

Crisis at Hallett for Arneb and Northwind

On New Year's Eve disaster nearly struck at Cape Hallett. *NORTHWIND* had damaged her propellers breaking ice for *ARNEB* and had pulled back to inspect her damage. *ARNEB* lay in loose pack ice in a sort of V between Cape Hallett and solid bay ice that was earmarked for an auxiliary landing strip.

A sudden shift in the wind moved ice floes down on *ARNEB* before she could maneuver free. *NORTHWIND* with her damaged screw was unable to rescue the veteran cargo ship.

Now *ARNEB*'s back was against the wall. Pressed against solid ice on one side, floes began to squeeze against her other side. Frames bent. Holes opened.

Damage-control crews began to work rapidly to patch the holes, to shore the bulkheads, and to pump water. At one time ten damage reports were flashed to the bridge in as many minutes.

Observers topside saw an iceberg approaching the helpless ship. *ARNEB* tried to maneuver out of her predicament but only succeeded in damaging her single propeller. Meantime *NORTHWIND* was battling furiously to reach *ARNEB*.

Underwater demolition crews aboard *ARNEB*, with their cold-water immersion suits, were a godsend. They went over the side to check damage; they went below water in *ARNEB*'s No. 2 hold to make repairs in the flooded compartment.

Nearly twelve hours after the crisis began, things began to look up. Winds abated and relieved the pressure against *ARNEB*'s hull. Repairs were being made and flooding had been checked.

Then winds shifted again and the iceberg which had threatened *ARNEB*—then seemed to heave to—was again underway and headed straight for *ARNEB*. She seemed a doomed ship.

NORTHWIND continued fighting toward *ARNEB*. Some say the propwash she created trying to reach *ARNEB* started a slow of current which the iceberg followed. Others say providence guided the berg's course. But at any rate, the berg veered course just before reaching *ARNEB* so both *ARNEB* and *NORTHWIND* managed to maneuver free in the channel created by the berg.

ARNEB swung her heavy boats outboard to create a list which brought her damaged hull above water so it could be patched.

Now that the dangerous ice was washed free *ARNEB* and *NORTHWIND* commenced the first amphibious assault on Antarctica.

They unloaded men, equipment, machines, and supplies by boat to erect a base, then steamed for McMurdo for inspection to determine whether they were fit for the Knox Coast assignment.



GOD ON BRIDGE OF NORTHWIND KEEPS WEATHER-EYE OUT.