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ASA Disbursing Office Plans To Install ATM

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

Beginning Feb. 1, McMurdo Station's Disbursing Office in Building 155 will implement a few changes for personal check-cashing procedures.

One of these changes will be that the office will no longer accept personal checks from Sailors. However, an ATM machine, scheduled for installation in late January, will serve the day-to-day cash needs of the community now provided by the office.

The ATM machine will be located near the teller window and will accept all debit cards (Plus, Cirrus, Novas, etc.) and cash-withdrawal credit cards.

The check cashing policy is one of a few changes Antarctic Support Associates (ASA) will implement as it assumes responsibility of banking services now provided by the Navy at McMurdo Station.

The change will not reduce customer service, according to ASA accounting clerk Susan Lee.

Naval Support Force Antarctica disbursing clerk DK2 Stephen Alexander said Sailors won't receive personal check cashing because of the difficulty in retrieving lost money once the service member transfers.

Alexander said the ATM should compensate for the loss in personal check cashing. He also suggested Sailors with joint checking make appropriate arrangements to prevent overdrawn accounts when ATM service begins.

Naval Antarctic Support Unit will handle all disbursing functions for winter-over Sailors beginning in April, according to Alexander.

In addition, ASA will continue its policy of not accepting personal checks from employees, but will give them the option of receiving traveler's checks or cash from their Employee Fund Account (EPA).

Traveler's checks, money orders and cashier's checks will be accepted from everyone as well as personal checks from scientists and grantees as guaranteed by the National Science Foundation. However, the decision has not been made as to whether ASA will guarantee corporate checks.

Kiwi Cargo Contributes to US/NZ Logistics Pool

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

Ross Island's Kiwi community hosted last week's traditional Moari feast to show their appreciation to local residents. But the Hangi isn't the only contribution Kiwis make to the United States Antarctic Program.

The New Zealand Army Support Group (NZASG) - Kiwi Cargo - plays a significant role in cargo transportation through McMurdo Station.

The twelve-member detachment is New Zealand's primary contribution to the U.S./N.Z. "logistics pool" in Antarctica. New Zealand provides this service in return for access to U.S.- owned flight support, medical and recreation facilities at McMurdo Station.

"We work very closely with the Movement Control Center (MCC) cargo coordinators," said WO2 Jacko Noble, Kiwi Cargo detachment warrant officer. "They generate the documentation and provide us with pallets and we do the loading and unloading off the LC- 130's."

Kiwi Cargo detachment members represent all three branches of the New Zealand Defense Force (NZDF) - Army, Air Force and Navy. Members also come from different trades and must attend a 10-day cargo handling course in Christchurch before deployment.

Many NZDF service members apply for duty in Antarctica, Noble says, but only 22 are selected annually. The detachment consists of two teams, each of which deploys for half a season.

"The biggest reason why I came down here is the unfamiliar environment," said CPL(?) Dave Ackroyd, Kiwi Cargo shift commander. "You just can't buy a ticket to come down here."

AROUND USAP

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

McMurdo Station - Antarctic Development Squadron SIX (VXE-6) has flown over 700 hours, transported over 600 passengers and delivered over 79,000 gallons of fuel and almost 1.5 million pounds of cargo to various field camps and the South Pole.

The annual move of flight operations from the ice runway to William's Field skiway scheduled for today was delayed until Sunday, Dec. 22. The delay was because of the unusually good condition of the VXE-6 transition and the ice runway.

The first flight to the Russian Station Vostok was completed last Monday. The camp was opened up and passengers and supplies were delivered. A resupply flight to the station was completed the following day. A total of eight flights to the station will be conducted this season.

The New York Air National Guard departed for Christchurch on Saturday. They are expected to return on Jan. 12.

South Pole - Flight operations to the South Pole continue to run smoothly. The station received 21 flights during the week completing delivery of all scheduled cargo. The next cargo bound for Pole will not be available in McMurdo until the arrival of the cargo vessel M/V Greenwave currently scheduled for Feb 2. Flights scheduled for next week will all be fuel flights. Currently, fuel tanks at the Pole are about half full.

Project representatives for the ground-based infrared measurement project and the spectroscopic studies of the airglow and auroral processes project arrived at the station last week.

R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer - The ship was scheduled to depart Lyttleton, NZ, for a research cruise on Dec. 6., but was delayed due to engine problems.

After repairs were completed and the engine was tested, the ship departed the harbor on Wednesday morning to conduct research on ocean atmosphere variability and ecosystem response in the Ross Sea.

