently.



**Great glacier glissade!**

Several times during the summer, we climbed Cape Hallett, just "because it was there", and to take pictures of the camp and the always glorious view of the Admiralty Range and the dominating Mt. Herschel. You could get annoyed with me, always talking about Mt. Herschel and the mountains—but, they were quite simply—a *presence*. ("We" is always whoever was along on any particular outing. The Navy guys never joined us, nor Doug the head Kiwi, or Gene—or Doc. Many of the younger summer biologists also were always game for a climb.)



**Climbing Hallett Glacier**

The steep climb required the use of crampons and ice axes, available in camp, and was strenuous but fun, and absolutely worth it for the—well, you know…. Going down was far easier and way more fun—we would lie on our hips and glissade down the glacier using our ice axes as brakes.

As mentioned before, our major station re-supply was by ice-strengthened cargo ships escorted by Coast Guard ice breakers. Supplies were generally brought ashore in landing craft-type boats, off-loaded onto trailers, and taken to the two large storage Quonsets. With rough seas, or uncooperative ice, helicopters did shuttle duty.

## Gallery: Climbing Hallett



**Gearing up for the climb**



**Summer bio; Barney**





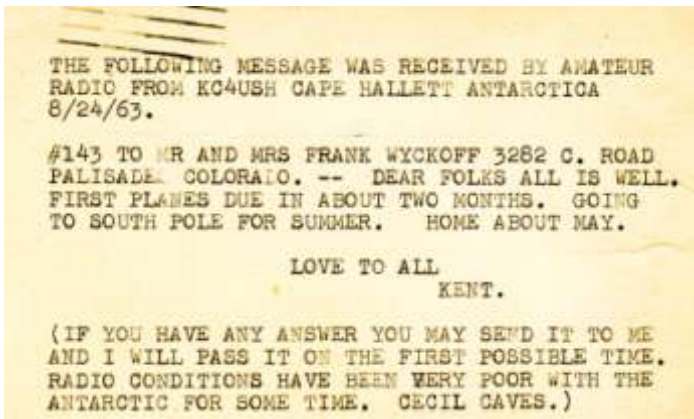
# Miscellaneous Notes on Life at Hallett (Continued)



**Shore Party**

Ship's crews, as with sailors in any port, expected shore leave when free of duty—it didn't matter that it was, for heaven's sake… Antarctica! So they would come ashore with a few cases of beer, build a bonfire on the ice-encrusted shore, and party-up, parkas up.

All of the Antarctic stations were equipped with ham-radio gear. Our station designation was KC4USH. "KC4 Uncle Sugar Henry", was the call that went out. "CQ, CQ, CQ" (seek you), to try to "work" points north—to try to find someone to talk with. We once reached some kid who was just trying out his new ham rig—he was so excited he could hardly talk—he had reached Antarctica! We usually made contact with experienced hams in particular parts of the country (it depended on "the bounce"—of the short-wave signal) who regularly worked Antarctica—Betty, in California is one I particularly recall. These folks could be counted on to send "hamgrams" for us—short messages to our loved ones they typed onto postcards and sent out. I was able to send several notes to my parents over the winter.



THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED BY AMATEUR RADIO FROM KC4USH CAPE HALLETT ANTARCTICA 8/24/63.

#143 TO MR AND MRS FRANK WYCKOFF 3282 C. ROAD PALISADE COLORADO. -- DEAR FOLKS ALL IS WELL. FIRST PLANES DUE IN ABOUT TWO MONTHS. GOING TO SOUTH POLE FOR SUMMER. HOME ABOUT MAY.

LOVE TO ALL
KENT.

(IF YOU HAVE ANY ANSWER YOU MAY SEND IT TO ME AND I WILL PASS IT ON THE FIRST POSSIBLE TIME. RADIO CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN VERY POOR WITH THE ANTARCTIC FOR SOME TIME. CECIL CAVES.)

**Hamgram home**

Don Warren in the ham shack—notice the visitor in the photo. Don was one of the Navy comm people, but his loud-mouthed, know-it-all attitude so irritated the other Navy men that he was replaced almost at the last moment by a young guy named Mallory—and he fit right in. But I was sorry to see Don go. I kind of liked him.



Many of us learned to use the station darkroom, and some of the results illustrate this account. I was surprised

at how easy it was to achieve pretty good results—once you learned to load the negative film-reel in total darkness. But, the amateurism shows in stained, scratched, and poorly exposed prints—so, please be kind. (I only did some of the black and whites used here; many were given to me, as I gave prints to others.)

One morning several of us (at least Will and I, and perhaps Barney) were invited over to the ice breaker that was in, to have lunch with the captain. Off we went in the "whale boat", so called, that was sent to take us for our lunch date—but the incoming tide had other ideas. We were soon stuck in the pack ice; unable to make our way between the floes—easy to understand the frustration and peril of the early explorers. A helicopter was sent to land on a nearby ice floe to deliver an emergency ration of beer—any thoughts of mutiny averted! We finally made it to the ship—late for lunch. The ice and approaching night mandated that we stay instead for supper, and for the night. The next morning we were helicoptered back to the station over a completely ice-free sea.



**...over a completely ice-free sea.**

I mentioned before that Slick had several different duties in support of station operations. In addition to his role as medic, he also ran the "ship's store". Available at certain hours were beer, cigarettes, candy and chewing gum, etc, and what made me one of his second-best customers—camera film. The best customers were those buying beer, which included mostly, if not solely, the Navy guys—including Doc.



**Blizzard causality**

The frequent blizzards, summer and winter, always followed a particular pattern—a building fury of wind and driving snow; the gale-and hurricane-force winds gusting to over one-

hundred miles per hour. During storms, a favorite detour for guys in the rec room was to check-out the wildly oscillating red trace of our recording wind speed/direction indicator. The blizzard would blow for three or four days, followed by several days of wind only, of gradually diminishing intensity, scouring away most snow accumulation. But our entrance to the met/rec building, being in the lee, always required digging out.



**Blizzard damage**

One particularly severe storm nearly resulted in tragedy. Two turbine-powered Army Huey helicopters (of later Viet Nam renown) left McMurdo one mid-afternoon, bound for Hallett. They were transporting a team of geographers whose eventual destination was to be the summits of nearby mountains for surveying—only the turbo-props could perform at those high altitudes.

They were caught by one of the unpredictable storms, with the usual accompanying high winds. They barely made Seabee Hook before the full force of the storm hit, and as night was falling—they had no time to tie the choppers down. A few mornings later it was revealed how damaging and dangerous the winds could be. One 'copter was on its side; the other had its rotors literally shredded. Our big storage Quonset huts sustained major damage with the stripping of much of their corrugated sheathing. After doing some damage in their flights, the thin iron sheets were allowed to stay where they lay.



A summer storm was over when long slow swells rolled in unimpeded from the Southern Ocean to break on the ice-encrusted black gravel beaches of Seabee Hook.

