



# EXPLORER'S GAZETTE

Uniting all OAE's in Perpetuating the Memory of U.S. Navy Operations in Antarctica  
Volume 4, Issue 1      Old Antarctic Explorers Association, Inc      Winter 2004

**Best Wishes For a Safe and Prosperous 2004**

**From Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station**

**BK Grant**  
South Pole Area Director

**Jerry Marty**  
Station Representative

**Dr. Vladimir Papitashvili**  
Science Representative



## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Jim Eblen – OAEA President

**T**O ALL OAE'S — I wish everyone a belated Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas. I know that there are those that say the use of these terms is not “Politically Correct”, however, I was never one to stand on convention. I was raised using these terms and consider them part of our great heritage.

At this writing, the chairman of the West Coast Symposium/Reunion Committee has made arrangements to host the upcoming Symposium/Reunion in January 2005 at Oxnard California. The delegates at the last Symposium/Reunion voted to hold the affair in 2004. This has caused a bit of confusion and concern among some of the members in that the affair is now scheduled for 2005 vice 2004. The West Coast Committee selected this time because of cost and availability and may not have any other times available. The OAE Board of Directors (BOD) is busy attempting to sort this out. Hopefully, by the time the members read this, the problem will have been resolved.

Billy-Ace Baker has volunteered to head up a committee to revise the OAEA Bylaws. There have been revisions to them since they were first introduced, and a rewrite is now necessary. As Chairman of the various committees, the BOD will be providing input for their areas of responsibility. Also, I believe that the membership, through the BOD, should also have their views known. Therefore, if there is any member having suggestions regarding the bylaws, please submit them by email to Billy-Ace at: [UPIZAUF@aol.com](mailto:UPIZAUF@aol.com) or myself at: [jcreblen@aol.com](mailto:jcreblen@aol.com). For members who do not have email access suggestions may be mailed to Jim O'Connell at the OAEA National Headquarters address contained on the last page of the *Gazette*.

Noel Gillespie, a Kiwi from Christchurch, NZ has written a book and it will be released in the near future. The story is a little history of the early days of Antarctic operations and about the men, women and the aircraft of VX6/VXE-6. I have been asked to write the foreword for the book and I am in the process of doing so. I am looking forward to the publishing of the book as it promises to not only bring back a lot of memories, but will most certainly provide interesting reading.

This is all for now. To those who have lost a loved one or a friend, our prayers are with you. To those who are under the weather, we wish you a speedy recovery. Until next time.

*Jim Eblen*  
President

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Cecil D. Harper - OAEA Chaplain

**F**ROM TIME TO TIME we hear it said of someone “he is caring too much baggage to get elected”, or, “to be put into such and such a position”. That simply means that there is a past life that could be exposed to interrupt that person's future goals, or that a person is too heavily involved to be effective at anything else.

When the tribes of Israel were selecting a king, they searched quite diligently for Saul, and found him, finally, hidden in the “stuff” the baggage. When they brought him out from the stuff, the young man stood head and shoulders above everyone there, and he was declared king. The story portrays exactly the situation in which you and I find ourselves so often; the best that is in us, the regality of our lives, the contentment and glory of our personalities, is lost in the detail and confusion and the baggage of life.

Life has a great deal of baggage. It is *seemingly* important to have, but after you get by the importance of something, it seems to vanish. We are impressed with the fact, as we get down the road and look back, that we have spent a great deal of energy just “toting baggage”. We gather together every convenience in order to take care of any possible emergency, and these conveniences become so numerous that they themselves become a burden. (Insurance on everything we own, for example, until we are insurance poor.) By this process we become slaves to our baggage and are lost in the accumulation of “things”.

It is the privilege of every person to find his throne, his place of complete mastery to extricate himself from the multiplicity of interest and live abundantly. Faith in God, and one's self, and knowledge of life's values do wonders in lifting the baggage-loaded pilgrim from personal confusion. A constant look into the heavens following the star over the manger will help him daily to get the true values of life and bring himself to a destination of worth.

As we enter the new year, may our prayer be that God will help us to be bigger than the many interest that surround us; that we may be saved from enslavement in petty affairs until our soul loses all its kingly glory, and that God will help us to press on toward the prize of the high calling of the son of God.

Hoping that everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year to all!!!

*Cecil D. Harper*  
OAEA Chaplain



## GROWLERS & BERGY BYTES

*Odds & Ends Collected and Compiled  
by Billy-Ace Penguin Baker*

Randolph, New Jersey, 16 October 2003—**OAEA member Chuck Fegley** visits South Pole Inn while vacationing in Ireland. See story on page 4.

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Virginia Beach, Virginia—**Retired Army Warrant Officer** claims he spent R&R leave from Vietnam in McMurdo during DF-71. See story on page 6.

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Columbus, Ohio, 9–11 October 2003—**American Polar Society** holds symposium at Ohio State University, Byrd Polar Research Center. See story on page 8.

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McMurdo Station, Antarctica, 25 December 2003—**Three members of Majerus family** all working in Antarctica spend Christmas together at McMurdo. See story on page 12.

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McMurdo Station, Antarctica, 29 December 2003—**Planks from Deep Freeze IV** found during demolition of USARP Garage. See story on page 13.

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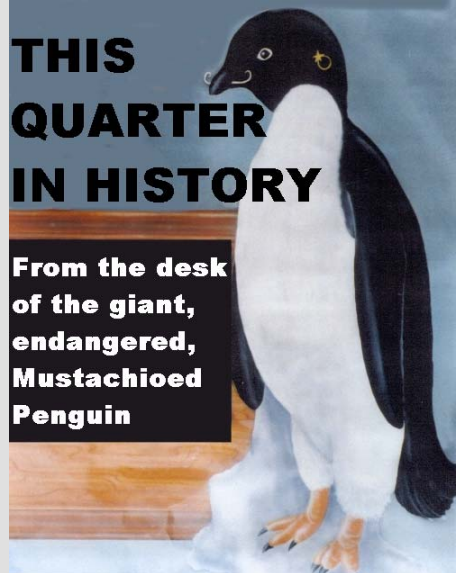
Washington, D.C., 1 October 2003—**Iccap Pay Approved**. Arctic and Antarctic hazardous-pay forthcoming. See story on page 14.

