

Narrative Log
Williams Air Operating Facility
McMurdo Sound, Antarctica
as written by
LCDR David W. Canham Jr., USNR and Robert L Chaudoin, YN1, USN

INTRODUCTION

During the period November 1, 1955 through March 26, 1957, LCDR David W. Canham, Jr., USNR, the Officer-in-Charge, U.S. Naval Air Facility, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica, assisted by Robert L. Chaudoin, YN1, USN, kept a detailed daily diary of events and happenings concerning the establishment, construction and operation of the U.S. Naval Air Facility, McMurdo Sound, as well as outlying stations which, of necessity, relied on McMurdo for logistic support – Beardmore-Scott Auxiliary Air Base and the South Pole Station.

Members of the group destined for McMurdo, departed the continental United States in three groups; the first two, being elements of the Advance Party, were transported on the USS EDISTO and the USS GLACIER respectively. The EDISTO departed Boston on October 31, 1955 and the GLACIER departed from Norfolk on November 1, 1955. Each of the two icebreakers towed a YOG to New Zealand and they were later towed to McMurdo. On November 14, 1955, the USS WYANDOT departed Norfolk with the balance of the members of Mobile Construction Battalion (Special) Detachment One. All of these personnel were immediately merged with the various ship's company divisions insofar as was possible and practicable. Line officers were assigned instruction Officer-of-the-Day watches underway. The majority of the battalion's administrative work was necessarily carried on after the ship's normal working hours, when spaces, typewriters and associated facilities were available.

During passage through the Panama Canal and an overnight stay in Panama City, several of our personnel were assigned Shore Patrol duties during that period. A request for open gangway for the wintering group was not approved by higher authority. The Battalion's conduct on liberty in Panama was excellent.

For most of the personnel of MCB(Special) Det 1, this was their first crossing of the line and appropriate and colorful ceremonies were conducted on the various ships. As bamboo had been taken aboard at Panama, working details were established specifically for the purpose of splitting the poles, in preparation for mounting trail flags.

As the two icebreakers were utilized to tow YOGs, their progress was retarded accordingly, they arrived at Port Lyttleton, New Zealand less than a week ahead of the main task force.

The USS GLACIER was the first American ship to arrive in Port Lyttleton, New Zealand since WWII. There were throngs at the docks to greet it.

On December 3, the Commanding Officer of the WYANDOT informed all troops aboard that CTF-43 had informed both the WYANDOT and GREENVILLE VICTORY that they must arrive in New Zealand in company with the ARNEB which was the Flagship. As the ARNEB had been having great difficulty in its forward progress and was now several days behind the other ships, it meant the reduction of speed and a drop in morale aboard the two ships. The Commanding Officer of the WYANDOT appealed the order, but it was to no avail. With the reply of this appeal, came the first of what was to become many quotations from the scriptures. It was, "The last shall be first and the first shall be last." However, CTF-43 authorized open gangway for all MCB(Special) DET ONE personnel in Port Lyttleton.

At 1200 on December 12, the following officers of the battalion gathered for a brief conference regarding the status of plans at this point. LCDR CANHAM, LT BERGSTROM, and LTJG BOWERS were in attendance, joined by LT FLIPPEN, the Staff Construction Officer. Although careful plans had been previously laid, considerable confusion existed at this stage and decisions were difficult to obtain - - a situation probably true in any foreign liberty port.

The mothers, fathers, sons and daughters of Christchurch, a beautiful little city on the other side of the hills from Port Lyttleton, welcomed the members of Task Force Forty-three with open enthusiasm and the hospitality received left nothing to be desired. Social functions were many and varied and the icebreakers took reluctant departure on December 10th and 12th. Most of the pollywogs had shaved their heads after going through the crossing the line initiation to become a shellback. One of the newspapers remarked that shaving of male heads must be a new fad in the United States.

With the main body of the Task Force still remaining to arrive New Zealand, special parties were planned by the townspeople for Saturday December 17th and the stores made appropriate plans to remain open for our convenience and the hotels took on extra help for the weekend. But, on the morning of Friday, December 16th, all South Island New Zealand radio stations were making numerous spot announcements to the effect that Task Force Forty-three personnel were to return to their ships immediately and that all ships would be underway at 1400. Hundreds of the men had appropriate out of bounds passes not due to expire until Saturday night, and were, accordingly, scattered over a several hundred mile radius. Innumerable long distance calls were made and Christchurch residents willingly became modern Paul Reveres, driving many miles to reach hunting lodges and mountain resorts that were not served by telephones but where several battalion personnel were enjoying their liberty. By 1400, all of the battalion group travelling to Antarctica by the WYANDOT and ARNEB were aboard – a feat duplicated in most part by all of the task force ships.

On all ships, daily meetings of personnel concerning offloading plans, job assignments and equipment readiness, were held. Inspections of vehicles, radios, batteries and

radiators were made and, with the ships underway again, details finally came to a completed stage.

That portion of the Advance Party aboard the GLACIER reached the ice on the 18th of December at McMurdo Sound. CDR WHITNEY, Commanding Officer Mobile Construction Battalion (Special), in company with CDR Ebbe, Commanding Officer, Air Development Squadron Six, made a helicopter reconnaissance and checked a tentative site for an ice runway for the fly-in. The location was some five miles NNW of Hut Point proper. Hut Point had been selected as the probable site for the permanent Naval Air Facility.

On December 20, 1955, with favorable winds forecast, AirDevRon Six aircraft departed New Zealand for the Antarctic fly-in with two R5Ds and 2 P2Vs succeeding in the venture. Two R4Ds had to return to New Zealand due to a strong headwind component. It was on this same day that the EDISTO reached the ice edge at McMurdo and aboard her were the basic elements of air support for McMurdo and also the GCA equipment. The GLACIER had departed the ice edge earlier that day to be on station for the fly-in and then proceed to Little America. Fortunately, the weather at McMurdo Sound was satisfactory at the time of the aircraft arrival. Had it been similar to that to be experienced on the day of the October 1956 fly-in the Navy probably would have lost four additional aircraft and men, as there were absolutely no ground support facilities available.

Continuous daylight was present at this time and the McMurdo Advance Party rapidly offloaded the equipment and material from the EDISTO to join the personnel and cargo offloaded from the GLACIER earlier that day. They launched out over some forty-five miles of questionable bay ice. Timbers were carried to bridge an open lead in the ice which was located some twenty miles from the campsite at Hut Point.. Within a day, personnel were scattered from the Hut Point area where the temporary tent camp was being erected, all along the forty-five mile trail to the ice edge into camp.

(Commencing December 20, 1955)

Tuesday, December 20, 1955

The advance party for the Air Operating Facility arrived on the EDISTO. Others had arrived the day before on the GLACIER. As soon as the ship was secured to the ice with ice anchors, the crew commenced offloading equipment for the advance party.

The temporary officer-in-charge of the facility LT FLIPPEN of Task Force 43.

CDR WHITNEY, CHMACH YOUNG, SVC MOSS AND BURLESON, CD2 hauled timbers to bridge the lead in the ice approximately twenty miles from the base camp site, which they had decided upon previously while aboard the GLACIER.

Ships sent to various stations for the first fly-in of aircraft. Upon a safe landing at McMurdo, the ships then headed for Scott Island rendezvous.

The first personnel to arrive and start setting up tents at the camp were, NOLEN AG2, WISE BUCA, HILL PH3 AND WOODY, HM1

In New Zealand, the P2V's became airborne at 0459. A message from VX-6 following shortly thereafter, stated that other aircraft would not depart until the following. However, Admiral DUFEK squared that away and the UF's and the R4D's were launched at 0700, and the R5D at 0800. The ARNEB was considerably late in arriving on station and quite a bit of confusion existed in the voice procedures on ships and aircraft.

As the UF's and R4D's neared the half way point, there was much doubt in the pilots' minds as to whether or not their aircraft could make it all the way. The forecast winds made by the staff Aerologist were entirely worthless and actual winds tended to be just about the opposite from what was forecast, resulting in rather heavy head winds. This, in addition to mostly overcast skies, resulted in DUFEK making the decision to have those planes return to New Zealand. Pilots of the R4D's kept talking to the Staff and reached Station C (NESPELEN) before finally returning.. It was noted that COL KOLP's plane kept giving bearings in Grid Direction in spite of the OpPlan's instructions to the contrary. This served to add to the confusion between the ship and air communications.

At approximately 2000, two R5D's and 2 P2V's, after making the flight from New Zealand to McMurdo Sound landed at a makeshift airstrip approximately 5 miles from base camp. These planes, because of their lack of fuel at present, must remain stationary on the airstrip regardless of conditions which may arise until the other ships of the task force arrive and avgas can be carried in and the planes refueled. They have enough gas to operate their radios at brief intervals and act as a communications relay station between the base and ships until more powerful radio equipment can be erected later in the week.

DUFEK directed that the UF's and R4D's were to be placed in storage in New Zealand

The dog teams and two sleds with ENS BAKER and ENS TUCK, SGT MCEVOY (USAF) and Mr. GUNN (of New Zealand) departed the ship in the early afternoon

All personnel are involved in bringing supplies from the ice edge and setting up the tent camp.

Thursday, December 22, 1955

The tractor train of the 21st arrived at the ice edge and commenced loading to bring more supplies from the supply dump to the camp site.

LTJG BOWERS flew in the Otter to the ice edge with a relief crew for this train

The Otter crashed upon take-off from the ice edge to return to the camp with men and cargo. MCQUISTON injured his back and CDR OLIVER of VX-6 injured both legs.

Each man at tent camp given a box of C-4 rations and told to eat all of its contents during that day in order to get the maximum amount of calories under existing conditions.

Friday, December 23, 1955

The first meal as held in the mess tent – Bacon and Eggs.

Due to our limited medical facilities at base camp, the EDISTO had been radioed to return to the ice to pick up the two injured men from the plane crash.

Soon after the morning meal, the tractor train was unloaded at approximately 1230, another tractor train was formed and departed the base camp to pick up most of the remaining supplies at the ice edge. This train consisted of 1 weasel and two D-2 tractors with eleven one-ton sleds and the following personnel: KENNY CM1, LYNCH CE1, CHAUDOIN YN1, HORNER AG1, NOLEN AG2 and RILEY (VX-6 Radio Operator).

The tractor train picked up a ten-man life raft at the air strip as a precautionary measure in the event the ice went out to sea. They crossed the bridged lead in the ice without mishap though it must be repaired before the return trip. The tractor train arrived at the ice edge at approximately 2230. There was a storm brewing and, after loading the “Go-Devil already on the ice with drums of fuel, the wind began blowing at sixty knots with considerable snow. The men of the tractor train party utilized the tents set up at the site of the plane crash and, with enough provisions and sleeping bags carried with them, were prepared to wait out the storm before proceeding further with the loading of the tractor train

The ships were informed of the otter crash at Cape Bird.

Saturday, December 24, 1955

The storm still rages with winds of fifty to sixty knots at the camp site and seventy to eighty knots at the ice edge where the tractor train party is camped. There has been no communications between the tractor train and base camp since early morning.

At approximately 1830, the tractor train party and working parties from the ship went on the ice to dig out the cargo from the snow drifts and load the sleds. The tractor train was loaded and departed the ship at approximately 2330 with one D-2 hauling eleven one-ton sleds and the other hauling the Go-Devil sled, an air compressor and a load of 12 x 12

timbers. There was still a great deal of equipment left on the ice and EDISTO personnel began to take it aboard and attempted to salvage the wrecked Otter.