# Gallery: Hallett



**A reflection on Hallett**

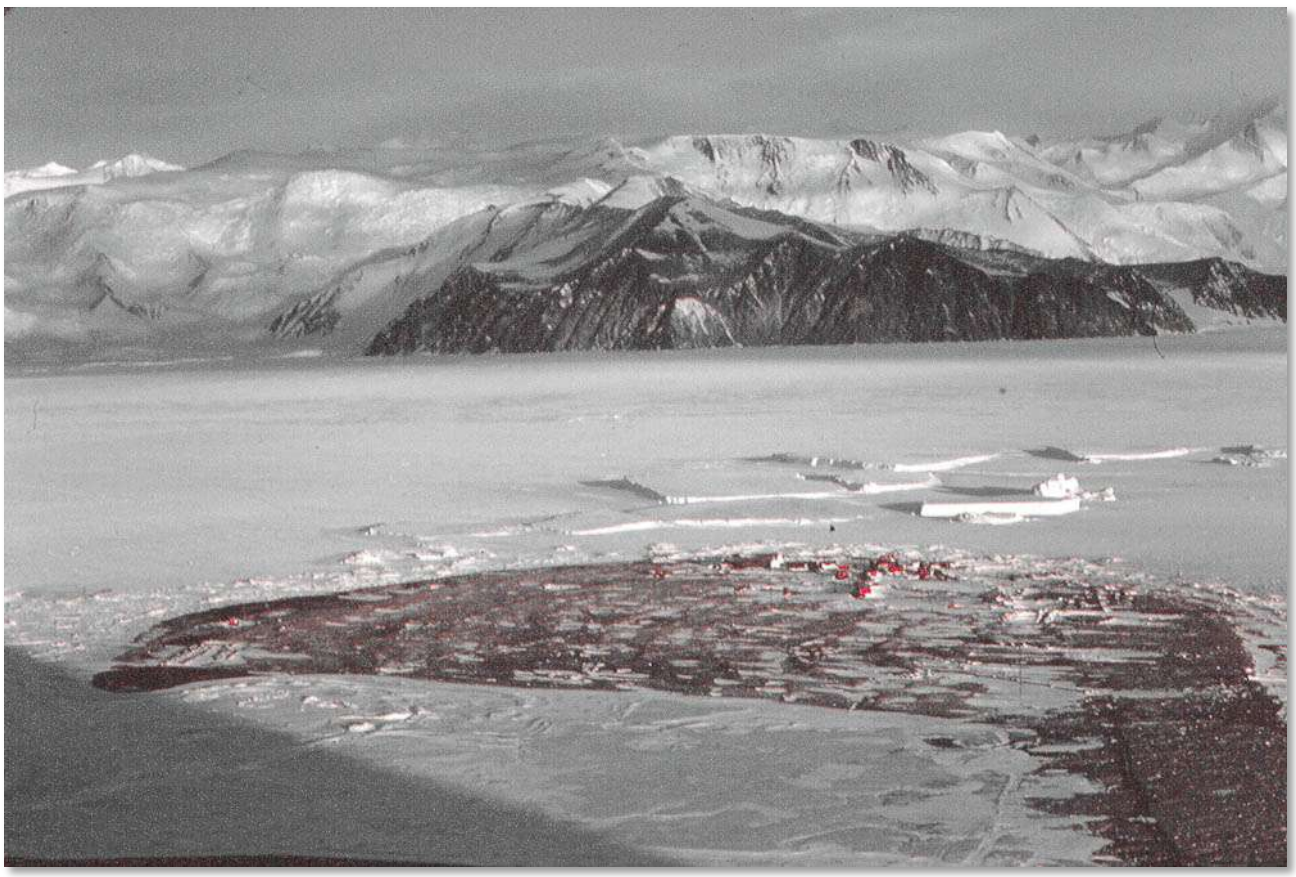





**Birds of a feather...**



**Ice and air**



## Gallery: Moods of Mt. Herschel

















## Gallery: Hallett Resupply














**Snowcat, DC-3, Weasel;**
**on Moubray Bay ice**



## Gallery: Invitation to an Icebreaker



**Beer delivery!**



**Yo-ho heave ho!**




**Ice ahead!**




**So near, and yet...**

# Winter-Over

The last of the summer people left on the ice breaker Edisto on March 10th, 1963. It seemed strangely quiet—and peaceful. Many of us drifted to the galley to enjoy a cup of coffee and the lack of hustle and bustle. We eighteen people suddenly seemed a very few, and seven months a very long time. After a while most departed—we had our work to do.

As mentioned before, the station commander was a Navy physician—true of all the stations except McMurdo. He had at his disposal a well equipped infirmary; and Slick, the medic (hopefully sober). This would suffice for most medical emergencies. It had to. Now, not to try to be too dramatic about this, but it's simply the case that once the ice breaker was away for a certain time and distance, any kind of rescue mission in case of fire or life-threatening medical emergency would have been impossible, until the ice in the Bay was thick enough to support a D-2 Cat (and an airplane!)—a September/October time-frame—and a possible seven- month interval.

With the departure of the three Navy met techs, our meteorological schedule changed, with elimination of the evening balloon launch. This reflected not just the reduction of crew; but the imminent (if not already accomplished) cessation of flights between Christchurch and McMurdo. Air support of inland stations had already ceased—Pole flight operations had been shut down for almost a month. The twenty-four hour, three-hourly ob schedule remained however.

Ray had to start doing obs. He took the night shift; four obs, midnight through 9 a.m.; helped me with the morning balloon launch and data run, then went to bed; and was up for supper, and the evening movies.

Hallett, as with all stations, had a fairly extensive sixteen-millimeter movie library. But by midwinter, we had seen them all; most more than once. Slick was the projector operator, and chose the movies, but often took requests. Two of *my* favorites were *Where the Boys Are*, with Connie Francis and Frank Gorshin (love that Connie Francis…and Yvette Mimieux…and Paula Prentiss…); and *Merry Andrew*, with Danny Kaye. I didn't say they were recent movies.

The met/rec building was just next door to the head, but during the evening movie, with everyone drinking beer or soda, no one was going to go out into cold and storm for a simple urination. Everyone, as the need arose, would traipse back through our met area (and often over our freshly mopped floor) to use the urinal installed on our back wall, which emptied outside just to the right of our back exit. This eventually required Ray and I to

carefully clamber back and forth over the ever-growing Great Hallett Piss Glacier to make our obs. With spring, it disappeared into the rookery gravel.



Hallett, located in the "banana belt", only about six and a half degrees below the Antarctic Circle, and at sea level, did not experience great extremes of temperature. The warmest sunny days could reach forty degrees above; comfortable shirt-sleeve weather, but also causing the rookery to become a reeking, nasty mess. Winter temperatures reached forty below, and that for a relatively short time.

Late in the fall, one early evening after the summer folk had left, we were fortunate to witness a very rare meteorological phenomenon—*nacreous clouds*, also called mother-of-pearl clouds. These lenticular clouds, "like opals in the sky", occur only at high altitudes in high latitudes, and are lit by the sun for up to two hours after it has dropped below the horizon.



We only saw them once, but their spectacular iridescence, and the rosy glow they cast over the darkening landscape were unforgettable. All too soon they were just wispy white clouds

Growing beards had been a tradition of true OAE's so, as *new* OAEs, we kept up with that tradition (maybe it was just laziness); except Gene, my buttoned-up boss, and Doug, the starchy head Kiwi (Will?, I don't remember…). What was NOT a tradition was head shaving. I'm not sure who came up with the idea, but I'm pretty sure it was alcohol induced. Most of the wintering-over party participated…except for…you guessed it. I wasn't particularly keen on the idea, but waited too long to say no, and before I knew it the deed was done. Slick did the honors for me. The tremor in his hands as he wielded the clippers made me glad he wasn't using, say, a straight razor.

