

# On Stage

## SHIPS, PLANES, AND MEN "SCRAMBLE"

**W**HILE 166 AMERICANS weathered the Antarctic winter night, Stateside gears were grinding. Directives originating at the staff level in Washington were flashed to the supply assembly point in Davisville, Rhode Island, to the Navy air arm at Quonset Point, to the Air Force arm at Greenville, to the Seabee Center at Davisville, to the ships on both coasts and to the various bureaus and departments of government.

Sprawling Davisville, home of the Seabees Atlantic, felt the weight of more than 30,000 tons of *Deep Freeze II* cargo that would be converted into Antarctic science bases. A supply crew received, inspected, marked, and stored cargo arriving by rail, road, sea, and air.

Men who would build and run the Antarctic bases marched and rode past these mountains of supplies as they conditioned their minds and their bodies for the chore of base building and the boredom that lay ahead.

They assembled and re-assembled prefabricated buildings in Rhode Island's summer sun. They went on boondock expeditions in the swamps, simulating the erection of a pontoon bridge that might spare the life of man and machine when an Antarctic ice crack or crevasse would have to be bridged. They accompanied the Navy air arm to Greenland to get first-hand ice experience. While airmen took off and landed planes on the ice Seabees checked out crevasse detectors and pitched tents on Greenland's icecap.

Crews went to special schools in Pensacola, Florida to learn cold-weather photography while other crews went to Camp Lejeune to master the Marine Corps' new assault fuel system.

Every man was schooled in the operation and maintenance of every snow vehicle.

Lectures on cold-weather survival were alternated with psychological screening sessions whereby the "head shrinkers" made a conscientious effort to guarantee that only the fit made the coveted trip.

By September ships began to arrive in Davisville for loading. First were the destroyer escort *BROCK* and the icebreaker *GLACIER* who would sail independently in the vanguard to take ocean and icecap stations to support the fly-in of planes from New Zealand.

An advance echelon was established in Christchurch, New Zealand to handle supply problems that arose as the massive task force headed south.

*BROCK* sailed from Newport September 4, 1956 and was followed by *GLACIER*'s sailing from Boston September 19.

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TELEVISION cameramen scan pier scene at Davisville during "Wide Wide World" program screened October 14.

4 TONS OF EQUIPMENT GO ABOARD AT DAVISVILLE.