

A Postal History of Ross Dependency (New Zealand Antarctic) 1955-87



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2018

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

In 1908 Britain was the first country to lay claim to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica. Britain later granted New Zealand responsibility for administering her territory between 150° East and 160° West and, on 21 May 1923, the New Zealand Cabinet made the Ross Sea region a Dependency and vested control in the Governor-General.

“And whereas the coasts of the Ross Sea, with the islands and territories adjacent thereto, between the 160th degree of East Longitude and the 150th degree of West Longitude, which are situated south of the 60th degree of South Latitude, are a British settlement...that part of His Majesty’s Dominions in the Antarctic seas...shall be named the Ross Dependency...the Governor General of the Dominion of New Zealand shall be the Governor of the Ross Dependency.”

Imperial Order in Council under the British Settlements Act 1887, 30 July 1923

Territorial Claims

Several other countries have made claim to Antarctic territory and much activity has occurred there to secure those claims or position for the eventual lodging of claims. However, since 1959 the Antarctic Treaty has put all claims on hold for the duration of the Treaty, which now has an indefinite term.

New Zealand Antarctic Postal History Background

Robert Duns’ 1997 monograph *New Zealand Antarctic Postal History to 1941* covered New Zealand’s early Antarctic postal history. Very little happened regarding Antarctic activities during the period 1942-54 from the New Zealand postal history point of view, apart from occasions when some of the US fleet of Operation High Jump passed through Wellington and Dunedin ports on their way to and from Antarctica during 1946-47 and the US Navy Antarctic Expedition when USS *Atka* visited Wellington and Dunedin in January 1955. This second chapter of New Zealand’s Antarctic postal history begins with preparations for New Zealand’s participation in the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1955-58 and ends with the closure of Scott Base Post Office on 30 September 1987. For convenience, I have divided chapters to accord with US Operation Deep Freeze periods. Specific topics of New Zealand’s Antarctic postal history have been dealt with separately elsewhere, so they are not re-presented herein; the following monographs may be viewed at www.classicstamps.co.nz:

- A Postal History of the 1955-58 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition
- Operation Deep Freeze Picket Ships
- The Postmarks of Ross Dependency
- The Postage Stamps of New Zealand - The Ross Dependency Issues
- Ross Dependency Historic Huts Restoration Project
- A Postal History of the Joint New Zealand - United States Hallett Station Antarctica
- The New Zealand Oceanographic Institute Antarctic & Sub-Antarctic Voyages 1956-79
- A Postal History of Campbell Island

Acknowledgements

Much of the primary data on the people who went south, how they got there and what they did while they were there, was extracted from the journals of the New Zealand Antarctic Society, the United States Antarctic journals (and its predecessors) and reports of the New Zealand and United States Antarctic Research Programs. The postal history of their dispatches was reconstructed from polar philatelic collections of Ian Harkess, Eric Gibbs, G.J. Harvey, the author, and many others. I am especially grateful to Paul Wales, Stephen McLachlan and Brian Summerell of New Zealand, David Larson, John Young and Bob Stark of the United States, Brian Clayton of the United Kingdom, Andrew Fitzhardinge of Australia, Neils Bruhn of Germany, and many others for access to their collections. There will be omissions and errors presented here I am sure, as the field is so wide and the information available often limited, my apologies for such occurrences. Images of covers were generally scaled to a 7.5cm width, with larger covers scaled to 10cm width, for consistency in presentation. Ross Dependency postal rates are the same as those of New Zealand, which have been reported elsewhere.

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New Zealand's early involvement in Antarctica

In 1923 New Zealand took over responsibility for the Ross Dependency, thereafter the government did little other than appoint a succession of administrators. During the next 30 years, not much else happened. In 1933, a group of enthusiasts formed the New Zealand Antarctic Society and 20 years later Robert Falla (Chair) and Arthur Helm (Secretary) wrote to New Zealand Prime Minister Sidney Holland urging the government to establish a permanent station in the Ross Dependency. A year later Jim Rose, President of the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand, together with his son-in-law Sir Edmund Hillary, were quoted in the Evening Post of 13 November 1954 *"it is time New Zealand took some steps to establish its right to administer the Ross Dependency...we should at least send an expedition there"*.

The Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition

See: Jurisich, M. *A Postal History of the 1955-58 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition*; Classic Stamps Ltd, Blenheim, New Zealand 2018. @ www.classicstamps.co.nz

New Zealand participation in the International Geophysical Year

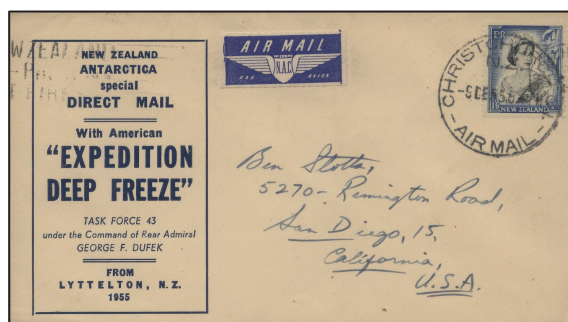
New Zealand participated, along with 12 other countries, in the IGY, from 1 July 1957 to 31 December 1958. The United States Operation Deep Freeze program subsequently became closely inter-woven with New Zealand's Antarctic efforts and also provided New Zealand with transport of men and equipment from New Zealand to and from Antarctica, together with internal ship and helicopter support.

Operation Deep Freeze I (1955-56)

The United States contribution to IGY included the establishment of bases in the sector between 160°E and 120°W. DF I had for its mission the construction of bases at Little America, South Pole, and Hut Point on Ross Island (McMurdo). These bases were in addition to Ellsworth Station on the Antarctic Peninsula. Nominally led by Antarctic veteran Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, operational command was with Rear Admiral George Dufek, who had returned to active service from retirement for this command, having served under Byrd in both the 1939-40 and 1946-47 Byrd Antarctic Expeditions.