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Pensacola, Florida—**OAEA Pensacola 2002 Reunion Memory Books** are still available from the publisher and may be purchased for \$20.00 each. The 11X17 group photo is also still available and these may be obtained for \$10.00 each. For more information contact Marilyn at the Dunning Company, PO Box 759, Theodore, Alabama 36590, or by calling 800 846 6335. In an interview on 11 November 2003 Marilyn stated that the books would be available for an indefinite period of time. The OAEA Job Order Number is: Job-02362.

## THIS QUARTER IN HISTORY

**From the desk  
of the giant,  
endangered,  
Mustachioed  
Penguin**



### January Events

- 17 Jan 1773 Capt Cook crosses Antarctic circle for first time
- 17 Jan 1820 American sealing ship *Hersilia* reaches 60°12'S, 58°38'W
- 18 Jan 1902 Scott reaches Wood Bay, Victoria Land looking for a base site
- 04 Jan 1958 Hillary arrives at the South Pole in a farm tractor
- 12 Jan 1986 *Southern Quest* sinks at 12:04 a.m.

### February Events

- 06 Feb 1821 Palmer meets von Bellinghausen
- 21 Feb 1902 German vessel *Gauss* stuck in ice
- 12 Feb 1956 USS *Edisto* selects site for Hallett Station
- 19 Feb 1973 Hallett Station closes forever
- 12 Feb 1990 Reinhold Messner and Arved Fuchs complete 1700-mile traverse across Antarctica without dogs or vehicles

### March Events

- 11 Mar 1839 William Steward, Wilkes Expedition, dies aboard the USS *Peacock*
- 08 Mar 1916 Death of Reverend Arnold Spencer-Smith chaplain for Shackleton's 1914–17 expedition. (See related story on page 13)
- 12 Mar 1947 Finn Ronne expedition arrives in Antarctica
- 19 Mar 1968 Fire at Plateau Station destroys garage and equipment
- 27 Mar 1967 McMurdo Dragon Watch Society captures Sir Lofless



# SOUTH POLE INN

By George A. Bloch, D.D.S. and Charles E. Fegley III, PE.

On the final day of our two week, self-generated tour of the wondrously beautiful *Emerald Isle* in August of 2003, we three OAE's and our wives were enjoying the visually stimulating, rugged beauty of the Dingle Peninsula in Ireland's southwestern corner when, to our absolute amazement, we passed a sign on that narrow, winding road that read, *South Pole Inn, ½ mile*. Not fully believing what we had seen, we found a wide spot in the road, turned around and went back to read the sign again. The Inn's location was not in the direction we were headed but we could not resist checking it out. We reached the Inn about 90 minutes before its scheduled 12:00 noon opening and, after peering in the windows for a few minutes, were graciously invited in by its current managers, Trevor and Eileen. We



followed by a delectable lunch. We were ecstatic with the memories it occasioned for us. Our wives, noticing our exhilaration with the Inn and its contents, later said that they could see us "light up" as a result.

The South Pole Inn is located in Annascaul, County Kerry, Ireland and is a home and pub built and operated

pictures, paintings and documents on its walls as well as memorabilia, all creating a most exciting atmosphere. Across the street from the Inn, in what could be considered the village square is a life-sized bronze statue of him holding four dog-sled puppies. A portion of a museum in the nearby city of Tralee is devoted to Tom Crean and his contributions to the polar explorations led by Scott and Shackleton. He had been on two expeditions with each man. He was with Scott on his final and fateful assault on the Pole, but was not selected for the final leg. On January 3, 1912 he was notified of Scott's decision and headed back to base camp at Hut Point. On the way there, Evans was dying of scurvy. Crean saved his life by striking off on his own for help over the last 35 miles. Then, in 1916, he accompanied Ernest Shackleton on his now famous voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia Island, then over the mountains to the whaling village from which the rescue of the expedition was eventually launched.



explained that we were OAE's who had wintered-over "on the ice" in Deep Freeze '64 (1963-64), whereupon flowed the customary Irish warmth, generosity and kindness. Coffee was made and a lengthy exchange of information took place

by the Antarctic Explorer, Tom Crean (1877-1938) following his years on the continent. It remains in his family to this day and, in addition to it's being an Irish pub; it's also an interesting, small-scale museum of his Antarctic years with countless

Tom Crean sailed for the first time to Antarctica in December of 1901 with then Commander Robert Falcon Scott, skipper of *Discovery* and, following several trips to the continent, arrived in Britain in November of 1916 and never returned to Antarctica. He was retired from the Royal Navy in 1920



as a consequence of eye problems caused by privations in Antarctica. He returned to his birthplace where he married, built and ran the South Pole Inn until he died. Excerpts from a pamphlet obtained in the museum in Tralee: “Tom Crean has, until recently, been largely neglected as one of the great explorers of the beginning of the twentieth century. Although his name appears in many of the accounts of the epic adventures of Scott and Shackleton, his contributions tended to be included with those of the other seamen, and overshadowed by the leaders of the expeditions and their officers. Modern historians of

Antarctic expeditions and people currently involved in the Antarctic scientific projects have come to realize that Crean’s contribution to the survival of the exploration teams, and his strength, physical and mental, were in large part contributory to their survival and, in some cases, directly responsible for saving the lives of some of his contemporaries.”

We left the South Pole Inn with autographed copies of the book by Michael Smith entitled *An Unsung Hero, Tom Crean – Antarctic Survivor* a fascinating account of the life and Antarctic adventures of this



remarkable Irishman. For any OAE touring the *Emerald Isle*, no trip would be complete without a visit to this historic Inn or to the museum in Tralee, a part of which honors him.