R/V Polar Duke - The ship continued operating in the Powell Basin until time constraints forced it to depart the area for Palmer Station. Researchers had been trying to retrieve at least one of the two acoustic moorings that had been deployed in the area. One mooring was still in its place, but could not be reached because of ice conditions. The other mooring remained suspended in the water, but was adrift. Attempts to catch the mooring line were not successful.

Christchurch - On Wednesday, Dec. 4, five Sailors from Naval Antarctic Support Unit (NASU) helped set up a party at Christchurch Public Hospital for the children's ward. The children met a New Zealand television puppet star and Santa Claus.

Sailors from NASU donned their dress blue uniforms and marched with the Royal New Zealand Navy on Friday during the dedication of a memorial water fountain in honor of New Zealand Sailors.

Phone Use On The Rise

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

McMurdo residents are taking advantage of the many telephone services now available to them.

It wasn't long ago when everyone had to take turns using the one phone line to the outside world.

"I wintered-over in '91 and we had one telephone line which was ridiculously expensive - \$10 a minute," said Rex Cotten, McMurdo Telephone Supervisor

"There was no personal email," he added. "All email had to be business-related."

Today, locals enjoy much greater access to home. Last year, the number of outgoing public trunk lines was increased to ten lines. So, it is now possible for ten people to make calls to the U.S. at once.

Eight outgoing and four incoming business trunk lines, as well as three fax lines, are also available.

For the first time, this year McMurdo residents can receive calls over five new incoming public trunk lines. From the U.S., dial 011-024-09-xxxx (McMurdo four-digit extension). New Zealand Telecom provides this service and all calls are routed through Scott Base.

Rates are better these days, too. When additional public trunk lines were first installed a few years ago rates were a dollar per minute. Now, prepaid calling cards average 33 cents a minute with personal cards as low as 20 cents.

With better rates has come increased use. During one week in November, nearly 4,000 public outgoing calls were made. McMurdo averaged one hour on the phone per individual.

SCIENCE PROJECT UPDATE

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

Undergraduate Research Initiative: Antarctic Marine Geology and Geophysics (S-096)

This project provides research experience to undergraduate students by giving them the opportunity to actively

participate in ongoing marine geologic and geophysical research on the continent. Research will be related to stratigraphy and/or evolution of the Antarctic continental margin.

The program also provides a full year for students to conduct follow-up research via a senior thesis. The program is intended to stimulate participating students to pursue advanced degrees in geology and geophysics.

LF/MF/HF Radiowave Observations from Southern Hemisphere Auroral Sites (S-128)

The objective of this research is to collect clues about three types of radio emissions of auroral origin. These emissions, while only a fraction of the total energy of the aurora, may provide important clues to the more energetic processes.

A low-, medium- and high-frequency receiver will be operated from the South Pole. It will take advantage of the radio-quiet Antarctic conditions.

While there will be no project personnel deployed, a contracted technician will maintain the system, change data tapes and transfer test data samples to the home institution throughout the year.

Researchers Give A Total Weather Picture

by Samantha Tisdal

"How's the weather?" -- Antarctica generates the coldest temperatures and strongest winds on Earth. In a continent of such extremes, this most mundane of questions can take on life-and- death proportions.

Which makes Antarctica just the sort of place a meteorologist loves to study.

The Antarctic Meteorological Research Center (AMRC), a research group headed by Dr. Charles Stearns from the University of Wisconsin - Madison Space Science and Engineering Center, has carved out a niche for itself in the United States Antarctic Program over the past several years, by providing up-to-date weather data to National Science Foundation grantees and anyone else who "needs to know."

"Our project has various facets," explained meteorologist Matt Lazarra, a member of the AMRC team. "One thing we do is to build a continuously updated composite 'weather picture' for the entire Antarctic continent, using data from a variety of over-passing satellites, plus two dedicated polar-orbiting satellites, NOAA-11 and NOAA-12."

According to Lazarra, the composite weather picture is revised every three hours at AMRC headquarters in Wisconsin, then shipped to McMurdo via cyberspace. Here the picture can be viewed on any LAN computer, under the Operational/Weather menu selection.

"The composite is all over the Internet on everybody's homepage; it's quite the novelty!" Lazarra chuckled. "But it's also an extremely useful tool. Naval Support Force, Antarctica's Weather Division likes to look at our composite, for example, because it sure makes those flights to and from Christchurch more predictable."

New this year on the LAN display is a continuous update of the most recent Automatic Weather Station temperatures around the Ross Island area, as well as a "meteo-gram" for Willie Field, depicting a timeseries of temperatures, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed and direction over the last 72 hours.

"We try to continually improve and collect more weather data, and to make it as available as possible for use here," Lazarra said.

One of the most exciting developments in the AMRC program this year is the integration of a "graphical interface" software package called McIDAS-Vis5D.