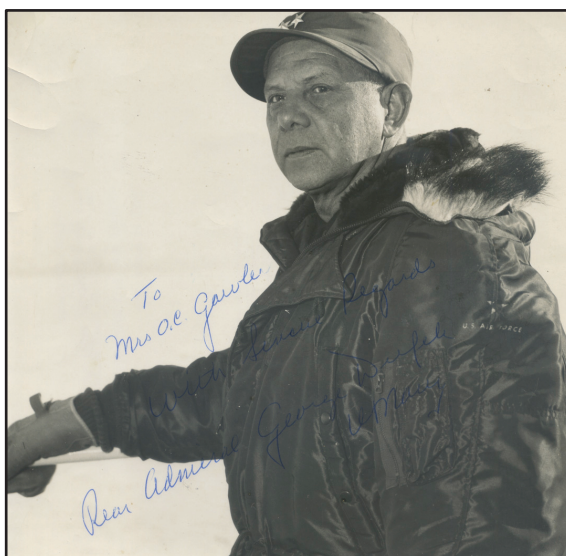
WELLINGTON N.Z REGISTERED -2 DE 1955
signed by Richard E. Byrd



CHRISTCHURCH AIRMAIL -9 DE 1955
New Zealand souvenir cover



Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd

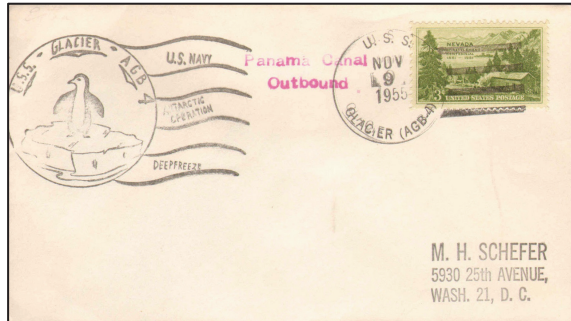


Rear Admiral George Dufek

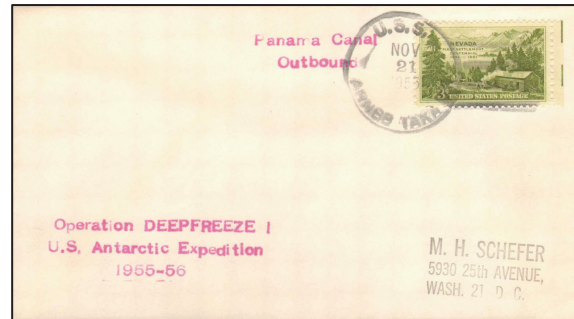
U.S. Fleet

Seven ships formed the fleet: USS *Glacier*, USS *Edisto*, USS *Arneb* and USS *Wyandot* (with post offices aboard), plus USCGC *Eastwind*, USS *Nespelen* and USNS *Greenville Victory* (no post offices aboard). Fuel tanker *YOG-34* was towed south by USCGC *Eastwind*.

Operation Deep Freeze I began in earnest in November 1955 when most of the United States Navy Task Force 43 fleet departed from Boston for Lyttelton, New Zealand.



U.S.S. GLACIER NOV 9 1955
cachet Panama Canal Outbound

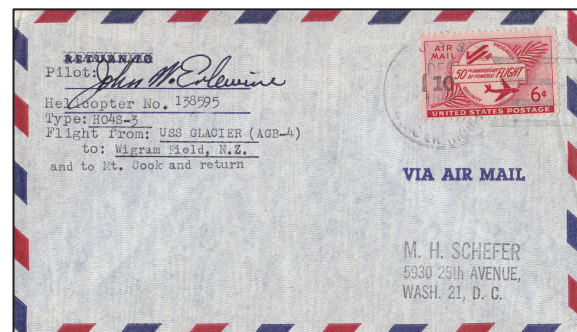


U.S.S. ARNEB NOV 21 1955
cachet Panama Canal Outbound

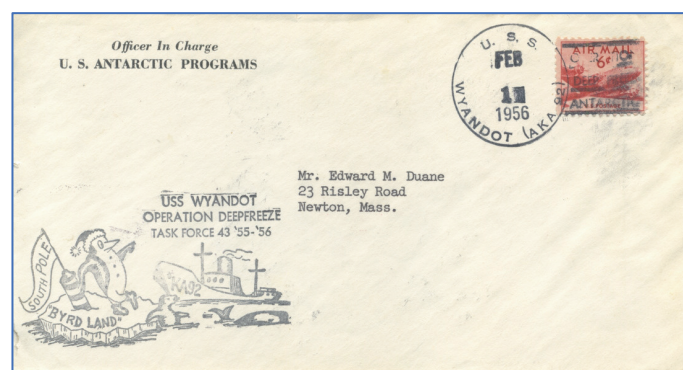
USS *Glacier* arrived at Lyttelton on 6 December 1955 and USS *Edisto* on 16 December; USS *Wyandot*, USNS *Greenville Victory* and USNS *Nespelen*, escorted by USCGC *Eastwind*, arrived on 12 December, and USS *Arneb* on 13 December.



U.S.S. EDISTO DEC 7 1955
flown via helicopter from ship to shore while approaching
Port Lyttelton Dec 8, 1955; signed Lt M.W. Alexander



U.S.S. GLACIER DEC 10 1955
flight USS Glacier to Wigram Field and Mt Cook and return



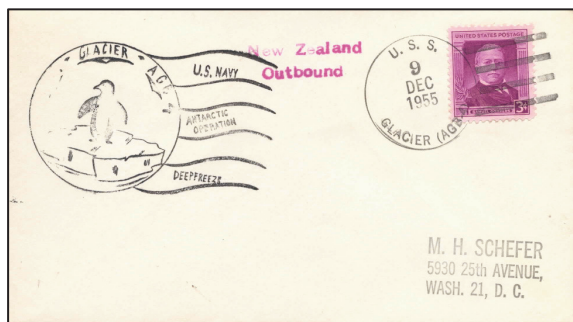
U.S.S. WYANDOT FEB 1 1956

USS *Glacier* and USS *Edisto* departed Lyttelton on 10 December 1955 to clear a path through the sea-ice and for the advance crew to set up an ice airstrip in McMurdo Sound for incoming aircraft.

New Zealand Advance Party with Operation Deep Freeze I

On 12 December 1955, geologist Bernard Gunn went south on USNS *Greenville Victory* while geophysicist Trevor Hatherton and Royal New Zealand Navy Lieutenant Commander William Smith went on USS *Edisto*.

The first sea-ice report was sent early on 16 December when USS *Glacier* was just south of Scott Island. Dufek decided to sail the other ships immediately, and at 2pm that afternoon they left Lyttelton.



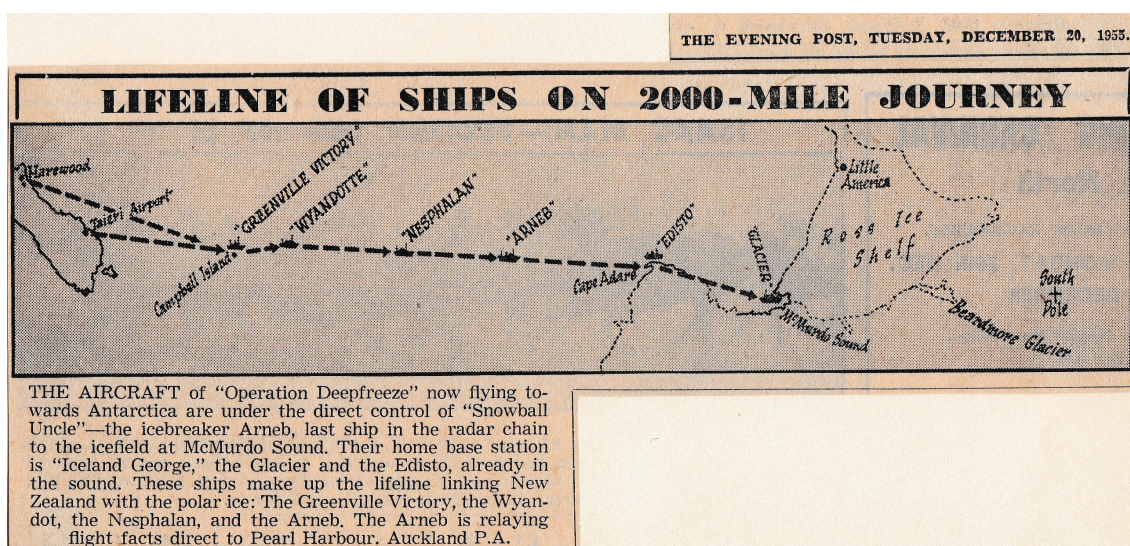
U.S.S. GLACIER 9 DEC 1955
cachet New Zealand Outbound