*Authors Note:*

The OAE’s mentioned and their wives are: Tom and Helen Bates, Chuck and Ruth Fegley and George and Sharon Bloch. In 1963–64 we were each Navy Lieutenants, kids in our twenties, now retired Captains a few years older, perhaps a bit wiser, and marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our arrival “on the ice.” Tom was our Physician/Flight Surgeon; Chuck, a CEC officer and Nuclear Power Engineer, who brought the PM-3A Nuclear Power Plant at McMurdo Station operational that year for the Navy after two years of contractor operations; and George was our dentist. Each of us was, at that time, the only one of our kind in that 5½ million square mile continent. The year was a profoundly exciting and memorable experience that produced enormously strong personal, lifetime bonds for which we are deeply grateful.

*Editors Note:*

The South Pole Inn web site URL: <http://www.southpoleinn.ie/>

**Premiers January 17, 8 p.m. ET/PT on the National Geographic Channel.**

**Crittercam** What does an emperor penguin (right) see when it dives beneath the Antarctic ice? *Crittercam*, a new 13 part series, presents sensational views of the animal world using a pioneering audiovisual/data collection device—the Crittercam. Attached harmlessly to the bodies of whales, seals, lions, and other creatures, it records the world they see as they, hunt, mate, and struggle to survive in the wild.







## I N M E M O R Y

OAE Edward J. Frankiewicz, age 84, died at his home in San Diego, California on 9 May 2003. Edward was a member of the ADFA, but was not a member of the OAEA. He served in VX-6 during DF-I.

OAE Martin Greenwell, age 85, died in Fairfax, Virginia on 16 September 2003. Martin was not a member of the OAEA, but he served as the Commanding Officer of VX-6 during DF-61 and DF-62.

OAE Peter Ross, age 78, died on 30 September 2003. Peter was not a member of the OAEA, but served on the USS *Burton Island*.

OAE Richard Russell Conger, age 82, died at his home in Ijamsville, on 9 October 2003. Richard was not a member of the OAEA, but he served as a photographer during Operation Highjump and Operation Windmill. **See related story on page 14.**

OAE Freddie Bowers, died in Charlotte, North Carolina on 12 October 2003. Freddie was a life member of the OAEA and the ADFA. He served at Little American V during DF-I and with MCB-6 during DF-64.

OAE Ronald F. Bushouer, age 73, died on 26 October 2003. Ronald was not a member of the OAEA, but he served in VXE-6 during DF-70.

OAE Daniel Slosser, died at Fatima Hospital in Jhohston, Rhode Island on 9 November 2003. Daniel was a member of the ADFA, but was not a member of the OAEA. He served at Little America V with DF-I.

OAE Herwil M. Bryant, died in Riverside, California on 11 December 2003. Herwil was not a member of the OAEA, but he served as a biologist with the United States Antarctic Service Expedition (1939–41) at East Base.

OAE Loyd E. Newcomer, age 85, died at the Hospice Care Center in Louisville, Colorado on 18 December 2003. Loyd was not a member of the OAEA, but he served with VX-6 as a LC-130 pilot during DF-60 and DF-61. **See related story on page 14.**

OAE Donald “Red” Sneddon, age 65, died at his home in Anna, Illinois on 19 December 2003. Red was not a member of the OAEA, but wintered over at Byrd Station during DF-67 with ASA Detachment Alfa.

# ARMY WARRANT OFFICER STOW AWAY

*By Billy-Ace Penguin Baker*

**AN ARMY WARRANT OFFICER** on R and R from Vietnam claims he hitched a ride to McMurdo on a Herc in December of 1970 and stayed for two days. I first heard of this story over a year ago from Bob Long, a life member of the OAEA who lives in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

The Warrant Officer, CW3 Alvin Lipson, USA (Ret) claims that he was actually forced into getting on a VXE-6 LC-130 by New Zealand Customs agents. Here is his story in his own words. I will leave it to the reader to decide if Alvin's fantastic story is the truth or a fabrication of his vivid imagination.

In December 1970 I was in Kontum, Vietnam with the 5th Special Forces Group and was on my way to R and R in Australia. I made an overnight stop in Nha Trang and went to the club. At the club, I met a pretty young American girl who was a crew chief on a C-141 from New Hampshire Air National Guard. I wowed her with my charm and informed her that I was on my way to Australia. She said that her aircraft was going to Australia the next morning and asked the pilot if I could hitch a ride with them. They looked at my orders and agreed that I could go. There was only one pallet of cargo and a comfort pallet on the aircraft manifest and with the exception of the flight deck crew; my little crew chief and me were the only other personnel on the aircraft. Needless to say, the crew flew the plane flawlessly and I rode the crew chief all the way to Sydney. We had planned to spend a day together in Sydney, which we did, and she then informed me that she was flying to Christchurch, New Zealand and would

return in 2 days to Australia. She begged me to come along which I did.

Upon arriving in New Zealand, we walked through customs. The flight crew passed through but I was stopped. They asked to see my orders and of course they read Australia. The customs agent informed me that New Zealand wasn't Australia to which I replied, "Australia — New Zealand — what's the difference?" He was not happy with my answer and I was informed that I would be on the next American Flag Carrier out of New Zealand. I believe the date was December 17th. The next American Aircraft left later that day — a C-130 to the Ice. I stayed on the ice only 2 days and left on the 3rd day.

When I asked Alvin for more details he was evasive and feigned a memory loss. He stated that he remembered being escorted to a US Navy Liaison Office at the airport. He also said that the aircraft crew was a bit disturbed because he was going to the ice with them. They gave him what he thought was called a crew pack. Which consisted of a parka, insulated pants, Mickey Mouse boots, a balaclava, and some gloves. He further related that he left the cold weather clothing on the aircraft when he returned to New Zealand three days later.

Alvin had no memory of what he did during the two full days that he was on the ice and he couldn't remember names of anyone he met while there. As a matter of background to explain his not being able to remember anything he told me about a tour of duty that he did on Shemya, Alaska — which according to him — was "an island 1800 miles out on the Aleutian Chain". Alvin stated that he was stationed on Shemya for one year in 1961 and that he could only remember about five names of people that he served with during that period of time and only had three photographs to document his being there and that he couldn't even remember what his barracks room looked like. In other

words accounting for his experiences during the two days while he was on the ice was out of the question.