The tractor train proceeded five miles from the ship toward base camp, when they were forced to drop the air compressor because it was too heavy to pull through the snow drifts. They entered a whiteout with high winds and blowing snow. They left the train and returned to the EDISTO in the weasel at approximately 0200 on Sunday Morning. By then, there was no sign of a trail that they had followed out and many new cracks were appearing along the ice edge.

A 2-inch tidal crack has opened between the nose and tandem landing gear of the R5D at the air strip. It is impossible to send relief either to the planes or the tractor train party during the storm.

Sunday, December 25, 1955

The men of the tractor train spent Christmas Day aboard the EDISTO getting some rest until approximately 1900 when it was decided that the weather had cleared enough for the tractor train to proceed to the base camp. CAPT KETCHUM told them that he would not order them to go out on the ice again, but left it up to them as the EDISTO had to rendezvous with the other ships at Scott Island.

The ship's helicopter had picked up the two men injured in the Otter crash and returned them to the ship.

At base camp, an excellent dinner was cooked on the field ranges in the Mess Tent.

CDR WHITNEY, CWO YOUNG, SVC MOSS AND CD1 BURLSON departed base camp in a weasel to bridge the lead in the ice at the air strip and return to the ship in order to depart for Little America. They did not reach the EDISTO prior to her sailing, shortly after the tractor train departed, and had no radio contact with the base camp.

Monday, December 26, 1955

Lt. FLIPPEN flew back to the GLACIER in the morning and turned command of the base camp over to LT BERGSTROM.

The tractor train proceeded slowly through snow drifts and over leads in the ice, striking out blind in the general direction of the base camp, since the trail had been erased by the storm. They were often in whiteouts with zero visibility.

At approximately 2300, the tractor train reached the large lead in the ice and began to repair the timbers of the existing bridge preparatory to crossing with the tractor train, since the load of timbers carried by them had been lost in the storm without their knowledge. The weasel crossed safely over the reconstructed bridge, but the first D-2, less sleds, broke the bridge and fell into the lead in the ice, resting on its blade in front and winching gear in the rear. All efforts by the tractor train party failed to bring the

tractor across this lead, leaving the other D-2 and all the cargo on the seaward side of the lead. All members of the tractor train party headed for the camp by weasel with no further mishap.

At the same time as the men were attempting to free the tractor, a helicopter spotted CDR WHITNEY's weasel and party in the same lead in the ice approximately three miles west of the bridge. The helicopter picked them all up safely and returned them to the GLACIER

Tuesday, December 27, 1955

The tractor train party returned to the camp at 0200 and, once again, all hands were safe and accounted for.

LTJG BOWERS, OSTROWSKI, MYERS AND SPAINHOUER flew to the EDISTO and, with the help of LT STAMM and crew members, returned and freed the tractor from its position in the lead in the ice. BOWERS and crew then repaired the bridge and safely moved all the equipment to the camp side of the lead and to safety. All efforts to remove CDR WHITNEY's weasel from the lead failed and it was stripped of as much equipment as possible.

Wednesday, December 28th, 1955.

Cracks in the ice at the airstrip are opening up more and more every day, putting the planes in a more precarious position.

Erratic helicopter schedules (*ferrying in supplies*) continually interrupt any type of planned operations. There seems actually to be no need for this type of operation but, with four or five helicopters operating independently and at such times as they will, these craft arrive at the Air Operating Facility at any time of the day or night, usually awakening all hands.

Thursday, December 29, 1955

Storm warnings were received in the afternoon and most of the men were detailed to tightening up tents and putting additional snow around the outside edges.

Friday, December 30, 1955

Subsoil investigations were begun at the site for the permanent camp. Test holes were dug and blasted. The basin behind the camp is a natural low for free water and will be drained as well as possible.

Helicopters continued to fly in supplies of avgas and other equipment.

The weasels, surveying the open lead, continued to search throughout the night and morning, making a trip completely across McMurdo Sound but finding no spot where the lead was appreciably narrower.

Saturday, December 31, 1955

The P2V Neptune at the base camp obtained sufficient fuel flown in by helicopter and took off for the airstrip near the ships at approximately 1900 in order to take on avgas and refuel the other P2V and two R5D's in preparation for photographic mapping missions.

At 2000, all hands were issued two ounces of either whiskey or brandy and two cans of beer in celebration of New Year's Eve.

Sunday, January 1, 1956

Both P2Vs made several short flights during the day between the air strip and temporary air strip alongside ships to shuttle avgas back and forth in order to fuel all planes for future mapping missions.

CDR CANHAM made a round trip from the ship to base camp to hold meetings. Enroute, he stopped at the air strip and talked at some length with the various crews that were staying within the aircraft themselves. All hands were extremely dissatisfied with the lack of organization and coordinated directions and wanted nothing more to do than to go home right now.

Monday, January 2, 1956

The temperature is about 34 degrees with light winds.

Captain KETCHUM recommended to RADM DUFEEK that the Air Operating Facility be established at Cape Evans as the best site. The selection was a bitter disappointment to Mobile Construction (Special) personnel. Although Hut Point is believed by LTJG BOWERS to be superior to Cape Evans, CAPT KETCHUM does not believe that the ships will be able to offload and transport cargo to Hut Point and depart by the middle of February due to the ice conditions.

Tuesday, January 3, 1956

ENS TUCK arrived in camp last night with the dog team from the EASTWIND, giving us a total of twenty-six dogs in camp and only four more dogs remaining aboard other ships.

LCOL KOLP of VX-6 flew over the geographical South Pole in an R5D, the first crossing of the Pole on this operation.

Wednesday, January 4, 1956

This was a pleasant day with much sunshine and temperature of approximately thirty-eight degrees.

The GLACIER is on her way back from Little America V with RADM BYRD aboard.

Thursday, January 5, 1956.

Two tents were erected at the airstrip to house VX-6, GCA crews and fire fighting personnel.

A P2V took off at 1000 and made a fourteen hour mapping flight.

Friday, January 6, 1956

Word was received that Operation Deepfreeze I had its first casualty. A D-8 Caterpillar tractor went through the ice just after crossing the bridge spanning the seven foot crevasses that had given us so much trouble from the beginning of our operation WILLIAMS, R. T., CD3 drove the tractor over the bridge as a test of its strength in preparation for transporting supplies from the ships to Cape Evans. When the cat was on the center of the bridge, the ice and bridge began to waver and he was motioned to back off. He continued ahead and, when the tractor was fully on the ice, the ice gave way and WILLIAMS and the tractor plunged through the ice to the bottom approximately 200 feet below. The loss of WILLIAMS was tragic even the moreso since it was in direct opposition to the instructions passed to Chief WISE and his group in that the D-8 was moved from where Chief SLATON had left it. A Board of Investigation was formed immediately”

P2V's and R5D's continued with photographic mapping mission. Although a P2V lost an engine on its mapping mission late in the evening, it returned safely to the airstrip on one engine after jettisoning cameras and other equipment to lighten the load. As they had to jettison the bombay tanks, fuel was very short, so the heaters were not used and, of course all hands were virtually frozen on landing.

CDR EBBE turned over the problem of VX-6 wintering personnel to CDR WIEGAND and he and CDR CANHAM came to an agreement on numbers and names of men of VX6 wintering.

Saturday, January 7th, 1956

A Board of investigation met at the WYANDOT to investigate the facts of WILLIAM's death.

Sunday, January 8, 1956

It has definitely been decided to erect the permanent camp at Hut Point as originally scheduled, since the GLACIER has been so successful in breaking ice inland toward Hut Point

RADM BYRD is now aboard the WYANDOT with a large retinue of reporters and photographers. He flew over the South Pole today in an R5D.

LCDR CANHAM finally obtained CAPT KETCHUM's permission to formally commission the Air Operating Facility

Another seal was killed and skinned to provide fresh meat for the dog teams.

ENSIGN BAKER and CAPT BLACK (Old Explorer) captured a young Weddell seal and sent it to the EDISTO by helicopter to be sent to the National Zoo in Washington.

Monday, January 9, 1956

Plans to formally commission the Air operating Facility were slightly interrupted when CAPT MANDORICH, RADM BYRD;S Chief of Staff called LCDR CANHAM into the Admiral's cabin and informed him that he should invite the Admiral, have him make a speech , and give a liberal invitation to the press and news people. Although this was exactly what it was hoped to avoid, there was little alternative but to accept his recommendations.

Three more seals were killed right off Hut Point to be skinned later for the dogs.

Tuesday, January 10, 1956

Mobile Construction Battalion (Special) personnel at camp were divided into two sections to work twelve hour shifts and to unload tractor trains as they arrive so as not to unnecessarily delay equipment.

The commissioning of the Air Operating Facility is scheduled to be held on Friday, January 13th, 1956

Wednesday, January 11, 1956

Tractor trains arrived during the day, from the ships approximately thirteen miles distant, with sleds and cargo. At present, the cargo ships are offloading cargo to the icebreakers. The icebreakers are then coming as close to camp as possible and offloading onto the sleds of the tractor trains.

Quite a bit of cargo and sleds are being left adrift along the trail due to the fact that heavy loads can be brought with comparative ease over the smooth ice near the ships, but become bogged down in the three-foot thickness of snow over the ice closer to camp. As soon as tractors are available, they will proceed to pick up the equipment abandoned along the trail and bring it into camp.

Three more seals were killed and prepared for the dogs.

New leads were sighted in the bay ice field indicating a rather rapid deterioration of the ice. These leads were sighted by CHIEF STITH and CDR CANHAM operating a weasel over the trail. Upon word being passed to CAPT WILLIAMSON of this new development, he took the WYANDOT to sea immediately. The NESPELEN decided to stay where she was and, as a result, the shift in the ice fields caught her between two large floes and she suffered major damage on the forward bow. She lost over 150,000 gallons of aviation gasoline through her side and also one main engine and generator were flooded out. She is still able, however to get about at reduced speed.

Thursday, January 12, 1956

A road was graded from the tent camp to the permanent camp site and dump areas marked off for the influx of cargo and equipment.

Grading was started at the permanent campsite in preparation for the construction of the buildings. For the 12-hour shifts, with ENS BAKER assigned as OOD for the 0000H to 1200H shift and LTJG TUCK for the 1200H to 2400H shift. LT BOWERS and LT BERGSTROM will work a floating shift in general supervision and get sleep as work permits.

The commissioning of the base on Friday, January 13th, 1956 was cancelled until further notice.

Friday, January 13, 1956

An accurate log is being maintained on the number of vehicles on the trail, number of sleds, names of personnel and type of equipment being transported, in order to know exactly what is occurring on the trail at a moments notice.

Mr. Fritz GORO of LIFE magazine arrived at camp (Note: He did a great article on us for Life Magazine)

LT BERGSTROM returned to the EDISTO in order to take LCDR CANHAM'S place when he comes to the camp for a few days. LTJG RICHARD A BOWERS has been designated temporary Officer-in-Charge during his absence.

Saturday, January 14, 1956

LT BERGSTROM returned to camp and resumed his duties as temporary Officer-in-Charge.
LCDR CANHAM was turned in to sick bay aboard the WYANDOT with snow blindness and fatigue.

