

ONE GRAND SPLASH

SECOND PHASE, RAISON D'ETRE OF ENTIRE OPERATION

FOR WHOM THE 'BEES TOILED

Dr. Herfried C. Hoerkes, meteorologist of Innsbruck, Austria, is measuring solar radiation (left). He and his brothers in science have been set up in business at the seven bases through the courtesy of USN specialists. The Seabees came in for a special accolade as the creators of "house beautiful," Antarctic bases.

THIS IS THE saga of *Operation Deep Freeze II*. (Its prelude, *Operation Deep Freeze I*, was chronicled in an earlier volume.) This is the heart of the matter, the big reason for the whole thing. This is it.

Scientists the world over desired to make a concerted study of the factors that rule the earth. Past studies had been made on a comparatively modest scale but this time they wanted to make one grand splash—from pole to pole with some forty nations taking part.

July 1957 to December 1958 was reckoned as the ideal period of earth science study since that would be the period of greatest cosmic activity.

A large part of America's share in the pie (and in the responsibility) was the erection of seven bases in the Antarctic: one at the Geographic South Pole, one on the Ross Ice Shelf at Kainan Bay, one (an air base) at McMurdo Sound, one on the Knox Coast, one in Marie Byrd Land at 80° South, 120° West, one on the Weddell Sea, and a shared base with New Zealand at Cape Hallett, where our IGY scientists could work.

Building the bases was the Navy's job.

USS *ATKA*, a Wind Class icebreaker, made a solitary reconnaissance in the Antarctic summer of 1954-55. She located a site for Little America V.

Eighteen hundred men in seven ships, an air squadron, and a Seabee battalion went south for *Operation Deep Freeze I* in 1955-56. They built bases at Little America and McMurdo Sound and cached fuel and supplies there for building bases at the South Pole and in Marie Byrd Land.

Under Rear Admiral George J. Dufek, Commander of Task Force 43, 3,525 men in a force of twelve ships, two air squadrons (one Navy and one Air Force), segments of three Construction Battalions, a cargo-handling battalion split among three ships, an underwater demolition team, a helicopter detachment divided between four ice breakers, a crack Army-Navy trailblazing party, and a team of Marine Corps assault fuel experts took to the air and the seas in the autumn of 1956.

Their destination was Antarctica, the seventh continent. Their goal was to finish the job of building windproof, coldproof bases for use by scientists during the International Geophysical Year, 1957-58.

This is the story of their job, their perils, their accomplishments. This is adventure in the 20th Century.