Our winter-over group picture shows most of the guys as clean shaven; we had waited so long to take the photo, it was coming up on time to leave the Ice. The Navy guys couldn't keep their beards when they got back to regular duty, and the three of us six USARPs who were married (Ray, Will and Harry), probably felt they hadn't better. I kept my beard because I wasn't going home—yet. During midwinter I decided as long as I was "there", I might as well try to get to Pole Station. I had comm send a message to POP, saying I would be willing to



**L to R (Back): Gary Mallory, Cox, TJ, Allison, Ray, Kent**
**L to R (Middle): Damschroeder, Doug, Harry, Doc, Len, Slick**
**L to R (Front): Barney, Brian, Gene, Julie, Reine, Will**

spend another summer on the Ice if I could be sent to Pole. I got a VERY prompt, affirmative response—they were delighted to accommodate me, as it saved them a lot of money.

As stated before, the frequent storms followed a particular pattern—three or four days of fierce blizzard and blinding snow; followed by several days of no snow, and merely gale-force winds of gradually decreasing intensity. During the winter storms, all of the outside floods were turned on for obvious safety reasons. In calm weather they were off so as not to interfere with the Kiwi's all-sky cameras, taking horizon-to-horizon pictures to document the southern lights. I was there during a low-sunspot cycle, so the auroral displays were not usually very interesting.

# And So, A Short Short Story



**But our entrance... always... required digging out.**

It was a dark and stormy night. Well, not so much stormy as windy. Dark and windy. Night. But it *had* been stormy—a real Hallett hurricane-blizzard. A few days in, the snow ceased but not the winds… seemed like a good time to take a walk. Not so foolish as it might seem, although if we had asked permission, Doc would probably have thought we were crazy.

We geared up (wind-proof pants, insulated vest, head-gear, foot-gear, zipped-up hood-up parka, mittens—whew!), found some flashlights and followed their bobbing yellow pools into the rookery, across the neck of the hook, towards the cape. (The sea still not fully frozen, it was the only way we *could* go.) At its base—the flood-lit station a dim glow and the generator muted—someone had a "bright" idea. With flashlights off, bracing in total darkness against the buffeting gales, and with the sound of Southern Ocean storm surges pounding the shore-line ice—the experience soon became quite surreal. Flashlights on. Back to camp.



**By the light of the silvery moon...**

The End.

One clear (Antarctica clear!) full moon-lit night—(Aha! Another one of the "elements of the scene") — I grabbed the station transit scope and tripod, and headed up to the roof of the met building (accessible through a small door in the Radom) to have a look at the beautiful silvery disk—its light so bright that, as they say, you could read a newspaper (or enjoy the mountains) by it,. It was just above

the horizon, and with the scope craters, maria, and rills stood out with startling clarity. The moon's brightness washed out the usual inky, star-flooded sky leaving little else to see. And I was getting cold. But before calling it quits, I swung the scope toward a particularly bright "star" that looked interesting—and got lucky. Shivering in the light wind, adjusting focus with cold gloved fingers (and trying to keep my glasses from fogging up) Jupiter swam into view. I could easily make out three of its four largest moons; two on the left side of the orb, one on the right. Nothing that Galileo hadn't seen centuries before, but fascinating *whenever* you are privileged to view it. On a later night, heartened to again brave the cold, I was able to add Saturn and its magnificent rings to my "collection". Jupiter still showed only three moons.

On a further astronomical note, I might mention the unaided viewing of the southern hemisphere night sky. First and most apparent, Crux—the Southern Cross—more obvious and easily discerned than the Big Dipper in our northern hemisphere. Iconic Crux is displayed on the flags of New Zealand, Australia, Western Samoa, and others. Next, and I think, the most interesting—the Clouds of Magellan (yes, *that* Magellan)—two thumb-print smudges, companion galaxies of the Milky Way.

During one of the winter storms I was startled awake by a loud BANG! (We had all soon learned to sleep through the howling winds and the rattle of gravel against the buildings). I rushed through my door curtains in my long underwear, to see Slick, in *his* long underwear (a frightening sight in itself)—warily, sleepily, and carefully, peering through *his* door curtains to see what had so rudely awakened us. Protruding several feet through Slick's shattered triple-paned Plexiglas window was a section of the corrugated metal sheathing from the storage Quonsets—hurled by the storm winds which were now pouring a bitter-cold torrent into our quarters. Almost frantically, we rushed into the infirmary to try to find something (anything!) to stop up the, ah, draft. Amazingly, we found a perfect-fit drafting board, and even more amazing, hammer and nails. (In an infirmary!?) The sheathing was soon returned to the wind (to become someone else's problem?), and the board nailed in place. Crisis over. Back to sleep.




Jennings "Will" Willey has written this observation about the wind:

> "This was probably the storm that put the hex on one of us. As the winter had proceeded one fellow became a bit spooked by these winds and began to talk about the wind as if it were a thing, animate, even a malignant entity. In the end he would not even come to breakfast or

> dinner when the wind was up. In my imagination I began to see him devolving from the civilization he was born to, into a believer in a more ancient God."

Given the isolation, and before communications satellites, we were obviously very out of touch with world events. We did get brief, weekly news summaries from "tear sheets" off the teletypewriter: The atomic submarine Thresher went down with all hands; Barbara Streisand was gaining fame; a local conflict in Vietnam was heating up; an English music group, the Beatles, was causing a stir in the UK.

Late winter—after the sea has reliably frozen solid and clear sunny days (however short) had returned—was a good time to go exploring: Frozen-in-place icebergs of many shapes and sizes; and—a wonderful surprise!—ice caves. Fashioned by wind, wave and storm, frozen solid, one with the ice extending hundreds of miles to the north and thousands of miles, circumferentially, to the east and to the west—and so, safe and fun to explore. (And, the caves made great dramatic framing for hero shots!) Temperatures were in the twenty-below range, but with little wind and good cold weather gear, we were quite comfortable. Upon returning to camp, the main irritation was combing the "snot-cicles" out of our beards.



(FJW)

## Gallery: All on a Winters Day…

















Located as we were just south of the Antarctic circle, we never had twenty-four hour darkness—although, in midwinter you easily could miss the "day" if you weren't careful. The extended mid-winter twilight, plus a weeks-long layer of low, heavy stratus clouds conspired to produce a feeling of oppressive leaden sameness. The 24/7 work routine began to wear (well ok, just 12/7 for me): Get up, obs, breakfast, balloon run, obs, lunch, obs, supper, obs, movies, sleep.

Getupobsbreakfastballoonrunobslunchobssupperobsmoviessleep.

Read; lift weights; shoot-the-breeze with Barney, Will and Ray; teach myself a passable 3-ball juggle. Same seventeen guys for company—same movies. No sun, no moon, no stars—no Mt. Herschel! Boring, tedious, dreary…a bit depressing. But I can *honestly* say—I never once wished I wasn't there. I was in Antarctica!