I suspected that Bob Long was Alvin's neighbor and that he had heard enough about the ice from Bob that he could make up a story about going there himself. Alvin told me that Bob was actually a student in a class that he has teaching and that Bob had mentioned his Antarctic experiences and all he did was tell Bob about his R and R to McMurdo which Bob passed on to me. When I questioned Alvin about this he said: "I didn't bring it up in conversation so if my memory of the place seems a bit fuzzy, it is. I certainly didn't stow away on any aircraft to get there". After the brief interview my final words to Alvin were: This is what in the Navy we call a Sea Story, or a "no shitter". It always starts out with: "This is no Shit". Not to be confused with a Fairy Tale, which starts out with: "Once Upon a Time". After due consideration I believe that Alvin's story is best described as a classic fairy tale.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

**Solo walker makes it to the South Pole**—Fiona Thornewill a solo walker/skier arrived on January 11 at the Geographic south pole. She has travelled from Hercules Inlet to the Pole in 42 days. She is camping out near the Ceremonial Pole alongside the new elevated South Pole Station.

**Pilot Gus McLeod takes off for the ice on 31 December 2003**—He left College Park, Maryland in a single engine aircraft described as a one-of-a-kind experimental modified Korean-built Velocity aircraft with a canard wing design and a single push-prop. Flight plans for the round-the-world trip include a Ushuaia-McMurdo leg over the South Pole, and he wants to use some of Polly Vacher's fuel cache.

Polly Vacher says he can't use her fuel at McMurdo unless he has landing permission there.

# AMERICAN POLAR SOCIETY THIRD SYMPOSIUM & DEDICATION OF POLAR ROCK REPOSITORY

By Billy-Ace Penguin Baker



## Women's Roles in Polar Regions Past, Present, and Future

October 8-11, 2003, Columbus, Ohio—The American Polar Society (APS) held its 2003 Symposium at the Byrd Polar Research Center (BPRC), at The Ohio State University, in Columbus, on 9-10 October. On Wednesday, 8 October registration and an ice breaker reception was held in the campus Holiday Inn and the APS Board of governors (BOG) held a board meeting. The newly elected incoming President John Spletstoeser replaced outgoing President Dr. Gisela Dreschhoff at the Board of Governors meeting. Newly elected BOG members; Billy-Ace Baker, Lynn Tipton-Everett, Bob Kremenak, Robert Rutherford and Donn Haglund were also present at the meeting as was the new First Vice President Richard Cameron.



The actual symposium was 9-10 October and A cross-section of speakers presented papers on the theme *Women's in Polar Regions: Past, Present, and Future*, a tribute to those who were often overlooked and in some cases, discriminated against, in their efforts to conduct research in a "man's world" in the polar regions. The symposium started out with a prayer in his native

language offered by Ken Toovak. A total of 20 speakers and a panel of three people appeared before the attendees. Included were "barrier-breakers" such as Mary Crawford, who as a newly commissioned ensign was the first female Navy Flight Officer (NFO) in the U.S. Antarctic Program. Mary recently retired from the Navy following a 28 year career; Edith "Jackie" Ronne one of the first U.S. women to set foot on the continent and then winter-over; and Colin Bull, who, as Director of the Institute of Polar Studies (now BPRC), assembled the first all-female research group in the U.S. Antarctic Program, and managed to have U.S. Navy approval and NSF funding to conduct its field project in the 1969–70 austral summer. A representative of the tourist industry, Susan Adie spoke on polar expedition tourism and the efforts of the tour companies in policing themselves in preserving the Polar Regions. Others speakers included native women from Alaska who reached professionalism in their careers as a result of proving their worth.

An anti-U.S. Navy theme or feeling seemed to prevail from speaker to speaker until Peter Wilkness, former NSF Office of Polar Programs Director (1984–93), stated during the presentation of his paper that initial Polar Discovery and Exploration, both Arctic and Antarctic would not have been possible without the U.S. Navy.

Jerri Nielsen the South Pole doctor who developed breast cancer during her winter-over at the Pole was an unscheduled guest speaker. Although her presentation was not all that great she appeared to be genuine in personal conversation and a true OAE. *Editors Note:* Jerri recently became a life member of the OAEA. She is currently in Antarctica as a tour-ship lecturer.

Other interesting personalities attending the symposium were Doctor Michelle Raney, first female doctor to winter at South Pole Station (DF-79), and Admiral Byrd's daughter Bolling Clarke. Several Authors of books about Antarctica were available to autograph copies of their book and discuss their experiences and these were Colin Bull author of *Silas*; John Behrendt author of *Innocents on Ice*, Paul Sipiera author of *Ernest Shackleton—A Life of Antarctic Exploration*, and last, but not least Jerri Nielsen author of *Icebound*.

On Thursday evening a banquet was held in the Hotel and Polar medals were presented to individuals who have had outstanding careers in their fields. Honorary Membership Awards went to Dr Ken Hunkins and Dr. Sayed Z. El-Sayed. Dr. Mort D. Turner, former Program Manager for Geology at NSF's Polar Programs received an Honorary Service Award. Two others, Dr. Tony Gow and Dr. James Van Allen, were unable to attend to receive their Honorary Membership Awards, which will be awarded at



a later time. Following the banquet and awards ceremony there was a meeting of the *Polar Times* editorial staff in the hotel lobby.



*LT Mary Crawford in Para Loft during DF-84. Mary was a Member of the VXE-6 Para-Rescue Team.*

Following the lunch break on Friday, 10 October a raffle of three donated items was held. The items included a wall rug featuring puffins, a set of Great Britain Extreme Endeavours stamps featuring several polar explorers, and a silver Old Antarctic Explorers Association (OAEA) commemorative coin, which included a free one-year membership in the OAEA. I was pleasantly surprised when Mary Crawford's ticket was drawn for the OAEA Coin/Membership raffle.



*Polar Rock Repository, located in Scott Hall at the Ohio State University*

The Polar Rock Repository was dedicated on Saturday, 11 October. The depository is just that and not a Rock Museum. It is contained in a newly constructed wing of Scott Hall, location of the BPRC, and was dedicated as the United States Polar Rock Repository. This 4200-sq-ft building will house collections of U.S. scientists from Antarctica and the Arctic, along with Arctic tundra cores. Dr. Barry Lyons, BPRC Director, Dr. Rosie Kyle, and repository curator Dr. Anne Grunow spoke on how the building came into existence with funding from the NSF

and the University. Dr. Scott Borg, Head, Antarctic Sciences Section at NSF's Office of Polar Programs cut the red ribbon to officially open the building.