U.S.S. EDISTO DEC 9 1955; CHRISTCHURCH 10 DE 55
cachet New Zealand Outbound



U.S.S. *Glacier* departs Lyttelton



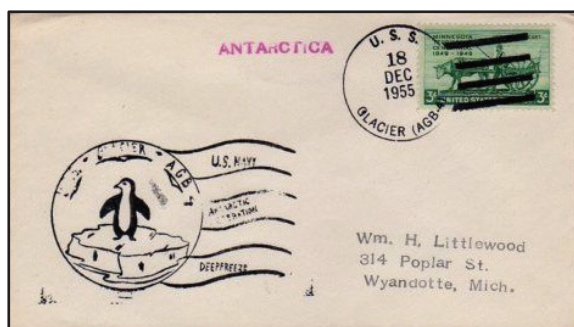
USS *Glacier* arrived off McMurdo Sound on 18 December. An airstrip was laid out on firm ice about 30 miles south of open water and USS *Glacier*'s UC1 Otter aircraft was off-loaded. A tent city was hurriedly thrown up at Hut Point to accommodate flight crews.



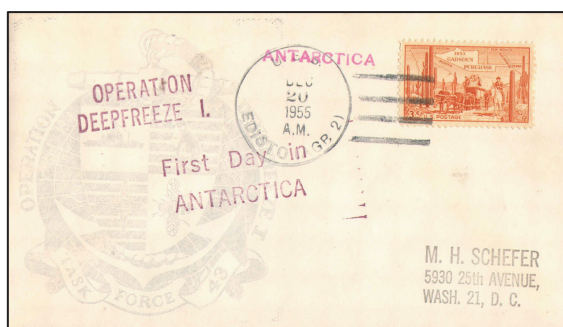
U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 15 1955
Antarctic Circle, Scott Island, Ice Pack (1st entry) - 15 Dec 55



U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 18 1955
First ship to arrive McMurdo Sound, visit Adelle Penguin Rookerie on Mt. Bird - 18 Dec 1955



U.S.S. GLACIER 18 DEC 1955
cachet ANTARCTICA (date of arrival off Ross Island)



U.S.S. EDISTO DEC 20 1955
cachet First Day in Antarctica

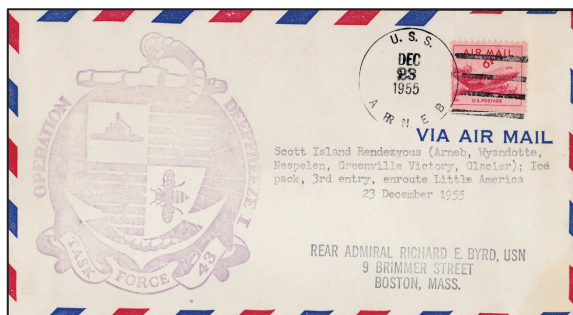
On 19 December USS *Edisto* arrived in McMurdo Sound and USS *Glacier* was ordered to her picket station near Cape Adare (71°S 170°E) for the incoming flights. Before the day was out everything was ready at McMurdo for the fly-in. On 20 December, USS *Glacier*'s UC1 Otter aircraft made the first flight from McMurdo Sound (opposite Mt. Erebus) to Hut Point.



U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 20 1955
First flight N.Z. to Antarctica (2 P2V's and 2 R5D's)
- 20 December 1955



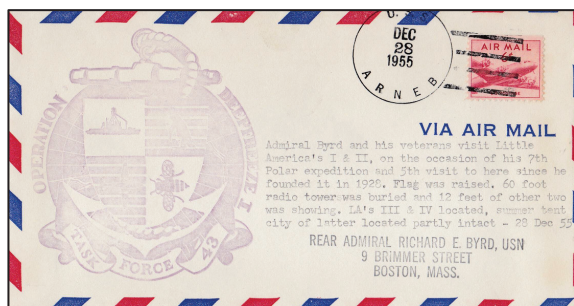
U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 22 1955
Ice pack, 2nd entry, enroute Scott Island Rendezvous
- 22 Dec 1955



U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 23 1955
Scott Island rendezvous (Arneb, Wyandotte, Nespelen, Greenville Victory, Glacier); Ice pack, 3rd entry, enroute Little America. 23 December 1955

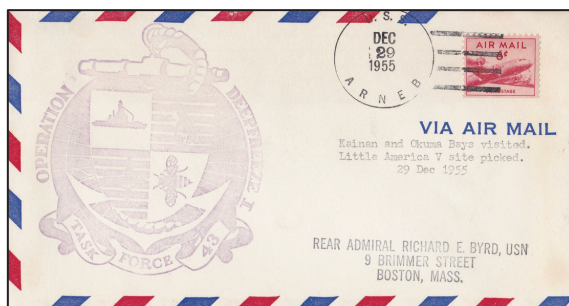


U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 25 1955
Christmas - Ross Sea - enroute Little America - 25 Dec 1955



U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 28 1955

Admiral Byrd and his veterans visit Little America's I & II on the occasion of his 7th Polar expedition and 5th visit to here since he founded it in 1928. Flag was raised. 60 foot radio tower was buried and 12 feet of other two was showing. LA's III & IV located, summer tent city of latter located partly intact – 28 Dec 55

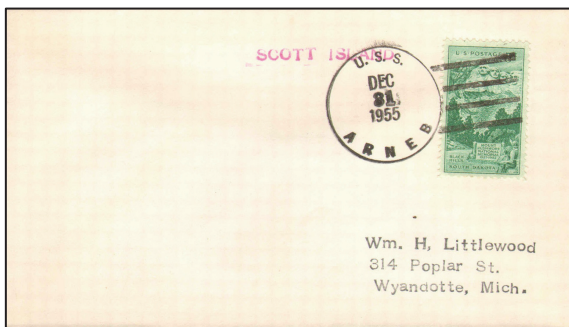


U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 29 1955

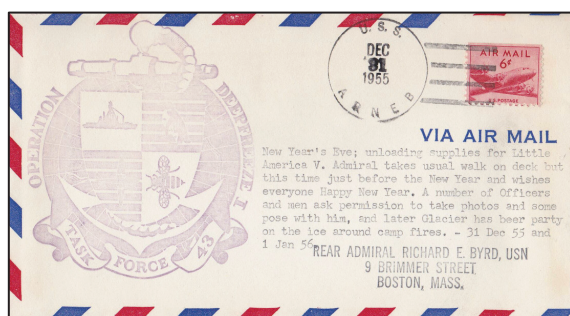
Kainan & Okuma Bays visited. Little America V site picked. 29 Dec 1955



