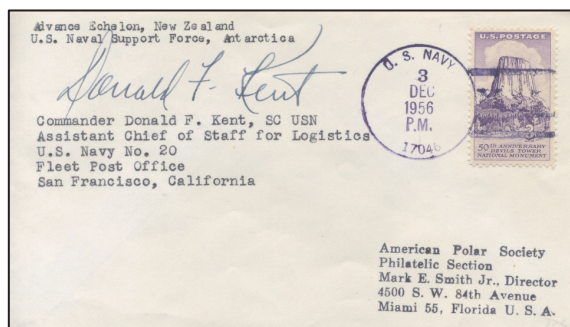


Operation Deep Freeze II (1956-57)

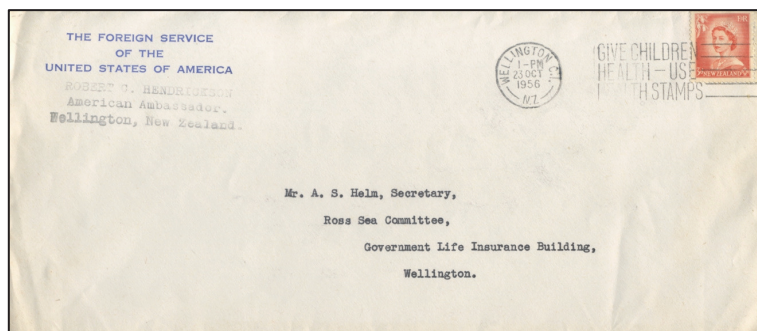
United States Naval Support Force Advance Echelon, Christchurch

In October 1956, the United States National Committee for the IGY sent John Hanessian Jr. to Wellington and Christchurch for numerous planning meetings, which further smoothed the way for future dealings. The group members began working out details of data collection, analysis, dissemination and ultimate disposition of the permanent records. They also productively discussed personnel selection, joint public relations and administrative relationships for the Cape Adare station.

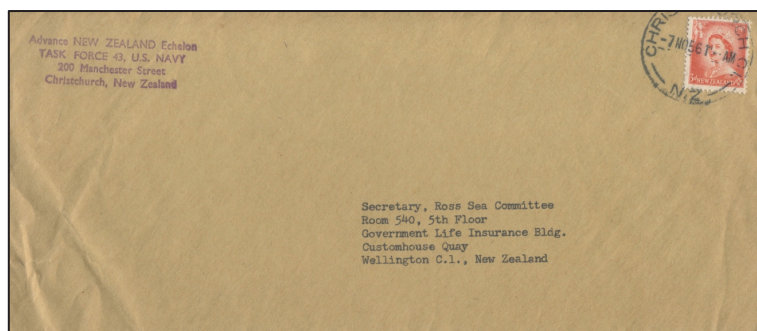
Rear Admiral Dufek set up Advanced Echelon offices in New Zealand and utilised the offices of the US Ambassador in Wellington. Commander D.F. Kent, Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics, was Dufek's most trusted representative in the New Zealand Advanced Echelon:



U.S. NAVY 17046 (Christchurch) 3 DEC 1956
sent by Commander Donald F. Kent, Assistant Chief of Staff for Logistics



WELLINGTON C.1 N.Z 23 OCT 1956
American Ambassador, Wellington to Ross Sea Committee



CHRISTCHURCH C.1 -7 NO 56
Advance New Zealand Echelon, US Navy, Christchurch to Ross Sea Committee

U.S. Navy VX-6 Squadron relocates to Rhode Island

In March 1956, after having completed its first deployment mission to the Antarctic, VX-6 Squadron transferred its home base from Patuxent River, Maryland to Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, Rhode Island. VX-6 Squadron was placed under the command of Captain Douglas Cordiner. It consisted of one P2V-2 Neptune, two R5D Skymasters, four R4D Skytrains and four P2V-7 Neptunes. Flights thereafter left from Quonset Point, via New Zealand, to Antarctica.

Royal New Zealand Air Force Station Weedons

On 10 September 1956, a post office facility was opened at the Royal New Zealand Air Force Station at Weedons, a storage and outfield grass runway area 18km south west of Christchurch. Antarctic flights did not depart directly from Weedons; it was used as a general storage area and an accommodation camp for US Air Force personnel of the 52nd Troop Carrier Squadron, 18th US Air Force, during DF II.



1956 Royal New Zealand Air Force Station Weedons (Phillips 2001:19)



WEEDONS AIR FORCE 10 SP 56.1



WEEDONS AIR FORCE 14 JA 57.1

U.S. Navy 17046 Post Office in Christchurch

On 21 September 1956, United States Navy Branch Post Office No.17046 opened in Christchurch.

Operation Deep Freeze Headquarters

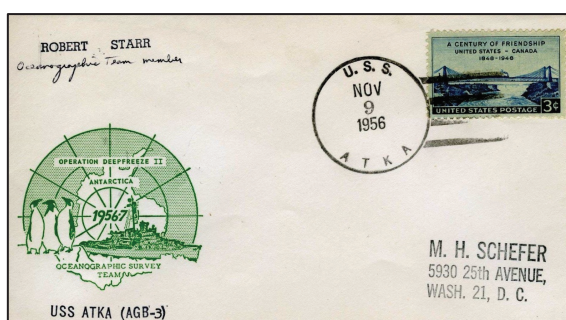
Headquarters of the United States Naval Support Force, Antarctica was initially set up at 200 Manchester Street, Christchurch, in September 1956; it was moved to 286 Kilmore Street, Christchurch, in 1959, and, since September 1960, has been situated at the Christchurch International Airport.

U.S. Fleet

The Ross Sea Task Group comprised six ships, USS *Glacier*, USS *Atka*, USNS *Nespelen*, USNS *Greenville Victory*, USNS *Pvte John R Towle* and USNS *Pvte Joseph F Merrell*; they concentrated on supporting the construction of Byrd and South Pole Stations.