Sunday, January 15, 1956

CHAPLAIN CONDIT arrived in camp for an indefinite period and held mass for Roman Catholic personnel.

It is planned to hold pay day for the crew on Tuesday afternoon

Monday, January 15, 1956

A new field range was received by helicopter and HUDSON, SD1 came aboard to help relieve the load on the cooks who now serve meals at 0000, 0600, 1200 and 1800 in order that each shift may get three meals during the day.

HAYNES, HM3 arrived in camp to assist WOODY, HM1 in order that the medical tent can be manned at all times.

Tuesday, January 17, 1956

Personnel are mainly engaged in the repair of vehicles and the running of tractor trains.

Construction was started on the foundations for one barracks and the mess hall.

Wednesday, January 18, 1956

High winds prevailed during most of the day.

LCDR DAVID W. CANHAM JR. arrived in the afternoon and assumed command as Officer in Charge of the Air Operating Facility.

CAPTAIN CORDINER turned over operational control of all remaining aircraft in the area to LCDR CANHAM.

RADM DUFEEK okayed a total of 91 to winter over at McMurdo.

The camp at Hut Point is now very spread out, as a portion is being moved up to the new building site and, as a result, much time is spent merely in the process of living.

Thursday, January 19, 1956

The first building is now 75% complete as far as the shell is concerned. The foundation for the Mess Hall is complete and foundations for two more quarters buildings are 50% complete

All material for the building shells at the Air Operating ' facility have been offloaded from the WYANDOT to the icebreakers.

The GLACIER has broken to within four miles of Hut Point, but the trail is still six miles long due to the necessity of the trail circumventing melt ponds in the ice.

Friday, January 20, 1956

The shell of the first permanent building was completed this date. Although this building is eventually intended for the library and ship's store, it is now being used as a temporary barracks. The first group of men moved in with their sleeping bags and personal gear shortly after the building was completed.

Saturday, January 21, 1956

The communications tent was moved from Hut Point to the permanent base site in order to more closely consolidate the activities of the camp and to make the former site available for preliminary work on the fuel farm.

Sunday, January 22, 1956

The shell of the Medical and Administration building was completed and is now being used as a temporary mess hall. The tent galley was moved from Hut Point up to the permanent base site between the building now being used as a temporary barracks and the Medical and Administration building. This tent galley, in accordance with the wishes of the cooks, will remain in use until the permanent mess hall is completed and furnished.

CHAPLAIN CONDIT arrived in camp and held both Roman Catholic and Protestant Services.

Monday, January 23, 1956

All available vehicles were used in tractor train operations hauling cargo from the ships to the base camp with a total of 21 round trips completed in the twelve hour period between 0000 –1200.

A special steak dinner was held in the evening in honor of the completion of the first permanent building. All possible work was halted and music was supplied by CHAPLAIN CONDIT on the accordion and the two men from the ships playing banjo

and guitar. After the special dinner, Beer was served to all hands and a movie was shown in the temporary mess hall. Work was resumed immediately after this special occasion.

Tuesday, January 24, 1956

The civilian welders finished the fuel tanks for the power house and will now commence work on the 250,000 gallon aviation gasoline tank farm.

Six hundred gallons of hot water were manufactured in the first snow melter to be put into operation

D-2 tractors collected the snow from the adjacent hillsides. This will be our main source of fresh water during the winter months when the few natural lakes here freeze over

Thursday, January 25, 1956

Quarters Building #3 is completed and will be used as temporary storage for Ship's Store stock. Work has begun on the foundation for the power house. The demolition work and grading is completed for the 250,000 gallon aviation gas farm.

Friday, January 26, 1956

Work was started on the reefer for the storage of food beside the mess hall. The foundations for Latrine #1 and for the power house were completed.

Friday, January 27, 1956

At present there are 144 personnel working in camp

The final decision has been made as to the selection of the 91 personnel for the wintering-over population of the U.S. Naval Air Operating Facility, McMurdo Sound, Antarctica.

LCDR I. M. TAYLOR (MC), USNR, Medical Officer for this facility made the following remarks pertaining to the health of personnel here: "The general health of the men has been very good in spite of the unavoidable sub-optimum sanitary conditions. Since the first week, the quantity and quality of the food has been adequate. It is remarkable that we have had such few injuries in spite of the type of work being done here. This indicates the carefulness of the personnel.

Six buildings have been erected as of this date and six additional foundations have been completed. The aviation gas tank is seventy-five percent complete.

Saturday, January 28, 1956

Grading was started on the site for the Communication building and it is expected that blasting for the antennae masts will commence tomorrow.

Sunday, January 29, 1956

MR WILLETT and his hydrographic party departed by helicopter for Inaccessible Island to complete further triangulation studies of McMurdo Sound. Due to the high winds which rose during the day, they had to return to the base before the completion of their studies.

Monday, January 30, 1956

Tractor trains and building construction were slowed due to high winds and poor visibility.

Tuesday, January 31, 1956

Tractor train operations were suspended between 0800 and 1700 due to snow and winds with gusts of 60 knots, which caused many whiteouts along the trail and rendered tractor train operations impossible.

Construction at the base was confined to inside work on the interiors of the quarters buildings due to the impossibility of handling building panels in the high winds.

Communications were suspended for a period of about six hours during the blasting of holes for the antennae system adjacent to the Communications Tent and the switchover from the 30KW generator to the 100KW generator. Power was switched in order to have all present power coming from one generator instead of two and also the conservation of fuel.

Wednesday, February 1, 1956

Tractor train operations resumed to normal speed today as comparatively fair weather prevailed.

A message was received from the Task Force Commander to return all civilian personnel to the ships. Helicopter flights and Weasel trains assisted in this operation. One of the dog teams departed on Sunday evening to hunt seals at the offloading site and, at last contact, were reported to be doing very well.

Thursday, February 2, 1956

During the afternoon, RADM Richard E. Byrd, USN (Ret), Officer in Charge, U.S. Antarctic Programs, arrived at the camp for a forty-five minute visit.

Friday, February 3, 1956

An emergency appendectomy was performed on CHAPMAN, YN2 aboard the WYANDOT. The operation was a success and the prognosis is good and he will be able to winter over as scheduled

A message was received from Little America that the Otter there which was returning the tractor train party from Marie Byrd Land back to Little America was one hour overdue and that Little America's ceiling was three hundred feet with snow flurries. They recommended that we form an SAR mission from this end and fly our Otter, with a helicopter crew, to Little America due to the fact that their helicopter crew was flying their Otter. The SAR Mission was formed and will take off for Little America as soon as VRF flying conditions permit.

The larger and heavier communications equipment was moved to the completed deck of the Communications Building and the building constructed around it.

Meals are now being eaten in the mess hall although they are still being prepared in the galley tent. The interior of the Administration Building/Sick Bay is almost complete and should be ready for occupancy tomorrow.

Saturday, February 4, 1956

The Otter from camp took off at 2335 on the SAR mission to Little America, but was forced to return to base at 0245 this morning due to bad weather. Every effort is being made to put our second Otter in operating condition in the event it is needed in the search. Weather conditions have prevented any more attempts at flying to Little America since they must be made in VRF conditions.

CDR H. W. WHITNEY, CEC, USN, Commanding Officer, Mobile Construction Battalion (Special) arrived from the EASTWIND. After the evening meal, a conference was held between all officers and CDR WHITNEY.

Sunday, February 5, 1956

One of the Otters was loaded aboard the EASTWIND and the ship departed for Little America in order to send this plane on the SAR mission for the Little America Otter. The other Otter here was put in working order and test flown in the evening with LCDR CANHAM as pilot and LT NASH as co-pilot and ADC DORE and AD1 BARONICK as crew members, and is now in a standby status until further ordered by the Task Force to fly on the SAR mission to Little America.

The building program is coming along according to schedule and it is expected that the mess hall will be in full operation in a few days. Building has commenced on two Quonset storage huts for dry provisions and another Quonset hut for the dog kennels.

. Monday, February 6, 1956.

No more SOS signals have been received by the ships from the downed otter since this morning. A helicopter SAR flight was made today at Little America to the Rockefeller Mountains with negative results. The Task Force had a tentative plan for the R5D's to fly into McMurdo Sound and leave from here on SAR missions to Little America, but this plan had to be abandoned

LCDR CANHAM & LT NASH went out on a reconnaissance mission to find a suitable landing field in this area for the R5D's. No suitable area for landing wheeled aircraft was found near Hut Point. The search covered a fifteen mile radius and either 1.5 to 3.0 feet of snow, sastrugi or rough ice were encountered. A blue ice area near Brown Island was located that would be suitable after flooding, but it would require approximately two weeks to prepare.

Work was commenced on three Quonset hut buildings – Dog Kennels, and dry provision storehouses.

Tuesday, February 7, 1956

RADM DUFEK has approved the flight of one P2V from Patuxent River MD to Little America via South America to assist in the SAR missions for the missing Otter. This made it necessary for the WYANDOT to sail to Little America for communication purposes regarding the fly in. Tractor trains have departed Little America in order to lay fuel caches for these flights.

Examinations for advancement in rating to Chief Petty Officer were conducted in the Mess Hall during the afternoon with Chaplain CONDIT, LT NASH, and CWO SINGER as proctors.

The present population of the camp is 153.

The 250,000 storage tank is 85% complete.

Wednesday, February 8, 1956

It has been decided to load the one remaining Otter here at base camp on the GLACIER and send it to Little America to assist in the SAR missions. Present plans are for LCDR CANHAM, LT NASH, ADC DORE AND AO1 BARONICK to accompany the GLACIER to Little America as the crew for the Otter.

The P2V scheduled to fly in from Patuxent River, Maryland to Little America via South America developed engine trouble and was ditched twenty-nine miles off the coast of Brazil. Since the exact position of the ditching is known, it is assumed that the crew is now safely ashore. This development cancels the necessity of the WYANDOT sailing to Little America to act as Communications guard Ship for the fly-in.

Thursday, February 9, 1956

At 0640 this morning, a message was received which stated that the P2V that ditched yesterday on the way to Little America to help in the SAR mission had been sighted. All personnel were safe with apparently no serious injuries. The personnel will be airlifted to San Juan Puerto Rico

At 1331 this afternoon, a message was received that the missing Otter at Little America had been found at Latitude 77-32S, Longitude 154-10W by the Otter from AIROPFAC sent over to Little America on the EASTWIND. The Otter was unable to land but personnel were believed well. Little America will proceed with the rescue by using helicopters and trail parties and, in the meantime requested that the GLACIER proceed with helicopter to Longitude 154 as close as possible to the ice shelf. At 1800, another message was received informing us that all hands were safe and they walked away from the plane. It further stated that the GLACIER is not needed.

For the first time in seven days, all hands are safe and accounted for.

Construction is proceeding according to schedule. It is expected that midnight chow will be prepared and served in the permanent mess hall. One latrine building is in operation and heated. The Quonset hut for dry provisions is complete and, since it was Zero Degrees Fahrenheit this morning, the ships store stock presently stored in one of the quarters buildings will be transferred to the Quonset and personnel still living in tents moved into a warm building .

Friday, February 10, 1956

On schedule, the 250,000 gallon avgas storage tank was completed today and is ready to receive the avgas from the NESPELEN on six hours notice. It is estimated that another four or five days will be required to complete the 100,000 gallon diesel storage tank. Work was started on the foundations for the electronics building and the aircraft maintenance building. Men were busy blasting holes in the permafrost for the main rhombic antenna.

