

Auckland, New Zealand followed Tahiti as our next port of call. Built on gentle sloping hills it is New Zealand's largest city and has some of its most beautiful scenery. However, above all, we quickly became aware of the friendliness of the New Zealand people--a friendliness that showed itself throughout the country.

EDISTO headed south after an enjoyable nine-day visit. We were now part of Task Force 43 and for us the mission of OPERATION DEEPFREEZE had begun.

It was Christmas Eve when EDISTO met her sister from Long Beach, California, BURTON ISLAND. Together we transitted through pack ice and heavy seas on our way towards McMurdo Station.

Approximately sixty miles from McMurdo we encountered heavy pack ice. An ice reconnaissance mission was needed and the "Green Ducks" were put in the air. An open lead was spotted that took us within thirteen miles of the research station. At that point ice that reached ten feet in thickness separated us from McMurdo. Our work had just begun.

With BURTON ISLAND a hundred yards to starboard we commenced our assault. Constantly backing and ramming, our progress was slow, advancing less than two miles per day. Finally, we reached McMurdo Station and received a glimpse of Antarctica's largest "city". Our work was far from being completed; the channel had to be rerun and widened at its mouth. It was during this phase of our icebreaking operations that EDISTO broke her rudder stock. Our icebreaking capabilities were drastically reduced, and the only alternative was to proceed to Wellington, New Zealand, for drydock repairs.

The work on the rudder stock became a slow and tedious job. Various complications resulted in a twenty-seven day stay in New Zealand's capital. It was an opportunity to learn a lot about New Zealand and her people.

Upon receiving word that BURTON ISLAND had lost one of her screws, EDISTO headed south to complete icebreaking operations for DEEPFREEZE '70.

Hallet Station was the first stop along the way. The station is manned only during the austral summer and the SEABEES were there closing the station for the year. Our job was to embark the men and cargo at the station and transport them to McMurdo where they would depart for home having completed a four-month tour in Antarctica. Our helos accomplished the operation in less than an hour.

Heading south through the Ross Sea we approached McMurdo Station and were amazed at the amount of ice that had cleared. No ice was encountered as we moored to the pier in Winter Quarters Bay. While there we off-loaded the men and cargo from Hallet and unloaded oceanographic equipment