

# 'The Bellingshausen-Amundsen Sea Venture' Exploration of Bellingshausen Area Made

## 'Grasshopper' Is Planted on Shore; Teams Start Work

(Editor's note: This is another installment in the account of an Antarctic expedition in which Herb Grey, Mail Tribune advertising manager, was an observer. Today's article discusses the expedition's stay in the Bellingshausen sea area, and messages of congratulations on the accomplishment.)

By HERB GREY  
Mail Tribune Advertising Manager

The following day, Tuesday, Feb. 16, the Navy-NSF Deep Freeze 60 expedition cruised east along the ice shelf as a bright polar sun occasionally pierced the overcast and squalls. Old hands in this part of the world had predicted that it would take 10 days to penetrate the 80-mile ice pack. It had been accomplished in 24 hours!

That evening, the Glacier's larger helicopter piloted by Lt. Comdr. William Kannheiser and co-pilot Sam Rocray flew through snow flurries and fog to plant a rocket-shaped, battery-charged instrument called a "Grasshopper" on shore.

**Transmit Temperature**  
This Buck-Rogers-type instrument would automatically transmit temperature, wind velocity and barometric pressure for a period of from three to four months. Photographer's Mate Robert Henry, Electronics Technician Stephen Sikirski and Charles Wagoner were on this grasshopper hop.

Progress eastward was halted 50 miles down the coast by heavy packs of ice, piled high in the vicinity of Fletcher Island as shown on current maps. Prevailing winds noted by Artowski when beset with the Belgica 62 years ago had built an impassable ice barrier.

Here the Glacier jammed her nose into an ice pack, open water and towering icebergs nearby. A big moon, high in the cold Antarctic twilight, turned the snowfields and icebergs to shimmering silver. A little band of penguins stood silent guard through the night.

The following day, Feb. 17, saw the Glacier's scientific teams go into action, scurrying out in helicopters and the ship's Greenland cruiser to explore the mysteries of this unknown land.

The major reconnaissance flight, employing two helicopters, took Commodore McDonald and a small party approximately 75 miles along the Bellingshausen sea coast to see if open water might be reached along the Eight's coast to the east.

Oblique aerial photographs were taken to supplement existing vertical "shots" secured on previous flights over this area. Many deep bays not yet mapped made it more certain that Thurston peninsula is not a peninsula at all, but instead an island or one of a group of islands with Peacock bay ice extending northeast through to Bellingshausen sea.

### Seems Hopeless

Because it seemed hopeless to reach open water along the Eight's coast, it was decided to expend major scientific and engineering efforts during the ensuing two or three weeks in the adjacent Amundsen sea.

It was during the afternoon of this day that Bob Miller of United Press International and I made the first press flight over this intriguing and forbidding Bellingshausen sea area with Lt. (jg) Sam Rocray at the controls of the HUL. As T. J. Baranski, AD2, waved us into the air with his green flag, the little orange helicopter dipped gracefully toward the ice, then high into a soft pastel-blue sky. Visibility was almost unlimited.

As far as we could see, until the distant horizon melted into a low hanging bank of clouds far to the left, there was ice everywhere, some in fantastic futuristic shapes, some spread like frosting on a great cake as it covered sweeping hills, more like giant ice cubes which, from the sky, appeared like those in the refrigerator at home.

**Smothered in Mantle**  
We swept up over five jagged humps smothered in a

lucent beauty — elusive sapphire hues changing into the deepest indigo blue as we gazed down into seemingly bottomless depths.

Far in the distance appeared the Glacier like a tiny toy, snug alongside an ice pack and dwarfed by nearby icebergs. Softly we landed on the ship's flight deck after covering several thousand square miles of wild, lonely land. Scott or Shackleton would have faced many long weeks of toil and hardship to cover, with dog and pony sleds or snow tractors, the area we saw on this flight.

Some of the icy expanse would have been impassable. **'Big Eye' No Bother**

The "Big Eye," the polar name for insomnia, did not bother us. Winter in the Antarctic is fast approaching and already the nights assumed a subdued twilight dimness. On board ship, however, it was no problem to shut out the light and get a good night's sleep. Port holes had to be covered for the evening movie show so that all might see news reels showing the 1958 All-American football selections, the last summer big league games and Kentucky Derby. Fast-shooting Western six-gun thrillers were most popular.

Cold winds off the Antarctic continent shifted around east the next day, Feb. 18. It jammed the pack ice into solid masses and formed high pressure ridges. Scientific excursions and helicopter flights were impossible as the ships backtracked westward toward the tip of Thurston island and Amundsen sea around it.

Bulldozing her way through heavy ice, the Glacier's progress was suddenly halted. Lieut. Roy Gadberry reported the ship's spring propeller shaft bearing on the port side had burned out. More than half of the 21,000 horsepower was gone and

every one was neded in this ice. A round the clock shift immediately went into action, under the supervision of machinist Kenneth Fritsche, to replace this 1,200 pound bearing. A difficult task at sea!