*Editor's Note:* During the APS Symposium the on Campus Holiday Inn was shared by a symposium of Visually Impaired individuals and their guide dogs. I noticed that some of the attendees spoke German to their dogs. On Saturday morning I opened my hotel room door looking for the newspaper and a large seeing eye dog entered leading his blind owner who was an attractive young woman. I cleared my throat and stated that I thought they had the wrong room. Their room was next door and after some awkward maneuvering they departed and went into their own room. I could hear the woman cussing the dog out in German through the wall. On another occasion I was sitting in the lobby talking to the editor of the *Polar Times*. Several blind people and their dogs were waiting for an elevator. Also waiting was a large guy who looked like he could have been a biker. When the elevator door opened one of the girls's pulled her dog and said: "Come on big boy, let's go." The biker looking dude said: "Are you talking to me or the dog?"

### **REUNION INFORMATION**

*Editor's Note - If you have any information regarding individual OAE group reunions, please send the information to Billy-Ace Baker at [upizauf@aol.com](mailto:upizauf@aol.com) for publication in the Gazette*

**USS Atka (AGB-3)**, Charleston, SC, 25–27 March 2004. Contact: CWO4 Henry G. Giles, (Ret) at 14053 Yale St., Livonia, MI 48154–5219, phone 734 591 3068, or visit the web site at: <http://www.ussatka.org>. The USS *Atka* participated in the IGY Survey, DF-II, III, 60, 62, 64 and 66. *Editors Note:* The *Atka* was transferred to the Coast Guard in 1966 and was recommissioned as the USCGC *Southwind* on 16 January 1967.

**Sixth Annual All Seabee Reunion**, Port Hueneme, CA, 20–23 May 2004. Contact: Edward Kloster, phone 626 280 9495, email [mccb@earthlink.net](mailto:mccb@earthlink.net), or call Casa Sirena Hotel 800 447 3529. Many of the Seabee Battalions deployed to Antarctica as units of the Deep Freeze task force.

**Cargo Handling Battalion One (CHB-1)**, Williamsburg, VA, 31 May 2004. Contact: Frank Kerry, phone 252 636 3015, email [fk1934@aol.com](mailto:fk1934@aol.com). CHB-1 participated in several Deep Freeze deployments.

## ACTIVITIES BY LOCALE

**New England Area**—See article in this issue concerning recent activities in the New England area. The New England group is now holding quarterly activities—contact Marty Diller at [mgdiller@blazenetme.net](mailto:mgdiller@blazenetme.net) or 207-729-0197 for additional information

**Northwest Area**—Plans are still in the works to establish another regional group in the Washington, Oregon and Idaho area. As more information on this becomes available, all members will be notified.

**Pensacola Area**—See article in this issue concerning recent activities in the Pensacola area. The Pensacola group is now holding monthly activities—for information on these contact Les Liptak at 850-492-1666 or [lcliptak@hightec.com](mailto:lcliptak@hightec.com) or Billy-Ace Baker at 850-456-3556 or [upizauf@aol.com](mailto:upizauf@aol.com)

**Tidewater Area**—The Tidewater group met at House of Eggs restaurant on Military Highway at 3 p.m. on 6 December—Contact Ed Hamblin at [ehamblin@cox.net](mailto:ehamblin@cox.net) or 757-405-3362 for more information. Six of the regulars plus one FNG attended the meeting. The new guy, Jim Pitnik, VX-6 Supply, was very dynamic and because of him the meeting was a lot of fun. The next meeting will be on 6 March at the House of Eggs.



## New England OAE's Establish Quarterly Meeting Schedule

*By Marty Diller, New England OAEA Coordinator*

OAEA members in the New England region began a new phase of existence this past October, as they embarked upon a quarterly meeting schedule. Twenty-one people, including seven spouses and friends, met at the former Pease AFB EM/NCO Club in Portsmouth, NH, on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Of those who gathered at Paddy's American Grille restaurant and bar, many had not attended a regional OAEA meeting before.

Everyone enjoyed a pleasant afternoon in the back of Paddy's billiard room, where members proudly displayed Antarctic charts and plenty of memorabilia for all to

admire. Included in the displays was the VXE-6 Decomm CD, made available on a laptop as a continuing slideshow presentation, with the program cycling through the many photos on the disk.

Present to enjoy the day of good times, good food, good stories and good memories were:

From Rhode Island

- Don "Squatty Root" Richards (PR2, USN (Ret.); VX-6, DF'59-61, DF'63-66, DF'70-73; W/O DF'61, DF'64, DF'66) with his wife, Maggee,
- Dave Killian (E-3, VXE-6; Strip Cargo DF'70-73),
- "Chet" Thomas (ABHC, USN (Ret.); VX-6 DF-I/II & DF'58-62) with his wife, Cora, and
- Jack Jennings (VXE-6, DF '70-73).

From Massachusetts

- Don Leger (RM3; VXE-6, DF'71-73),
- Don Gianelli (AEC, USN (Ret.); VX-6, DF'64-65), and
- Fred Santino (AE3; VX-6; DF'64-65 Strip Avionics, DF'65-66; Strip Ops Coordinator).

New Hampshire attendees included:

- Win Hames (HMCS, USN (Ret.); VX-6, DF-II/III/IV), with his wife Janet, and
- Charlie 'CB' Bevilacqua (CWO4, CEC, USN (Ret.); DF-I & II), with his friend Ellie White.

Rounding out the group, from Maine were:

- Gary Newquist (HMC, USN (Ret.); DF'69-70, McM W/O'70) with his wife, Karen,
- Dave Hazard (ABCS, USN (Ret.); VXE-6 Herc Loadmaster, DF'70-74) with his wife, Anne,
- Dave Dubois (SKC, USN (Ret.); NSFA; McM W/O'73; DF'72-73/78-79),
- Charles Lagerbom (NSF; Field Asst. for U.Maine Meteorology research team in the Dry Valleys, DF'90-92), and
- Marty Diller (LCDR, USN (Ret.); VXE-6 Herc pilot, DF'92-94; "Mayor" of Willy Field DF'92-93), with his wife, Bev.