The D-8 tractor, now in operation, broke part way through the crevasse along the road leading from the lower camp to the upper camp.

LCDR CANHAM is scheduled to sail from Little America on the EDISTO on February 15th for McMurdo.

The construction of the base is proceeding satisfactorily with more work being done on inside work such as interior carpentry, electrical wiring and plumbing. The wiring of the mess hall is 98% complete and the Administration / Sick Bay building is 100% complete. The main power cable is 65% complete

Sunday, February 12, 1956

Chaplain CONDIT held church services for both Roman Catholic and Protestant personnel in the morning and evening to give all hands an opportunity to attend regardless of the shift they were working on

We lost radio communications around 1100 when the transmitter failed to operate. It was repaired and back in operation at 1400.

Pumping was commenced to fill the 250,000 gallon tank with aviation gasoline. Work has started on the Diesel Tank and is expected to be completed within the next few days.

Monday, February 13, 1956.

The last load of cargo was received in the base tonight at approximately 2000 and this completes offloading operations except for the fuel which is continuing to be offloaded from the NESPELIN, and the small amount of cargo that the GLACIER will bring back from New Zealand. This has taken the majority of the manpower in the camp during the past weeks to operate the tractor trains and work in the supply dumps.

Tomorrow at noon, all possible operations will cease for a six hour period and men will begin to work on a one twelve-hour shift basis from 0600-1800.

Appropriate festivities will be held in honor of the completion of tractor train operations with beer and perhaps a motion picture or two.

Fourteen VX-6 personnel were transferred to the NESPELLEN for return to the continental United States. On February 18th, the remainder and a few MCB personnel will be transferred to the EDISTO for return transportation.

Tuesday, February 14, 1956

The aviation gasoline transfer from the NESPELEN to the storage tanks was completed this morning.

Automotive gasoline was pumped into 10,000 gallon collapsible tanks during the day. These tanks are presently out on the ice off Hut Point. The ice there was tested a few days ago by LTJG BOWERS and LT BERGSTROM and was found to have a minimum thickness of 5 ½ feet. It is expected that the 100,000 gallon tank for Diesel Fuel will be completed late Thursday and pumping will commence on Friday. Before the tank is completed, the automotive gasoline in the collapsible tanks will be pumped up in the permanent storage area.

It is the intention of the Task Force that the icebreaker break ice up to Winter Quarters Bay, if the ice does not go out of its own accord by then so that the YOG's can be moored in that area.

The men enjoyed their six-hour holiday. Beer was issued and two movies were run during the afternoon and evening.

Wednesday, February 15, 1956.

Since the offloading of the ships has been completed, the majority of the people that were employed in the operation and maintenance of tractor trains and working the supply dumps have been reassigned to construction work. Construction was commenced on the aerological building and three Quonset Quarters building. Work is progressing on the communications building antennae system, power house, dispensary, and mess hall in order that these important buildings may be as complete as possible when the ships of the Task Force depart this area. It is hoped to have at least the shells of all of the buildings up by this time.

Visitors have been coming into AIROPFAC by weasel with three round trips scheduled each day. The EASTWIND has been very cooperative in this respect in that since we are not equipped to feed extra personnel, the trips are scheduled so the men are back at the ships during their own regularly scheduled meal hours and the EASTWIND also takes care of feeding the driver of the weasel.

Thursday, February 16, 1956

The first meal was prepared in the permanent galley this morning. Even though the galley is not complete as yet, it is expected that the whole mess hall and galley will be in full operation by the time the ships depart this area around March 1st.

The poles for one of the Rhombic antennae are up and the holes for quadratics and other rhombic are being drilled.

Friday, February 17, 1956

Both welding machines were out of commission during part of the night which slowed down the progress of the diesel storage tank. However, one welding machine was repaired and the diesel tank was finished during the afternoon and ready for the pumping of diesel fuel. The EASTWIND started pumping diesel in the late afternoon and it is expected the pumping will be completed in approximately 16 hours.

The EASTWIND was gracious enough to send out enough lemon pies during the morning for the noon meal.

Saturday, February 16, 1956.

The pumping of diesel fuel is complete and personnel are in the process of taking up the fuel assault system from the ice.

Preparations were made during the day to transfer thirty-one personnel to the EDISTO for return to the States.

Sunday, February 19, 1956.

LCDR CANHAM returned to the base and resumed his duties as Officer in Charge, Williams Air Operating Facility.

At 1200, a half holiday was declared to give the men a short, but much needed, rest.

The base is beginning to run on a more orderly routine and the Plan of the Day is now being published.

MILLWOOD, BU2 was injured when a sledge hammer fell from the top of a Clements hut during the process of construction and struck him on the back of the neck. He was taken to the EDISTO and, though the x-rays show no evidence of fracture, it was decided to retain him aboard ship for observation and transportation to the United States.

Both Protestant and Roman Catholic church services were held for personnel in the evening.

February 20, 1956

The Coast Guard icebreaker EASTWIND commenced breaking ice toward Winter Quarters Bay in preparation for the mooring of the YOG's when the GLACIER returns from New Zealand with the YOG-70 in tow.

Tuesday, February 21, 1956

The EASTWIND discontinued breaking ice due to damage to one screw.

Work is continuing on the rhombic antenna and the Communications Building installation work in order to have one high frequency transmitter in operation before the departure of the ships.

Examinations for advancement in rating to pay grades E-5 & E-6 were conducted in the afternoon in accordance with Task force and BUPERS directives.

After the evening meal, volunteers worked toward the completion of the Ship's Store Quonset building in order that the Ship's Store may be available to personnel as soon as possible.

Wednesday, February 22, 1956.

Work was begun on laying the fuel line from the Diesel storage tanks at the base of Hut point to the Power House at the permanent camp site.

Steps were taken to get the administration regulations of the base set up and in affect by originating the necessary instructions and notices.

Thursday, February 23, 1956

The communication tent was out of operation during the morning for a period of about three hours due to a short in the system. Due to the fact that vehicles have been damaging the copper covered main power lines, it is planned to put the heavy conduit in the road system which cuts across the cables.

AT 1530 communications were cut off almost completely except for the EASTWIND located in the immediate area. Atmospheric conditions caused a radio blackout.

Friday, February 24, 1956.

Construction is proceeding rather rapidly in this comparably good weather with the completion of the Quonset Ship's Store building, one Quonset quarters, and Quonset photo storage building, the Rawin Dome on the main aerology building, the stringing up of the rhombic antenna beamed on Washington, D.C., etc.

Saturday, February 25, 1956

Work has been started on the preliminary planning for the operation of the auxiliary station at the Beardmore Glacier and the South Pole Station.

All of the tents comprising "Tent City" were struck and are being stored with the primus stoves and other advanced camp equipment for repair and future use.

LCDR CANHAM and LTJG BOWERS flew NE from the camp across Cape Armitage to look for a suitable location for the snow compacted runway to be used in future operations in connection with the establishment of Pole Station.

Sunday, February 26, 1956

Visitors at the base during the day included RADM GEORGE DUFEK, Commander Task Force Forty-three. He stated that he was pleased with the progress of the base construction and that he would visit us again before the ships departed.

Holiday routine commenced at 1230.

Church services for Roman Catholics and Protestants were held at 1700 and 1900 respectively. It is hoped that construction will commence on the Quonset hut chapel this week..)

Monday, February 27, 1956

A conference was held aboard the EASTWIND between RADM DUFEK, LCDR CANHAM, LTJG BOWERS, LTJ TUCK and others regarding plans for the construction of the Pole Station and the Beardmore Glacier. RADM DUFEK agreed to the tentative plans of the Air Operating Facility, with the exception of the dog teams which will remain here at the base. Fifteen main points were brought up at the conference, as follows:

1. Beardmore Glacier Camp is designated a first priority item with a pilot in charge of the Station. This station must be established before work on the Pole Station is ever begun.
2. The Dog Teams will work out of the Air Operating Facility rather than the Beardmore Glacier as originally planned.
3. LCDR D. W. CANHAM JR. Officer in Charge, Williams Air Operating Facility was given the responsibility within the chain of command for the construction and operation of the Beardmore Glacier Station and the South Pole Station as well as the Air Operating Facility.
4. It is planned to use R4D's (ski-equipped) in support of all ground forces at the South Pole Station.
5. It is planned to train the men who will work at the South Pole in groups of three and four men survival units. Each unit is to be complete with tents, rations, stoves, etc.
6. The responsibility for the Pole Station will be entirely military throughout the Geophysical Year.
7. The IGY Representative (Mr. Harold Wessbecher) will be the only civilian in the initial phases of construction at the Pole if he so desires. Other civilians and tourists will be kept at a minimum.
8. An additional eight Jamesway Huts have been ordered for the Pole and Beardmore Stations.
9. There was a long discussion with reference to the free fall of 16-gauge drums of fuel at the Pole Station. It is questionable whether they will prove satisfactory or whether a heavier gauge drum will be required.
10. The Pole Station will be located at 90 degrees South if at all possible, but the Task Force Command will not be disappointed as long as the station is located within a one hundred mile radius of the pole.

11. Two more radiomen were added to the wintering over list, bringing the total camp wintering in population to 93
12. Additional parachutes must be ordered for the Pole drop.
13. Admiral Dufek and the Commanding General of the 18th Air Force plan to fly in early next year for the construction of the Pole Station.
14. R5D's (wheeled aircraft) will be used in Search and Rescue work.
15. All men for the Beardmore and South Pole Stations will be taken from the present personnel at the Air Operating Facility, to be replaced at the Facility by new incoming men.

A speaker for the Motion Picture system was procured from the EASTWIND, ours not having arrived in Davisville before our departure.

A storm came up in the night with cold temperatures and high winds.

Tuesday, February 28, 1956

The EASTWIND was broken away from her moorings at the offloading site and sent out to sea by the high winds. The helicopter at the offloading site blew over in the storm. It was NOT tied down due to the storm coming up so suddenly. LTJG BOWERS & LT NASH were retained aboard the EASTIND to await the ending of the storm. Winds of 90 knots were registered at the ship's side.

The communications Tent collapsed at the base when the center poles snapped due to the heavy pressure exerted on the tent from the high winds. It was rigged again by using 2 x 4's as center poles and the radio was out of operation only for approximately one-half hour

The communications blackout, which has limited our communications since February 23rd lifted and we are once again in contact with other ships in the area and Little America.

Wednesday, February 29th, 1956

A party was held for All Hands in the mess hall during the evening with rations of whiskey and brandy being issued to the men and a double feature movie show. This party was given on the occasion of the non-wintering personnel departing the base for the EASTWIND and transportation to the United States the next day. This left the base with just the wintering-over personnel on station, and approximately nine more due to report in.

Thursday, March 1, 1956

Watch Lists were drawn up during the day and put into affect, thereby putting the camp on a more regular routine of operations.

All of the antennae poles are now completed.

The helicopter which had been blown over in the storm was returned to the base on a sled and it is hoped to get it back into operating condition.

The GLACIER is delayed on her return to McMurdo Sound from New Zealand due to encountering many storms along the way.