U.S.S. WYANDOT DEC 30 1955
cachet tanker YOG-34



U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 31 1955
cachet SCOTT ISLAND

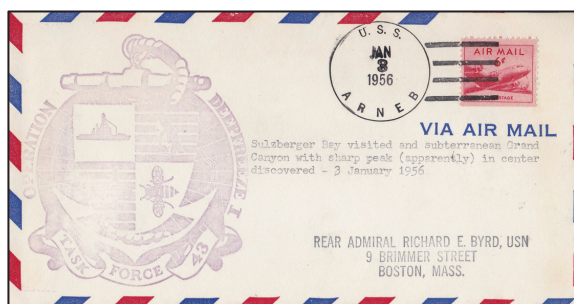


U.S.S. ARNEB 31 DEC 1955

New Year's Eve; unloading supplies for Little America V, Admiral takes usual walk on deck but this time just before the New Year and wishes everyone Happy New Year. A number of Officers and men asked permission to take photos and some pose with him, and later Glacier has beer party on the ice around camp fires. - 31 Dec 55 and 1 Jan 56.

Seamail

Nearly 280,000 souvenir covers accompanied the United States fleet for cancellation at Little America V Station in the Bay of Whales, at Byrd Station in Marie Byrd Land and at Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station.



U.S.S. ARNEB JAN 3 1956

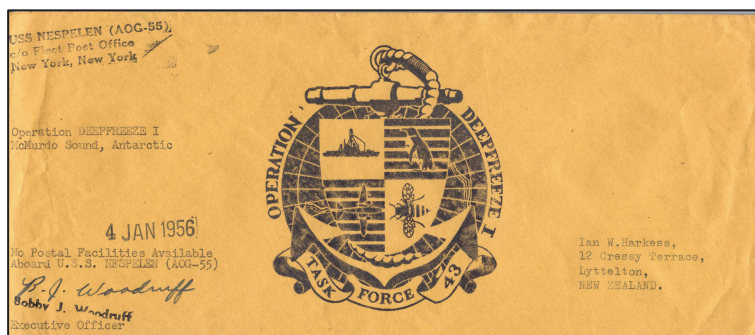
Sulzberger Bay visited and subterranean Grand Canyon with sharp peak (apparently) in center discovered – 3 January 1956



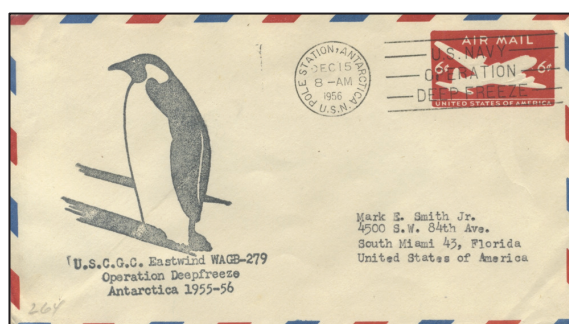
U.S.S. ARNEB JAN 4 1956

Little America V Commissioned 4 January 1956

Mail was cancelled at McMurdo on board those ships that had postal facilities, and mail from those ships without postal facilities, can often be identified by ship's cachets:



4 JAN 1956; No Postal Facilities Available Aboard U.S.S. NESPELEN signed B.J. Woodruff Executive Officer



POLE STATION, ANTARCTICA DEC 15 1956 cachet U.S.C.G.C. Eastwind

U.S. Flights inbound

The first incoming United States aircraft, an R5D-3 Skymaster and a Lockheed P2V-2 Neptune, arrived at the Royal New Zealand Air Force Base at Wigram near Christchurch on 27 November 1955. The rest arrived soon after, the R5D-3 Skymaster, Grumman UF-1L Albatross and the Douglas R4D-5 Skytrain on 30 November; the R4D-5 Skytrain on 2 December, the Albatross UF-1L on 9 December and finally the Lockheed P2V-2 Neptune on 11 December.

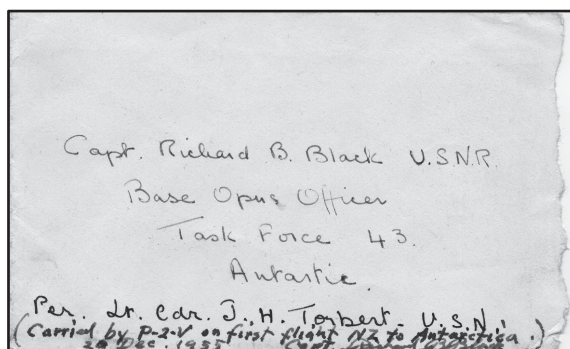


US aircraft at Harewood (Christchurch) airport on 15 December 1955

On 20 December, with all vessels on station and weather favorable, the eight aircraft of VX-6 Squadron took off from New Zealand for McMurdo. The two Skytrains and the two Albatrosses left from the Royal New Zealand Air Force Base at Wigram at 3am, refueling at Taieri Airport near Dunedin. The two Skymasters and the two Neptunes left from Harewood (Christchurch) Airport. As the two R4Ds and two UFs drew near the 'point of no return', gasoline was dwindling at an alarming rate and they would never make McMurdo.

The pilots proposed making an emergency landing short of the McMurdo destination, near Cape Adare. The United States Task Force Commander however ordered the smaller aircraft back to New Zealand.

The long-range aircraft: P2V 122466 (pilots Lieutenant W. Hawkes & Lieutenant Commander J.H. Torbert), P2V 122465 (pilot Lieutenant J.W. EntriKin), R5D 56505 (pilot Lieutenant Colonel H.R. Kolp), and R5D 56528 (pilot Lieutenant Commander H. Jorda) flew south and by 10pm all had safely landed. The R5Ds landed on the sea-ice landing strip in McMurdo Sound near USS *Edisto* and the P2Vs at Hut Point on the ice runway. Hawkes & Torbert made a photographic pass by Cape Adare to obtain photographic resources that might later assist in the Cape Adare site selection. As a result, they were the last to land. Torbert and Hawkes carried the cover below to Captain Richard Black, who was in charge of US local operations at McMurdo. Pilots spent their first night on USS *Edisto* then moved to the tent city on 21 December.