Once again, many thanks are directed to Charlie Bevilacqua, who provided informational booklets on Antarctica. His generosity prompted all attendees to willingly donate money towards the administrative costs of setting up and notifying New England OAEA members of these gatherings.

Continued member interest in regional New England get-togethers remains high, prompting a consensus among this meeting's attendees to begin a quarterly meeting routine. This is a big step towards transitioning to a more structured framework — from a "region" of members



*New England OAEA October meeting group photo: (all rows left to right)*

*Front row kneeling: Charlie Bevilaqua, Dave Hazard, Don Leger*

*Second row of five: Don Gianelli, Ellie White, Squatty Root Richards, Jack Jennings, Magee Richards.*

*Third row: Janet Hames, Bev Diller, Marty Diller, Anne Hazard, Chet Thomas, Cora Thomas.*

*Last row: Win Hames, Charles Lagerbom, Fred Santino (head shot only), Gary Newquist, Karen Newquist, Dave Dubois.*

*Not pictured: Dave Killian*

who sometimes attend these social get-togethers, to perhaps the long-range goal of establishing an organized and structured OAEA New England Chapter for active, dedicated members with chapter officers and everything!

Accordingly, plans are underway to have the next northern New England get-together on a Saturday in mid-February. I'd like to emphasize again that you must not hesitate to attend the next 'mini-reunion' or get-together of OAE's in your area. If you put it off, you may never get to meet some of these amazing Ice veterans and share your memories of Antarctic service.

To those of you who dislike the traffic, crowds and "bother" associated with attending these events – you shouldn't expect that you're going to have to meet and greet every single person there. You'll have a great time just talking to one or two of your fellow OAE's over a drink for a couple hours before heading home.

We're not getting any younger, so promise yourself to take the time and make a little effort to get out there at the next opportunity—you won't regret it!

### **Gulf Coast OAE's Get Together at Seville Quarter**

On 21 November a small group of 18 OAE's showed up at the monthly meeting of the Gulf Coast OAEA group. The meeting was scheduled for 1300, but due to a mix-up in scheduling the meeting was delayed until 1400.

Members who had arrived early took advantage of the situation and had a few drinks, or lunch while waiting for the meeting to start.



*Ashlee Baker, Billy-Ace, and Pam Landy are seen applauding the end of Lennie Bourgeois' Road Trip to Alaska speech.*

Les Liptak moderated the meeting and after muster was held, Capt. Con Jaburg, USN (Ret) gave a presentation of his winter-over experiences at Ellsworth Station during Deep Freeze II. Following Con's presentation Lennie Bourgeois gave an impromptu, but detailed dissertation



of his road trip to Alaska. Lennie came to the meeting in the full regalia of an OAE wearing his original Byrd Cloth jacket and Mukluks. The jacket was moldy and the Mukluks had seen better days. Due to the meeting starting late Lennie had to cut his presentation short, but he promised to conclude it the next meeting. Following the presentations the chapter Master-At-Arms/Happiness and Bad News Petty Officer and Scribe, AKA Charlie Henke, collected money for the 50/50 drawing. In addition to the money collected from the drawing several members made cash donations to the chapter fund and a special thank you is extended to all who participated in the drawing, and/or donated to the fund.

Near the end of the meeting Mark O'Brien, journalist for the Pensacola News Journal showed up and collected notes for an article he later wrote about the proposed postage stamp commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the first aircraft landing at the South Pole by Gus Shinn piloting *Que Sera Sera*. One new face at the meeting was that of Paul Beal who was a Dental Technician and a member of the Para-Rescue team with VX-6 During DF-III. Due to the holiday season there was no meeting in December. The next meeting is scheduled for 1300 on 30 January 2004 and Capt. Frank Stokes will give a dog and pony presentation of his winter-over experiences at Little America V during Deep Freeze III.

### THREE FAMILY MEMBERS SPEND CHRISTMAS TOGETHER AT MCMURDO

*By Billy-Ace Penguin Baker*

**N**ick Majerus, who has spent over 70 months in Antarctica was able to enjoy Christmas dinner with two other members of his family who are all working on the ice for Raytheon. Nick first came to McMurdo Station on WinFly for DF-81 (1980–81), and stayed for the summer. DF-81 was the first contract year for ANS/ITT having replaced Holmes and Narver. Nick was the Sheet metal Foreman, the job that he has held on each of his trips to the ice, and worked out of the “Foldaway”, or Bldg-191. In a recent email messages Nick explained that some buildings still go by names that have stuck over the years and other buildings just go by building, numbers. Nick did five summer seasons with ANS/ITT, and then took a break from the ice.

In 1990–91 he was “sucked back into to ice thing again”. He returned once more as the Sheet Metal Foreman, this time for ASA and it was the first year of their contract. In 1991–1992 his brother, Greg “John” Majerus who worked as a welder, joined Nick. Since then John has returned to the ice each year. He also summer/wintered last season and

went home during Winfly. Then returned the first week of November of this season.

Nick’s daughter Michelle first came to the ice in 1994–95 and worked in the Galley, and part of the year as a Janitor. She moved on to the Firehouse where she was a dispatcher for four seasons including one winter-over and she is back this season as a shuttle bus driver. John’s daughter, Nicole Majerus came to the ice in 1995–96, and

*Majerus family enjoy Christmas 2003 dinner together. Left to right: Unknown suitor, Michelle, Nick, & John.*



worked as a janitor. She also wintered-over one year. Nicole decided to stay at home this season. Of all the Majerus OAE’s Nick has the most time on the ice but is the only family member who has never spent a winter in Antarctica.