Friday, March 2, 1956

The galley is now 100% complete and operational. A large portion of the day was taken in preparing reports and other papers that must be returned to the United States when the ships leave the area. The GLACIER arrived and tied up alongside the EASTWIND and immediately began the transfer of personnel, mail and cargo. Four wintering over personnel arrived from New Zealand and were brought to the camp. The mail was brought to camp as soon as possible after the ship's arrival and sorted and delivered to all hands.

Saturday, March 3, 1956

The morning was declared a holiday in order that the men might have a chance to answer some of their mail received the night before and get it on the last ship departing the area. The day was very windy and most of the work during the afternoon was accomplished indoors.

Sunday March 4, 1956

A half holiday was declared for the morning and church services were conducted for Roman Catholic and Protestant personnel.

The USS GLACIER (AGB-4) displayed tremendous icebreaking powers by breaking clear on in up past Hut Point. This is the first ship to break ice up this far in the past fifty-three years.

The rhombic antenna beamed on Auckland, NZ is now complete

Monday, March 5, 1956

Work was started on the inflation shelter and the men completed the battening down of the tarps on the roofs of all completed buildings.

The GLACIER has broken on in past Hut Point, due West, and is now breaking ice in Winter Quarters Bay.

The Ship's Store is now in operation and opened for the first time during the afternoon.

The showers and laundry facilities were completed and they will be utilized, starting Wednesday, by each barracks having a separate day to shower and use the laundry and two days being left open for all hands.

Tuesday, March 6, 1956.

The YOG's were brought into the Hut Point area and mooring was commenced on the North side of Hut Point. Anchors were being frozen in on Arrival Heights in the vicinity of the fuel farm and men worked around the clock to expedite the work and get the YOG's moored as soon as possible.

Most of the reports of the camp were completed and turned over to the GLACIER for delivery to the United States.

Wednesday, March 7, 1956.

One of the anchors for the YOG pulled out and had to be reset. Conditions were difficult to work in as the temperature was ten below zero with winds up to fifty knots. By the end of the day, the YOG-70 was moored and work will start on the YOG-34 in the morning, to be completed by tomorrow night.

Thursday, March 8, 1956

The mooring of the YOG's is now complete. The winterization of the YOG-70 is complete and is expected to be complete on the YOG-34 by tomorrow. Temperatures were still minus ten degrees with winds of forty knots.

Friday, March 9, 1956

The EASTWIND departed for the United States in the early hours of the morning, after mail and other supplies were transferred to her by the GLACIER.

The GLACIER returned to Winter Quarters Bay and Commander, Task Force forty-three (RADM GEORGE DUFEK) arrived at the base at 0830 for a brief farewell ceremony. He stated that he was proud "that so much had been accomplished in so short a time". The GLACIER departed at 1000 for Little America and thence to the United States.

Williams Air Operating Facility is now self-sufficient and on its own without any support from Task Force ships

An "All Hands" meeting was held in the mess hall during the evening to discuss camp affairs. This will be a weekly meeting to get things ironed out that occur during the week and also to keep the men informed of future plans and operations.

The wintering group is now complete with a total population of ninety-three as shown on the following alphabetical listing::

OFFICER PERSONNEL (MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (SPECIAL

BAKER, David E., Ensign – Communications Officer
BERGSTROM, James H., LT – Executive Officer
BOWERS, Richard A., LTJG (CEC) – Construction Officer
CANHAM, David W., Jr., LCDR – Officer in Charge
CONDIT, John C., LTJG (CHC) – Chaplain
JORGENSEN, Frank C., LT – Aerology Officer
KNOEDLER, David J., LT (DC) – Dentist
SINGER, Bernard., CWO (Photo Officer)
TAYLOR, Isaac M., LCDR (MC) – Medical Officer
TUCK, John Jr. LTJG – Dog Team Leader, Prospective OINC South Pole Station

OFFICER PERSONNEL – VX-6

EICHHORN, Noel D., LTJG - VX-6
FISHER, Harold C. , CWO – VX-6
NASH, Donald E., LCDR – VX-6 Helicopter Pilot

AIR FORCE PERSONNEL

DOLLEMAN, HENDRICK, MSGT USAF (In charge of the Dog Teams)
GORITY, Raymond L., Airman Second Class
WILLETT, Harold E., TSGT – In charge of air drops for the Pole

CIVILIANS

JONES, Elm, Civilian, Disney Studios
WESSBECHER, Howard, Civilian, IGY

NAVY ENLISTED PERSONNEL – MOBILE CONSTRUCTION BATTALION (SPECIAL)

ALMOND, Samuel H., CS3
ARMISTEAD, Sidney G., CM1
BARGER, Paul K., ETCA
BEDSOLE, Henry C., Jr. CM2
BEVILACQUA, Charles A., BU1
BICKNESE, Neal W., CD3

BRISTOL, William W., PHCA
BROWN, Joseph E. , YN2
CHAUDOIN, Robert L., YN1
CLAY, Michael M. CM3
DORE, John C., ADC
EMERICK, Paul, CS2
FLANAGAN, Walter B. ATC
GARRETT, Aubrey B., RMCA
GOODWIN, William R., AE3
GRACZYK, Roy L., AG1
GRISEZ, David N., MR2
HAINES, Gary F., HM2
HESS, William T., SKCA
HILL, Ronald J., PH2
HISEY, Howard , BU2
HORNER, William K. Jr., AG1
HUBEL, Edward H.
HURD, Harold D., CD3
JACKSON, Dennis H.. AD2
JEFFUS, Morris E , ET1
KEMP, Dewey F., SW2
KENNEDY, Christopher J. , SW1
LEASE, William T., SVCA
LEDVINA, Robert F., AB2
LINDNER, Edwin R. ,AG2
LUNDY, Harold D., MM1
LYNCH, Clarence S. CECA
MARINO, Francis J., RM1
MC CORMICK, Patrick D. BU2
MC COY, John W., Jr., AC1
MC CRILLIS, Harold G., CE2
MONTGOMERY, Thomas T. RM1
MYERS, Clarence M., CD1
NASON, Norman N., SW1
NIEMEYER, James J. , BU1
NOLEN, Jerry L. AG2
OLIVER, Charles L., Jr. AB3
PASTOR, Stephan F., CD2
PATTERSON, Harry F., UTCA
PITTMAN, Robert L., RM2
POWELL, Dale, L., RM2
PRESCOTT, Richard J., BU2
RANDALL, John A., CM3
RIGG, Luther, AC1 –
ROBERTS, Colon H., SW3
ROTHER, Jesse A., RM2

SCOTT, Donald J. Jr., UT3
SLATON, Charles M., CMCA
SPAINHOUER, Freddie P. PHCA
SPIERS, Raymond R., CS2
STITH, Charles E. BMCA
SWARTWOOD, Bryan K., Jr. AC1
TALLON, John C., AD3
TYLER, Gordon C., AD3
UPTON, Harold D., CS1
WAGNER, Clarence A., UT1
WEEMS, Aubrey O., AM3
WEHNER, Virgil L., SK1
WHITMER, Richard D., CE1
WILLIAMSON, Harry R., BU1
WOODY, Floyd A., HM1
ZEGERS, John E., RM2
ZIKELI, George A., Jr., RM1

ENLISTED PERSONNEL – VX-6

BARONICK, Michael, AO1 – VX-6
COPPOLA, Anthony E. AD3 – VX-6
JUSTICE, Leo E., AD2 – VX-6
ROONEY, James AD3 VX-6
SELMAN, William R., AD2 – VX-6
STREIT, Robert , AK1 – VX-6

The large transmitter in the communications building was fired off at 0100 and the Communications watch was shifted from the communications tent to the permanent Communications Building.

Saturday, March 10, 1956.

While work continued to complete winterization of the YOG's and more dead men were set for the YOG-70, the majority of the men in camp were occupied with various interior projects such as bolting the roof trusses to the roof panels, laying linoleum, electrical wiring, etc.

A brief party was held in the Mess Hall in the evening for the dual purpose of celebrating the Fourteenth Anniversary of the Navy Seabees and the departure of the final task force ships from this area. Rations of whiskey and brandy were issued to all hands.

Sunday, March 11, 1956

The entire day was Holiday Routine for all hands. The men accomplished much work about their barracks such as laying linoleum, erecting additional lockers, erecting fuel drum racks at the side of the barracks, constructing partitions and exterior vestibules. *(The exterior vestibules were designed to keep the wind and cold out of the huts. When you opened the door to the vestibule, you could not open the door to the hut until the first door had been closed).*

Men worked during the afternoon on the construction of the new Quonset Chapel. Church services were held in the morning and Brunch was served from 0900-1100.

Monday, March 12, 1956

An excellent day for construction with the temperatures running between minus two and plus twelve, with absolutely no wind. Construction was begun on the Inflation Shelter and the completion of the remaining vestibules for the buildings already constructed. The site for the Aircraft Maintenance Shop was graded and the tarps were put on the dog shelters. The material was broken out for the two remaining Quonset huts to be erected.

CWO SINGER and his crew of photographers went to Castle Rock to shoot the twice weekly ice reconnaissance photos.

After regular working hours, men worked with Chaplain CONDIT on the construction of the Chapel. The shell is now approximately 70% complete.

This morning, when attempting to load the large transmitter in the Communications Building in order to obtain point to point contact, the transmitter went out of operation due to water collecting on the antennae lead-in insulators and shorting out the circuit. A few small parts were burned out and will have to be replaced and the transmitter dried out before it can become operational again.

Thursday, March 13, 1956.

Transmitter back in operation before evening chow. Work continued on aircraft maintenance shop and enclosing the lower portions of the heads (*Bathrooms*)

(The narrative contains the Name Rank and Serial Number (alphabetically) of the men on the base)

Wednesday, March 14, 1956

Men worked mostly inside due to cold and high winds.

Thursday, March 15, 1956

Pay Day was held for All Hands

Weather unsuitable for flying due to zero visibility and high winds. Men worked mostly indoors.

Dog teams were moved to their indoor quarters. .

The Library and Lounge was put into operation for the use of All Hands during their off hours

Williams Air Operating Facility took over point-to-point radio contact with Balboa, Canal Zone and Washington DC

Friday, March 16, 1956

Weather still undesirable for flying but diminished in the late evening and crews went to work on the Aviation Maintenance Building and completed the foundation at 2200.

All the miscellaneous equipment remaining was cleared away from the initial campsite at Hut Point. The Sno-Kitten was put into operation for the use of the Master at Arms (MAA) detail in their daily work routine.

All GSK and food items were moved from the supply dump into their permanent storage areas.

The welding shop, an addition to the garage is now two thirds complete.

An "All Hands" meeting was held after the evening meal in order to discuss routine camp operational problems.

Saturday, March 17th, 1956

Twice-weekly ice reconnaissance trip to Castle Rock made. It was noticed that pancake ice is filling in the former offloading site to the south side of Tent Island.

It is hoped that the helicopter will be flyable sometime next week. The walls of the Aircraft Maintenance Shop were completed and the inflation shelter is complete except for the roof.

Water is now available in one of the heads for personnel to use for wash water during the day.

A Saint Patrick's Day celebration party was held for the crew in the evening with a floorshow presented by Chaplain CONDIT and his associates. It was a large success with all hands and rations of whiskey and brandy were issued to personnel.

Sunday, March 18, 1956

Sunday was Holiday routine for all hands. The majority of the men continued in working on the interior to their huts to make it their own.