U.S.S. GLACIER DEC 10 1956



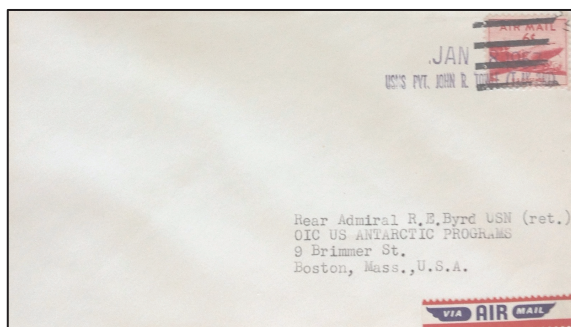
U.S.S. ATKA NOV 9 1956



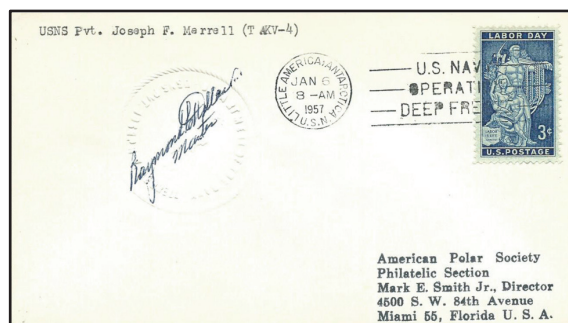
cachet USS Nespelen



cachet USNS Greenville Victory



cachet USNS Pvt John R Towle JAN 8 1957

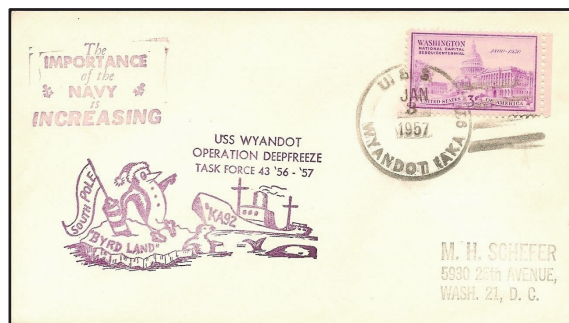


cachet USNS Pvt Joseph F Merrell

The Weddell Sea Task Group comprised USS *Staten Island* and USS *Wyandot*; their task was to establish Ellsworth Station. The Knox Coast Task Group comprised USCGC *Northwind* and USS *Arneb*, under the command of Captain C.W. Thomas; their task was to support the Ross Sea Task Group before establishing Wilkes Station on the Knox Coast.



U.S.S. STATEN ISLAND FEB 11 1957



U.S.S. WYANDOT JAN 3 1957

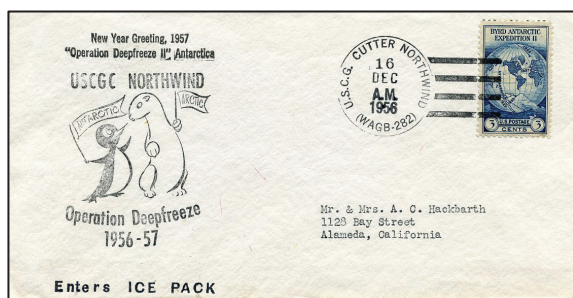


U.S.S. ARNEB FEB 16 1957

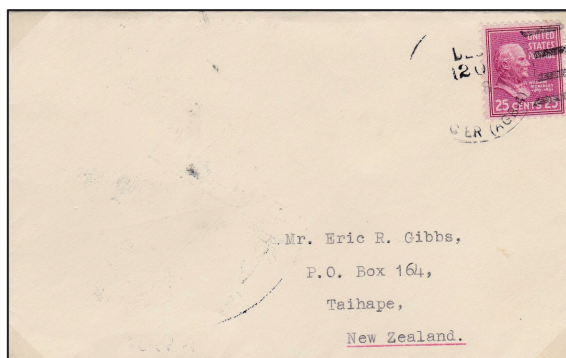


U.S.C.G. CUTTER NORTHWIND 10 DEC 1956

The main ship group left from various New Zealand ports on 10 December 1956, arriving at McMurdo Station on 20 December 1956; mail dispatches began shortly after.



U.S.C.G. CUTTER NORTHWIND 16 DEC 1956
cachet Enters ICE PACK



U.S.S. GLACIER DEC 20 1956

Above cover at right contained the below letter from E.G. Edie (New Zealand Meteorologist):

*U.S.S. Glacier
73.7°S. 179°E
19th December 1956*

Dear Mr Gibbs,

We expect to arrive at McMurdo Sound tomorrow, so I shall post this letter at the U.S.S. Glacier P.O. which is considered a New York P.O. for mailing purposes. Apparently at McMurdo there's no official P.O. only a letter box – letters being taken to Chch N.Z. for further action & only a 3d NZ stamp would then be required.

Thank you for your telegram & good wishes. We have had a wonderful trip down these last 10 days – no storms, no “roaring forties” or “screeching sixties”. The ice-pack has offered no difficulty to this ship between 63° & 72° & today we are again in the open water of the Ross Sea. Air temperature outside 30°F, but properly clothed it is quite comfortable. I am looking forward to my stay at Little America, some 400 miles west of McMurdo and I understand there is an official P.O. there.

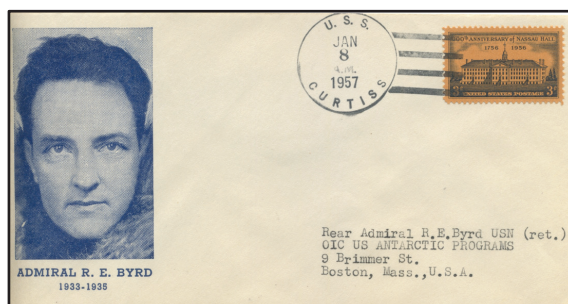
*Yours sincerely,
E.G. Edie*

Apart from resupplying McMurdo Station, Pole Station and Little America V, Operation Deep Freeze II also succeeded in establishing scientific bases at Wilkes, Cape Hallett, Byrd and Ellsworth Stations, in readiness for the 1957-58 International Geophysical Year.

U.S.S. Curtiss

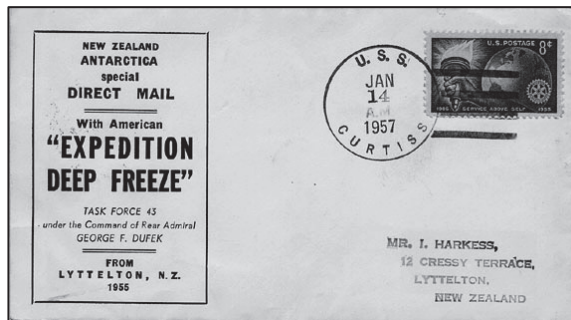
The present planning for the USS. CURTISS is that she will come first to McMurdo, discharge cargo (approximately three days), pick up all of DET ONE and VX-6 personnel, sail to Little America, change wintering groups and pick up any VX-6 and MCB ONE personnel, load two Otters and then return to McMurdo, offload one Otter, pick up MCB ONE personnel, proceed to Cape Adare, discharge one Otter and pick up MCB ONE personnel, and then proceed to the United States via Auckland, New Zealand.

Vessel left San Diego on 27 December 1957, carrying Little America V's wintering-over party and scientists to take part in the IGY program.

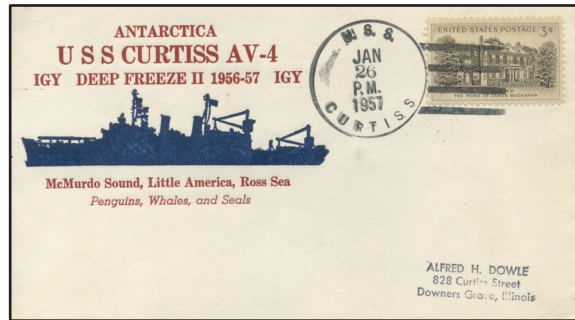


U.S.S. CURTISS JAN 8 1957

Calling at Lyttelton 12-15 January 1958, the ship then entered McMurdo Sound on 19 January and transferred cargo by helicopter to the USS *Glacier*. From 21-28 January, she put men and cargo ashore at McMurdo, then unloaded at Little America V from 30 January-6 February.