'Sent 20.12.55 on first NZ-Antarctic flight from Wigram, carried by LCdr J.H. Torbert'

First airmails

A stamp dealer in Christchurch arranged for 48 covers to be cancelled at Christchurch Central Post Office at midnight on 19 December 1955; they were then affixed with US stamps and delivered to aircraft that started to depart at 3am from Christchurch Airport. The covers were arrival cancelled on 7 January 1956 on board USS *Wyandot* that was berthed at McMurdo.

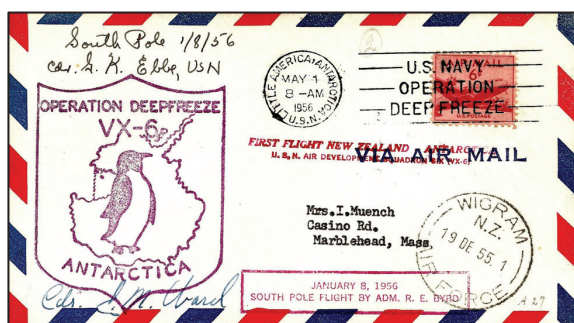


CHRISTCHURCH 19 DE 55, U.S.S. WYANDOT JAN 7 1956
"Insufficiently Prepaid for Transpacific Air Mail"
sent by Jack O. Hill VX-6 P2V-466



"Insufficient Postage For Clipper"

A number of US covers were also carried, mainly by individual flight crew members:



WIGRAM AIR FORCE 19 DE 55
South Pole 1/8/56 Cdr. G.K. Ebbe and Cdr. E.M. Ward

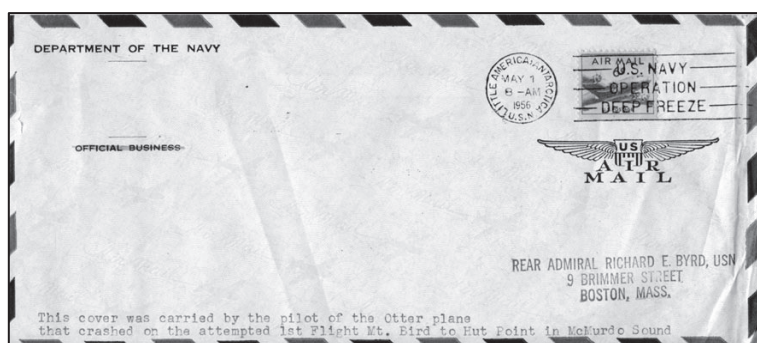


WIGRAM AIR FORCE -9 MR 56
first USN Neptune flight on 20 December, signed J.G. Arnold



CHRISTCHURCH 19 DE 55 12PM, U.S.S. WYANDOT JAN 7 P.M. 1956
sent by H.E. Blount VX-6 P2V- 122466

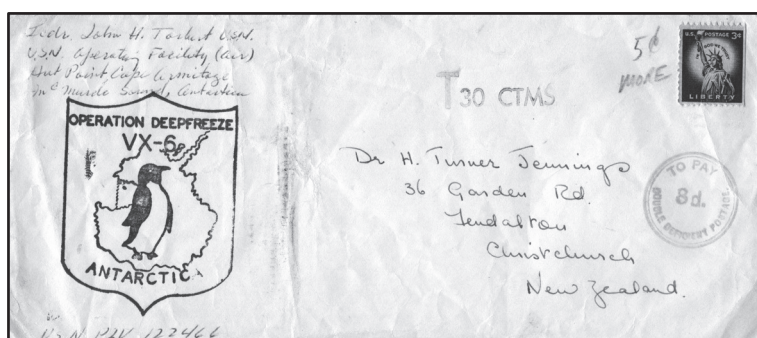
With all ships, except USCGC *Eastwind* and YOG-34 (they arrived McMurdo Sound on 31 December), at or proceeding to Scott Island, a plea for immediate medical assistance was sent from McMurdo on 23 December. The UC1 aircraft piloted by Hawkes had crashed, seriously injuring two persons and slightly injuring two others. USS *Edisto* returned to McMurdo Sound to help while USS *Glacier* provided escort for the other ships through the pack-ice.



LITTLE AMERICA, ANTARCTICA U.S.N. MAY 1 1956
flight cover carried by Hawkes

"This envelope was carried by the pilot of the Otter plane that crashed on the attempted 1st flight Mt. Bird to Hut Point in McMurdo Sound"

On 29 December 1955 Lieutenant Commander Torbert wrote from the McMurdo Air Facility to Dr. H. Turner Jennings, thanking him for his hospitality during his stay in Christchurch:



per USN P2-V 122466, sent by Lt Cdr J.H. Torbert
reverse 'Received 5.3.56 from Lt Cdr J.H. Torbert. Carried on 1st Antarctic New Zealand flight.'

Of high importance was the task of fueling aircraft for long-range flight. USNS *Nespelen* was brought two miles into the channel broken by USCGC *Eastwind* and USS *Edisto* on 2 January then an airstrip was laid out adjacent to USNS *Nespelen*. Local flights were made on 3 January during which aircraft were fueled directly from USNS *Nespelen*.

The **first exploratory flight** on 4 January 1956 was made by R5D 6505 aircraft piloted by Lieutenant Colonel H.R. Kolp. The destination was Wilkes Land and the course due west, but whiteout was encountered at 77°30'S 135°17'E. Kolp then reversed course and returned to Longitude 145°E where visibility was normal. Not wishing to return empty handed, he flew down that meridian to the South Pole, flying over unknown territory from 85°S to 90°S and determining the altitude of the South Pole to

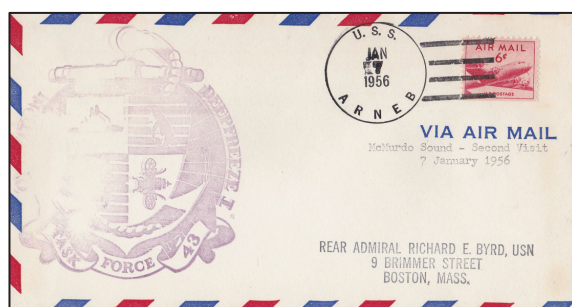
be 9,700ft. Over the South Pole the aircraft descended to 500ft for a close look. The area was quite flat with gentle, elongated sastrugi that had the appearance of a white, stationary sea. By dropping smoke bombs, crew members inferred the snow to be soft and powdery with a low order of density. On the return flight, the polar plateau south of 80°S was found to be flat and featureless. (no known mail).

The **second exploratory flight** on 5 January 1956 was made by R5D 56528 piloted by Lieutenant Commander Henry Jorda. This time the aircraft flew to the unexplored heart of Wilkes Land from 80°S 120°E to 80°S 90°E and returned from 82°S 120°E to Barne Inlet, then to McMurdo Sound. Two new mountain ranges were discovered on Jorda's flight. The first one stretched along 156°E 79°S, for about 80 miles southward. Its width averaged 30 miles, with numerous peaks towering between 7-10,000ft. The second range sighted by Jorda extended from 79°30'S 151°E to 79°S 156°E, about 100 miles to the southeast and 60 miles wide. Like the first range, it thrust jagged peaks aloft from 7-10,000 ft above sea level. Total flight distance was 2,200 miles.