Church services were held in the library. After the evening meal, personnel helped to relocate the chapel, now under construction, on to its foundation. The high winds, earlier in the week, moved it off of its foundation.

Monday, March 19, 1956

Flying weather good. Majority of work accomplished on the Aircraft Maintenance Shop. All Administrative and Electrical supplies were broken out from the supply dump and put in storage for easier accessibility. The electricians completed almost entirely the outdoor splices of the electrical cable and have definitely concluded that overhead wires would have saved half the time.

Tuesday, March 20, 1956.

Flying weather just average. Shell of the Aircraft Maintenance Building complete except the hanging of the door. Inside wiring is complete in the Aerology Building and outside lights were placed on the two heads and the interiors were painted.

Work was started on the parachute loft, and the water tank was hung in the Photo Lab. The TEM transmitter was placed into full operation with the exception of voice features. Work commenced on the TAB.

After the movie, the first rehearsal of the newly formed Chapel Choir was held in the Library. Immediately thereafter, a crew proceeded to lay the linoleum in the Mess Hall.

Wednesday, March 21, 1956

Flying weather good all day. Inflation shelter is now complete and the doors were hung on the Aircraft Maintenance Shop and the canvas and tiedowns were completed on those buildings as well as the dog shelters. The electrical circuits were completed in both the dog shelter and Aircraft Maintenance Shop and power was brought to the Electronics and GCA buildings. All the Quonset ribs are up on the Parachute Rigging Loft.

It was noted that the forward anchor chain on the YOG-70 has lost all of her slack. The snow ice ledge alongside the YOG-34 had deteriorated and fallen on to the deck of the vessel. Deep cracks appear in what is now the leading edge of the snow ice shelf.

Additional seals were killed by Sgt. Dolleman for dog food.

Thursday, March 22, 1956.

Flying weather from poor to undesirable.

Sixteen new splices required in the power lines due to inadvertent cutting by a D-4 Tractor. Parachute Loft now ready for canvas installation.

TAB transmitter was fired off, but is not in operating condition.

Work on the damaged helicopter continued, but the metal work is progressing rather slowly due to the paper thinness of the magnesium

13 members turned out for Choir Practice. Work is progressing satisfactorily for the Palm Sunday and Easter church services.

Friday, March 23, 1956.

Tiedowns were completed in the morning for the helicopter landing strip and drilling completed for the parachute loft.

Work progressed favorably on the three Quonset Huts currently under erection.

Following lunch, a medium size blizzard struck camp and continued to blow for the remainder of the day. Winds held rather steady at 47 knots with gusts in excess of 65 knots. It was necessary to continue work on the Quonset Huts during these conditions to bring them to a point in their construction which would ensure saving the work done in the morning. BEVILACQUA, BU1 was struck about the head and shoulders with a large piece of airborne plywood.

Estimated that the Utilitymen and Electricians will need an additional three days to complete the Photo Lab.

The TAB transmitter went into operational usage. Communications is now working on a DC source for their remote keying apparatus; they are temporarily using the dry cell batteries, but this is not suitable for any extended period of time. Work commenced on breaking out the amateur radio station gear.

The helicopter was brought to a point where a flight test can be conducted at the first break in the weather.

Haircuts were given for the second time on a scheduled basis and, once again, two openings were unfilled. Beards continue to disappear and are now the exception rather than the rule.

Saturday, March 24, 1956

Winds and blowing snow continued, and flying weather was unfavorable throughout the day.

The door was cut in the garage that a causeway might be made between the garage and the Polar Field Repair Kit, where our transpiration people will install a battery and tool shop.

KENNEDY completed the shell of the steel shop and work continued on the D-2, readying it for use in connection with the construction of the Sea Ice Runway.

Overheating in the Power House was experienced several times during the day and the generator stopped at one point for an hour and five minutes. To take care of this, additional louvers were cut into the building.

Carpenters completed a desk for the Administration Building and one for the Amateur Radio Gear.

A party was held in the Mess Hall in the evening. All hands behaved very well.

Sunday, March 25, 1956.

The morning of Palm Sunday was a day of rest for almost all hands. Church Services held at 1000 and 1100 were comparatively well attended.

In the early afternoon, groups of personnel climbed the nearby hill to try their luck at skiing and tobogganing. No fatalities, one wrenched knee, many bruises, but they all seemed eager to go back for another try.

For the first time, there was not too much work to be done about the individual huts, and the majority of the people were able to spend their holiday doing things they personally desired to do.

During the day, the winds diminished and the skies cleared and, in the early evening a full moon came into view over Observation Hill while the sun was still setting.

Monday, March 26, 1956

The GCA crew continued working on getting their gear into operation.

On the reconnaissance mission to Castle Rock, it was found that the winds of the past few days had taken out additional ice. And also the northern mile and a half of Glacier Channel is again clear of ice.

The Welders spent the day at mounting double barrels as fuel drums for the living quarters.

The helicopter blades were checked and we now but await a reasonable calm day for flight tests.

ARMISTEAD was checked out in the maintenance of both generators at the power house. Hereafter, he or Chief SLATON will be the sole individual for, and to repair the generators.

An additional dozen seals were killed and brought in for the dogs. One of the teams was hooked up and exercised.

Fire extinguishers were mounted in all winter buildings by GRISEZ and necessary service performed on them. He also mounted the emergency kerosene lanterns to be used in the event of an electrical failure.

In the evening, the first meeting of the personnel selected for the construction of the Pole Station was held in the library. Information sheets were passed to them in order to start them thinking and planning for their jobs in connection with this station. The personnel selected were as follows: SLATON CMC, STITH BMC, HESS SKC, HUBEL UTC, LYNCH CE1, BEVELACQUA BU1, UPTON CS1, ARMISTEAD CM1, MONTGOMERY RM1, LEASE SV1, CHAUDOIN YN1, BRISTOL PH1, SPAINHOUSER PH1, WOODY HM1, LUNDY MM1, MARINO EM1, WAGNER UT2, HISEY BU2, WILLIAMSON BU2, RANDALL CM3, GOODWIN AK3, HILL PH3, NOLEN AG2, LINDNER AG3, ROBERTS SW3, KEMP SW3, SCOTT UT3, MC CRILLIS CE3, SPIERS CS2 AND TYLER AD3

Tuesday, March 27, 1956

Flying weather was unfavorable due to wind, light falling snow and heavy blowing snow. Temperatures averaged plus eight degrees.

The Mechanics completed major checks on both generators in the Power House and the Duty Mechanic Watch was formally established.

Communications completed work on the amateur radio gear with the exception of the antenna which will take approximately two weeks for its fabrication and erection.

GCA continued to be plagued by shorts due to moisture in the circuits.

The Electricians ran power to the new Aircraft Maintenance Buildings and moved a considerable amount of their gear to their new storage Quonset.

The Steelworkers completed the top of their structure with tar paper and canvas etc. Five sets of fuel drums were connected containing bars welded thereon. Also, additional tiedown cables were made.

Received notification that the EASTWIND trials, after damaging a screw while at McMurdo, were successful and will depart Wellington NZ at eleven o'clock tomorrow morning, bound for Pago Pago with our detachment of non-wintering personnel aboard.

CDR WHITNEY requested a conference by voice – a request which we were unable to honor due to our modulator difficulties on the TEM and the incomplete installation of our amateur gear.

A lengthy choir practice was held in preparation for Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

Our first birthday cake was presented at evening meal in honor of CHAUDOIN, LUNDY and WEEKS.

WEDNESDAY, March 28, 1956

Work was finished on the second of the sea ice Wanigans and the Land Planer was 25% rigged.

The helicopter resumed its flight status after a month layoff and its first mission was a complete ice reconnaissance which showed open water running all the way across McMurdo Sound on an East West line passing through the old major offloading site and having a northwardly bump around the moraine running on the west side but resumed a southward direction and tied into the western shore at Blue Glacier. Seaward, there is a light covering of pancake ice.

The YOG's took on additional snow slides and showed more effects of strain on the anchor chains, but no movement of the land anchors themselves was evident

The barber shop remained open but half a day due to lack of customers. (this was the only day this week that it was to be open.

Orders were issued to exercise strict radio circuit discipline in regard to idle conversation between NLA (Little America) and NGD (McMurdo). Brought on by chitchat between the two regarding our amateur station and our times of best reception. CDR WHITNEY apparently felt that an arrangement had been made for the voice conference through this very inefficient means. The Williams Air Operating Facility operator had no idea that such a conference was even contemplated. The incident was magnified all out of proportion, but did bring on the direction of a clamp down.

Thursday, March 29, 1956.

The temperatures remained sub-zero to zero throughout the day 15 to 20 knot winds blowing. Flying was restricted, but local flying was accomplished, flights being made both in the morning and the afternoon

It takes approximately one half hour in pre-flight warm up and exercising of the controls to permit appropriate freedom as the oils and greases are reluctant to cooperate.

The URN-5 building was erected. It is hoped to have the gear installed and operating by the end of next week.

The VHF transmitter and receiver was checked out and is now in operating condition in the GCA building and provides communications between the helicopter and the facility.

The Mechanics are taking the pontoons off of one weasel and converting it to a passenger pick-up by fabricating an extension in the rear which will permit seating ten people.

The steel shop broke out a considerable amount of general stores in the way of sheet metal, round stock, etc.

The interior of the Parachute Rigging Loft was readied for full scale operations.

Communications is experiencing difficulty with the TAB and the technicians spent most of the day going over circuits. The materials for the amateur antenna were broken out from the supply dump and carried down to the Clements aircraft maintenance building where the antenna will be fabricated.

The sledding contingent worked with two teams and added to their collection of dead seals.

Individual cups were issued to all hands to be retained and brought with them for all coffee breaks.

With excellent results , a new sound system was rigged by Joe Brown in the Mess Hall for the movie system.

The strain was taken off the forward anchor chain of the YOG-70 by letting out an additional three fathoms. The YOG-34 shows a definite list due to the heavy snow and ice accumulation on the decks.

It is necessary that the Electricians continue to splice main power lines and they commenced the wiring of the Carbon Monoxide Alarm System.

Friday, March 30, 1956

There was no flying during the day, visibility being less than one mile with blowing snow and winds averaging 25 miles per hour and an average temperature of minus 12.

The electricians completed wiring nine of the twelve CO detectors.

All work was secured at 1130 and Good Friday services were held in the Library at 1300 and 1400 – some sixty-three people attended.

The afternoon was spent quietly by most, with considerable sleeping. An “All Hands” meeting was held in the evening.

Saturday, March 31, 1956

Early morning winds diminished to ten to fifteen knots and the temperature steadied at minus ten. Outside work included completing the foundation, deck and erecting the ribs of a Quonset quarters. Large amounts of supplies were broken out of the dump for the Steelworkers, Electricians, and Photographers. The Photo Lab personnel completed laying their linoleum.

FLANAGAN AND DORE'S crew placed the transmitter inside the ULM-5 structure and completed weatherproofing it.

EMERICK was admitted to sickbay and twenty-four hour surveillance – is emotionally upset.

As Easter Sunday is tomorrow, no party was held in the Mess Hall. All hands turned in rather early as the winds resumed 30-40 knots and a half moon afforded the Fire and Security Watch considerable light by which to see while making his outside rounds.