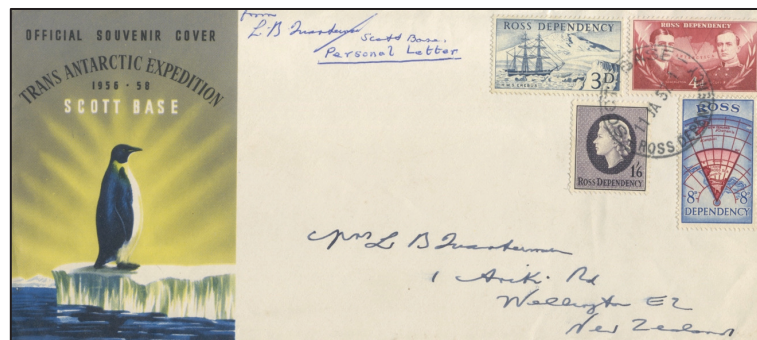
U.S.S. CURTISS JAN 14 1957



U.S.S. CURTISS JAN 26 1957 (VX-6 cachet on reverse)

1956-57 L.B. Quatermain visits Scott Base and Discovery Hut

On arrival at McMurdo aboard U.S.S. *Curtiss*, Les Quatermain and Paul Emile Victor (head of operations for Terres Australes Antarctiques Francaises) were transported to Scott Base by open weasel vehicle. En-route they stopped at Discovery Hut, crawled in, and were moved by its state of disrepair.



SCOTT BASE ROSS DEPENDENCY 11 JA 57.1

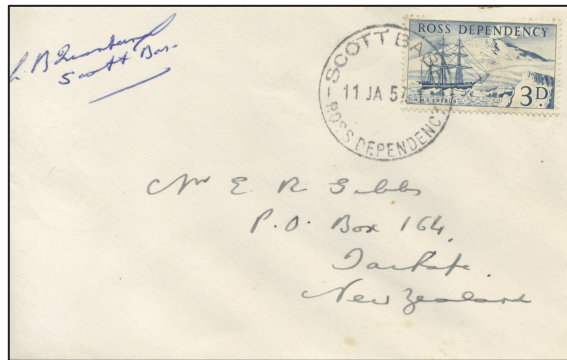
Scott Base,
Pram Point,
Antarctica
23 Jan 57

Dear Helen,

A chance to get a very hurried note away. Brian O'Neill is posting a long letter from ChCh & will also I think ring you up. Yes, I'm here at the NZ Camp. What is more I've spent a night here. Came across the 6 miles or so yesterday with Paul Victor in an open weasel driven by Bill Cranfield & John Claydon. Called in at Hut Point & crawled into Scott's old Discovery Hut there. Fearful room of ice, snow, blubber-smear'd garments & other rubbish. But a thrill to be there. Paul Victor took nearly 50 flashlight photos inside, so you can see how he felt about it. Then on through the terribly untidy//over American camp & on to our own. Warmly greeted by Ed, Holmes & others, & later when he drove a search team in Ron Balham. All looking fit & happy. Wonderful night. All around are peaks with famous names Crater Hill, Mt. Discovery etc. Seals everywhere on the ice. No trouble about staying the night - was lent a sleeping bag. Stayed Dr. Findlay's tent. Nice chap. He was called early the morning by Holmes. Richard Brooke just in by dog sledge & report Dr. Marsh ill 30 miles out on the barrier. Dr Findlay is being flown out to him any time now. So I seem to be striking exciting incidents wherever I go. Hope Marsh is not seriously ill - some abdominal trouble. I am well & very happy even if I did sleep last night with everything on & it was still chilly!!

Love,
Les

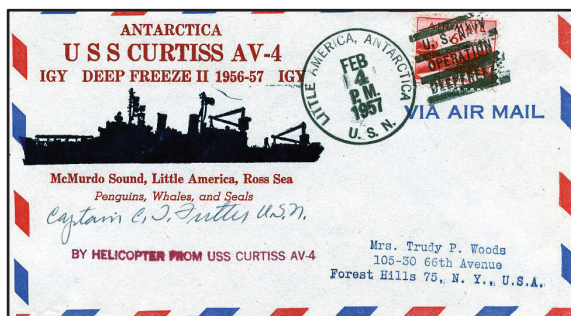
Quatermain also sent the below cover to Eric Gibbs, who later became a member of the Huts Restoration team in 1960-61. Quatermain's reports to the New Zealand Antarctic Society and the DSIR Antarctic Division led to the genesis of the Historic Huts Restoration Program.



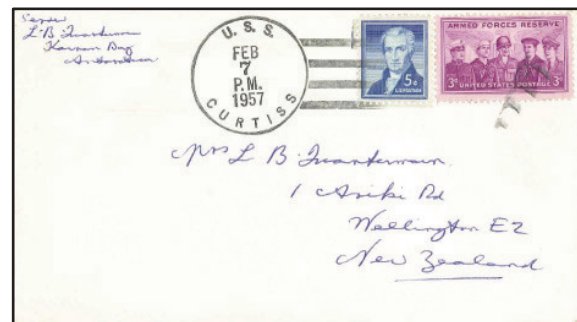
SCOTT BASE ROSS DEPENDENCY 11 JA 57.1
signed by Les Quartermain, Scott Base

See: Jurisich, M. *Ross Dependency Historic Huts Restoration Project*. Classic Stamps Ltd., Blenheim New Zealand 2018. @ www.classicstamps.co.nz

U.S.S. Curtiss at Little America V

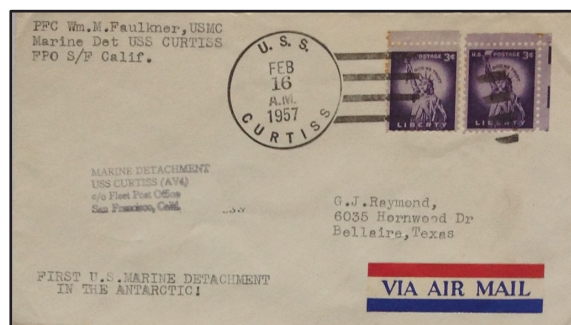


U.S.S. CURTISS FEB 4 1957



U.S.S. CURTISS FEB 7 1957

Vessel carried out ice reconnaissance before departing McMurdo Sound on 10 February, then called at Lyttelton, Auckland and Sydney before returning to San Diego on 25 March.