**Apprehension Apparent**  
During this enforced temporary besetment, with snow falling on icebergs and pack ice, the apprehension of the crew was apparent. Rumors were rampant. Many were convinced that the Glacier and Burton Island were facing the fate of the Belgica near these water back in 1898. Smiles appeared the following Sunday, however, when bearing tests proved successful and the ice-crushing course was resumed.

In these polar waters the sky becomes a giant mirror to show, with reasonable accuracy, what lies ahead. A glow across the horizon, called a "blink," means pack ice ahead; dark clouds in the distance point the way to open water.

After punching through ice for miles, there was a "water sky" ahead for the Glacier on that day. This time the promise was fulfilled; the sun was setting as we emerged into an expanse of shimmering gold that was ice-free water. The Burton Island lay silently off the port bow, that evening a "painted ship upon a painted ocean."

Meanwhile the officers and men on board the Glacier and Burton Island were elated when messages of congratulations began to crackle over the ships' wireless. Here are a few of them, directed to Admiral Tyree and relayed to our icebreakers:

"The penetration to the Bellingshausen sea by ships of your command is one of the great accomplishments in the exploration of Antarctica. It is an outstanding example of the spirit and daring which make the

Navy of ours the greatest in the world. Congratulations to you and all the others who, under your leadership, made this historic voyage a possibility. Capt. McDonald and all those with him, a hearty well done, good luck and good sailing."

Arleigh Burke, ADM, USN  
Chief of Naval Operations

"The penetration of Bellingshausen sea by ships of your command is an historic peacetime achievement . . . please extend my congratulations to those who have participated in this mission, under your leadership they have achieved their goal through

careful planning, skillful operation and integrated efforts and they have carried our flag to one of the last unknown areas of the earth."

Office of the Secretary of Defense.

"To Captain McDonald and the men of his command heartfelt congratulations and well done on your outstanding achievement in penetrating the Bellingshausen sea. The Atlantic Fleet takes pride in your accomplishment."

Jerauld Wright, ADM., USN, U. S. Atlantic Fleet

"Warmest congratulations on successfully carrying out Antarctic operations. Please radio information about ice conditions in Ross, Amundsen and Bellingshausen Seas. If you encountered whales please let me know."

The Glacier's captain sent this acknowledgement to the Soviets:

"Thank you for your kind message. Northeast wind has pressurized the heavy pack leaving no exit in our area. There is a notable lack of marine and bird life here. We saw a few whales north of 70 and one south. Best hunting to you and your crews."

Eager for any news of the outside world, the officers and men of the Glacier and Burton Island were enthused over the announcement via short wave radio that a son was born to Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain. In recog-

dition of this historic event, Capt. McDonald, command of Task Force 43.3.1 sent the following wireless message to Her Majesty:

"From the Antarctic shores of the Bellingshausen sea, first penetrated this week, the scientists, officers and men of the U.S. Navy Ships Glacier and Burton Island send their heartfelt congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the birth of a son and extend to the Royal Family their best wishes for a long and happy life."

And, from Buckingham Palace came the acknowledgement:

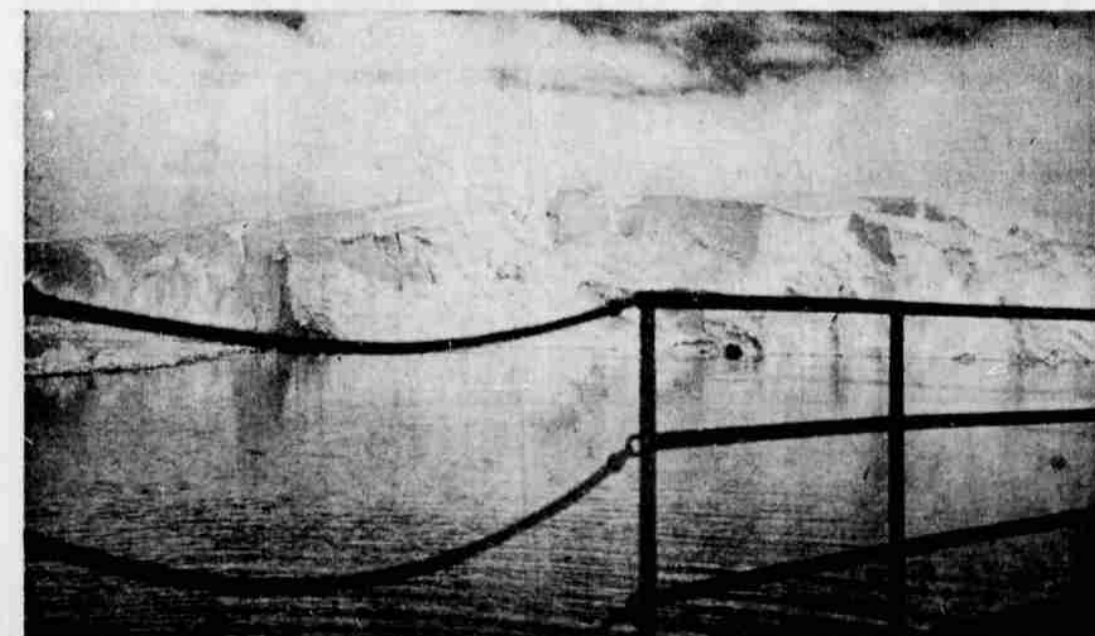
"The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh sincerely thank you and your ships' companies for your kind message of congratulations on the birth of a son to Her Majesty and His Royal Highness."

mantle of ice and snow. This was probably Durstin Island, first sighted on a flight from the USS Bear over this area in 1940 and named by Admiral Byrd for a member of his expedition. The low-lying hills beyond seemed to form a great bay not shown on the map.