The **third exploratory flight** was on 5-6 January 1956 in P2V 124466, piloted by Commander W.M. Hawkes and Lieutenant Commander J.H. Torbert. This flight went to Vincennes Bay at 68°S 109°E on the Budd/Knox Coast, then westward on the Knox Coast for 50 miles to Conger Glacier, before returning to McMurdo, about 2,600 miles in 14.5 hours. Save for mountains immediately west of McMurdo Sound, the landscape was entirely featureless icecap. Along Vincennes Bay, the location of Wilkes I.G.Y. Base, the icecap sloped gently to the sea but was scored with crevasses. Upon approaching McMurdo Sound, Mt. Erebus was sighted 200 miles away. This was the first round-trip Trans-Antarctic flight.

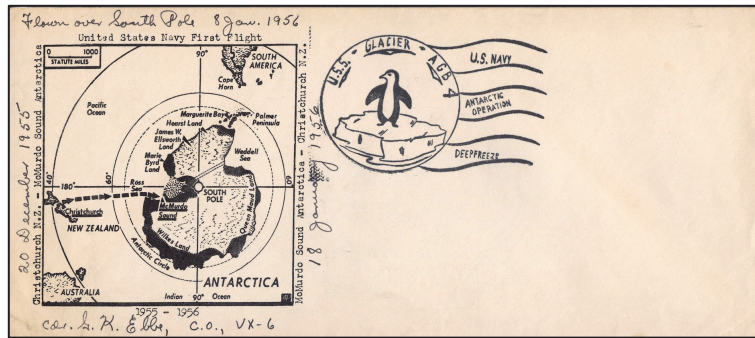
On 6 January, **the 4th exploratory flight**, a near-tragedy occurred: P2V 142465, piloted by Lieutenant J.W. Entrikin, was flying to 72°15'S 96°30'E. The flight was controlled from U.S.S. *Wyandot*. She received a routine position report at 22:30hrs, but at 22:51hrs SOS signals began. The aircraft's starboard motor was failing, Entrikin reported. 1,060 miles of icecap lay between the aircraft and McMurdo Sound. About every three minutes the crippled engine backfired violently. When the distress alarm was flashed to McMurdo Sound an R5D and P2V were hastily flown to USNS *Nespelen*. They re-fueled and took off to escort the crippled aircraft to McMurdo. Ten minutes before landing Entrikin's starboard engine failed completely; he made a single-engine landing at the airstrip with only 150 gallons of gasoline left. The flight covered 2,120 nautical miles.

On 7 January, **the fifth exploratory flight** was made by R5D 56505, piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Kolp. The aircraft flew directly to 71°S 146°E and then to 69° S 130° E, crossing the South Magnetic Pole, future location of the French I.G.Y. Station Charcot. From this point Kolp headed north until he reached the Wilkes Land coast, which he skirted to 145°E, location of the French Base Dumont D'Urville. It was then necessary to return to McMurdo.



U.S.S. ARNEB JAN 7 1956
McMurdo Sound – Second Visit 7 January 1956

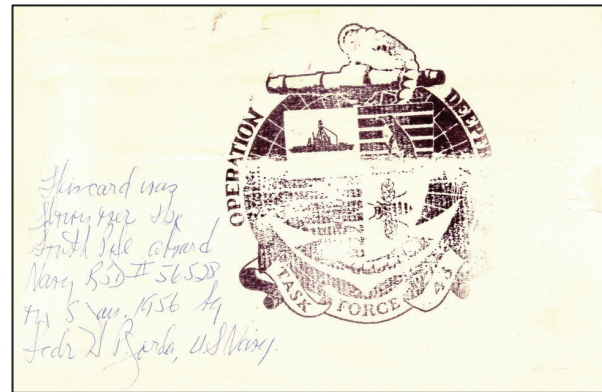
On 8 January, **the sixth exploratory flight** was made by R5D 56258 piloted by Commander G. Ebbe and Lieutenant Commander H. Jorda, with Rear Admiral R.E. Byrd and P. Siple aboard. The itinerary was to take them to the Pole of Inaccessibility at 82°30'S 56°E, but they were forced by weather to turn for the South Pole 360 miles short of this destination. They returned via Beardmore Glacier.



flown over South Pole 8 Jan 1956, signed by Cdr G.K. Ebbe. C.O., VX-6



AUCKLAND 25 JAN 1956

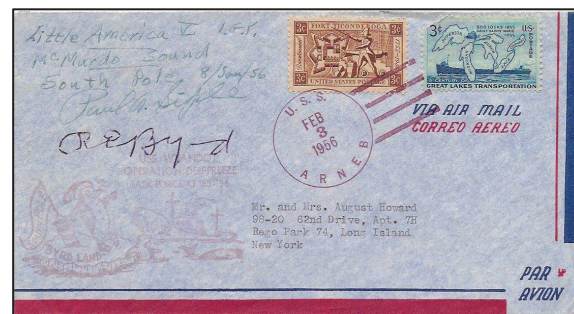


reverse: This card was flown over the South Pole aboard Navy RSD#56528 on 8 Jan 1956 by LCdr H.P. Jorda US Navy



U.S.S. ARNEB JAN 8 1956

South Pole Flight – Admiral Byrd's Third in 26 years – 8 January 1956



U.S.S. ARNEB FEB 3 1956

Little America V, McMurdo Sound, South Pole 8 Jan '56; signed by Paul Siple and Rear Admiral R.E. Byrd

On 9 January, P2V 124466, piloted by Commander Hawkes and Lieutenant Commander Torbert, made the first flight from McMurdo to Little America V. From there they flew with Commander Whitney and Lieutenant Commander J. Bursey to Byrd Station and returned to Little America.

On 11 January, Rear Admiral Dufek passed command of Task Unit 43.1.2 to Captain C.W. Thomas then flew with Hawkes and Torbert back to McMurdo Sound.



WIGRAM AIR FORCE N.Z 12 DE 55.2

(Major Fredrick J. Helling, U.S.M.C. second pilot was aboard the 7th exploratory flight)

On 13 January 1956, **the seventh exploratory flight** was made in R5D 56505, piloted by Lieutenant Colonel Kolp. The 14.7-hour flight took in the new Pole of Inaccessibility and returned by way of the South Geographical Pole. This was the first time the former pole had been viewed by man. After leaving the South Pole, the aircraft encountered a complete whiteout that obliged Kolp to finish the flight on instruments.