Sunday, April 1, 1956 (EASTER SUNDAY)

Temperatures were minus thirteen to zero; the sun occasionally broke thru a moderate overcast and the great number of "incoming class easy messages" added to the joy of Easter Sunday

Several of the men ascended Observation Hill before breakfast to catch the sun's first rays and many other made the same journey later in the day.

Church had some seventy-two in attendance (the choir now numbers sixteen).

Following brunch and church, a dozen enthusiasts spent the afternoon on Honey-Bucket Hill furthering their proficiency on skis and others took long hikes about the general area and many spent the afternoon in their bunks.

Today marked the appearance of our first edition of 'AIROP FACTS' – A DAILY newspaper which CHAUDOIN and BROWN originate, edit and publish.

The movie, "Lovely to Look At" played to a full house.

Monday, April 2, 1956

The morning was relatively calm – temperatures hovering at about minus fifteen. The masonite and insulation were placed on the Quonset Quarters to be used next summer season.

The helicopter crew is changing the clutch and doing other maintenance work on the Helicopter which will see it in a down status for approximately one week.

Wiring was completed on the CO detectors and they were placed in an operating condition.

Brackets were made for the PA system and the speakers are being mounted.

At noon, the weather changed – winds increased to forty knots and held there for the rest of the day. The temperature dropped to minus twenty-eight. A double crew was placed on the Quonset crew to save what had been done. By secure (*quitting*) time all the metal siding had been installed except the top curved pieces. Personnel could work but twenty to twenty-five minutes at a time as frostbite was a constant companion. The building could not be strapped down but two D-4 tractors were used as weights to prevent it from moving from its foundation.

The parachute Rigging Loft was wired and GCA reported short circuits again due to drifting snow.

The YOG's have moved out a bit more from the ice ledge and most of the lines and wire are taut, likewise the anchor chains; no parting as yet.

An audit of the cash at Ship's Store was carried out according to Navy Regulations and a liquor and narcotic inventory was held by the board.

As increased difficulties are being experienced with the generators and diesels in the power house, a permanent four man watch, comprised of two electricians and two Utilitymen was established and will start on 4 April.

The sun runs the mountain ridges until about 1430, when it finally breaks into the clear due north from us.

All stoves will run at #2 setting in the Clements and #3 in the Quonsets until further notice

No improvement in EMERICK.

Tuesday, April 3, 1956

Temperature averaged minus fifteen and winds of fifteen to twenty knots.

Started foundation for the LAST Quonset Hut.

Installation of the PA system speakers was completed and the electricians started installing the fire alarm system. As we have only six alarms, they will be placed in all winter living quarters.

The TBK modulator is almost readied for use. Wellington New Zealand wants to receive weather twice daily. Starting Thursday, we will no longer guard FOXTROT broadcast but maintain point to point with Balboa.

SLATON and crew worked at repairing the pony engine on our standby 100KW Generator.

Aerology's progress still indicates they will be fully operational on April 15th.

Photographic Personnel finished moving all of their gear out of the supply dump and started constructing necessary darkrooms.

EMERICK attended choir practice – No Improvement

Wednesday, April 4, 1956

Temperature remained in the minus fifteen to eighteen range and the winds blew gustily from the East, Southeast and South up to forty knots on occasion.

The opening in the inflation shelter for the release of balloons and radiosonde was started.

Weasel #25 conked out at the suggested ice airstrip location on McMurdo Sound. LTJG EICHORN and CWO FISHER walked back.

The Electricians are still unable to phase the two main generators. This results in an extremely heavy load being placed on one generator.

Old POL hose was brought into camp and will be used as a protective conduit for the PS system wiring.

Our station newspaper was renamed the "Antarctic Bulletin" – submitted by SPIERS and TALLON.

Thursday, April 5, 1956

Temperatures averaged minus 16, winds easterly averaging thirty knots.

The large doors on the North side of the Inflation Shelter were cut and hung – Aerology has but to connect up their generator and they'll be in the radiosonde business.

Aviation personnel completed rounding up Quonset material for the copter lean-to and finished preventive maintenance check on the helicopter except for changing the oil (not a small job in this climate).

Started weather broadcast with ZBM – Weather Wellington. We transmit twice daily.

CWO SINGER got his appointment (via message) to W-4. The photographic personnel completed two of their darkrooms.

Friday, April 6, 1956

Temperature during the day averaged minus sixteen. Winds held steady throughout most of the day at thirty to thirty-five knots. Gusts up to fifty-three knots were experienced in the evening. Winds picked up large sheets of material, sending them floating through the camp.

Two Builders worked most of the day on gathering material and constructing the amateur radio antenna.

Installation of the lathe was started in the garage and work progressed favorably on the repair of the D-2 for the ice runway

The sledding contingent started melting down blubber for emergency dog rations.

The inspection of the YOG's showed the stern deadman on the YOG-34 to be pulling loose. The stern anchor chain is taut. It was therefore decided to add an additional shot and a half of chain into this position. As the YOG-70 is holding fast, it must be assumed that the pressures brought to bear on the YOG-34 are solely those of the movement of the snow-ice ledge adjacent to the ship.

The week's labor by GARRETT and BARGER on rigging an additional mechanism in an effort to load up the TAB antenna was a lost cause as our TAB is still not operational. Two of the four teletype machines are ready for work, but the modification kits have to be rigged for the TBM and TBA.

Following an early morning talk with CDR WHITNEY at Little America and using Chief STROUP's suggestion to increase the droop control to full, LYNCH was able to phase the two generators in the power house. No further difficulty with them has been experienced. We now use the two generators during the peak periods of electrical usage which, at the present time are from 0600 to 2130, and then one of the generators is secured for the remainder of the night.

An "All Hands" meeting was held and DR TAYLOR discussed EMERICK'S condition with the entire crew in order that they might understand the situation and do everything possible to assist in his recovery.

It is planned to hold a "WAKE" on Saturday, April 15th in honor of Miss Grace Kelley's coming marriage – the crew seemed to be much in favor of this.

Saturday, April 7, 1956

Temperatures averaged minus fourteen with 30 knot winds, gusting to 40. Flying conditions unsatisfactory.

The Builders continued construction of antenna for amateur radio gear.

Strain taken off lines, wires and anchor chains at the YOG mooring site by adding pieces of wire, letting out more line from the ships and adjusting the anchor chain links.

Difficulty again experienced in paralleling the generators.

Borings were made at the proposed ice runway site and approximately twelve feet of good ice was found. However, it was covered by two and one half feet of snow of which at least two feet must be removed for satisfactory ice manufacturing. Additional samples will be taken at various places before actual flooding commences

Two-way Communications was established between the weasel at the ice runway site and transmitter and receiver in the GCA building. GCA also maintains radar watch on personnel and equipment on the ice, all of which show up well as for getting on the scope

The TBM modulator was brought to a state of operational readiness and it is planned to commence daily schedules with Little America at the beginning of the week.

We were notified by message that "we are pioneers and heroes all". This story apparently appeared in the New York Times on March 9th. A similar message was sent to Little America simultaneously. Their story appeared on March 14th.

Six ounces of liquid rations were issued to all hands with no outstanding problems or after events.

Sunday, April 8, 1956

Average temperature was minus eighteen, winds averaged 40 knots.

Attendance at church was very light.

All hands turned in early and by 2200 most all were in bed.

Monday, April 9, 1956

Wind continued with velocities of thirty to thirty-two knots in the early morning. Temperature slowly rose to a maximum of minus five at noon, at which time the winds died down and it was relatively calm for the rest of the day.

Lathe, Drill Press and Planer were installed in the Garage and additional planking laid for the band saw and big DeWalt saw.

The Builders worked in the Power House inserting additional openings for cooling purposes and it is now possible to maintain temperatures of approximately sixty-five degrees around the generators. Box type shelters are being added on the exterior to permit varying degrees of the opening settings and this should end our difficulty with abnormally high temperatures at the power House.

Difficulty with the TAB antenna was finally solved and it is now being used point to point for communications with Little America. The voice feature of the TBM was used for the first conference with CDR WHITNEY at Little America. It is tentatively planned to hold these voice conferences at 1800 each evening, the agenda items being transmitted by CW to each other in the morning, thereby permitting time for planning and the gathering of information.

The Utilitymen are in the process of changing the location of the draft vents in the stoves. At the present time, they are located on a level just below the tops of the stoves and, in this position, due to high winds, the burner is subject to rather violent flame throwing and fluttering. By moving the vent upwards a distance of approximately three feet, it seems to eliminate this difficulty.

The Electricians brought the fire alarm system to ninety percent completion with the installation of the master boxes in the OOD's office.

The thickness of ice at Winter Quarters Bay was checked for depth and it was twenty-four inches of what might be determined firm slush, sufficient to support the weight of several people, but quite unsatisfactory for any other purpose. In contrast with this, a sample was taken approximately one hundred yards northwest of the YOG's in Glacier Channel which revealed twenty-one inches of good firm ice. This is the amount of ice that has formed since the thirteenth of March.

A group proceeded to the Wanigan at the sea ice runway site and took another sample of the ice depth which turned out to be ten and one half feet. The bottom six inches is a bit slushy, but the depth is more than adequate for the requirements of the 124's. Profiles of the snow will be taken in the near future although realizing that, due to winds and additional precipitation, such profiles can change rapidly overnight.

DR TAYLOR removed a large coagulation of blood from a bump on the hip of FLANAGAN who slipped and fell on the slippery path to the Chief's Quarters vestibule. It emphasizes the need for daily attention to the snow/ice areas which personnel must constantly use in connection with entering and departing buildings.

CONFERENCE REPORT
Monday, April 9, 1956 - 0800

Participants in the first daily voice conference between McMurdo and Little America were as follows: From Little America; CDR WHITNEY, LCDR GRAHAM, LT

MEHAFFEY, CWO YOUNG AND STOCKTON AT1. Those from McMurdo were: LCDR CANHAM, LT BERGSTROM, LTJG BOWERS.

Topics Discussed: Most of the conference was discussing requirements for next operating season when the ships came back. McMurdo could not order anything themselves. It had to go through Little America and LT MEHAFFEY & CDR WHITNEY.

Cleaning of woolen shirts and trousers. Regular washing and drying shrinks them to a size only one of the dogs could wear. Sleds. We need more one ton sleds at McMurdo, and stated that we needed 12 as we only had 4 remaining. The question arose as to which tractors would be better for hauling them. D-2 or D4

Generators. Neither station was happy with their generators and the phasing problem. It was emphasized that, at McMurdo, three phase power is definitely required.

Welders. Confirmed the need at both stations that 600 amp welders are a necessity. McMurdo burned out two 400 amp units in welding this year.

Clothing needs for next season were discussed. Discussed A1 and A2 clothing which seemed to be very satisfactory. It was stated that the A1 & A2 clothing kept people plenty warm at minus 40 degrees. Indicated a need for more of everything in the way of shoes, gloves and glasses for next season.

Pay. CDR CANHAM asked LT MEHAFFEY, "Would you ask your disbursing clerk to draw up the total amount of money due at AIROPFAC on April 15th to put out a pay list so each man knows what he has on the books?"

Profit from Ship's Store. CANHAM brought up the subject of taking the profits from the Ship's Store and using it for things for the men i.e. a popcorn machine and so forth. LT MEHAFFEY said that he would find out from Washington.

