



Dump McMurdo

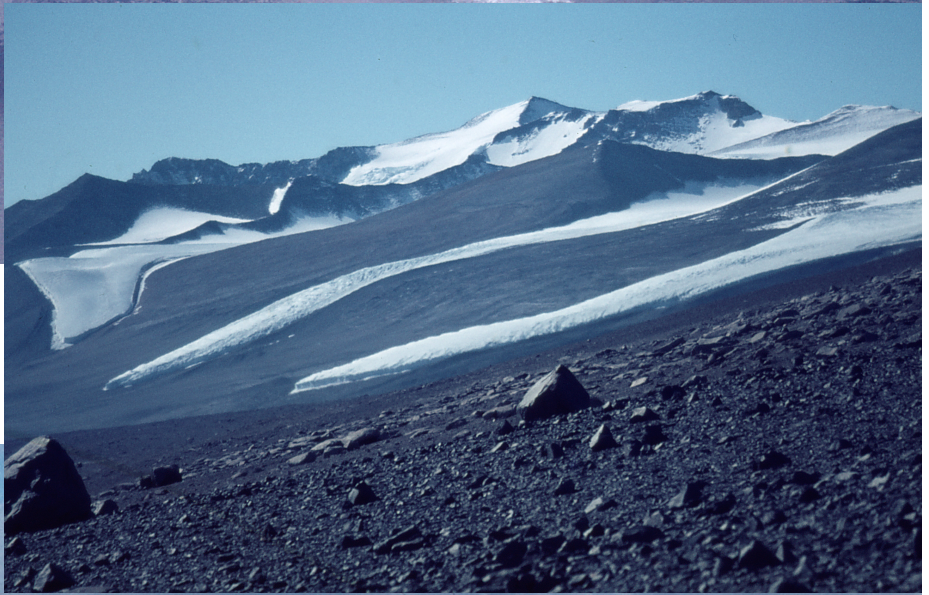


A Continent For Science. R. S. Lewis (U.S.A.).

New Zealand uses the dependency as the site for Scott Base, the efficient station near the American base (McMurdo)

Adventurous visitors try to "ride" a seal (Weddell) This is not recommended. An alarmed seal can do a good deal of damage to a human being with a mere flick of its powerful tail.

During the austral summer of 1960 an 800-pound Weddell female, apparently seeking a mate, attempted to wiggle into a field tent - attracted, witnesses believed, by the luscious snores of a sleeping geologist. She witnessed ~~him~~ said they frightened the seal away. Sheir colleague slept through the entire episode and doesn't believe a word of it to this day.



Penguin flesh saved men on ice floes

(Special Correspondent N.Z.P.A.)

SCOTT BASE, December 3.

After five days drifting helplessly on ice floes in McMurdo Sound after their trimaran became jammed in pack ice and had to be abandoned, four men of the University of Canterbury's marine biology unit, starving and near total exhaustion, were rescued by a United States Navy helicopter yesterday afternoon.

During the five days on the ice floes, the four men, normally based at Cape Bird, were rammed by an iceberg, followed by a killer whale, and had to subsist by eating raw penguin flesh.

The four men were today in the dispensary at McMurdo

Station, resting from their ordeal, after being rescued in an aerial search by British and American aircraft which flew more than 30 hours.

The men are James Kenneth Lowry, aged 30, Graham David Fenwick, aged 22, Paul Michael Sager, aged 22, and Ronald Warren Farrelly, aged 23. All four are single. Mr Lowry is an American, while the others are New Zealanders, from Christchurch.

Before being discovered their remarkable journey had taken them westwards from their base at Cape Bird, south through Wohlshlag Bay, and along the Ross Island coast. They then drifted westward again before being sighted.

NEAR EXHAUSTION

Suffering from frostbite and snowblindness, the men were starving and near total exhaustion when rescued by the helicopter after being spotted by a Royal Air Force Hercules aircraft three miles west of Cape Royds.

At their bedsides today lay reminders of their journey—a penguin eaten by the four starving men, and one of the pieces of punctured cardboard used as sunglasses against the burning light.