As spring approached, there began to be some encouraging sights: Under particular conditions horizontal rays of the returning horizon-riding sun shot under the low stratus, illuminating distant tabular ice bergs, causing them to glow as if lit from within and to stand out in startling contrast to an otherwise gloomy twilit day.



**...causing them to glow as if lit from within...**

One clear day, several weeks before first planes, a few of us headed out into the light of the low-lying early spring sun for our last ascent of Cape Hallett. The winter ice allowed us to start our climb further south than previously—a steeper and higher goal. And tough, after some months of mostly non-activity. (Weight-lifting just doesn't cut it as aerobic exercise!) The height, once attained, made the struggle absolutely worth it: Range-upon-range of the Transantarctic Mountains, winter-solid sea studded with ice bergs, storm-blown hummocks—all, only in shades of shadow and white. And there on its swatch of black was our station (our lifeline!), nearly lost in the vastness; reduced by distance to a small orange huddle.



In late September/early October the bay ice was thick enough to begin preparing the ski-way, always located well up into the bay, away from the more uncertain ocean ice. Slick was the designated heavy equipment operator; he spent many, many cold days trundling up and down on the enclosed-cab D-2 Cat., smoothing off the accumulated crust of winter snow. I suppose it would have made a great skating rink—if we had had ice skates. It was quite a change from his usual duties of movie projector operator, ship's store proprietor, and unemployed medic, but he did his solitary duty without complaining.



# Changing Stations

Mid-October was time to start the annual rotation of station personnel. By that time we were all glad to leave. Especially Doc! He had come to truly despise the place. On the day of his departure, before boarding the Weasel to the skiway, he raced up and down main-street screaming at the top of his lungs: "I hate this f—-- place! I hate this f——— place!". But I at least, felt a sort of resentment at "the new guys", strangers, over-running the station as if they owned the place, and disrupting our quiet routine. (Did we do that when *we* came in?) The new arrivals brought more than a new busy pace to the camp; they also brought some invisible guests—a few days after the first planes, most of us in the winter-over crew came down with colds.



**So long, Seabee Hook and Moubray Bay (skiway upper right)**

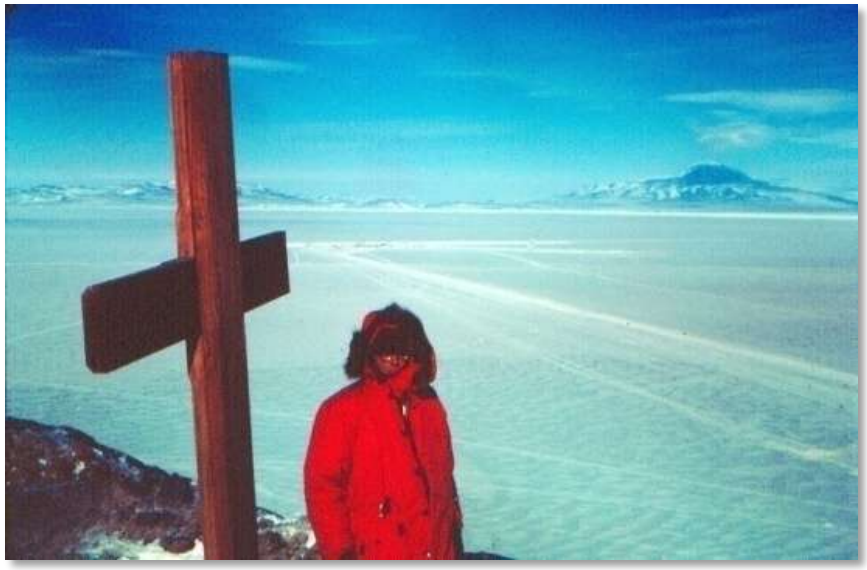
My trip to Pole Station involved a trip back to McMurdo (once again "transiting"), where I was staged for a few days awaiting a flight south. This allowed me some time for a little more sightseeing—a cold hike over to Hut Point (*cold?*—of course it was cold!), the site of Scott's early, pre-pole attempt,



(FJW)

camp. Nothing much to see—the entire hut was swathed in a lath-and-canvas protective covering. Probably to keep out sightseers—like me.

Several of us climbed Observation Hill, to get a panoramic view of the station and the surrounding area, and to see the cross erected in the memory of Robert Falcon Scott by his surviving men. The cross is inscribed "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield", from Tennyson's *Ulysses*. Scott's 1912 attempt to be the first to reach the geographic South Pole ended in failure. He discovered he had been beaten by Roald Amundsen and his four-man party (Hanssen, Hassel, Wisting and Bjaland), by a month. Bitter disappointment. "Great God! This is an awful place…", he wrote in his diary. Scott and his four companions (Bowers, Oates, Evans and Wilson) died of exhaustion and exposure on the return journey. Amundsen used dog sleds and a route up a different glacier from a farther-south base, and had a relatively easy trek. Scott and his men man-hauled and had a terrible trip—see, *The Most Terrible Journey in the World*—by Apsley Cherry-Gerrard (what a *great* English name!). Scott was regarded as a hero by some; as a fool by others. Pole station is named Amundson-Scott in their honor; their achievement commemorated with a plaque in the station galley, inscribed with their names.






**Observation Hill; Scott's Memorial Cross;**
**At right: Williams Field & the "McWilley Expressway"**




We had also had time for a short visit to the New Zealander's Scott Base; a short walk over a low saddle from McMurdo. We USARPs, in our international orange gear, from our international orange station, were made to feel quite welcome at the lime-yellow Kiwi base. (No, they didn't wear parkas the color of…)



**Scot Base**

We ("we" being, among others, new Pole winter-overs, and summer-only staff such as, now, me) boarded a ski-equipped C-130 Hercules for the seven hundred eighty mile, four to five hour flight to Pole. Very Spartan: fold-down frame- and web-seats, arranged sideways on both sides of the un -insulated interior; cold, very noisy.

It wasn't a direct flight—but at least didn't require a change of planes. The one stop was Beardmore Station, on the upper Ross Ice Shelf—at an altitude of about seven-hundred feet—half-way to Pole; to re-supply a summer-only three-man weather station. A bare-bones operation: two Jamesway huts, a couple of cotton-region shelters, and an outhouse—I imagine a very cold….

Beardmore served the exact same purpose as the mid-ocean picket ship, and Hallett—weather observation and radio relay, at approximately the half-way point on major polar operations air-lanes. It was located close to the bottom of Beardmore Glacier, the longest in the world, which pointed our way up to the polar icecap. (Beardmore had been called "Shackleton's highway to the south"—it's little known that he reached within about 100 miles of the Pole in 1907. He is better remembered for his later *Endurance* adventure). And, Beardmore was, four years later, Scott's highway to the south.



