# THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY

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**HONORARY PRESIDENT — MRS. PAUL A. SIPLE**

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## *" I remember it well - like it was yesterday "*

Alton Lindsey was one of the more prominent scientists who went south with the late Admiral Richard E. Byrd, and what makes him most unique is that he is still alive today, plus the fact that he still has all his marbles. A couple of years ago he started to put together some notes about his being on the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition, and we were going to publish them in a single newsletter last winter, but on the way to the Forum, Ruth came down with the shingles, and we never got it out. But now is the time, and here it is!!

Al and Paul Siple became close friends at Allegheny College, and both went on to have distinguished scientific careers. Al got his PhD at Cornell University in 1937. He taught at Purdue University until he retired in 1973.

There are only two living scientists from the Byrd expeditions, namely Ervin Bramhall and Lindsey, although Norman Vaughan who was on the 1928-30 expedition lives on; and Steve Corey, Bill McCormick, Joe Hill, Guy Hutcheson and Olin Stancliff, of the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition, are still alive.

It is an especially appropos time for us to publish the words of Al Lindsey about the Second Byrd Expedition, as it will help to set the record straight on some scores associated with Byrd at Boiling Advance Base, which were greatly maligned by a British film group who produced a terrible documentary on Byrd which was shown on a limited basis at several PBS TV stations in this country this past fall. Al, Bill McCormick, and Joe Hill have written strong letters to newspapers and the PBS, denouncing the documentary as a fraud.

Al's account is really the second in our newsletters of what transpired at Little America II, as we featured in our Newsletter, Vol. 81-82, April, No. 6, pages 2-10, the talk which the erudite Charlie Murphy had presented to the Society on April 1st. The similarities in the message being given by both of these gentlemen is so in contrast to the portrayal which people who never knew Byrd are trying to feist onto the public. The bottom line for them is not truthfulness, but will it sell, will it put monies in our pocket.

Hope you enjoy your trip to Little America II.

Alton A. Lindsey, BAE II

**BYRD'S PRACTICE WORK — THE NORTH POLE FLIGHT.** If doubts that have been raised about both Robert Peary and Frederick Cook are valid, the first humans to see the florth Pole were Richard E. Byrd and his pilot Floyd Bennett. Most of the very few who have questioned that Byrd's plane reached this pole (or close enough for practical purposes) rest their case on newspaper accounts of the time element.

On April 30, 1975, the late E. J. (Pete) Demas sent to at least two other Byrd expedition veterans, radio engineer Amory Waite and me (and to the U.S. National Archives) a carefully prepared 15-page typed manuscript bearing on that point, entitled "Eye-Witness Facts about Byrd's North Pole Flight." It has apparently never been published nor even referenced in print. Knowing Demas throughout the 19-month BAE II, I vouch as literal truth that no expedition member was more serious and conscientious nor more highly respected for total integrity. An outstanding aeronautical engineer and career explorer, he believed in precision. He wrote, "Having been ashore [at King's Bay runway] during the entire time the plane was on its historic flight, I speak out in hopes the record can be corrected."

Expedition meteorologist William C. Haines advised Byrd on the fortunate weather for May 8-12, 1926. Skies were clear to cloudless, visibility excellent, and the air was universally smooth between Spitzbergen and the Pole on the flight date, May 9, when Haines estimated the average wind for the entire flight was five knots or less. Demas personally recorded the flight times on his automatic camera. Take-off was soon after midnight, 00:30 GMT. They reached the pole at 9:04 GMT, flew in circles for 12 minutes for fixes, and at 9:16 headed south, arriving back at 17:45. Time in air was 16 hours and 55 minutes, and the difference in the outbound and return flights was only 5 minutes. Demas stated, "The outbound flight to the North Pole is more than adequately documented by Byrd's fixes. His navigation was checked by experts of unquestionable qualification, upon his return."

The published flight time is an hour short because a rewrite man in New York lost an hour through mistaking the reported GMT time to be local time The total shortfall was 1 hour and 20 minutes. The 20 minutes were because the reporters called 17:25 the landing time, when that was actually 20 minutes later. A Norwegian published account concurred with Demas's time, but most reports worldwide made the flight time an hour and twenty minutes shorter than it was, and critics have questioned Byrd's North Pole claim on this basis.