The men were discovered missing on Friday night when a helicopter cargo flight landed at Cape Bird. The huts were deserted and a small trimaran used for marine research was missing.

The temperature recording graph indicated that the men were last at their base on November 26. No entry had been made since that date. Their last radio communication with Scott Base had been on November 25.

The four men were last seen on November 23 when the Scott Base leader (Major P. G. Frazer) made the 60-mile helicopter flight to col-

lect their voting papers in the General Election.

SEARCH MOUNTED

Major Frazer immediately approached the commander of the United States Navy Antarctic support force (Captain A. N. Fowler) who ordered a search to be made.

Almost 30 hours after it began, the missing men were spotted by Chief Aerographer's Mate A. C. Boeger, a trained ice observer, who was aboard a Royal Air Force Hercules returning to Christchurch.

A United States Navy VXE6 helicopter, piloted by Lieutenant A. Costlow and Lieutenant J. McComas, soon after put down on the small ice floe to make a rescue.

His eyes bandaged for snowblindness, the unit leader (Mr Lowry) said the trouble began just after they had launched their first boat trip of the season.

"Both the boat's motors cut out soon after leaving Cape Bird. We switched tanks and motors but nothing happened.

"A northerly breeze swept us south into the pack ice," Mr Lowry said.

When a change of wind began blowing the boat northward, the men abandoned it and remained on an ice floe. They floated on this for several days, and at one stage were within 20 yards of the shore.

FORCED TO JUMP

But their hopes were dashed when a southerly suddenly arose and drove them back out into McMurdo Sound. As huge waves washed across the ice, breaking it up, the men were forced to jump from ice floe to ice floe to keep afloat.

Their small supplies of sledge biscuits, sardines, sugar, chocolate, peanut but-

ter, Marmite, and meat bars, salvaged from the boat, were running low. The food was rationed among the four, and consumed with sugar-flavoured snow.

Mr Lowry said that a captured penguin was their real saviour — its warm, raw flesh provided their first real body-heat and gave the men new hope.

Despite the nagging fear that they might not reach the shore and safety, the men were still able to joke and sing. Photographs were taken and diaries written.

"VERY DEPRESSED"

"Several times we became very depressed," said Mr Fenwick. "But something would happen and our hopes would rise."

They were particularly worried men when an iceberg rammed and splintered their small ice floe — but luckily all four were able to scramble on to the largest piece.

A killer whale patrolling the ice floes brought more worries — but these were soon forgotten with the first sound of a helicopter.

"We saw the helicopter fly all the way to Cape Bird and then return in a great hurry," Mr Lowry said. "We thought it wouldn't be long before they found us."

But on Friday night two Hercules aircraft passed within a mile — and hastily fired flares failed to attract them. Bright night sunshine was thought to have swamped any glare from the distress flares.

The four men organised themselves into half-hour watches after that, but the disappointments continued. Flares fired towards helicopters and searching Hercules aircraft produced no result.

"We would walk and walk," Mr Fenwick said. "Walk to keep warm, and walk just to do something. Water and bitter winds produced uncontrollable shivers. Our chests ached from shivering."

The trimaran which the four men used in their marine biology studies was 16ft 6in long with a 12ft beam. It had 144 sq. ft of deck space, a locker, a work table, a winch, and a hole for sampling through the deck instead of over the side. The weight of the boat was 1318lb.

SEAL TAGGING WORK ON ICE EXCITING

Riding 900lb seals to tag them, cutting ice with a chain saw, instructing in snow and ice techniques and licking salt deposits, were all in the day's work for field assistant, Ken Mason, of Dunedin, who has just returned from the Antarctic.

Care had to be taken when catching the Weddell seals for tagging as some of them were aggressive, he said. He soon learned to put a bag over the heads of the worst ones and ride them until they had been tagged.

He was helping Canterbury University technician Dave Greenwood tag 450 seals as part of a study of the movements, way of life and community trends of the creatures.