Nick left the program again at the end of the 1996–97 summer season, thinking that would be his last season on the ice. Little did he know that he would return again in 2003–04. Once again as the Sheet Metal Foreman and for another new contractor. Nick said “this time it is RPSC (Raytheon).” “Same job, same Building, same desk, same everything.” “It doesn’t change here — it is the same ball game, just different players.” Nick went on to say; “I find myself thinking as if I have never left here, and remember where things were in 1997 when I was last here. I go to look for material, and some times it is still there!”

*Editors Note:* A story about the eight members of the Majerus family who have worked in Antarctica was published in the final edition—9 February 1997—of the *Antarctic Sun Times* published by NSFA on 9 February 1977.

**OAEA Commemorative Coins are still available and part of the proceeds go to the OAEA Scholarship Fund. Contact Billy-Ace Baker at [upizauf@aol.com](mailto:upizauf@aol.com) or by telephone at 850 456 3556 for details.**

## Baker's Second Law of Antarctica

This law states that Summer Support will reinvent the wheel every fourth season. The Second Law is based on the premise that after four years operational procedures have a tendency to repeat themselves based on new guys on the block believing that they have created an Antarctic first in the absence of veterans who could say 'been there, done that'. This is a classic example of the OAE's VS the FNG's syndrome.

Apparently this law preceded Operation Deep Freeze and was in full force during Operation Highjump. A case in point being the story of Rev. William Menster, USN who was the Operation Highjump chaplain for the Central Group and served on the USS *Mount Olympus*. Father Bill, as he was known to his congregation, was the first chaplain to accompany Admiral Byrd to Antarctica; and he is touted to have been the first clergyman to set foot on the continent; and the first to hold religious services there. He composed the Prayer of Antarctic

Dedication, first recited at Little America on 26 January 1947, and which has been in use since that time. His book, *Strong Men South*, first published in 1949, has gone through five printings with the most recent being in 1999. We know that most of the above is true, but the claim that Father Bill was the first clergyman on the ice invokes the Second Law of Antarctica.

Rev. Arnold Spencer Spence, another OAE, who preceded Father Bill by over 30 years may hold the distinction of being the first ordained clergyman to set foot on the Antarctic continent. He was an Anglican cleric on the Shackleton 1914–1917 expedition and was signed on as the photographer because Shackleton did not like clergymen. However, at times Spencer-Smith held furtive religious services. He died on 8 March 1916 from scurvy and exhaustion, during particular miserable circumstances on the return trip from the Beardmore Glacier to Ross Island.

It is probable that men of the cloth accompanied earlier explorers on their expeditions to Antarctica. Many of the expeditions were large with a number of ships and hundreds of men. It shouldn't come as a surprise to learn that some of these expeditions may have included chaplains who ventured south of the Antarctic Circle before either Spencer-Smith or Menster did.

*Editorial Note:* In 1998 Capt. Eugene Van Reeth, USN (Ret), former VX-6 CO, CASA and CNSFA, became aware that Fr. Menster did not have an Antarctic feature named in his honor. After making contact with the appropriate people at NSF and the USGS Board on Geographic Names steps were taken to have a prominent ledge named after Menster. The President of Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa presented the USGS certificate to him at a ceremony in October 2001. Both Menster and Van Reeth are alumnus of Loras.



*On June 4, 2000, former Pastor Fr. Michael Mescher (L) welcomed Fr. William Menster as a visitor to Sacred Heart. Fr. Menster, pictured here at age 89, in 1947 celebrated the first Mass in Antarctica, 750 miles from the South Pole. He was chaplain of Admiral Richard E. Byrd's Flagship, the USS *Mount Olympus*. Fr. Menster is a graduate of Sacred Heart School, and served here as a Pastoral Associate over 60 years ago.*



## Deep Freeze IV Planks

During the recent demolition of the USARP garage at McMurdo Station heavy wooden planks used in the flooring of the old building were unearthed that had DEEP FREEZE IV stenciled on them. One of the planks is shown in the photo on the right.



## Operation Highjump and Operation Windmill Photographer

*By Billy-Ace Penguin Baker*

**PHC Richard Russell Conger**, age 82 died at his home on 9 October 2003 (*See In Memory elsewhere in this issue*). Chief Conger made three trips to Antarctica and participated in Operations Highjump and Windmill.

He was a pioneer in Navy cinematography and early in his career he worked nights at Life Magazine to learn still photography techniques. During WW-II he was assigned to aerial mapping, and he photographed or filmed many Pacific islands and Japan during this time. In 1946, he went to Antarctica, where he would travel three more times.



*PHC Conger and penguins*

When the seaplane (PBM) *George I* carrying an eight-man crew and the captain of the USS *Pine Island* crashed during a whiteout into the icy mountains in the vicinity of Thurston Peninsula Chief Conger participated in the rescue mission. After the wreck was located 23 days later, the closest place to land was 12 miles away. The rescue plane's commander and Mr. Conger set out in a lifeboat, threading their way through ice-choked waters and pulling a sled. They reached the crew, got them aboard the lifeboat and arrived back at their plane just in time to take off before they would have been iced in. Three of the crewmembers died in the crash.

In 1949 and 1950, he was lent to the 20th Century Fox studio to shoot underwater sequences for the 1951 movie *The Frogmen*, starring Richard Widmark. He was sent to the Arctic in the early 1950s to shoot photos for maps. In 1963, he took the first combat photo team into Vietnam. He retired from the Navy in 1969 as a lieutenant after 28 years in the service.

## First Winter Emergency Flight

*By Billy-Ace Penguin Baker*

Six weeks after station closing a VX-6 C-130 flew a 13,000 mile mercy mission from Quonset Point to Byrd Station to rescue a Russian exchange scientist.

The pilot of the history making Medical Evacuation (MedEvac), CDR Loyd Newcomer, age 85, died on 18 December 2003 (*See: In Memory elsewhere in this issue*). On 9 April 1961 Cdr. Newcomer and his crew landed their LC-130 at Byrd station. Within 45 minutes they were off again, carrying the ailing Russian scientist to New Zealand.