**A FORMAL SCIENTIFIC BANQUET AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.** Admiral Richard E. Byrd was well-known and popular in New Zealand from his stops there during his 1928-30 expedition. Again, on the arrival of our flagship, the JACOB RUPPERT, in late 1933, New Zealanders proved the most hospitable people anywhere. However, the Governor General, Lord Bledisloe and his Lady did not invite Byrd to their gala dinner held specifically for introducing the most eminent New Zealand scientists to the twelve members of our scientific staff, among whom only Paul Siple, the youngest, was internationally celebrated.

The resident scientists were gray-haired, dignified, and serious-minded. Byrd, in selecting us, had kept in mind that (in those days) polar exploration was a young man's game. (The average age of our 55 Ice Party members was 26.) Only three of the expedition scientists had Ph.D. degrees; most of the other nine of us had interrupted our graduate studies to go on the expedition. Moreover, during the recent Equator-crossing festivities, before we "walked the plank" into the salt-water pool improvised on our top deck, the shellbacks of the ship's crew

had run wild with clippers, leaving our heads semi-shorn in the most creative and bizarre fashions. Of course, this was some decades before such male coiffures had become commonplace. The host, hostess, and the distinguished New Zealand scientists did very well at keeping straight faces in front of us virtual Indians from the wild American West. Paul Siple, after whom the New Zealand government later named the east rim of the Ross Ice Shelf as "Siple Coast," had a scalp-lock of long jet-black hair that gave him a particularly fierce aspect.

As the two men sat together at the head table, Lord Bledisloe's short stature and neat, slight figure made a striking contrast with the gigantic and muscular bulk of our Senior Scientist and Second in Command of the expedition, Dr. Thomas Poulter. In introducing Poulter for a speech on our scientific objectives, the diminutive but commanding and suave Lord asserted that the next speaker was "very big in American science." In the social hour following the dinner, the gracious Lady Bledisloe, hearing that I was a biologist, led me to a rare wall hanging, a robe of Maori workmanship. I recognized it as skillfully pieced together skins of the Kiwi, but held my counsel when she said it was made of Moa feathers.

Lord Bledisloe presented each of us with an autographed book he had written on the human geography of the country. He gave Siple, known in New Zealand as the Boy Scout of BAE I, a framed photograph of the famous "Pelorus Jack," a porpoise whose self-appointed mission in life was meeting ships off Wellington Harbor and piloting them in safely.

Six decades have passed since I directly experienced the happenings recounted here, which I had recorded in my expedition diary but which have not appeared in print before. Many other events were much more significant as history, but those have long been accessible in polar literature. BAE is said to stand for "Boys After Experience," and I offer these true vignettes of unusual experience. Even footnotes have their value and interest for history. Those below are given chiefly for what they reveal of the character, personality, and problems of one of the most fascinating individuals of Twentieth Century geographic exploration, Admiral Byrd.

**ON THE TRAIL WITH BYRD AND WITHOUT.** The scientific staff of BAE II, including the senior scientist who was next in command after Byrd, were on the same footing as all other of Byrd's subordinates. We were all on call by Executive Officer George Noville for the routine but essential jobs such as K.P., unloading and transporting gear, construction of buildings and the snow-shoveling which seemed endless. This, and the importance of dog teams, must be the chief difference in antarctic life for scientists prior to World War II versus those based at the research stations established since, such as the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, McMurdo, and Palmer, as well as the closed Byrd, Siple, Eights, and Plateau stations, and the U.S. stations given to foreign governments, Ellsworth and Wilkes.

As the expedition Vertebrate Zoologist and biological collector, I had never tried dog driving until arrival at the Bay of Whales brought on the unloading job of transport across sea ice to Little America by tractors and dog teams. I was then one of several terrified amateurs at dog driving. On the same memorable day I had four new and notable experiences — learning to ski, harnessing and driving dogs, seeing my first polar atmospheric effects caused by sunlight and ice-crystal showers, and having a celebrated polar explorer hitch a ride on my dog sledge. The seven dogs per sledge were harnessed in pairs on either side of the center-axis rope, with the leader hitched out front alone. The driver skied along, to the left of the sledge's front end, holding the slanting gee pole with his right hand, controlling the leader by yelling "Yake," "Gee," "Haw," or "Whoa." No whip was carried

Seeing my sledge emptied and my readiness to drive it back to the moored ship, the Admiral volunteered as a passenger. Most of the 7-mile trail was over apparently

stable ice, but for about three miles over sea-ice, subject, near the Bay's edge, to lateral pressure, trail-building and repair crews were kept on duty 24 hours daily to keep it relatively passable. Admiral Byrd sat low on the ash-wood vehicle, holding an outer slat with each hand to stay in place. Sharp curves around ice-pinnacles were more the rule than the exception.