"We managed to tag two crabeater seals which are an athletic animal capable of 15 m.p.h. on the ice. We had a terrible struggle tagging them and I can understand why only about 10 of them have ever been tagged.

"Detailed work being done on seals by American scientists using underwater cameras and by attaching transmitters to their tails has made tagging nearly obsolete."

Most of the work he did on the seals was done from Cape Evans, the site of Captain Scott's hut. "The atmosphere in the hut was such that I felt as if I had bumped into Scott himself."

Mr Mason said the hut

was full of rubbish which had historic value inside the building but outside it would be worthless.

For about seven weeks of his four-month stay on the ice Ken was stationed at Scott Base. There he instructed Americans and New Zealanders in snow and ice techniques, tested prototype ski climbing equipment and painted huts. "I still do not know whether the paint dried or froze," he said.

While at the base he met Antarctic Treaty delegates who stayed for a week. "The delegates were from different countries and when they were there the base was so full, tents had to be pitched outside. There were 51 people at Scott Base and those sleeping outside were set no hardship as the Antarctic tents are beautifully designed and warm."

The beared Ken did not find the Antarctic as cold as he thought it would be. "Because of the low humidity, the cold is not as penetrating as it is in New Zealand. On still days, I wore shorts and did not feel cold, even though the highest temperature recorded was plus 1/2 deg C." As soon as the wind

blew the apparent temperature dropped markedly.

Mr Mason did a small amount of field work with Antarctic old-timer Harry Keys, collecting samples of salt deposits. Taste was the easiest method of identifying salt.

Chainsaws were used to cut holes in the sea ice about 20km from Scott Base in McMurdo Sound. The field party he was part of was doing oceanographic work and lowered equipment into the sea through 4ft square holes in the ice.

Water currents and temperatures at varying depths were measured.

"The lowest water temperature we measured was -1.93deg C. This had slivers of ice in it and with another point or so of a degree, it would have been solid. If a man slipped into the water, he would have three minutes of conscious life left. Chances of survival are small."

At 20km out on the sea ice, the party was always on the lookout for the ice breaking out. This is when a crack forms and the ice moves out to sea at a speed of up to a foot a second. "We had escape routes off the ice in our minds the whole time, in case of a breakout."

Mr Mason was one of four men from Dunedin and Gore who were chosen to work in the Antarctic under the D.S.I.R. Antarctic Division over the 1972-73 summer. The others were: Bruce Laybourne, a journalist who was the public relations and information officer at Scott Base; Ken Blackwood, a field assistant and party leader, both of Dunedin; and Harold Lowe, of Gore, who was the field leader whose job was to sort out the problems of the field parties.

These men will be arriving from the ice in the next few days.

*N.C. meeting.
Still showed 8mm.
taken in the shotover
t.*

The result of an interview with Alan Showles.

Seals of the World - Gavin Maxwell.

World pop. 200,000 - 500,000.

Weights up to 900 lb. Male up to 10 ft, female 11 ft.
Feeds on cephalopods, crustaceans & fish with amounts of mud, sand & stones.

- nonplussed, vacant, unbelieving expression.
- spend winter under the ice. Lives invariably within sight of Antarctic mainland.

Old and/or sick animals "retire" away from others. - 1/2 to 3/5 miles from coast & 3000 ft. a.s.l.

- species non-migratory

Breeding - Sept to Jan. - gestation period 10-11 months.
Most pups born 1st. week of Nov. - pup suckled c 6 weeks
- cow facts.

Pup c. 4'6" and c 60 lb at birth. End of lactation pup c. 260 lb. ^{7ft} Mum - 300 lb.

Females breed at c 3 yrs. Males @ c 4 yrs.
Males arrive at rookeries 2 or 3 weeks after pupping starts.
Sighting common 'tween Oct & Dec.

Crabeater Seal.

very ~~most~~ abundant but least known. Pop 2-5,000,000
- 9 ft long & 500 lb. Body long & slim
Feeds only on crustacean *Gnathypus* - strains them out with teeth. Fairly rapid on ice (at least 15 mph.)
Lives amongst pack ice.