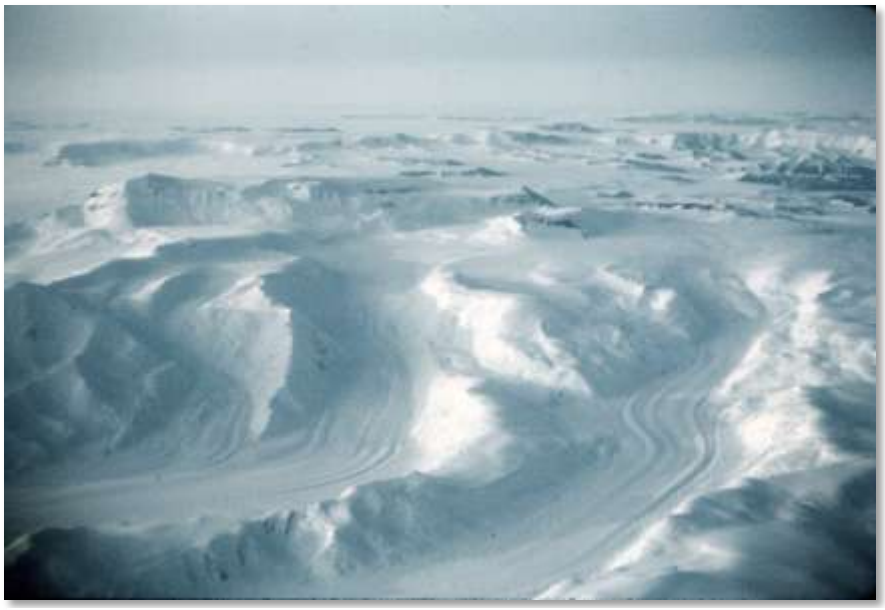
**Beardmore Station**

No prepared skiway here; just a careful set-down, skies down, on the crusty snow—pointed south, into the wind and parallel to the wind-carved sastrugi. I had time to rush out and take a few

pictures—typical tourist. As I was heading back to board the Herc', I noticed the crew affixing something to the rear of the plane, but thought nothing about it—typical tourist.

Pictures taken; back to the aircraft. Strap in for takeoff. Engines whine to a take-off pitch—we don't seem to be moving. A startling series of jolting, jarring *BANGs!* had us racing across the snow and soon air- borne—JATO bottles to the rescue!

The closer you get to the pole, the more referring to direction gets problematical. Latitude (north and south) still makes sense, but the converging longitude lines (meridians) makes things tricky. East is still east and west, west; but soon these become basically clockwise and counter-clockwise. Polar aviators use "grid north"; an overlay centered on the South Pole, with north being defined as the prime meridian. (And, speaking of converging, since all time-zones meet at the pole, McMurdo-time is used at Pole Station.)



**…complete with glacial tributaries.**

The ascent to the ice cap, flying along the eastern edge of the glacier, was fascinating. First there was the barrier of the Transantarctic Mountains. (Literally, to man-hauling sledgers.) It was hard to imagine Scott and his team hauling a one-ton sledge up that thing. And back—almost. *We* made our easy way south, over the tips of snow- and ice-drowned mountain ranges, flying roughly parallel to big ol' Beardmore, My position on the right side of the plane allowed me a nearly continuous view of the one-hundred thirty-mile long ice river, complete with glacial tributaries.

We followed its rise until, at an altitude of two miles it merged with its source: the southern polar ice cap. As we approached the plain of the cap, sunlight glistening off the glacier's striations and flow-lines dramatically illustrated the millennia-old slow flow of the ice struggling to find its way to the sea through every mountain gap.



**…the one-hundred thirty-mile long ice river…**



**…until, ... it merged with its source...**

# Pole

After the ascent, the scenery was—well, nothing but white—until a faint dark patch was revealed as the plane banked for its landing approach. Pole operations usually open for the summer season about October fifteenth, when temperatures have risen to a safe operating level for the Hercules. I turned twenty-five on October 19th, 1963; my second birthday at Hallett. Once again I didn't get a cake!—this was during the station rotation mentioned above. I left Hallett a day or so later, had my several days layover at McMurdo—so my arrival at Pole was about October 23rd, give or take a few days. That put me into Pole on one of the first planes in. The Weather Bureau was eager to rotate out the winter-over guys as soon as possible—we all were getting bonus money for our "Ice-time"



**Pole - First Look**

Our landing at Pole was not on ice as with Hallett and McMurdo, nor loose snow as at Beardmore, but ice-like compacted snow—seems trivial, but a real difference. There wasn't a lot to see from the window of the taxiing Herc': plowed snow banks lining the skiway, a Radom, antenna fields (familiar from Hallett)—and, a large hand-lettered sign that read: WELCOME TO SOUTH POLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT—COURTESY TOURS—USN.

It was probably less than a hundred yards from the skiway to the station entrance, but the combination of heavy duffel, dry thin air, near sixty-below temps, and loose sand-like snow (so cold it squeaks), soon had me puffing like I was climbing Cape Hallett again. Behind me, the four engines of the departing Hercules were again roaring up a



**…down a snowy ramp -- the dark entrance...**

mini-blizzard; ahead, a false south pole barber-pole, distance-to direction markers, white-plumed vent stacks and, down a snowy ramp—the dark entrance to Amundsen Scott South Pole Station.

Pole, like other inland stations—Eights and Byrd—was situated beneath the snow surface. The first Pole Station, established in 1956 as one of the original IGY stations (as I had read in my National Geographics) was a learning experience—within several seasons the buildings were becoming more and more deeply buried, and even in 1964, showing signs of being crushed by the yearly accumulation of wind-driven snow. (And by the way, my early hero, Eagle Scout Paul Siple, now *Dr.* Siple, was the *first* Pole Station scientific leader.) "My" Pole became "Old Pole" when it was abandoned in 1975 for a new dome-enclosed station.



**...false South Pole...**

The buildings, similar to the Hallett T-5's I was already familiar with—including the color—were constructed in trenches; standing off, top, bottom, and sides from the surrounding snow, to prevent heat from the buildings causing melt problems. It was literally a deep freeze in the tunnels between buildings; at about—what?—thirty-, forty-below? (Mean annual outside temperature is minus fifty-six degrees) Even out of the wind, and with wool garb, walks between buildings soon turned into a very brisk hands-deep-in-pockets scamper through the incandescent-lit tunnels.



**Incoming! Towing a blizzard**

Everyone is interested in the temperature at the pole—it was nearly sixty below zero the day of my arrival, and while I knew it was COLD, it didn't affect me nearly as much as first arriving at McMurdo (not having the penetrating wind helped immensely). As the summer progressed, we watched the indicator on the temperature-recording chart rise slowly to a high of two-below zero. The previous winter-over group had recorded one-hundred twelve below. I saw some amusing pictures, taken in the early spring—a few months before their first planes—of some brave souls

cavorting in the snow in swim suits(?!) in the bright sun—at eighty below zero. I doubt that they cavorted long. But, take that! polar-bear club. When I departed Pole about four months later, in mid-February, the temperature was back down to fifty-below and heading south fast—(sorry).

We had an overlap of about a week with the winter-over met guys, to get a feel for their operation. I soon settled into a familiar routine, although the brief weather obs were less than inspiring—compared to Hallett. No need to gear-up for the cold; we climbed a ladder from our met room to an outside-opening hatch for a (brief!) peek And, we didn't have the cotton-region shelters as at Hallett—it's difficult to calculate a dew point with a frozen wet-bulb(!), and dew point at the pole doesn't make much sense anyway. There was one welcome change—the new winter-over met-tech (Hank, a recent college graduate and self-described BMOC) figured out how to operate the chlorine/catalytic hydrogen generator. Balloon inflations became much faster and easier.