About the time we started into the area of unstable pressure ice, the dogs realized they were headed back toward open water and the trail's end where their feeding was done. They sped the empty sledge with full power on the stretch of trail where speed was least appropriate or safe. I managed to stay on the skis and keep the sledge from overturning. Backward glances were not affordable. The dogs finally tired enough for me to get them stopped, and I turned to check on Byrd. The sledge was upright, but there was no sign of the Admiral on it or on the backward trail! Had he been unceremoniously scraped off by an overhanging spur of ice? Had he been plunged into a frigid pool of sea water? Had he, in fact, survived the ordeal at all?

While *I* was struggling to straighten out the yelping dogs to retrace our course as far as might be needed, I was overjoyed to see him appear from behind an upthrust slab not far back. As he approached on foot, I particularly noted that he was grinning widely. What a relief! Soon he was explaining that he had decided to jump off at a particularly tricky stretch of the trail not far back. He seemed actually to have relished the incident, enjoying the joke on his tyro dog driver. He blamed the trail and the approach of feeding-time rather than me, and I reverted to a vertebrate zoologist happy to anticipate getting to my own occupation even though it also would entail considerable sledging.

Many such frequent small happenings on the 1928 and 1933 expeditions might easily have ended tragically, since most of us had no previous experience with antarctic conditions. We were, especially during the field season, scattered widely in small groups, over a vast area, or alone, as I usually was when working on animal life. The British polar authority Brian Roberts correctly characterized Byrd's early expeditions thus — "Looking back now in the light of hindsight at the first two [Byrd] expeditions, it is impossible not to wonder at the extraordinary risks which were constantly taken without fatal consequences." We became aware of this as the time in Antarctica wore on, and referred to the phenomenon as "Byrd Luck." He and the rest of us were particularly fortunate that the Ross Ice Shelf itself, which cracked and moved, threatening to give way under Little America, at least as early as the (antarctic) autumn of 1929, did not break off there until 1961 or 1962.

**BYRD'S WINTER AT ADVANCE BASE.** At the time when Byrd was preparing for his 1933-35 Antarctic venture, no expedition had collected winter climatological data deep in the continent away from ameliorating influence of the seas. The bases had all been on the coast or nearby oceanic islands. The most recent (Nov. 1997) and least acceptable television treatment of Byrd, (in the PBS "Adventurer" series) concentrated on the Advance Base story. Interpretations of the "why alone?" issue have so far not taken into account evidence from the late Paul Siple. My tentative conclusion considers information in his 1936 book Scout to Explorer, and conversations I had with him while at Little America in 1934.

The earliest relevant information I have is in a letter of June 1, 1933, to Emanuel Cohen of Paramount Productions, which had made the movie on BAE I, but was reluctant to risk another. The Admiral desperately needed another, for he was risking personal financial ruin during the Great Depression. He confessed to Cohen, "It is one of the ways that I can keep from being bankrupt," and wrote that he had a dramatic secret plan which he could not put down on paper. He did reveal that "two men will spend the winter night at the foot of the mountains only 300 miles from the Pole, where the temperature will be as low as 90 degrees." This letter

came to me through the courtesy of one of only a few authentic Byrd historians, Dr. Raimund Goerler of the Byrd Polar Research Center at Ohio State University. (The interpretation given it here is my own.) Siple's book Scout to Explorer (1936) is quite revealing.

I was not in the inner circle of the expedition, but Paul Siple, who at age 19 had been selected by the Boy Scouts of America for the 1928-30 expedition, was. He had been my college friend before that, and had joined my ongoing project studying the biology of an extensive Pennsylvania swamp (Pymatuning) which involved owning an automobile together. During the 1934 winter night, we spent many days in my zoology shack flensing and cleaning museum skins of seals and oceanic birds, and talking about expedition work, policy, and politics.

Two men connected with BAE I, Siple and Victor Czegka, were in on the Advance Base project from its start. Nearly as early were two BAE II people, Ivor Tinglof (carpenter) and Stevenson Corey (supply officer). Byrd delegated Siple to oversee the operations. Siple wrote in Scout to Explorer (p. 37), "I had watched every stage of its construction in Boston....."