On 14 January 1956, **the eighth exploratory flight** was flown in R5D 56528, piloted by Commander Ebbe and Lieutenant Commander Jorda. The 14-hour flight penetrated to the heart of Antarctica, 81°S 62°E, near the future Sovietskaya Russian IGY Base. Again, the region was found to be a high featureless plateau. The maximum elevation was 13,800ft at 80°S 83°E. This was the highest altitude noted so far in the entire continent.



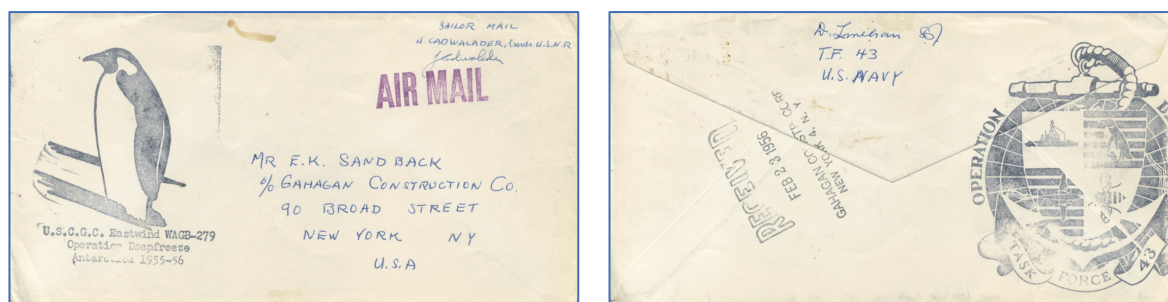
U.S.S. EDISTO JAN 14 1956
Carried on flight from McMurdo Sound to South Pole and return.
signed John E. Fletcher

On 13-14 January 1956, **the ninth exploratory flight** was made in P2V 124466, piloted by Commander Hawkes and Lieutenant Commander Torbert. The 19-hour record-making flight, flew to the Weddell Sea at 40°W via the South Pole. The return flight was made from 77°S 43°W to 84°S 90°W, to the Pole and return by Leverett Glacier. Four new mountain ranges were discovered and photographed. These stretched between 85°S and the Weddell Sea as far as 90°W. This was the first round-trip Trans-Polar Antarctic flight.

These flights more than achieved the exploration objectives for DF I.

DF I Aircraft return to New Zealand

In anticipation of the fly-out to New Zealand, USCGC *Eastwind* was sent to take ocean picket station between New Zealand and Cape Adare.



Sailor Mail (authorised by Cdr. W. Cadwalader USNR) to USA; cachet USCGC *Eastwind*; received N.Y. 23 February 1956.
sent by Father D. Linehan, Task Force 43 US Navy.

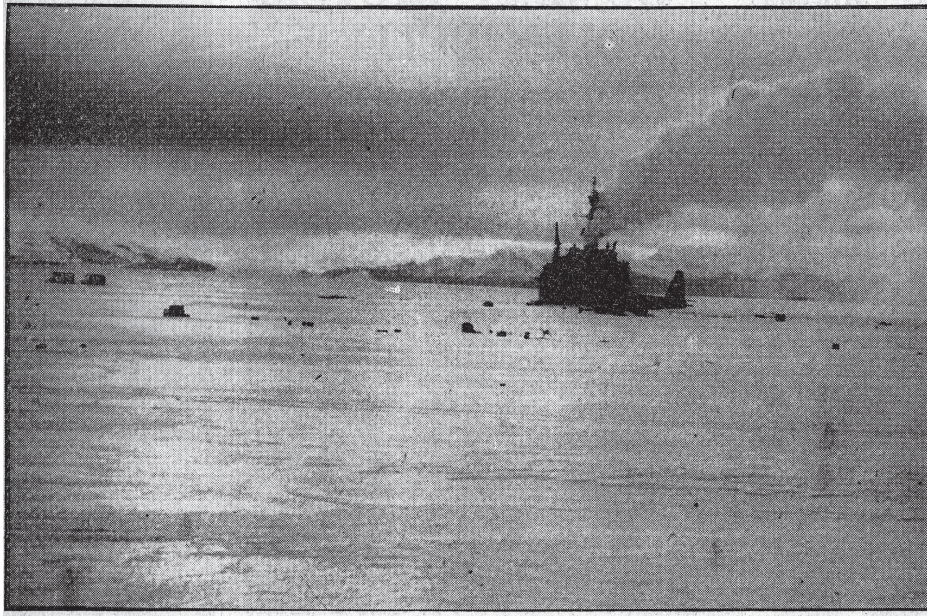
A flight plan from McMurdo to Wigram was prepared for 17 January. Regrettably, that day aircraft were unable to take off for New Zealand because of bad weather. The next day, with good flying weather, the two R5D's and two P2V's took off and made the flight to Wigram without incident.

USCGC *Eastwind* then left her ocean picket station and returned to McMurdo.

THE EVENING POST, SATURDAY, JANUARY 21, 1956.

THE ANTARCTIC—DESOLATE YET BEAUTIFUL

FIRST PICTURE of the United States Antarctic Expedition which was taken from a colour film belonging to Commander Henry P. Jorda, a pilot of a Skymaster which returned to New Zealand from McMurdo Sound on Wednesday.



"I TOOK THESE SHOTS as we flew out of McMurdo Sound on our way back to Christchurch," said Commander Jorda. "It was a beautifully sunny morning. The time—3.45am." In the picture is the expedition's icebreaker, Glacier, making smoke as she prepares to turn out of McMurdo Sound on her way back along the 30-mile channel to the open sea to pick up an Otter aircraft from one of the cargo ships. The trip through the cut channel takes about two-and-a-half hours each way. Against the Glacier can be seen one of the Neptune planes sitting on the ice landing strip by the ship. Stores can be seen lying about on the ice.



U.S.S. ARNEB JAN 18 1956

"Planes fly back to New Zealand (AirOpFac), McMurdo to Wigram Field) 18 January 1956"



WIGRAM AIR FORCE N.Z 19 JA 56

flown from McMurdo Sound Antarctica to New Zealand via R5D #56528 1/18/56



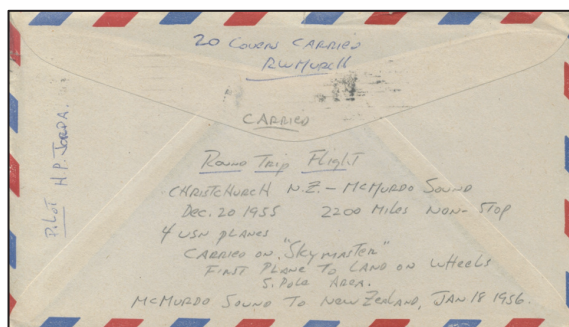
WIGRAM AIR FORCE 19 JA 56 USS ARNEB JAN 1 1956
signed by LCdr H. Jorda (VX-6)
cachet First Flight from McMurdo to New Zealand



U.S.S. ARNEB DEC 25 1955; WIGRAM N.Z. 19 JA 56
signed by Rear Admiral Dufek and LCdr H. Jorda (VX-6)
cachet First Flight from McMurdo to New Zealand



AUCKLAND C.I. 25 JAN 1956; signed by LCdr H.P. Jorda



reverse: "20 covers carried" R.W. Murch

The P2-V Neptunes then left for the United States on 24 January and the Skymasters two days later.