Cruise Book at End of Operation. It was agreed that a cruise book would be nice, provided it covered both bases. CANHAM stated that if we cannot get a cruise book within reason, we would take about 200 official photographs and make prints of them and provide a scrapbook for the men to put the pictures in.

Quarterly Marks for Enlisted Personnel. Agreed that these would be transmitted to LUCIER at Little America for inclusion in the Personnel Service Records for each man.

Barrel Testing

LCDR CANHAM – For your information, we conducted barrel testing this morning with disastrous results to both the metal and the rubber tanks. They split and lost their load. Not that it will prove anything, but it might give you some idea what might be expected at the Pole.

CDR WHITNEY – What altitude did you drop them from and how full were they?

LCDR CANHAM –The altitude was 200 feet. Five or six gallons were taken out of both drums.

CDR WHITNEY – I understand. Tests that were conducted in Greenland were dropped at 50 feet.

LCDR CANHAM – I sincerely doubt that Air Force planes will get within fifty feet of the soft snow. AE are still confused as to the amount of fuel. You stated one figure and the rear echelon stated another

CDR WHITNEY – It was Graffe up in Davisville that gave the figure of 45 gallons. The report of the Air force that was sent out indicated that it was forty-five gallons in the metal drums at an altitude of fifty feet.

LCDR CANHAM – We had not seen the report but noted that the message stated fifty-three gallons infoed to the 18th Air Force. We will take out some fuel to get to the forty-five gallons. We would like to get a firm figure. Relieving all of the drums of eight gallons of fuel will be quite a chore.

CDR WHITNEY - I will quote a number of things to you without any compromising and send you a message.

Tuesday, April 10, 1956

Temperature rose to minus five degrees and remained there throughout the day. Winds were relatively calm and flying weather was excellent.

The last Quonset hut was finished except for the ends. Electricians wired the machine shop in the garage, including power to the heavy machinery.

A crew to work on the ice runway and has nowhere found less than ten feet of ice along the proposed site. Complete details on the salinity tests of the ice etc. have been completed for this time, but will be re-run again next spring. The major problem at this time is the location of an area having comparatively little snow atop the ice, thereby removing the necessity of lengthy snow removal operations.

The helicopter conducted a photo reconnaissance flight on ice conditions and also made two barrel drops, one with rubber tank and the other with the same type drum to

be dropped at the Pole. These drops were made at two hundred feet at the speed of 85 knots and resulted in the demolition of both containers. Additional drops will be made at lower altitudes.

Blasting operations were carried out throughout the afternoon in an attempt to fill in the many crevasses on the westward slope adjacent to the aircraft buildings. Additional blasting will have to be done as this area is virtually pockmarked with leads, cracks and crevasses.

A four-gallon batch of home brew was located in camp and a lengthy order was placed in the plan of the day against such operations.

The supply people continued to break out gear from the dump and store it in the new Quonsets and they also accomplished a good deal of general clean-up of the remaining large boxes about the buildings. This is an ever present problem.

The Fire Alarm System was thoroughly checked out and works satisfactorily.

Choir practice was held at 2130.

Wednesday, April 11, 1956

The temperature stayed at approximately six below zero except for the period around noontime when it suddenly slipped to twenty-two below for a two hour period. Winds were constant at twenty knots and flying conditions were above average.

The aviation people erected a Quonset skeleton on the side of the Aircraft Maintenance Clements building - a prodigious feat.

Additional barrel drops were conducted by the helicopter in the area approximately two miles south of Cape Armitage. There, between the crests of sastrugi, soft snow is found in abundance. The drops were made from an altitude of 50 feet and a speed of 100 knots and, although both drums had large depressions in their sides after striking this surface, neither showed any signs of structural failure and these results indicated that drops would be quite suitable if snow is present.

Additional borings were made in the ice at the tentative runway site and, as the samples were taken in an increasingly southerly direction, the depth of the ice seems to increase greatly. Additional borings indicated fourteen to eighteen feet of solid ice. The major problem still is the removal of the two and one half or three feet of snow. Progress was made on the preparation of a detailed and extremely accurate map of the entire area with particular emphasis on borings and distances of all major objects from the Air Operating Facility location.

Communications is in the process of checking the various foreign country weather broadcasts to get some idea of the reliability of such reception. The full scale weather

program slated for Sunday, April 15th should be underway on time. The twice-daily weather schedules with Weather Wellington continues to be satisfactory.

The generators are running in parallel fairly well. There also seems to be an adjustment required when one is cut in or out. But, thanks to four well qualified people, all is working out satisfactorily.

The Survival Officer was assigned the last Quonset for the storage of survival gear. A change will have to be made just prior to the arrival of additional personnel, but this will afford him an inside space in which to break out, check and ready the gear for the coming summer's operations.

Thursday, April 12, 1956

Relatively warm with average temperature about zero and wind of eighteen knots, but many periods of virtual calm.

Work continues on the erection of the amateur radio antenna and the aviation people continued working on their Quonset structure. The fuel people spent the entire day in pumping fuel from the tank at Hut Point to the power house nest of tanks and replenishing the fueling stations in the camp.

A power cable was run up to the AN/URN-5 and FLANAGAN spent the afternoon checking the circuits in the homer. Flight was restricted due to visibility never being more than a mile and a half.

The sledding contingent is now melting down the seal blubber and preparing emergency dog rations for future use.

Chief STITH opened the sewing shop in the afternoon and accomplished considerable repair work on some of the clothing about camp. The Welders continued with their tiedowns and the fabrication of the many small parts for the building crew. Progress of their own shop has been delayed due to their support of the many other groups.

Aerology released their first radiosonde and obtained an upper air observation. Both the release and following results were satisfactory.

Friday, April 13, 1956

Temperatures rose – averaged plus four, but winds remained at twenty to thirty knots with gusts to forty-two knots.

The builders finished the amateur radio antenna, both its construction and erection. The canvas was rigged on the helicopter Quonset frame and the South End Piece completed.

The weekly inspection of living spaces and heads found everything in an outstanding condition. The decks were spotless and the uniform neatness of the individual cubicles was certainly encouraging.

Aerology worked on the hydrogen generator and finishing touches on the inflation shelter.

LEASE and KEMP continued blasting crevasses and several blasts violently shook the entire camp.

A voice conference was held with Little America at 1730 – CDR WHITNEY informed us that we were to be the central weather collecting agency next year for the Antarctic *stations*. An “All Hands” meeting followed the voice conference – the troops seem happy.

Additional floodlights were placed in both main streets of camp and the lighting is now adequate

Saturday, April 14, 1956

Average temperature was zero, but rather high winds approximating thirty-eight knots and considerable blowing snow which made flying conditions unsatisfactory.

A half day of work was accomplished with almost every crew working on preparing their shops and readying material for the coming week.

Additional tiedowns were put in place at the Library, BOQ and the Chiefs' Quarters. The ground is now most difficult to drill into and several augers have been lost in that they have become frozen in the ground. They will be retrieved next summer.

The afternoon off was spent by most in sleep and a dropping thermometer and barometer ushered in the evening with constantly strong winds.

The wake for Miss Kelly was held in the Mess Hall and attended by virtually all hands. Immediately following the wake, a skit was presented by the officers and other residents of BOQ which depicted the marriage of Miss Kelly and Prince Rainier. The dialogue was the work of Chaplain CONDIT as was the idea for the skit. The troops thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment and, following the ceremony, the majority of the personnel partied in their particular hut until the wee hours of the morning. Several were slightly ill, but there were no mishaps nor was there any undue difficulty in the control of the personnel. Frequent checks were made to ensure that all hands were properly accounted for lest one become disoriented in the blowing snow storm and lie down for a long sleep.

Sunday, April 15, 1956

A day of rest found temperatures moderate, averaging three below with a constant wind of approximately thirty to forty knots.

Church services were poorly attended as most of the camp spent the entire day in the sack.

Discussions were held between LCDR CANHAM and several of the camp personnel concerning their quarterly marks and it is quite apparent that many of our personnel are unaware of the verbal description which accompanies the various numerical grades. All hands seemed satisfied following the discussion and are fully aware of what is expected, particularly in the way of leadership qualities from petty officers.

Aerology commenced making two weather maps a day although Commander Task Force Forty-three still has not advised us of the times and frequencies which are to be used in receiving weather data from Mason, the Russians and the French IGY stations here in the Antarctic.

“Goals for the coming week” were discussed at the evening Officer-CPO meeting and, in regard to building, it is intended to complete the Quonset, finish the exterior of the chapel, construct the small inflation shelter annex and partition the amateur radio room in communications. Other projects are the completion of the installation of the public address system and the commencement of snow-removal from the ice runway site.

A press release was sent to CTF-43 covering the wake and wedding of Miss Kelly the night before

Monday, April 16, 1956

Temperature rose to plus eighteen degrees during the day and, although many gusts exceeding thirty-five knots were experienced, there were several periods of relative calm, and the helicopter was able to conduct an ice reconnaissance flight. Aerial pictures of the ice edge were attempted and the results will not be known until the development of the film is completed. The only problem will be one of light as the entire flight was conducted in twilight.

FLANAGAN encountered the same type of trouble with his antenna field as had communications. He cannot get the power to the URN-5's antenna, very probably needing but a proper ground for his counterpoise.

The YOG's have not moved in the past several days although this mornings' ice reconnaissance showed clear blue water from the ice edge out as all the pancake ice and floes which previously covered this area have gone far to seaward.

Supply personnel finished up the inventory of survival gear.

The aviation group exhumed two ten-thousand-gallon tanks from the snow and ice at Hut Point in preparation for their transport to the Aircraft Maintenance Building for thawing out and subsequent cleaning.

The photographic people cleaned up their area and continued work on caulking and making light-tight their dark rooms. KENNEDY worked until midnight re-welding the sink for the photo lab.

At `1715 local time, LT BERGSTROM fell and fractured both elbows. He had been securing tiedowns on the rooftop of the BOQ and had lowered himself to the shoulders of LTJG BOWERS where he planned to jump – in jumping, he caught his feet in LTJG BOWERS' parka which momentarily secured that portion of his body, and his head swung like a pendulum toward the deck. To prevent smashing his face, he threw both arms up and took the impact on the elbows and forearms. DR. TAYLOR worked continuously on the arms, x-raying, manipulating and setting them until 0030 Tuesday Morning.

Tuesday, April 17, 1956

Weather continued rather warm, with a high of fourteen and a low of minus four. Winds were mostly twenty to twenty-five knots from the north. About 1700 there was abrupt shift to the South with an increase to thirty-five knots.

The electricians continue to battle electrical lines being broken around camp.

Aerology is experiencing difficulty in the launching of the 0300 radiosonde. They need four men and have but three, so the fire and security watch has been detailed to lend a hand from 0230 to 0330.

The first work was accomplished in the machine shop in the garage utilizing both the lathe and the band saw. At the present time, we have been unable to locate the outside micrometers. This will hamper precision work.

New areas for possible ice runway sites were located and, with GCA's assistance, the spots were accurately mapped by GCA taking bearings and distance marks on the helicopter as it flew over the various points. The excellent GCA runs were made in the afternoon and the Quad gear is at last completely operational and flight checked.

First contacts were made with the amateur radio. Among the areas contacted in the first group were Pennsylvania, Ohio, Washington and California. Only the CW feature was used as we are still experiencing difficulty with voice.

Choir practice was held in the Library following the movie.