Apparently, very soon after Byrd wrote to Cohen about posting two men to the "Mountain House" over winter, he changed his mind, the idea being held so briefly as to be practically non-existent. Siple told me one important reason. Byrd had explained to him what he thought the "smart-aleck New York writers" would have done with that arrangement. From that point on, Siple's work on the extra camp was definitely based on three occupants. On page 45 of Scout to Explorer he states: "The original plans for these investigations called for a staff of three men, food enough for at least nine months, and additional emergency rations for another three months.. There could be no tolerance of a slip-up when on it depended the lives of these men."

While the ship was being unloaded and freight being taken to the base, Paul was responsible for keeping track of every piece of the "Mountain House" and its supplies, and he put it up at Little America for its "trial run." This Advance Base project was Paul's almost exclusive job during this stage of the expedition.

I postulate that throughout this period Byrd still intended that it harbor three men, following through on the detailed preparation Siple had supervised in Boston. One of them would probably have been one of our two meteorologists, William Haines or George Grimminger. Siple would clearly not be one, since Byrd promised him the leadership of a summer field journey to the eastern mountains. Preparations for that would require most of Paul's winter.

On March 4 came the crisis which determined the final "plan" for Advance Base — the breakup of the Low Barrier Ice that supported Little America over salt water off the edge of unseen Roosevelt Island. Dr. Poulter showed me that day the ice movements along the widening cracks around our base, and the active tiltmeter in his geophysics shack. Not one of the 56 men doubted the direness of this threat, which was fated to carry Little America out to sea about 1961. Byrd called together all the members of his previous (1928-30) expedition, and after discussion called for a vote on how to proceed. This resulted in a compromise action. If Byrd had then been wedded to the thought of being the sole occupant of the "Mountain House," it does not seem he would have put the closely-related decision to a vote, which easily might have resulted in total abandonment of Advance Base.

Response by establishing the emergency Retreat Camp on High Barrier set the expedition schedule back more than a month. The approach of winter rendered the plan to place three men at the foot of the mountain range clearly impossible. When it became nearly too late even for the retrenched project, came a break in the weather. Byrd suddenly directed Siple (p. 59), "Cut all of the food supplies down to that amount required for <u>one</u> man. Reduce all weight to a minimum. Take the

canned food out of their boxes, and arrange them in 1,000-pound shipments ready to put into the planes as soon as they are conditioned for flight." Siple noted, "I was surprised, but there was no time for speculation on his meaning now."

The Pilgrim and the Fokker planes were both to have taken this freight, but the Fokker had just been wrecked in a short test flight. Siple had one hour, while the plane heated its engine oil, to load the Pilgrim. "In the meantime (p. 60), I must have a ton of supplies ready for shipment. I ripped open the boxes of canned stuffs and stacked a *third of their contents* (italics mine) on a small, man-hauling sled. The weight of each item was calculated down to ounces, and each time my sled held 100 pounds, I dragged it out onto the aviation field. Incoming fog made it necessary to take everything else, including the piecemeal "Mountain House," by tractor.... There were hundreds of last-minute things to do, so that I was rushing around following out the Admiral's instructions a dozen or so behind the newer one." Later, the same split had to be made for items to go south by tractor. Tinglof and Paul traveled out by tractor to direct the erecting of the camp. (p. 64). *While enroute* (italics mine), Siple received Byrd's radioed directions to set up the house 123 miles south of Little America by trail. Siple does not state exactly when he was assured that the one man was to be Byrd himself. But I am convinced by our later talks in Blubberheim that Paul himself believed essentially throughout that Byrd had intended the project for three men. And Byrd could hardly have arranged these complicated, frenetic events and circumstances. I have seen no credible evidence that Byrd had intended from the start that he would be alone that winter, though, of course, such may still turn up. My tentative conclusion is that Byrd's going it alone was a last-minute decision, and that the secret he was not ready on June 1, 1933, to confide to Cohen was that Byrd would be one of the (two or) three occupants. This would certainly, as he wrote Cohen, "have more drama than anything that I had ever done before," and "will turn out a [movie] which will beat anything that has ever been produced." It seems the outcome quite surprised his wife, Marie Byrd.

This fact shines through the fog of speculation, publicity, and financial worries — Byrd was strongly guided by something which fails to impress most movie-makers and journalists — the permanent value of finding basic scientific knowledge. Despite Byrd's debilitated condition that winter, he routinely climbed the ladder to his outdoor instruments, kept them free of clogging snow, and changed the record sheets, and, quite remarkably, produced an unbroken record, unprecedented deep in the continent. This scientific achievement is valued more today, when Antarctica is a continent-sized Nature Preserve owned by no one, an internationally enforced "Pleistocene Park." Though Byrd did not live to see this happen, he was more responsible for it than any other individual.