U.S.S. CURTISS FEB 16 1957



U.S.S. CURTISS FEB 21 1957

Picket Ship U.S.S. *Brough*

See Jurisich, M. *Operation Deep Freeze Picket Ship*. Classic Stamps Ltd., Blenheim, New Zealand, 2018. @ www.classicstamps.co.nz

U.S. Flight operations

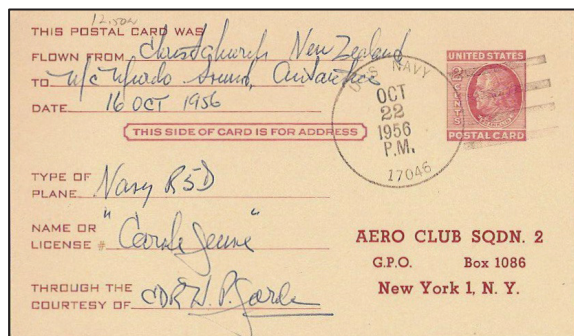
USAF 18th Air Force, under Major General Chester McCarty, provided DF II flight support through the 63rd Troop Carrier Group, under command of Colonel H.A. Crosswell. The 63rd Troop Carrier Group included eight C-124 Globemaster aircraft.

Incoming flights to New Zealand

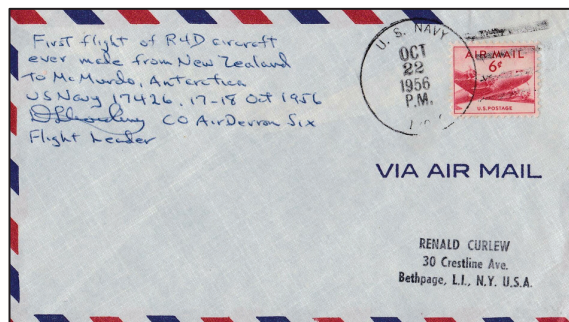
VX-6 Squadron flew from Rhode Island to Wigram Airport, near Christchurch, arriving on 3 October 1956.

Outbound flights to Antarctica VX-6 Squadron

R5D BuNo. 56258 XD/3, piloted by Lieutenant Commander H.P. Jorda, with Rear Admiral Dufek on board, was the first to fly south on 16 October, two days in advance of the main VX-6 Squadron. Apart from heavy icing for four hours of the flight, the flight landed in clear weather 13.5 hours after take-off.



U.S. NAVY 17046 OCT 22 1956
R5D flight from Christchurch to McMurdo 16 October 1956
signed by Cdr. H.P. Jorda

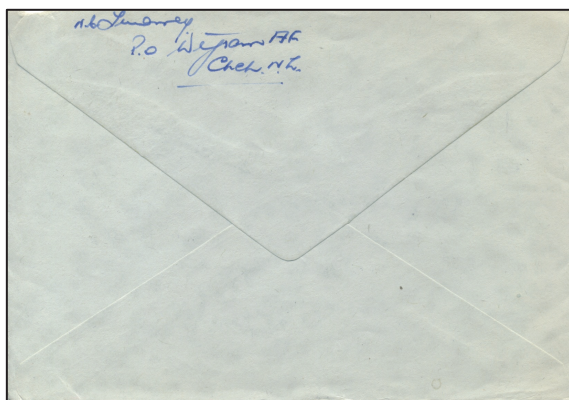


WIGRAM 16 OC 56, U.S. NAVY 17046 OCT 22 1956 P.M.
R4D Dakota flight south on 17 October 1956

The VX-6 mass flight consisted of one P2V-2 Neptune, one R5D Skymaster and four R4D Skytrains. The following day P2V-2N Neptune Bu122465 and an R5D Skymaster aircraft took off from Harewood and four R4D Dakotas took off from Taieri. The Neptune crash-landed at Williams Field, killing three crew-members; the others landed safely a short time later.

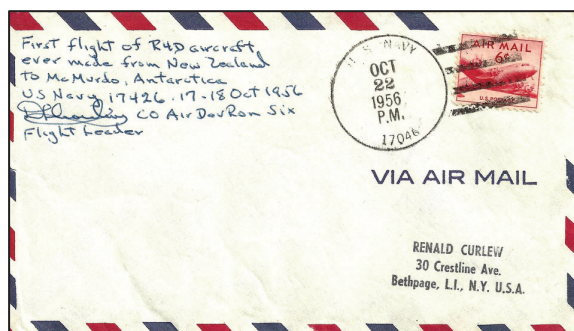


WIGRAM AIR FORCE 19 OC 56.1



reverse

The two covers below were carried on Navy VX-6 incoming mass flight, then carried to the South Pole by United States Air Force and held for later South Pole First Day Post Office cancellation.



U.S. NAVY 17046 OCT 22 1956
first flight of R4D aircraft ever made from New Zealand to McMurdo Antarctica U.S. Navy 17426 17-18 Oct 1956
signed by D.L. Cordiner



POLE STATION, ANTARCTICA DEC 15 1956
cachet OPERATION DEEP FREEZE II U.S. Navy Task Force 43 Squadron VX-6 2400 Mile Non-Stop Flight New Zealand to Antarctica/17 October 1956; cachet VIA U.S. AIR FORCE MCMURDO SOUND to SOUTH POLE December 1956

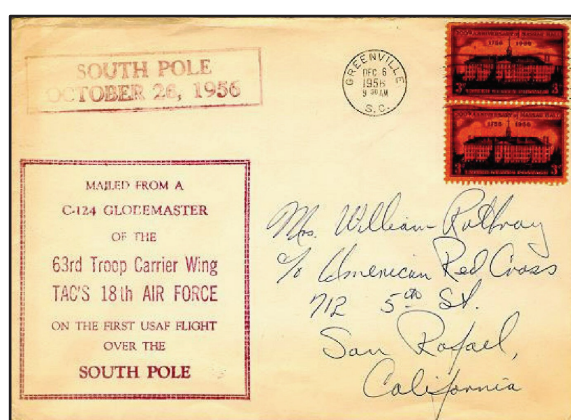
Covers with 17046 dated OCT 22 1956 were carried from New Zealand to McMurdo by VX-6 and from McMurdo back to New Zealand on the USAF medevac flight that brought the four crash survivors back

to New Zealand. It is likely that McMurdo winter-over mail was also loaded on the medevac flight and received the same Christchurch 17046 cancellation on arrival as no canceller was available at McMurdo.

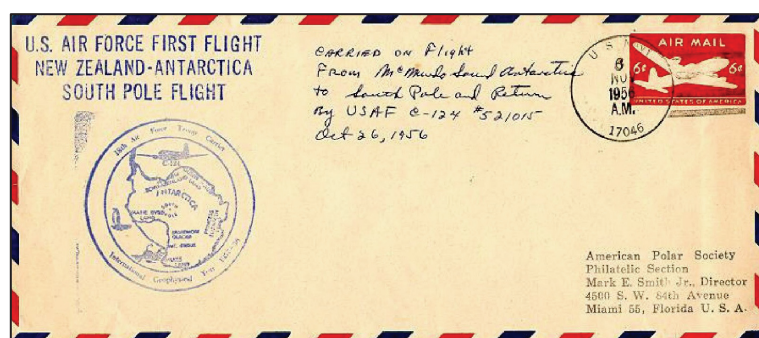
Outbound flights to Antarctica - Globemasters

Six of the eight C-124C Globemasters flew from New Zealand to McMurdo Sound on 20-21 October. The first USAF C-124C that landed, piloted by Col. Crosswell, off-loaded 46,500lbs. of cargo, including an unassembled Otter. They loaded the injured personnel from the Neptune that crashed and took off for the return flight to New Zealand just prior to the landing on C-124C #2.