**Resupply—Pole**

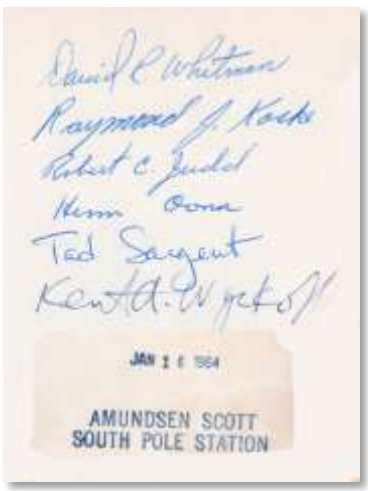
I did go out for a few extended sight-seeing excursions. One was the trek to the *true* South Pole marker, about an eighth of a mile—um, south of camp. *We* had to walk; but DV's (distinguished visitors)—congressmen and others of that ilk—would fly in with their brand new gear, jump on a ski wagon behind a Cat., to be towed out to the Pole for the obligatory "run around the world" hero shots, and to fly out on the same plane. Some would storm down to the galley, panting from the altitude and red-faced with cold, to warm up and suck-up a quick cup of hot coffee before departing—very amusing to us old hands.

My most interesting outing away from camp was an invitation to help read the snow stakes—sounds suspiciously like an offer to go snipe hunting, but it was for real. The snow stakes were set out at intervals in seven-mile legs along the compass points away from camp. Once a summer, readings were taken to get a year-to-year profile of snow accumulation. Any accumulation is due to blowing and




**Dave, Bob (my boss), Tad, Ray (the 'cat skinner), Henn, and Kent**







**This is it!**

drifting, not generally *new* snow fall—the ultra-cold air cannot hold much moisture, even as snow—the Antarctic ice cap is said to be one of the driest deserts on earth. The closest thing to precipitation that I saw was "diamond dust"—ice crystals glittering out of a clear blue sky.

Fortunately our group of six had a comfortable vehicle—a semi-trailer sized, black Snowcat, which had been a part of the previous summer's trans-Antarctic expedition. It certainly didn't take six guys to do the job—we were out on a lark. And I enjoyed it; I got to drive—the only requirement—well, there were no requirements.



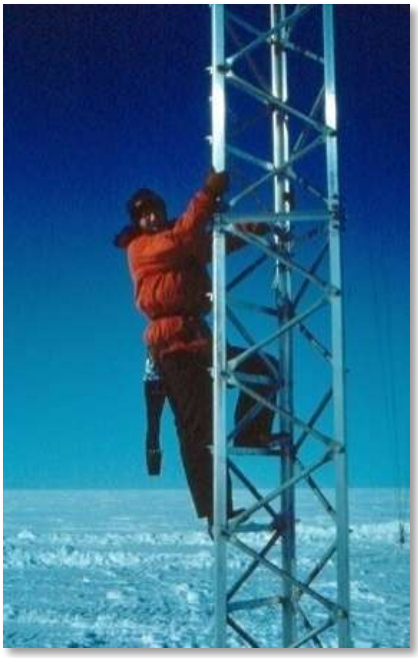
At our farthest distance from the station, as it had disappeared from view, all that marred the featureless white plateau were the tracks of our Cat receding to a hazy-edged horizon.

As with Hallett, Pole had a summer-only population—scientists, weather bureau folk—and Seabees. The Seabees (C.B.'s—Construction Battalion) were constructing new scientific buildings, and twin antenna towers, the purpose of which I never learned. These guys were amazing—young and full of energy and pride. The two hundred fifty feet-plus (estimated) tall twin-towers would have been challenging to build anywhere. At Pole, with temperatures well below zero, an altitude of nearly ten thousand feet, and constant wind, these guys could only work for several hours at a time. They would barrel into the galley puffing, red faced, and half frozen, grab some coffee, and thaw out as the next shift headed out for *their* brief stint. Our met office was in the same building as the galley, next to the "front door"; so we had a ring-side seat so to speak, for all the station comings and goings. On the way to and from meals, station personnel would pop-in to check the continuous-recording temperature indicator. (And *we* could be first in line for meals!)



**Seabee-Built!**

I found a couple of linemen's safety belts somewhere in the station, and had an idea. I was familiar with their use (not that it's complicated) from my stint as a pole line team chief with the Colorado National Guard in Denver. So my Pole-pal David Whitman and I, in order to get some "above-it-all" panoramic shots of the camp, climbed two of the already in-place twin antenna towers, (and to get hero - shots of each other). It's amazing that we had the freedom, and lack of oversight, to embark on such a venture. You can see the result in my top-side picture. It shows summer construction—new storage tunnels and above-surface science buildings. Also seen are summer-quarters Jamesways for the Seabees. The bulk of the station proper trends left and right across the center of the photo, under the snow surface. The skiway is in the upper-right.





**Safety-belted; fiddlin' with camera**






Part of the off-duty recreation for the Seabees, and general station personnel (read, Navy guys; they were young, single—and, Navy guys), was "90° South", the station pub: bar, bar stools, mirrored walls, soft lighting, Playboy pin-ups, alcohol, an open area that could only be construed as a dance floor, mood music (to the extent that Country and Western can be considered mood music)—but no women. Truly a triumph of fantasy over reality!

Water for the camp wasn't a particular problem; we were surrounded by it at its purest, just in a form we couldn't use. So we did what everyone has done in similar situations—melted snow. But a bulldozer was used to gather the stuff, and a diesel-fueled melter was our stove. Every few days the 'dozer would head out and push mounds of snow into the maw of the melter. Not all the snow would fall in, so it was expected that everyone pull periodic snow melter detail—gear-up, grab coal shovels, and have-at the frozen mounds for as long as you had energy and breath. Understanding the effort and energy put into the water supply made for unspoken, voluntary conservation—including short, infrequent showers (although I can only speak for myself regarding frequency). We didn't have to worry about for water for flushing—the "facility" was essentially an indoor outhouse. Heated.

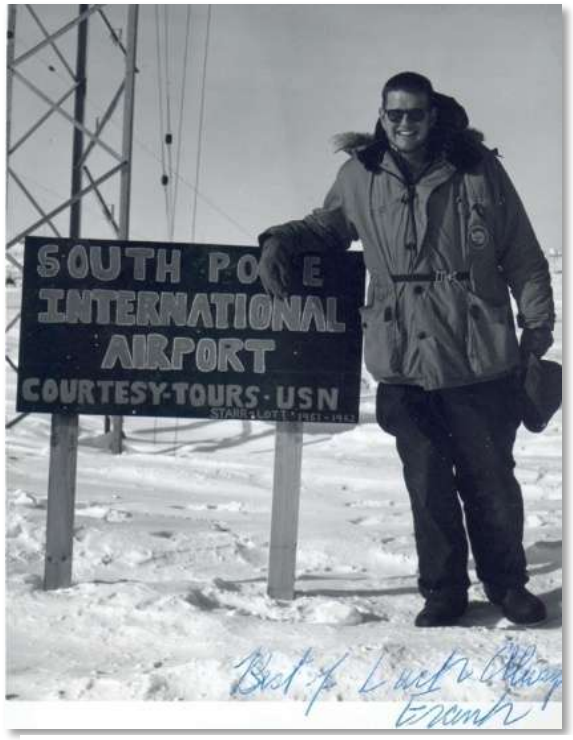


**Kent and Dave actually working!**

The first Pole wintering-over party didn't just go "out" for their frozen water, they also went down. The result is one of the "tourist attractions"—the snow mine. It heads down at about a forty-five degree angle to a considerable depth. It was finally halted when the effort of digging and hauling became too great a strain on station time and personnel. It did have another purpose, however; the tunneling-down was a virtual trip through time—revealing, as with geological strata, insight into millennia past.