**SOME PROMISES UNFULFILLED.** From the fact that more than three thousand hopefuls had applied to go with Byrd for the nineteen-month absence on BAE II, it seems clear that lacking any salary, some other tangible benefit was among their expectations. Public approbation of Byrd's and his crew's accomplishments would seem to hold that promise, for at least the Ice Party members. But this favorable attitude of society as a whole was not universally shared, immediately after the return, by university scientists and administrators. The media attention included Byrd's being quoted that ten heavy volumes of scientific results were forthcoming, but I learned in 1996 that this hyperbole originated from a member of our scientific staff! Many in the world's scientific community (before the many technical papers had appeared in journals) felt that a big wind from the south was all they could expect. At least two of the twelve expedition scientists fell afoul of this situation, in two of the large and prestigious universities of the eastern United States.

One young man had left his graduate teaching assistantship, after a creditable

performance for three years. He applied for reinstatement on his return, but was rejected. By borrowing money he went back on campus, to complete his two theses, both quite unrelated to Antarctica or the expedition. At the same time he wrote, and published at first try, five technical papers on his BAE II research. By two semesters after his return, his double effort had won the respect of his hard-nosed colleagues. He was reinstated with a graduate assistantship to finish his degree work, and soon accepted a higher-ranking university post elsewhere. By and large, having been one of the overwintering party was helpful to one's long-term advancement. It also enables one to reflect, with novelist Joseph Conrad, "Only a moment, *a* moment of strength, of romance.... a fleck of sunshine upon a strange shore."

Our next story of a promise and its fate concerns Byrd, his young zoologist, and one of the four great natural history museums in America. Before leaving for BAE II, Byrd had an advance agreement with one of them that his expedition would include a capable taxidermist, and that enough good specimens would be donated gratis to the museum for its artists and finish taxidermists to build into an exceptionally large habitat group of antarctic life and terrain, to stretch across the entire end of the Hall it would occupy. It was agreed that the museum would put up the necessary $10,000. This was probably the main objective Byrd had in taking me with him as the expedition Vertebrate Zoologist and museum collector. I had been a naturalist and taxidermist since age 13 (resembling President Theodore Roosevelt in that one respect), had been a Ranger Naturalist and learned about glaciers at Mount Rainier and Glacier National Parks, and had taken many zoology courses in college and graduate school. The time I spent collecting for the museum during the 19-month trip equaled that spent on my own research on the ecological life histories of two seal species.

On returning home on May 10,.1945, the Ice Party sailed up Chesapeake Bay in the old icebreaker BEAR OF OAKLAND, and were welcomed back by President F. D. Roosevelt waiting on the dock of the Washington Navy Yard with thanks for each man individually A few days later, I delivered and unpacked my biological collection at the museum of Byrd's arrangement. Its chief taxidermist stated that it was in better condition than the skins done by their own field men, who unlike me, had been paid for their work. (I had time during the winter night, with Paul Siple's help, to clean skins very thoroughly.) After everyone concerned had seen my collection, I made my first post-expedition visit, separately, to the two department heads who were accepting it for the museum. Since their taxidermy artists had praised my work, I was expecting at least a kind word. The two must have conferred together as to how I should be handled. Handshakes and greetings were not offered, nor was I invited to be seated. Their first words were, "Well, what do you want?" Though surprised, I held my peace. Since the museum aspect of my job was done, I didn't want anything. The ball seemed in their court. Each told me, without explanation, apology, or qualm, that the museum was not going to fulfill its end of the bargain.

The head of the Mammal Department asked, "Why should we spend our money for the glorification of Dick Byrd?" I added to this, only mentally, with "...now that his big donation is already in our hands." I was really puzzled at having been "wined and dined" nearly two years earlier on departure, then being so crudely snubbed on my return "with the goods." Many years later I learned what doubtless lay behind my treatment. During our time in the South, the Great Depression had hit that museum heavily. The director was fired for his emphasis on expensive scientific expeditions by museum personnel. There were simply insufficient funds for the promised exhibit group. But, instead of notifying Byrd, who would have well understood, they let his underling bear the brunt of the unexpected and unpleasant surprise, which Byrd apparently never mentioned to anyone. Neither he nor anyone else received any payment or thanks for the largest collection of mammal skins and skulls and bird skins ever brought back from the Antarctic Continent.

**KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH HIS MEN.** Dr. Paul Dalrymple wrote in 1996, "If a person is known by the company he keeps, then the late Admiral Byrd had to be a great man, as never before in history had so many men been paid nothing and turned out to be such great successes in life." Part of the reason for their success was Byrd's faithfully keeping track of the former associates from his expeditions' Ice Parties particularly, and repaying his perceived moral debt to them by support in their career moves. In extremely few cases did a man fail in gratitude for all that being a "Byrdman" meant to his subsequent career. The most flagrant instance involved one of Byrd's former key plane-pilots, who later became an alcoholic unable to hold a job, so that the best Byrd could do to help him proved insufficient. This account was told me by Paul Siple. The man's bitterness over the tragedy of his personal life and career, said Siple, led him to conspire with an unscrupulous newspaper reporter to be "found" jobless and destitute on a park bench in New York City, wearing the medal which Congress had conferred for his work with Byrd! The latter was especially shocked by this published canard because the impression given was diametrically untrue — all his former associates well knew that Byrd stood up for them to the highest possible degree.

Siple attributed a special importance to this incident. He said that on his first Antarctic trip Byrd had an easy, relaxed style of leadership, as "one of the boys." With so many of the personnel of his expeditions being civilians, military discipline was out of the question as inappropriate for dealing with scientists particularly. But the park-bench episode between BAE I and BAE II convinced him that easy-going leadership and familiarity tended to undermine respect. Beginning with BAE II, his leadership style was more formalized, with his personal contacts more restricted to his Department heads, and relationships with the general run of us largely indirect. He lived on the bridge of the ship and took his meals there, and at Little America had separate quarters where he had meals with Executive Officer Noville. He never ate with the men in the mess hall. He did not watch the movie showings there with us. He rarely posted memos on the bulletin board. He gave no speeches, except once when he briefly introduced the showing of Paramount's "Little America" documentary from his previous southern expedition.

During the eastward cruise before we headed for Little America, I served two watches daily as the one-man Iceberg Watch, stationed on the very prow of the thin-shelled iron freighter, JACOB RUPPERT. Once, when fog was quite severe, Byrd made his way forward to urge me to keep a very sharp lookout. He said that the man watching to warn against bergs was the eye of the vessel, on whom everyone else depended for their lives. The ship was moving at half-speed, he stated, and he was reluctant to move her at all, but the expedition was so far behind schedule that he felt he had to risk it, but "don't relax your vigilance for an instant of your two-hour stretch!"

Rear-view critics have surmised that Byrd was overly "aloof" toward his men. My sense was that he was properly reserved instead, that he was leading from out front and doing his job well. I never heard one of the men say that The Old Man was aloof or unsympathetic.

Prior to Byrd's leaving Little America for his vigil alone at Advance Base, I had but one other personal conversation with him. Noville sent me into Byrd's office for a get-acquainted chat about my work. He made a similar effort to get to know all those who had not been on his previous trip. Clearly, the Admiral knew as little about polar biology as I did about his aviation interests. All that I remember of this, our first real talk, was his asking whether, in case some feature of Antarctica was to be named for me, I would prefer that it be a topographic feature or some new-found life form. I was surprised, since the possibility of either had not occurred to me. I suggested that as a biologist, the latter might be more suitable. I realized, knowing how organisms are named, that he would not be likely to have any

influence in such biological naming. In 1940, Byrd personally discovered a group of 12 coastal islands, which were given my name officially in 1960.

Shortly before Siple took freight 123 miles south to the site of "Boiling Advance Base," word came down directing me to select enough books to fill a wooden chest — reading matter during separation from the library at our main base. Our news correspondent Charles Murphy was more literary in interests than I was, but he was probably too busy for an extra job.

Byrd's experience at Advance Base during the winter night of 1934 changed his attitude toward science and scientists generally. The three-man tractor party which reached Byrd and nursed him through his illness was led by Senior Scientist Thomas Poulter, a geophysicist. The months of long, serious conversations gave Byrd a better understanding of the motivation and methodology of scientists, which was essentially new to him, and enhanced his appreciation of their role in modern expeditions. I recognized this improved atmosphere from the very day of his return by plane to Little America.

Certain "repeaters" on his several expeditions became Byrd's highly cherished friends, lifelong. Dr. Paul A. Siple was with Byrd on BAE I as the Eagle Scout selected from all U.S. Boy Scouts. He accompanied all of Byrd's southern expeditions and others after Byrd's death. Pete Demas, George Noville (a companion of his early Atlantic Ocean flight), and Charles J.V. Murphy who assisted the Admiral with several of his books, were also among Byrd's close friends. Likewise, Amory (Bud) Waite was along on all Byrd's southern forays except the first. These and many other capable associates developed an almost religious devotion to the Admiral. As an old man, on his last expedition in 1956, Byrd and his nearly lifelong associate Paul Siple, revisited the original Little America, and were photographed standing before one of the three familiar triangular metal radio masts so characteristic of this base. Only five feet of its 70-foot length still projected above the snow surface. Byrd passed away in Boston on the llth of March, 1957.