There were no flights until 25 October 1956, when four flights took place. One Skytrain, piloted by Lieutenant Commander Conrad "Gus" Shinn, flew Captains Cordiner and Hawkes on a survey flight to select a location for a supporting air base (later named Beardmore Base) for South Pole operations. Two of the other Skytrains stood by to fly Commander Paul Frazier and his Byrd Base trail party to Little America. On 26 October 1956, a C-124C Globemaster piloted by Major General C. McCarty became the first plane during DF II to fly over the South Pole. This flight was the seventh aircraft over the South Pole, had 45 observers on board to appraise surface conditions, to report on event, and dropped 10,000lbs. of equipment, including an automated weather station that reported every 6 hours.



GREENVILLE S.C. DEC 6 1956



U. S. NAVY 17046 6 NOV 1956; backstamped LUDLAM FLA. NOV 10 1956

U.S. Navy Beardmore Station I

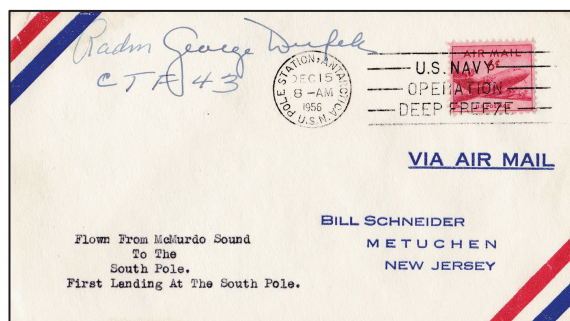
On 28 October 1956 two Skytrains flew the advance Beardmore Base crew to 84°56'S, 166°W. Both aircraft landed and disembarked a crew of four to set up a tent camp. Shortly after noon on 30 October, four Skytrains and a Globemaster took off from McMurdo. One Skymaster headed to Little America with equipment and personnel for Commander Paul Frazier's Byrd Trail Party. The other three Skytrains and the Globemaster headed for Beardmore Base with personnel to complete the Base complement and equipment including a Jamesway Hut for sleeping quarters, a radio shack and an Antwell Hut.

On 31 October 1956 Beardmore Station was set up at 84°56'S, 166°W, the south end of the Ross Ice Shelf near the Liv Glacier, 120 miles east of the Beardmore Glacier, as a halfway weather and refueling stop between McMurdo Station and the South Pole. It was used until February 1957. The following season the station was relocated to 83°47' S 174°20' E, at the base of the Beardmore Glacier on the Ross Ice Shelf. First flights from McMurdo Station to open **Beardmore Station II** took place on 9 September 1957; it remained open until October 1964.

South Pole Station

The Globemaster piloted by Major C.J. Ellen went on to the South Pole with 'Trigger' Hawkes for a second reconnaissance. The South Pole landing could now be attempted. Weather delayed the attempt until 31 October. At 12:55pm on 31 October, the R4D 'Que Sera Sera' with Gus Shinn piloting, took off from McMurdo. Two wheeled aircraft, an R5D piloted by H.P. Jorda and a C-124 piloted by Major C.J. Ellen were to join them at the Pole. They would assist in the location of the Pole, offer rescue equipment should the R4D be disabled and provide pictorial documentation of the historic landing.

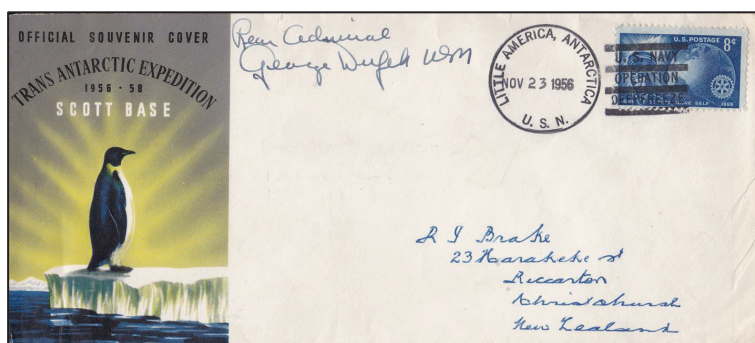
Aboard the R4D was Lieutenant Commander C.S. Shinn, pilot; 'Trigger' Hawkes, co-pilot; Lieutenant J.R. Swadener, navigator; AMM2/c J.P. Strider, aircraft captain and machinist; AET2/c W.A. Cumbie, radioman; Capt. Douglas Cordiner and Rear Admiral George Dufek, observers. The Skymaster developed engine trouble over the polar plateau and, to the dismay of the photographers on board, returned to McMurdo. The C-124 and R4D met at the Pole and agreed on the correct location (thought to be within 2000 yards). After several passes, Shinn brought the 'Que Sera Sera' to a landing at 8:34pm. The engines were kept running and Strider jumped from the plane to chock the wheels. Dufek was the first down the ladder that Strider deployed. A flag was raised, photographs attempted and radar reflectors deployed, but frostbite forced them back to the plane. The stay lasted only 49 minutes in the -58° F weather. After a difficult take-off, with JATO assist, the R4D headed for Beardmore Base to top off the fuel tanks. The C-124 returned directly to McMurdo.



U.S.N. POLE STATION, ANTARCTICA DEC 15 1956

"Flown From McMurdo Sound To The South Pole. First Landing At The South Pole."

Dufek was shaken by the severity of the weather and decided to retreat to New Zealand with the air crew and ten members of the construction crew, to recuperate and await warmer weather. Dufek's fear of the cold experienced on 31 October, and his resulting illness, caused him to depart for New Zealand with most of the aircraft and ten of the South Pole construction crew. They did not return until 13 November. It was not until 19 November that the transport of the South Pole construction crew could be initiated.



LITTLE AMERICA, ANTARCTICA U.S.N. NOV 23 1956

signed by Rear Admiral George Dufek USN

Plans called for delivering a preliminary party of eight to the South Pole. The South Pole construction crew leader was Lieutenant R.A. Bowers and the preliminary party included himself, Jack Tuck, Chief Bristol and five Seabees: Montgomery, Woody, Nolan, Randall and Powell, with eleven dogs. They would be carried to the Pole in two R4Ds, piloted by Gus Shinn and R.E. Curtis. Air Force C-124s would rendezvous with the R4Ds at the Pole, assist in locating the precise location, and air dropping equipment and materiel for the Station. The R4Ds landed at 12:45am and disembarked the men and dogs. Sun shots proved that they were eight miles from the geographic South Pole.

