

Introduction

This data sheet contains information (names, dates, etc) on the deployment of American and Canadian icebreakers, research vessels and MSTS/ MSC vessels that participated in various U.S. operations in the Arctic and the Antarctic from 1946 to 2003. It is divided into four parts.

Part One- Antarctica lists the ships that visited the frozen continent during the austral summer from "Operation Highjump" through Deep Freeze '03

Part Two- Western Arctic Operations lists the ships that participated in the early re-supply of Point Barrow, Alaska (1947) through the most recent deployment of Coast Guard icebreakers on Arctic West Operations.

Part Three- Eastern Arctic Operations lists the ships that participated in the building of early weather stations in the Canadian Arctic and the building and re-supply of DEWLINE radar stations that were established during the Cold War. It includes the ships that have participated in the recent re-supply (Pacer Goose) at Thule, Greenland.

Part Four- MSTS/ MSC lists the vessels that transported cargo and fuel to Arctic stations in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland as part of Task Force Six, Atlantic Area.

The data (ship names & dates) have been acquired from various sources. The dates of the icebreaker's deployment were taken from the Coast Guard Medals & Awards Manual and individual icebreaker cruise reports.

Dates shown in brackets e.g. [2 DEC 55- 15 FEB 56] are the period the ship was south of Latitude 60 South and eligible for the Antarctic Medal or the ship was north of Latitude 60 North and eligible for the Coast Guard Arctic Medal.

Dates shown without brackets e.g. 1 July- 30 September 1954 were obtained from alternate sources such as cruise reports or the Post Operation Reports of Commander (CFT 6), Military Sea Transportation Service, Atlantic Area. We give a special thanks to USS Michigan Chapter member, Robert Quintero, USCS #3893, who provided the MSTS reports many years ago.

Other sources of data were the Antarctic Journal of the United States and correspondences with U.S. Naval Support Force, Antarctica, the United States Coast Guard Library (Sheila Lamb), the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C, and the Canadian Coast Guard via e-mail.

The data sheet supplies listings of ships and dates that will help the polar philatelist and the naval cover collector with an interest in mail from the ships that made voyages to the Arctic and the frozen continent of Antarctica.

John Young, USCS #8219

Ned Harris, USCS #3608

OPERATION HIGHJUMP (1946-1947)

Objectives:

1. Train personnel and test material in the Antarctic.
2. Consolidate and extend American sovereignty over the largest practical area of Antarctica.
3. Determine the feasibility of establishing and maintaining bases in the Antarctic.
4. Develop techniques for establishing and maintaining air bases on the ice
5. Amplify existing scientific knowledge of the area.
6. Aerial mapping of as much of Antarctica as possible, particularly the coastline.

Task Force 68 U.S. Naval Antarctic Expedition

Central Group Task Group 68.1

U.S.S. MOUNT OLYMPUS (AGC-8)	[30 DEC 46 – 1 MAR 47]
U.S.S. YANCEY (AKA-93)	[29 DEC 46 – 15 FEB 47]
U.S.S. MERRICK (AKA-97)	[15 DEC 46 – 16 FEB 47]
U.S.S. SENNET (SS-408)	[28 DEC 46 – 7 FEB 47]
U.S.S. BURTON ISLAND (AG-88)	[3 FEB 46 - 9 MAR 47]
USCGC NORTHWIND (WAG-282)	[30 DEC 46 – 5 MAR 47]

Western Group Task Group 68.2

U.S.S. CURRITUK (AV-7)	[23 DEC 46 – 12 FEB 47]
U.S.S. HENDERSON (DD-785)	[24 DEC 46 – 1 MAR 47]
U.S.S. CACAPON (AO-52)	[24 DEC 46 – 1 MAR 47]

Eastern Group Task Group 68.3

U.S.S. PINE ISLAND (AV-12)	[24 DEC 46 – 10 MAR 47]
U.S.S. BROWNSON (DD-868)	[26 DEC 46 – 1 MAR 47]
U.S.S. CANISTEO (AO-99)	[24 DEC 46 – 10 MAR 47]

Carrier Group Task Group 68.4

U.S.S. PHILIPPINE SEA (CV-47)	[24 JAN 46 – 3 FEB 47]
-------------------------------	------------------------

The Central Group reached the Bay of Whales on January 15, 1947. They established a temporary base Little America IV (Task Group 68.5) complete with three compacted snow runways.

PHILIPPINE SEA carried six R4-D transport aircraft (the military version of DC-3) and Admiral Richard Byrd to the edge of the ice pack. These aircraft successfully took off from the flight deck, using JATO bottles attached under their wings. They reached Little America six hours later. Extensive aerial mapping was conducted during the flights from the airfields at Little America. There were two flights to the South Pole on 15-16 February 1947.

Note: All ships had post offices aboard except USS SENNET & USS YANCEY