Two episodes that signal Byrd's personal nature are etched into my memory, one at Little America in 1934 and the other back in Washington, B.C. in 1939. When the Admiral finally flew back to Little America, haggard and gray-haired and still in precarious health, he spent the rest of that day touring all the buildings so that he could be brought up to date about everyone's work, and have a friendly visit with each Ice Party member. He made the rounds with an expedition publicist to physically assist him through the undersnow tunnel system. The super-sensitive guide had never ventured into my zoology shack, having heard that, although its false floor 18 inches above the real floor and the pot-bellied, blubber-burning iron stove make it the warmest place in town, it was reputed to smell of seal and penguin blubber. He led Byrd past the door, saying that he would find the blubber odor too unpleasant to bear. The Admiral passed me by, apparently. However, at the end of his tiring tour and interviews, I was surprised by his arrival alone at my door. I realized that he could not hurt the feelings of the guide, or mine, so after he had finished the rounds and excused his guide, Byrd returned without him. He asked many questions about my work and reactions. It was far and away the best talk I ever had with him, and it dissipated the feeling that I had not yet come to know Admiral Byrd.

This zoology and taxidermy cabin was the last Little America II building to be constructed. All other new buildings had been placed upon the snow surface, and the wind quickly filled in snow between them, up level with their flat rooftops. (The buildings of BAE I were in the same area but submerged at one story lower.) We biologists had been kept busy with general demands, and nearly missed our chance to have our own shack, since winter was setting in rapidly. Siple, Earle Perkins, and I had to dig a hole by shovels, down ten feet and sixteen feet square, into the hard-packed snow, and carry it away. Soon after we completed this strenuous job, a

blizzard drove us indoors and quickly filled the space up to its rim. In the next couple of days we had to dig it out twice again before we were able to cover the newly re-emptied space with a temporary roof, beneath which the prefab shack was set up on a bitter cold but calm day. My colleagues dubbed it "The Lindsey Hole of Science."

In 1939, during my three years of teaching biology and ecology at American University in Washington, Byrd's thoughtful nature was again revealed. My fiancee Elizabeth Smith lived in B.C. Her widowed mother worked at the Library of Congress and was putting her through college. We sent a wedding invitation to the Admiral at his Boston home, for his information, but with little expectation of his being able to attend. He replied that he was sorry that his testimony on Capitol Hill for justifying Congressional financing of his third (U.S. Antarctic Service) expedition was scheduled for that very afternoon. Although this would most likely prevent his getting to our ceremony, he would try to cut the questioning short enough to make the attempt. At this news, we felt it was quite unlikely that he would be with us. Byrd kept a taxi standing by throughout his testimony before the Appropriations Committee. After answering the final question, he rushed out and spurred the cab on toward Quebec Street, arriving a bit after my minister father had pronounced us man and wife, but still during the reception! Our parents, other relatives, and friends joined us in deep appreciation for this chance to talk personally with the gracious Admiral one-on-one.

**THE MAN, THE EXPLORER, AND HIS EXPEDITIONS.** Richard E. Byrd was widely and highly respected during his life and afterward. Since "the higher one gets in the world the harder the wind blows," he has also been criticized, even vilified, but almost exclusively by those who never visited Byrd's arena of action. The world's leading explorers have long been favorite targets of professional detractors. No one else on earth, during the depths of the Great Depression, could have raised the funds and donations of supplies and equipment to mount an ambitious scientific/technological expedition like BAE II. That it was a privately supported project, for which he went deeply in debt to be defrayed by his radio shows, New York Times syndicated news stories, books, documentary movies, and lectures, evidences Byrd's faith and courage.

What sort of man was capable of weaving all the necessary strands together? First and last, he was an aviator, but he was far more. The public thought of him as the Admiral of the Antarctic lands and seas, and not as the Virginia aristocrat living on Boston's historic Beacon Hill among New England's aristocrats. Although a complex and many-faceted personality, he was not a scientist and never claimed to be one. He was skilled at navigation, taught the subject to aviation cadets, and invented the sun compass. He became the superlative organizer and visionary generalist who made a continent safe, nearly, for specialists, in his own time and onward.