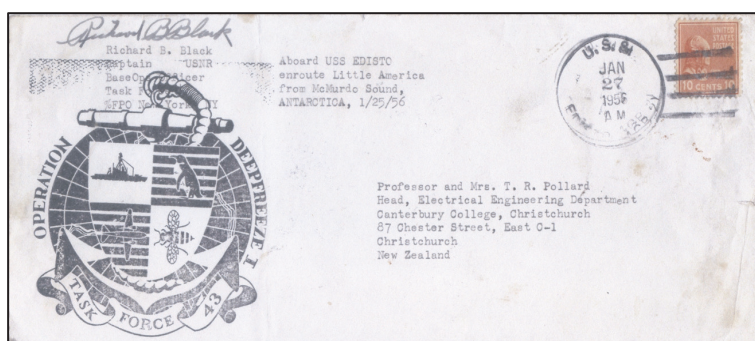
AUCKLAND C.I. 25 JAN 1956
signed by LCdr H.P. Jorda



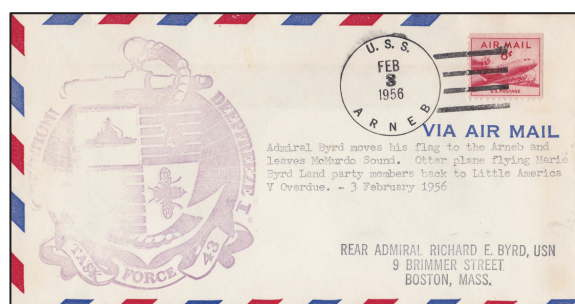
reverse: "This letter was flown over the South Pole aboard Navy RSD56528 on 8 January '56 by LCdr H.P. Jorda"

U.S. Fleet returns to New Zealand

March 7 was the deadline date given by Rear Admiral Dufek for the U.S. ships to be out of both McMurdo Sound and Kainan Bay (Little America V).



U.S.S. EDISTO JAN 27 1956
Captain Richard Black aboard USS Edisto enroute Little America from McMurdo Sound, Antarctica 1/25/56



U.S.S. ARNEB FEB 3 1956

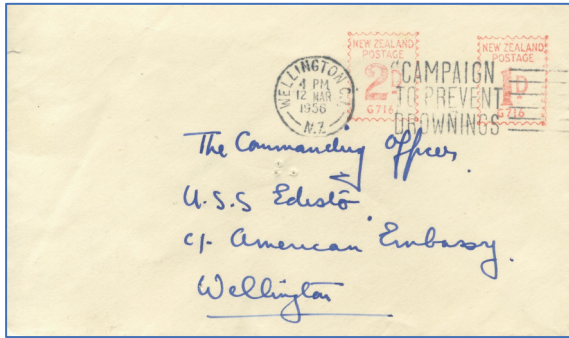
Admiral Byrd moves his flag to the Arneb and leaves McMurdo Sound.



U.S.S. ARNEB FEB 10 1956

Arrive Port Lyttelton New Zealand 10 February 1956

USS *Glacier* left McMurdo on 9 February with the New Zealand Advance Party aboard; she went to Little America V in the Bay of Whales on 10 February and departed the same day for Lyttelton, arriving there on 17 February 1956. She then departed for the USA, arriving there on 2 April 1956.

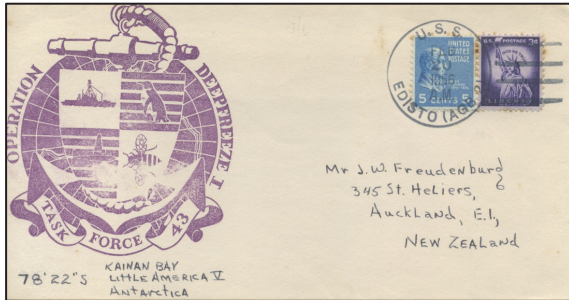


WELLINGTON 12 MAR 1956



U.S.S. GLACIER 2 APR 1956

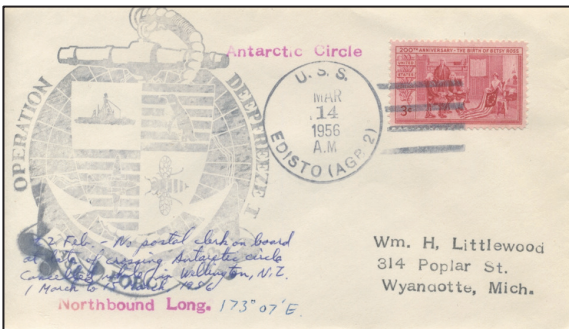
USS *Edisto* departed Wellington on 14 March for the United States at the completion of DF I.



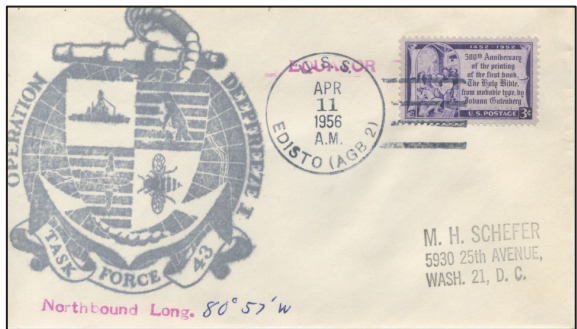
U.S.S. EDISTO FEB 20 1957
at Kainan Bay Little America V



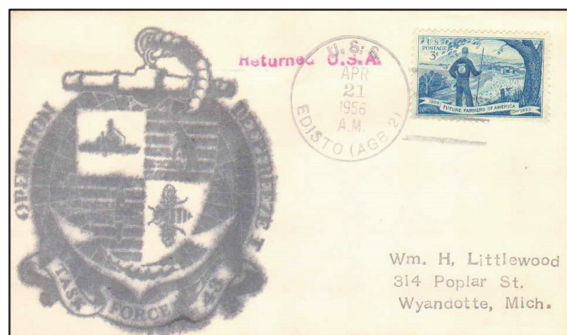
WELLINGTON 14 MR 56; U.S.S. EDISTO MAR 14 1956
cachets NEW ZEALAND, Homeward Bound



U.S.S. EDISTO MAR 14 1956
cachets Antarctic Circle, Northbound Long. 173° 07'E
"22 Feb - no postal clerk on board at date of crossing Antarctic circle
Cancelled while in Wellington, N.Z. 1 March to 15 March 1956.



U.S.S. EDISTO APR 11 1956
cachets EQUATOR, Northbound Long. 80°51'W



U.S.S. EDISTO APR 21 1956
cachet RETURNED U.S.A.