The tiny dot, the shadow of our helicopter skimming over the glistening ice below, became larger as Pilot Rocray swooped down along the coastline where great masses of towering ice spilled onto the ice pack and spawned new icebergs. Deep crevasses were close, in all their trans-



**GRASSHOPPER PLANTED** — Above is a reproduction of a painting by Arthur Beaumont, combat artist, of scientists and Navy personnel installing a "Grasshopper" during Operation Deep Freeze 60 earlier this year. The instrument automatically transmits temperature, wind velocity and barometric pressure for a period of from three to four months. (Official Navy Photo)



**ICE SHELF** — The towering ice shelf as viewed from the icebreaker, USS Glacier, in the Bellingshausen sea during Operation Deep Freeze 60 this winter. This is the first time in history the waters have been penetrated and this portion of the coast seen. Landings were made on the ice and land, and near this point, a "Grasshopper" automatic meteorological station, was established. (Official Navy Photo)

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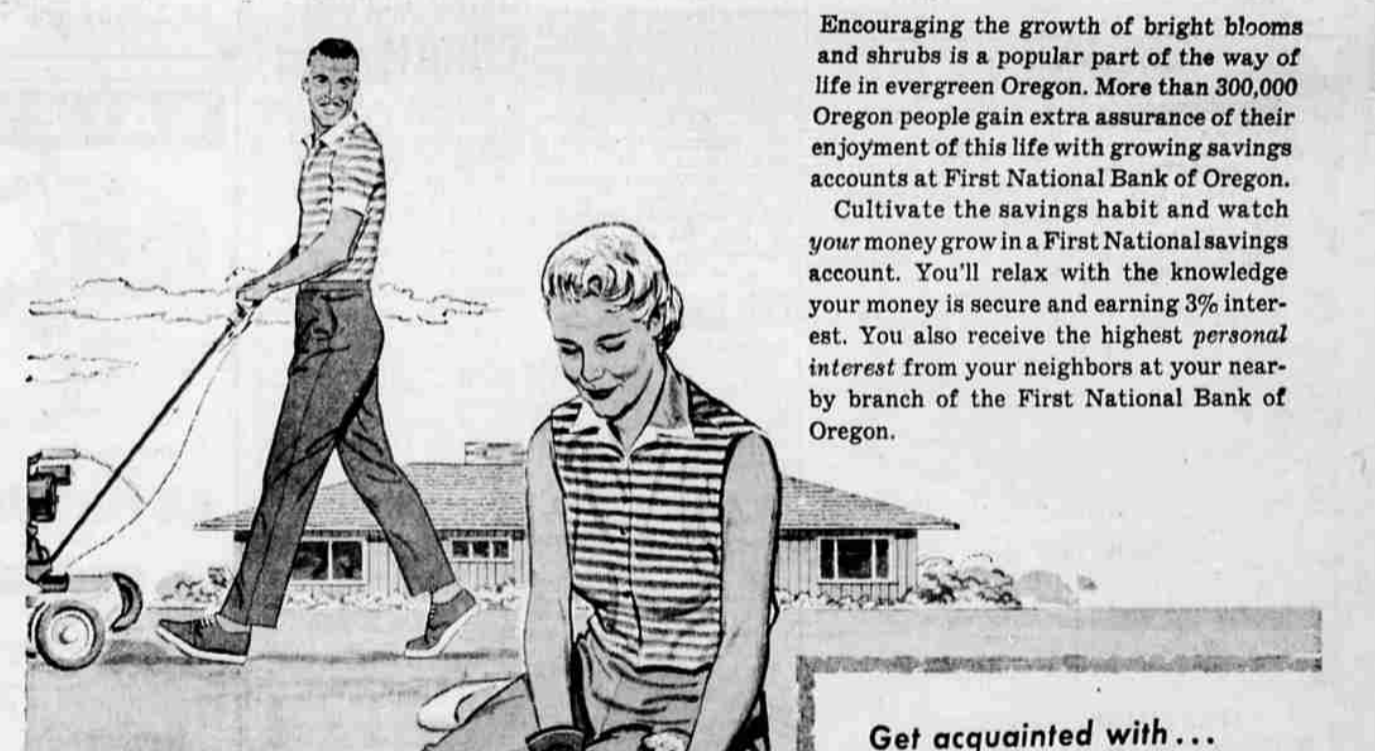
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