The construction crew was split into two groups of four. Four took the dog team and traversed to the exact South Pole location to set up a target area for materials airdrops. The remaining members awaited replacement parts for the weasel so that it could be brought to the South Pole. Once a target zone was established at the South Pole, C-124C airdrops took place three or four times daily, weather permitting.

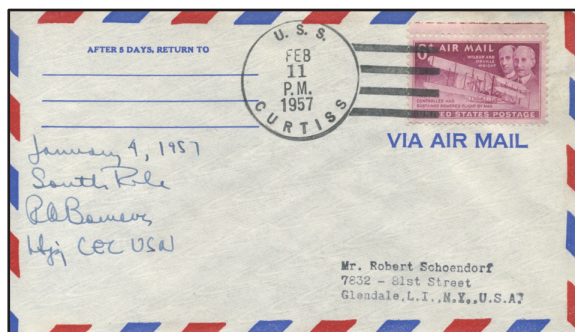
On 26 November, an additional 10 Seabees of the construction crew were brought to the South Pole by two R4Ds (fourth and fifth landings at the South Pole). In addition, Sergeant Richard Patton, USAF parachuted in from a Globemaster, bringing the local population to 19. On 27 November, the crew received their first mail drop. On 30 November, the crew was completed with the arrival of the final five Seabees for the construction crew and Dr. Paul Siple, Station Scientific Leader. Jack Tuck returned to McMurdo, so the local population was 24.

On 6 December, the first P2V-7, piloted by Capt. D. Cordiner, landed at the South Pole, had substantial difficulty and did not depart until 8 December, after parts had been flown in. On 14 and 15 December, nine bags of philatelic mail were dropped. South Pole Post Office was officially opened on 15 December, with R.L. Chaudoin as postmaster.



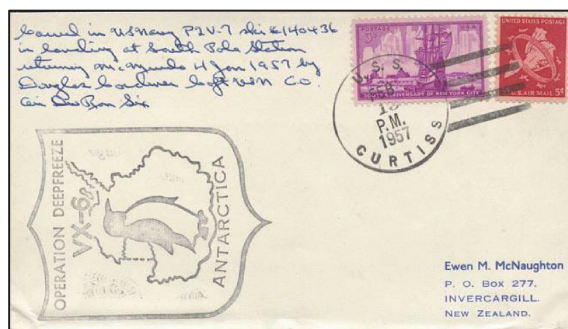
U.S.N. POLE STATION, ANTARCTICA DEC 15 1956

On 20 December, Bowers conducted a Base dedication ceremony. A pre-Christmas dinner was held on 24 December prior to the arrival of 2 R4Ds and the P2V-7 piloted by Capt. Cordiner, and the departure of eight Seabees. The first eight construction crew Seabees departed on 24 December 1956. The next P2V-7 was to bring the first eight permanent winter-over personnel (including Bravo) and then return eight additional South Pole Station construction crew Seabees to McMurdo. This took place on 29 December 1956. On 4 January 1957, the last seven South Pole Station construction team members departed, leaving eight men at the South Pole.



U.S.S. CURTISS FEB 11 1956

January 4, 1957 South Pole R.A. Bowers, Lt.jg. CEC USN



U.S.S. CURTISS FEB 13 1957

Carried in U.S. Navy P2V-7 ski #140436 in landing at South Pole Station returning McMurdo 4 Jan 1957 by Douglas Cordiner Capt. USN C.O. Air Devron Six

On 7 and 8 January, the first three permanent scientific team members arrived, marking the onset of IGY operations at the South Pole. The 8 January flight was the last for quite some time due to the deteriorating condition of the Williams Operating Facility ice runway. Most of the aircraft retreated to New Zealand. The South Pole program desperately needed an additional flight to bring the personnel manifest at the South Pole to completion. This was impossible unless the ice runway improved with the onset of colder weather. About one month was lost before the ice runway was deemed operational. Only one R4D was still flight-ready (the indomitable Que Sera Sera) and airdrops by the C124Cs restarted on 10 February.

Harvey Speed in R4D BuNo 12418 delivered the final seven men to the South Pole (2 sailors and 5 scientists). Local South Pole winter-over population was 9 scientists and 9 sailors. Airdrops continued until 21 February and then flights were closed for the winter.

HMNZS *Endeavour*

The Ross Sea Committee was required to raise £100,000 to fund their participation in the Trans-Antarctic Expedition but by 1956 had only raised about 20% of that amount. In the face of huge public support for the expedition, the New Zealand Government decided in April 1956 to make up the shortfall by the purchase of a ship to transport the New Zealand party to McMurdo. HMS *John Briscoe* became available from the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey when the ship was replaced by the Royal Navy. HMS *John Briscoe* was commissioned as HMNZS *Endeavour* on 15 August 1956.



A party of 10 naval officers and ratings were flown to the United Kingdom to stand by while the ship was being refitted and they formed the nucleus of the crew to sail it to New Zealand. The ship left London on 23 August on its delivery voyage and arrived at Auckland on 23 October under command of Captain Harry Kirkwood, Royal Navy, with Lieutenant Commander W.J.L. Smith Royal New Zealand Navy, as First Officer. Kirkwood had commanded the HMS *John Briscoe* for several years in the Weddell Sea and had visited the Ross Sea on several occasions in RRS *Discovery II*.



CRISTOBEL C.Z. SEP 17 1956

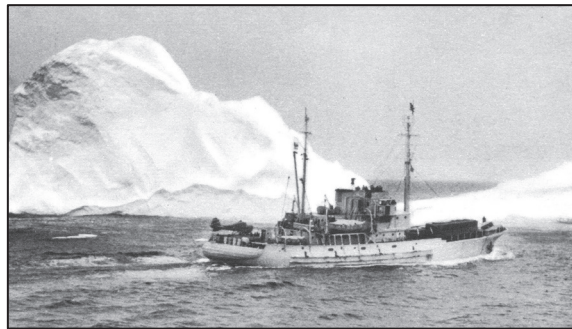


reverse: sent by C.P.O. J.C Harman, H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour

By mid-December, loading of HMNZS *Endeavour* was completed in Wellington and a large quantity of gear had been taken south on USNS *Private John R Towle*.



H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour at Lyttelton 17 December 1956



H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour commemorative postcard
(Otago Daily Times photo)

IGY Summer Party members were A.J. Heine, L.H. Martin and J.H. Hoffman. IGY Winter Party members were T. Hatherton, V.B. Gerard (University of Canterbury), H.N. Sandford, R.H. Orr and W.J. Macdonald (Victoria University of Wellington). Douglas, Warren, Heine and some of the equipment went south aboard USNS *Private John R Towle*; 16 others went on USS *Glacier* and the rest on HMNZS *Endeavour*.