*Personnel pre-heating C-130, BUNO 148321 at McMurdo, prior to takeoff for the first winter medevac from Byrd Station in April 1961.*

When the Russian ionospherist became ill VX-6 was called on to assist and dispatched two C-130BLs from Quonset Point, the aircraft reaching Christchurch on April 4, 1961. Weather delayed the rescue mission until April 8, when BuNo 148321 departed for McMurdo. The aircraft, under the command of Commander L. Newcomer, carried 23 personnel, including a spare crew, a linguist and medical officers. The icebreaker USS *Staten Island* made a dash from Port Lyttelton to be in position at 60° South to cover the rescue flight, and the second LC-130 stood by at Christchurch as an SAR aircraft. The rescue aircraft was refueled at McMurdo and then flew on to Byrd Station. After picking up the patient it returned to McMurdo and topped up with fuel for the return flight to Christchurch. When it came to leaving McMurdo, however, some trouble was experienced. Even with full power on all four engines and the assistance of eight JATO bottles the Hercules could not overcome the drag of three feet of soft snow. It taxied up and down the skiway four times to compact the surface, and on the second attempt, with new JATO bottles, was able to get airborne.

Following the 26,000 mile, round-trip mission the Navy was criticized for putting the aircraft and aircrew at considerable risk to rescue a Russian who was not in immediate danger. In addition there was no formal thanks from the Soviet government. In spite of the criticism and the snub the Navy proved that they could fly to Antarctica at any time of the year.

*Editors Note:* Part of the information used in compiling this article was from a newspaper obituary submitted by OAEA member Eugene Van Reeth.



# Ice-pack incentive pay could set new precedent

By Rick Maze *Navy Times* staff writer  
Submitted by OAEA member Mike Selke

Unable to convince the Pentagon that aircrews flying to the Arctic and Antarctic deserve hardship-duty pay, the House Armed Services Committee has made a precedent-setting move of creating a new pay — the exact same amount but at a daily rather than monthly rate — for those crews.

The new ice-pack incentive pay, included in the House version of the 2004 defense authorization bill, would be \$5 a day for any service member who sets foot in the Arctic or Antarctic. Simply flying over or sailing under the ice would not qualify service members for the pay.

Only one unit makes routine flights to and from the ice packs: the 109th Airlift Wing of the New York Air National Guard (NYANG), which flies ski-equipped LC-130s on missions to Antarctica from October to February.

It's no coincidence that the lawmaker sponsoring the pay proposal is from New York — Rep. John McHugh, R-N.Y., who heads the House Armed Services total force subcommittee.

Two other units, the Air Force Reserve's 445th Airlift Wing and 452nd Airlift Mobility Wing, also might qualify for the proposed pay. These units fly between New Zealand and McMurdo Station, Antarctica.

McHugh tried last year to make the aircrews eligible for monthly hardship pay of \$150. The Pentagon balked, saying hardship-duty pay is for people who endure 30 consecutive days of hardship, with payments beginning on the 31st day. *Editor note:* The story was carried in the Summer 2003 issue of the Gazette (Volume 3, Issue 3).

Hardship pay is authorized for the Arctic and Antarctic, but the aircrews don't normally qualify because they spend only a short time on the ground.

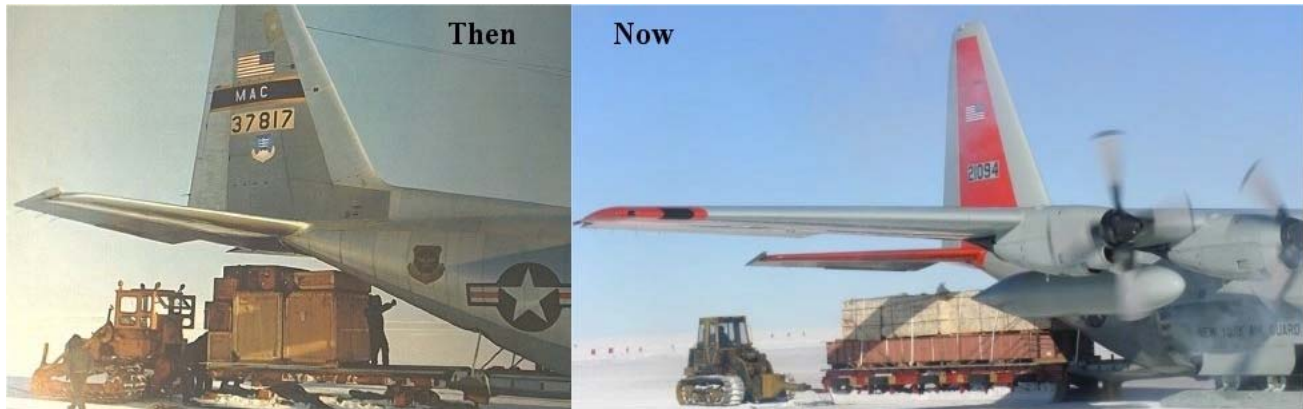
A General Accounting Office review of the Pentagon policy in April found that the aircrews do, in fact, work under extreme conditions and face a variety of hazards. They take off and land in remote areas on snow and ice, do maintenance in temperatures as low as minus 59 degrees Fahrenheit with no hangars and face such potential health hazards as "hypothermia, frostbite, carbon-monoxide poisoning, ultraviolet radiation and dehydration."

But the GAO found no fault with the view that hardship pay is not intended to compensate for short deployments, no matter how bad the conditions.

In the wake of that review, McHugh decided to take a different tack with his \$5-a-day proposal. The Pentagon has yet to comment on the idea, but defense officials said it would be a precedent-setting move to create an incentive pay for one type of assignment.

When effective this special pay will apply to duty after 1 October 2003 and will be in addition to any other flight pay or aircrew pay received.

**Editors Note:** This article refers to the special hardship pay as "ice-pack" pay and states that sailing under the ice would not qualify service members for the pay. This statement alone excludes submarine crews from being eligible. However, the term ice-pack pay applies to submarines, but does not apply to the NYANG who operate their aircraft on the ice-cap and not the ice-pack. A moot point, but you better believe that if the NYANG receives this special pay the submarine crews will demand their share.



*Air Force ski equipped C-130 aircraft cargo operations in Antarctica. Left photo circa 1960 at McMurdo and right photo at South Pole Station in 2003.*

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