"It's a very dimensional software that allows you to view weather data a little differently than you may be

accustomed to," Lazarra explained. "The idea is that it would really be neat to look at weather in '5-D' -- in terms of length, width, height, time, and data."

A quick demonstration of Vis5D reveals a completely new way of conceptualizing weather. Replacing the familiar two-dimensional satellite image of a weather system is a dramatic three-dimensional color display, depicting a "topographical slice" of weather at a specific elevation overlaying the Antarctic continent.

The image can be animated to depict movement of the weather system over a period of time. The whole thing can be manipulated in various ways, adjusted to integrate new fields of data, tilted on edge in any direction, in order to watch the weather structure evolving from many different perspectives.

"This runs on a lot of horse-power," Lazarra said. "You need a fast, fairly high-end computer to handle the graphics. But the software is free to anyone who wishes to acquire it."

Free as well is an AMRC archive of Antarctic weather data, available to scientists and other grantees. AMRC has recently obtained a new tape system to allow for increasing the stability of archived meteorological and project data.

The data is accumulated from such diverse sources as polar orbiting satellites, weather balloons, automatic weather stations, and manned weather stations across the continent. It is compiled using a versatile computer-based system called the Man- Computer Interactive Data Access System (McIDAS).

Using the MERLIN software system, which is installed at certain consoles in the Crary Telescience Lab, users can tailor weather data to their own needs, and create "custom-made" weather maps and charts for any area in Antarctica.

We like to think of ourselves as 'one-stop-shopping' for weather information," Lazarra said.

Those wishing to view current Antarctic weather displays back home can do so on the World Wide Web at the following address: <http://uwmmamrc.ssec.wisc.edu/amrchome.html>

AMRC can also be e-mailed at: amrc@ssec.wisc.edu

USAP PERSON OF THE WEEK

by JO3 Roland Ortiz

It doesn't take much to ruin an aircraft engine as AMH1 Bob Sokoloski of Antarctic Development Squadron SIX (VXE-6) knows.

A tool or even a nut or bolt left behind after maintenance can result in damage to an engine or other vital aircraft systems.

Sokoloski, an aviation structural mechanic - hydraulics, is a quality assurance representative. He inspects work completed by maintenance crews to ensure the aircraft is ready to fly.

"I overlook any mechanical or electrical problems that were worked on during the day crew," he said.

Another part of Sokoloski's work is to ensure all tools and parts are accounted for. With the proper accountability comes the assurance that nothing has been left behind that can cause mechanical problems which would prevent an aircraft from flying.

In a recent situation, Sokoloski found a missing part. "We were missing a small piece of magnet from a tool," he said. "The search took about six hours. I found the part in the nose ski section of the aircraft."

A native of La Salle, Illinois, Sokoloski has been in the Navy for fifteen years. He will stay with VXE-6 until April of 1998 when he hopes to transfer to Florida.

Packrats Beware

by Mike Beery and Jody Miller

If you are yet to spot friendly firemen walking through your workcenter, you most likely will. What these folks are doing is fire inspections. Please don't take offense to their presence, if you have a question feel free to ask, they will gladly answer with pride.

What we are basically looking for are hazards to aid in the prevention of fires. We understand that McMurdo Station is a unique place and proper storage can be a problem.

Here are some simple things that you can do to help:

- Refrain from storing excess material on top of heating ducts.
- Do not store above the coverage of fixed fire suppression systems.
- Keep walkways, hallways, and doors clear.
- Fire extinguishers should be kept clear and easily accessible.
- When possible, store items neatly on shelves.

We thank you for cooperating with our constant quest to keep a safe work environment present in McMurdo.

Navy News

Tax Help Available To Sailors *by BUPERS Public Affairs*

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- For Navy members who dread filling out tax forms, "VITA" might be the nicest four-letter word spoken during the tax season.

VITA, short for Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, is a quality of life program that helps Sailors file their federal and state income tax returns electronically.

Preparing tax returns electronically offers several benefits, including: faster refunds, fewer mistakes, and money savings.

Last year VITA personnel prepared more than 61,000 federal returns (14.5 percent of all active duty Navy) and 16,500 state returns. Sailors saved more than \$5.7 million in tax preparation fees and received refunds of more than \$42 million.

Electronic Tax Filing (ELF) will be available at most CONUS shore installations and at more than a dozen overseas shore installations. It is also expected that nearly every aircraft carrier and submarine tender will offer ELF services. The location of the VITA office nearest you can be found by contacting the local Naval Legal Service Office.

Personnel interested in assisting with the VITA/ELF program should contact their chain of command and the tax officer for their local tax center. NAVADMIN 271/96 outlines the ETF policy.