H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour departs for Antarctica

The New Zealand Ross Sea Party sailed from Bluff on HMNZS *Endeavour* on 21 December 1956.



SCOTT BASE ROSS DEPENDENCY 11 JAN 57.1
cachet H.M.N.Z.S. PUKAKI 27 DEC 1956
cover to J. Brodie, head of the New Zealand Oceanographic Institute in Wellington

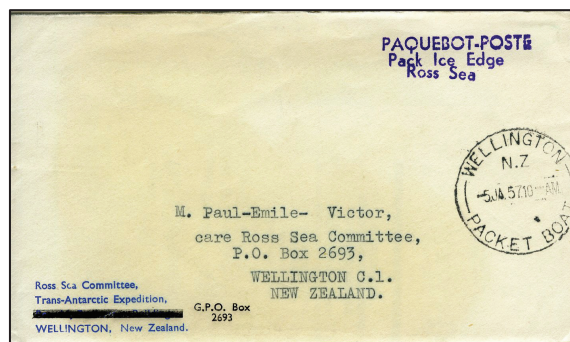
She was escorted by two Royal New Zealand Navy frigates HMNZS *Pukaki*, under command of Captain W.J. Brown and HMNZS *Hawea*, under command of Captain R.T. Hale, until they reached pack-ice near Scott Island on 27 December when mail was exchanged, and the two frigates returned to New Zealand. Covers were carried south on HMNZS *Endeavour* then returned per escort ship HMNZS *Pukaki* once they reached the edge of the ice shelf.

First Ross Dependency Transit Mail

The New Zealand Ross Sea Party included Ross Sea Committee Secretary Arthur Helm as liaison officer; he also carried out postal duties on behalf of Sir Edmund Hillary. In December 1956 Helm had learned that it would be possible to dispatch mail back to New Zealand by the support ships escorting them down to Antarctica.

As the Ross Dependency stamps could not be used before the post office was opened at Scott Base, he arranged to dispatch letters marked Paquebot-Poste. Helm obtained from the Otago Daily Times in Dunedin a purple-ink pad and three linotype slugs reading 'PAQUEBOT-POSTE', 'Pack Ice Edge' and 'Ross Sea'; these cachets he placed on the covers to be dispatched.

When the escort ships turned back to New Zealand on 27 December 1956 after reaching 60° South, about 200 letters stamped with the cachets were placed on board.



WELLINGTON PACKET BOAT -5 JA 57
cachet PAQUEBOT POSTE Pack Ice Edge Ross Sea

Below is the letter enclosed in the above cover, sent by Arthur Helm to Paul Emile Victor, head of operations for Terres Australes Antarctique Francaises:

*At Sea, Southern Ocean
64°40'S.
26 December 1956.*

Dear M. Victor,

Just a short note to accompany an unusual philatelic item which you may wish to add to your collection.

We, on the "Endeavour", are being escorted to the pack ice by two New Zealand Frigates, one of which, the "Pukaki", is to take our mail off as soon as we get to the pack ice. So far we have had excellent weather, and I hope that it continues this way until we get to McMurdo Sound.

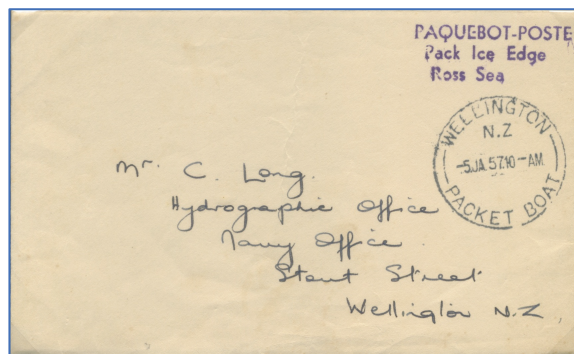
Sir Edmund has asked me to convey his best wishes to you, I am looking forward to meeting you, either in New Zealand, or in Antarctica itself. The cover on this letter will be a rarity, for there are only a handful of them posted in all. Yours is the only one for France as far as I know.

With Best Wishes for 1957.

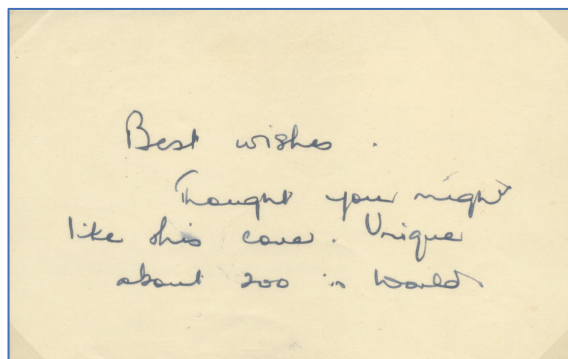
Yours sincerely,

A. Helm

Secretary



WELLINGTON PACKET BOAT -5 JA 57
cachet PAQUEBOT POSTE Pack Ice Edge Ross Sea



reverse

H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour arrives in McMurdo Sound

The first problem encountered on arrival in McMurdo Sound on 4 January 1957 was thick pack-ice as HMNZS *Endeavour* sailed towards Butter Point. Despite best efforts, Captain Kirkwood was unable to make any landing near the proposed base site, so he requested help from Rear Admiral George Dufek, who immediately sent USS *Glacier* to free her. By late afternoon HMNZS *Endeavour* was secured next to USS *Glacier*, within eight miles of Butter Point. Later that evening, Kirkwood, Miller and Hillary were flown by a US helicopter to the proposed site for Scott Base. They were disappointed.

New Zealand Ross Sea Party begins exploration Summer 1957

On 5 January, unloading of HMNZS *Endeavour* began. Meanwhile, Hillary and his team examined the site in detail and looked at other alternatives. By 7 January, Butter Point was abandoned as a viable option. About that time, Pram Point was suggested by the Americans as a potential site. In the afternoon

of 8 January, Hillary and Miller were flown to meet Rear Admiral Dufek aboard USS *Glacier*. They then flew to Pram Point and returned both decided and enthusiastic about the site. Two hours later they returned to the site, hauling supplies for the building and setting up the tents.



Scott Base - tents erected and buildings under construction



Scott Base – building construction nearly completed

The following morning a US Navy bulldozer helped to level the ground for construction to begin.



Auster and Beaver aircraft on the snow runway

Scott Base Post Office Opens

Arthur Helm opened the post office at 3p.m. on 11 January 1957 in the first of a row of tents between the edge of the ice and the future site of the base buildings. The opening date of the post office was radioed to New Zealand and supplies of stamps were then made available for sale on Monday 14 January 1957 at Chief Post Offices throughout New Zealand.



Arthur Helm, at centre, cancelling covers in the aircraft packing case

When the post office opened there was a strong demand for stamps and covers from U.S. personnel at McMurdo Station, so on 14 January 1957 Arthur Helm moved the post office into an aircraft packing case alongside HMNZS *Endeavour*. Over 2,000 first day covers were sold from that location. When demand slackened, the Post Office was moved back to Pram Point and once the Scott Base mess hut had been completed it was moved inside. Helm ceased work as Assistant Postmaster on 23 February 1957 and returned to New Zealand aboard HMNZS *Endeavour*.

