

Polar Do's and Don'ts is the title of a two-page leaflet [See next Title] issued by the Navy to every newcomer to the White Continent. It is obviously necessary to be specially clothed, when walking around the South Pole at -40° . Our clothing issue was generous, as all provisions of the Navy proved to be, especially with regard to food, available from a 24-hour luxurious buffet without having to pay. Alcoholic drinks were only obtainable for cash from a US Air Force bar, where a tumbler full of Cointreau liqueur cost 25 US cents.

Keeping the human body healthy, warm and ever prepared for possible emergencies was the primary duty of the US Navy, designated at my time to act in support of all scientific activities. The Navy took its duty extremely seriously, as any rescue operation was very costly, time-consuming and brought others into often more dangerous situations than those to be rescued. Flying by helicopter is considered particularly dangerous, and my first report from the Antarctic was about a helicopter crash there. The disaster of Air New Zealand in 1979, 10 years after my visit, when their plane crashed into Mount Erebus, 3000 m high, with the loss of all lives, was aggravated by the much-feared invisibility caused by 'whiteout', when sky and ground are undistinguishably white. I saw it a number of times during my visit.

The ruler over all American Antarctic activities, and by virtue of his command, the chief of all transportation and communication facilities, was at my time Rear Admiral D.F. (Kelly) Welch USN, the 'uncrowned king'. I would not call his kingdom an entirely happy one, as the dichotomy between his duty and the safe-keeping of all scientists and their often excessive demands—from his perspective—led to controversies. I was soon to experience his absolute power myself.

Admiral Welch gave all newcomers an interesting briefing shortly before our departure from Christchurch. Of the total permanent American population on the ice of 904, only 559 overwinter. All summer Americans in 1969 numbered 2158. During the previous summer 26000 tons of food and other supplies were shipped by sea, half of which was fuel oil. By air, supplies reached 720 tons delivered to Williams Field. Oil storage amounted to 6500000 gallons, sufficient for one year. He agreed that atomic power was cheaper than fuel oil for Diesel electric generation. Since 1957, when American operations began, the United States had invested \$ 25 million. With reference to the Russian Station, with which visits were exchanged, Admiral Welch remarked: "Here the environment is the enemy, and not ideology, and that is very refreshing".

He mentioned that sports were available for his men, such as broom hockey (?), volley ball, rugby games with the 'All White' team from the New Zealand Scott Base, and ice sailing. Financially, a total expenditure of \$ 35 to \$ 39 million was essential each year, and it cost the sum of \$ 150000 to keep one man in the Antarctic for one year. (I calculated that my three weeks on the ice cost the US Government \$ 8654, or \$ 412 a day, the equivalent of a five-star hotel). A cut in his annual budget of 25%, Admiral Welch said, would mean the end of all American scientific activity on the White Continent.