Anyone above a certain age will recall where they were when they heard of President Kennedy's assassination. I was at the South Pole November 22nd, 1963. Asleep in my room, I was awakened by the dorm door slamming

open (we were usually careful about the door, as people could be sleeping at any time). Someone ran through the hallway—(I never found out who) shouting something like: "The President's been shot! The President's been shot!"— and banged out the other end of the corridor. Awakened as I was from a deep sleep, and hearing no further commotion, I'm sorry to say that I… went back to sleep. It just didn't seem to make any sense.




**My D.C. pal "Warehouse" Frank, up on a day-trip from McMurdo**

The next day, there was little sense of reality about the tragic event amongst our small community; the dry facts off the TTY tear sheets simply could not provide that. I didn't learn a great deal more about the event until I returned home.

One of the books I used for fact-checking, *Antarctica*, one of "The Lonely Planet" series, said, "Due to radio blackouts and a lack of flights, South Pole residents in 1963 didn't learn of President Kennedy's assassination for twenty days". What!? No! Can't be! But I saw it referenced in another book, and twice on the Internet. Does that mean it's true—or is it just repetition of misinformation? After all, twenty days is about one-fifth of the entire Pole summer season! That doesn't mean it's impossible of course. But, I can't believe it. And I can't prove it.




We could buy beer and hard liquor at the ship's store, but I still wasn't a drinker; I not only had no taste for beer (not even Coors as a Colorado teen-ager)—much less beer that had been frozen, thawed, refrozen, and thawed again—I also had no taste for hard liquor. I had tried (very cheap) Scotch whiskey at Hallett, and found it nearly undrinkable—compared to Hallett cocktails. My met pal David Whitman, a man of the world (he had lived in Italy!), told me that if I wanted to learn to drink Scotch, I should get a bottle of the *good* stuff, put it by my bedside and take a shot every night before going to sleep. So, I got a bottle of Haig & Haig Pinch from the ship's store, and did as my mentor suggested. It worked. I'm not sure why I ever thought this was a good idea, but I still do like the taste of Scotch, and drink it occasionally—say, at wedding reception open bars.

# Home Bound

Mid-February: Time to start shutting the continent down. Pole would be first, then Byrd and Eights; coastal stations last. Ships would be leaving; planes leaving—and summer people. I was among those leaving on the last plane out of Pole, February 14th, 1964 [insert lame Valentine's Day joke here]—leaving twenty-two men to their eight months of truly dangerous isolation. (Not seven months as the clipping indicates, i.e., mid-February to mid-October, roughly.) They liked us well enough, but were glad to see us go. I knew the feeling.



SEVEN MONTHS' ISOLATION

22 Men At South Pole

Twenty-two men at the South Pole will settle down next week to seven months of isolation. They will receive their last letters by air probably on Monday, but the aircraft will not land, as the temperature is likely to be too low. This week the men at the Amundsen-Scott Station have experienced 96 and 78 degrees of frost.

The last aircraft to land at the Pole this season flew back to McMurdo Sound last Friday. In the clear, sunlit sky 13 Navy men and nine scientists watched the ski-equipped VX6 Squadron Hercules become less than 15 miles as they stood outside the Pole station buildings in a temperature of minus 47 degrees Fahrenheit.

The station doctor and leader of the Navy men for the coming winter is Lieutenant W. K. McLean, Mr R. Yon, of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, is the scientific leader for the United States Antarctic Research Programme. He will conduct geomagnetic and seismological studies.



**Recipient of my wool shirt... you're welcome!**

And I left behind something of myself, so to speak—my warm, comfortable, checkered wool over-shirt that I had worn since Hallett. One of my comm friends had coveted it, and asked if he could have it. I really would have preferred to keep it; but he was going to need its comforting warmth far more than I—so I was happy to give it to him.

So there we were—droning downhill towards McMurdo; on the first leg of the three-thousand mile trip back to Christchurch and the world. One of the crew said we could go up front to have a look-see from the cockpit. What a view!: A panoramic last-look at the Tranantarctic Mountains as they slid slowly under the nose of the

aircraft; its peaks and summits showing off dramatically in the austral autumn—low-sun lit on one side, sharply shadowed on the other. The pilots and navigator looked bored. I suppose it's possible.



One last landing at Williams Field. One last visit to Mactown for a meal and a short rest (no time, or inclination, for sightseeing). One last trip on the McWilley expressway. One last flight on the Connie. I know these things happened, but I really remember very little of that last day or so—I guess I was really, finally, "Antarcticed" out.



As jolting as going from civilization to the Ice was, the reverse was even more so. You absolutely cannot imagine how the sight, and the scent, and the feel, of a warm…green…fragrant …temperate climate literally strikes you when you have been away from it for over year and a quarter—talk about intoxication! No parka, no hat, no gloves, no long underwear—no wool! *Wonderful*! (And yes, I have to say it—seeing women after that length of time was *very* amazing!).

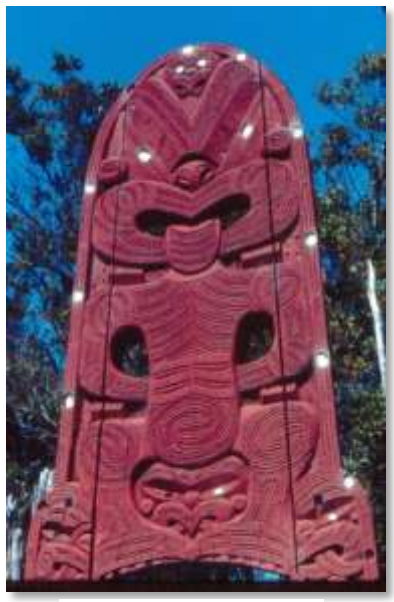
I was able to delay my return flight and spend two wonderful weeks traveling New Zealand—great sights, great people (though I never got used to the taste of mutton-fried chips). While I was "away", MATS had upgraded to Boeing 707 jets for the cross-ocean flight—direct from Christchurch to Hawaii. Never an organization for frills, these planes were dubbed "flying tunnels"—no windows. But what can you see going over the ocean anyway?

I then spent two weeks in Hawaii—to *really* decompress. (I had the money—I had been saving it for some time.)