The male half of the public admired Byrd's derring-do as a flyer and discoverer, while many women saw the soft-spoken, strikingly handsome leader as also a romantic Tyrone Power look-alike wearing a fur parka. The size of the Saturday night listening audience for the expedition's hour-long, prime-time C.B.S. radio broadcasts was phenomenal, partly because few in Depression days could afford to go out "on the town." It is no exaggeration to state that BAE II, although a non-governmental project, was quite equivalent in the public mind with the Apollo "space" effort of one generation later. Indeed, Byrd's flight over the South Pole in 1929 had been mankind's last step before the moon.

The second Byrd expedition formed the historic dividing line between the old-time excursions with dog-teams, wooden ships and iron men, versus the modern antarctic science done on prolonged research cruises and in more or less permanent fixed

bases, supplied largely by aircraft. Byrd's successful adaptation of mechanical air and land transport and high-tech living, started the trend to polar modernity. The use of dogs tapered off after BAE II, until today sledge-dogs are banned entirely from the southern continent. Byrd would have been surprised if told that he was a conservationist, but his influence toward substituting machines for dogs eventually saved the lives of countless coastal seals, which would otherwise have been killed for dog food over many years.

In his speaking and writing, Byrd always emphasized the vital role of his men in the success of his expeditions. The men of the Ice Parties and ships were of two basic categories — the tatooed and the untatooed. The tatooed were sailors, mechanics, sailmakers and artisans who were indispensable for keeping things on a continuous even keel. The non-tatooed were aviation pilots and navigators, scientists, physicians and other professional men who had previously not had many opportunities to mingle with the tatooed persuasion. On the expeditions, men of these two groups learned to appreciate each other's qualities and viewpoints.

The last job I was assigned at the base camp, after I had loaded all my boxes of heavily salted specimens aboard the flagship, was to help retrieve the corrugated metal fuselage, tri-motor Ford monoplane of 1929 South Pole fame. It had been left after careful burial on high shelf ice inland from Little America I, to be perhaps salvaged later for its historical interest. We found it five years later, encased in a shell of hard ice, hidden beneath the Barrier snows with no surface indication it lay there. While freeing it from its icy tomb was very laborious, it was a labor of love. This airplane is now preserved in the historical museum of Byrd's friend Henry Ford, at Dearborn, Michigan.

The first general reunion of BAE II veterans was held on October 22-23, 1983, the 50th anniversary of our departure from the United States. Twelve men from the Ice Party and their wives, and two from the icebreaker BEAR OF OAKLAND, gathered in Washington. We laid a wreath at the base of Admiral Byrd's sculptural likeness (in polar furs) on the Avenue of the Heroes on the approach to Arlington National Cemetery, and shared reminiscences at a gala banquet that night renewing cherished friendships. Byrd was the only great man that most of us had known personally.

Of the fifty-six-man Ice Party, seven have survived through 1997, and five of us gathered in Irving, Texas on October 17-19, 1997, for the second reunion. In addition, Byrd's daughter Boiling Byrd Clarke, was our special guest. The seven are Ervin H. Bramhall, (now) of Sun City, Arizona, physicist; Stevenson Corey of North Andover, Massachusetts, supply officer; Joseph E. Hill, Jr., of Canyon Lake, California, tractor mechanic and driver; Guy C. Hutcheson of Arlington, Texas, radio engineer; Alton A. Lindsey of Tulsa, Oklahoma, vertebrate zoologist; William S. McCormick of Scottsdale, Arizona, aviation pilot; and Olin D. Stancliff of Erie, Pennsulvania, dog driver.



over

# T H E  O U T B O U N D  B R E E D

From random meetings of rare ancient genes
There is a breed of Man in every clime
Who skirts the edges and a bit beyond.
On the last continent, in the abyss of sea,
Or probing unprogrammed infinity,
They revel in adventures few may share.
A wisp called Fame appears to beckon some;
Some seek new knowledge on the mind's frontier.
The beauty these men find is truly there,
Not second-hand, as that of man-made art.
Perhaps unconsciously, their major search
Is for that most elusive goal — Escape.
Not From, but To, the true reality.
Which is more real, the fragile hive we build,
Or this God-given universe itself?
If singing Homer could return today
He'd tell of Byrd as Richard Eagle-heart
Who knew the air, the ice, the dark, the sun.
He brought back far romance to stay-at-homes,
Yet left the take-off strips for flights of Science

— A. A. Lindsey