Trans-Antarctic Expedition souvenir covers

"The Post Office was persuaded, as a special case, to sell these envelopes at all permanent post offices in the Dominion, and to accept addressed envelopes and place the requisite stamps on them. In all, the total printing of 100,000 covers was sold out." (Helm & Miller; 1964:396)

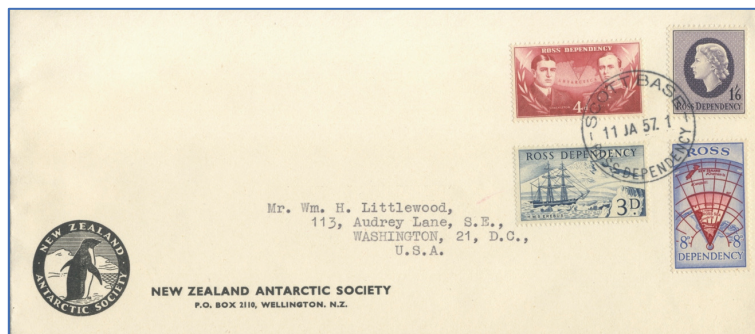


SCOTT BASE ROSS DEPENDENCY 11 JA 57.1; signed by Assistant Postmaster Arthur Helm

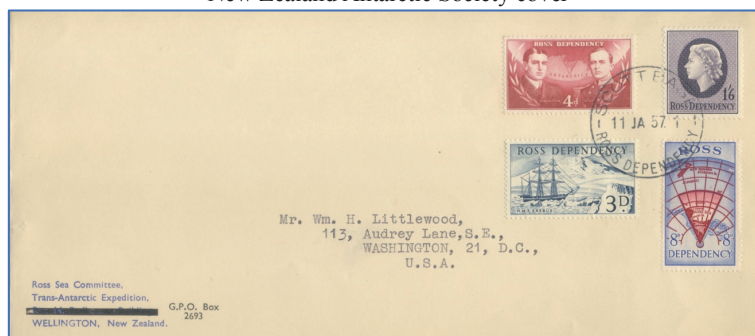


SCOTT BASE ROSS DEPENDENCY 11 JA 57.1

This was the first registered cover issued at Scott Base Post Office; signed by 17 members of the NZ Summer Party.



New Zealand Antarctic Society cover



Ross Sea Committee cover

Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition

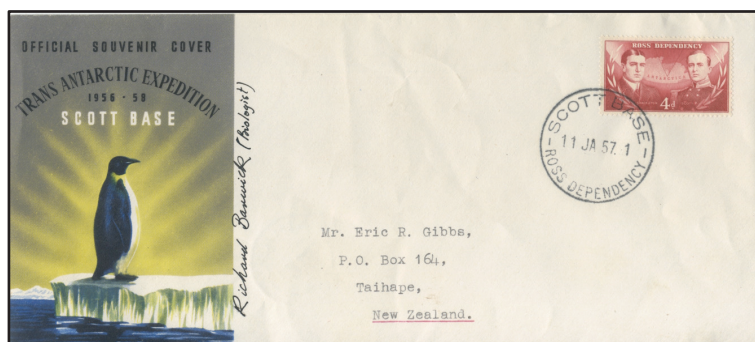
See Jurisich, M. *A Postal History of the 1955 -58 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition*. Classic Stamps Ltd., Blenheim, New Zealand 2018. @ www.classicstamps.co.nz

Adare-Hallett Station

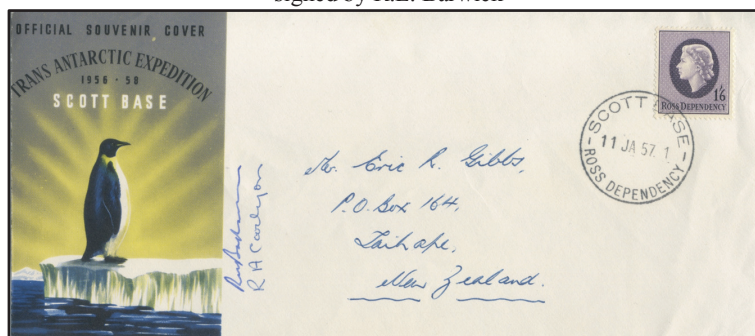
See Jurisich, M. *A Postal History of the Joint New Zealand-United States Hallett Station Antarctica* @ www.classicstamps.co.nz

Victoria University of Wellington Antarctic Expedition No. 1

R.W. Balham and R.E. Barwick, who took part in the second season of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition of 1956-57, came from the Victoria University of Wellington; their participation was later named VUWAE No. 1.



signed by R.E. Barwick



signed by R. Balham & R.A. Carlyon

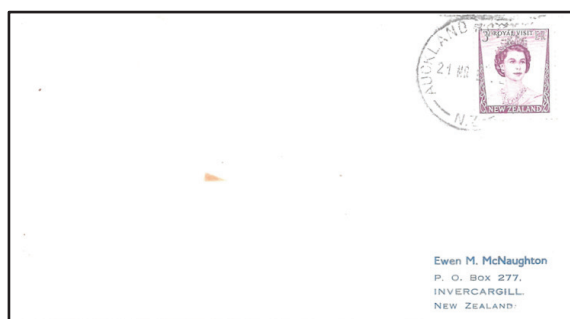
H.M.N.Z.S. Endeavour departs

On 22 February, HMNZS *Endeavour* departed for New Zealand, leaving behind the Winter-over party who declared a holiday the day after the last flight left McMurdo on 24 February 1957 (*Hal Vogel*).



SCOTT BASE ROSS DEPENDENCY 24 FE 57.1
signed E. Hillary Postmaster

The ship sailed via Campbell Island 2-3 March and arrived at Dunedin on 5 March. She then went to Wellington and finally berthed at Auckland Naval Base on 19 March 1957.



AUCKLAND NAVAL BASE 21 MR 57
cachet Commanding Officer HMNZS Endeavour 20 MAR 1957 on reverse

Scott Base Winter-over Party 1957

Sir Edmund Hillary (leader), Bob Miller (deputy leader), George Marsh, Murray Ellis, Lieutenant Commander Richard Brooke R.N., Murray Douglas, Bernie Gunn, Harry Ayres, Guy Warren, Roy Carlyon, Ron Balham, Jim Bates, Selwyn Bucknell, Chief Petty Officer Peter Mulgrew RNZN, Ted Gawn, Squadron Leader John Claydon RNZAF, Flying Officer Bill Cranfield RNZAF, Sergeant Wally Tarr RNZAF, plus the IGY team of Trevor Hatherton, Vern Gerrard, Herbie Orr, Neil Sandford and Peter MacDonald.