# Gallery: New Zealand



**Dunedin, S.I., NZ**



**Maori art**



**Scott's Statue, Christchurch**



**Lake Wakatipu; a Kiwi I met on a bus**



**The Remarkables; Lake Wakatipu**



**More sheep than people**

## Gallery: Hawaii



**Rainbow Falls, Hawaii**



**Diamond Head, Oahu**



**Waimea Canyon, Kauai**



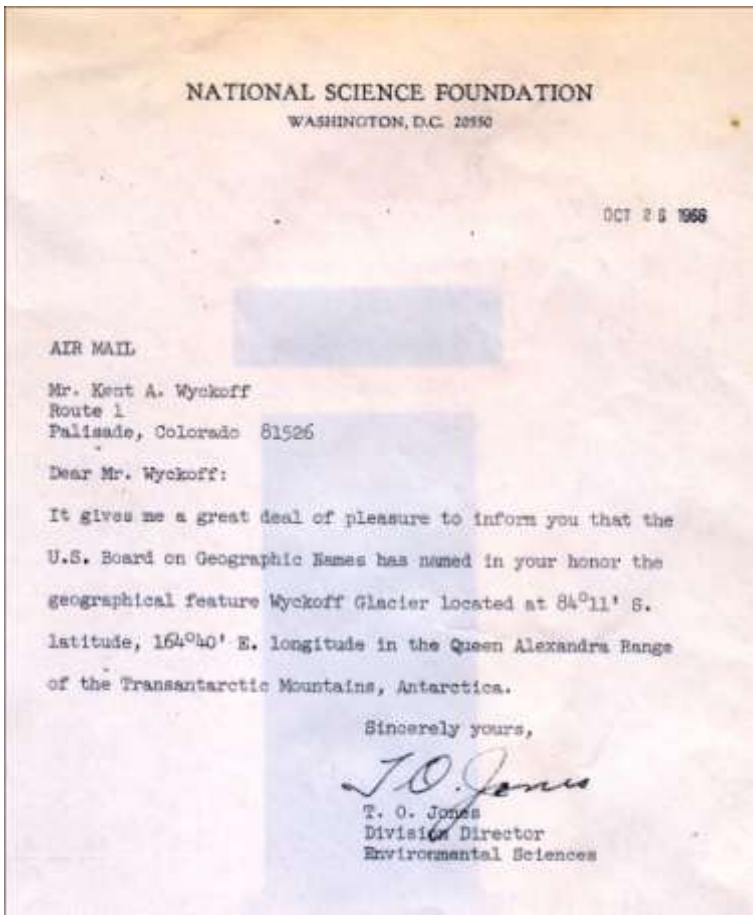




**Akaka Falls, Hawaii**

# Postscript

Two and a half years later, in November, 1966, I received a surprising letter from the National Science Foundation, Washington, D.C. It can be read below:



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20550

OCT 28 1966

AIR MAIL

Mr. Kent A. Wyckoff
Route 1
Palisade, Colorado 81526

Dear Mr. Wyckoff:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform you that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names has named in your honor the geographical feature Wyckoff Glacier located at 84°11' S. latitude, 164°40' E. longitude in the Queen Alexandra Range of the Transantarctic Mountains, Antarctica.

Sincerely yours,

T. O. Jones
Division Director
Environmental Sciences

It's true!—I have a map of the U.S. Geological Survey that shows it.

It was thirty-nine years before I found out exactly why this happened—the Internet IS an amazing information resource. Antarctica is a big place, and even in the sixties, there were a myriad of geographical and geological features that needed naming. All of my fellows Hallett USARPs (and Doc!), were granted eponymous features. Of course there were many, many more, but these the only names that I remember.

So apparently, it wasn't because I was some kind of hero—I never thought so anyway…*really*!



## Gallery: It's All About Me!









(FJW)



# From the "Antarctic Gazetteer":

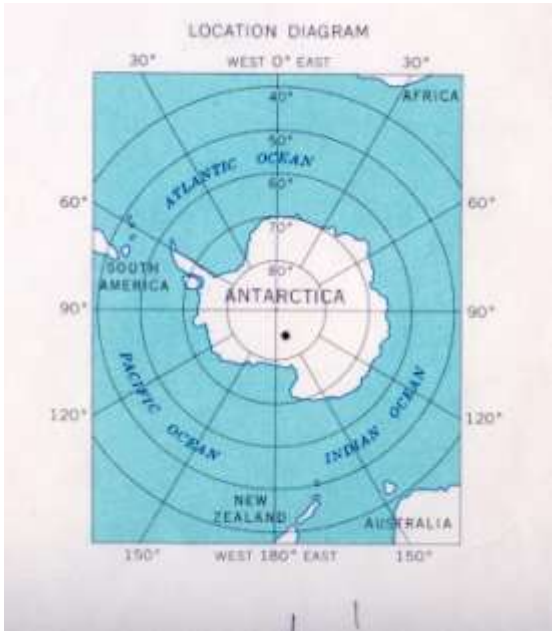
E.E. Barnes—Barnes Peak, "…a peak, 11,024 ft… in the Queen Alexandra Range…"

Gene Levi—Levi Peak, "…a rock peak 2 miles NW of Mt. Stanley…"

Rayburn Price—Mount Price, "…the eastern of two peaks, rising to 9,941 ft….in the Queen Alexandria Range…"

Jennings Willey—Willey Point, "…a conspicuous rock point along the west side of Beardmore Glacier…"

Harry Freimanis—Freimanis Glacier, "...tributary glacier flows for 25 miles…Admiralty Mountains…"







E.E. Fitch—Fitch Glacier, "…tributary glacier flowing south…Admiralty Mountains…"

Kent A. Wyckoff—Wyckoff Glacier, "…a glacier, 8 miles long flowing west from Grindley Plateau in the Queen Alexandra Mountains…" (About 35 miles east of Beardmore Glacier—I think I flew over it!).

So, Doc, Harry, and I all got glaciers; but Harry's at least, is bigger than mine.

I was saddened by something else I learned in my research—the closing of Hallett Base, in February of 1973. Previous to that, Hallett experienced the most dreaded of Antarctic emergences—fire. On March 6th, 1964 (remember, I had left Hallett October 20th, 1963, the same summer-season) the Kiwi science building, including the aurora tower and dorms, were destroyed. My Internet research seems to indicate that the winter-over party stayed for their winter stint, but I'm not sure of that. If anyone from the "Antarctic community" can clear this up, please let me know. The station remained in summer-only operation for six more seasons, closing forever on the above-mentioned date. With the growing sensitivity to ecological issues, it is quite understandable.

The construction of Hallett Base necessarily displaced, and disrupted the breeding of, large number of penguins. Even though Adelies are the most abundant and widely dispersed of all penguin species, the constant disruption—caused by early summer (breeding season) resupply operations, with helicopters, ground vehicles, people roaming at will in the rookery (including me)—became unacceptable. Consequently, Seabee Hook was designated a Specially Protected Area (SPA), with rules and guidelines as to approach, duration of stay, structures, etc. Most of the buildings, antennas, trash, etc.—anything that hindered nest building and other rookery life—were removed from the site over the next several summers.

Eight winter-overs, from 1957 through 1964, approximately eighteen men per season—only about one-hundred fifty men have been a part of that short Hallett history. I feel fortunate to have been one of them.

So, would I say "yes", to *the question*, again? Absolutely! I had some wonderful experiences, saw some great sights, and met some fine people. But to me, the most amazing thing about my adventure is—how it started...

…"How would you like to go to the Antarctic?"



So…I'm curious…what do you think *your* response to *"the question"* might be—other things being equal—(which, of course, they never can be!):

Antarctica Yea!

*Or*

Antarctica Nay?