

trouble. When departure day was about 4 or 5 days away, we paid a visit to the Norwegian Consul to tell him about my proposed trip to Bouvet Island. We explained about the permission I had received through LA5HE to operate from there. Of course he knew nothing about it, but said he would get off a cablegram to Oslo and let us know what he found out. A few days later he telephoned to say that all was OK and the call sign I should use was LH4C—this was great! We then went to the ice breaker that was to carry me there and I was introduced to the crew of the ship. I could see that they were all fine fellows and looked as if they would be an easy lot to get along with—even though most of them were seasoned seamen and a pretty tough looking batch. They had all made many trips to this part of the world and they knew what we were going to be facing when we were in the South Atlantic with those icy cold gales from Antarctica tossing the ship around.

next month fellows, this was one trip I won't forget.

There was some question about our going to Bouvet Island, since the Captain of the ship had been requested to tow a disabled lobster boat back to Capetown. It looked as if Bouvet was going down the drain until I contacted Brian—ZS6ANE. I asked Brian if he had any pull with the big man in Pretoria. He told me not to worry and made a schedule for five hours later. When the sked time came, Brian was right there and said he had good news for me. We were definitely going to Bouvet. This was confirmed by the First Mate who told me we were now headed for the island after all. This was great news for me. I immediately got on the air and told the fellows the news. Then I pulled the switch to the rig and wandered up to the poop deck to chat with the man at the wheel. When I first entered, he told me we had changed direction and were headed for Bouvet, which he called the land of ice and snow. He said I had better have lots of warm clothing . . . as much as I could walk in. He said it was the most unhealthy and the coldest place in the world. He told me he wouldn't go there for a thousand dollars and I was in for a rough time if I planned to land. I told him landing on Bouvet was the reason I had come on this trip and nothing was going to stop me. This little talk with this man made me want to go there more than ever. I like these challenges.

Gus: Part 28

Bouvet Island

About the 2nd or 3rd day out from Gough Island, the first iceberg was spotted. Just a cold, white hunk of ice floating in the sea. The first one looked to be about the size of an automobile, and they tell me that only about one fifth of it is above water. The further South we went, the more icebergs were seen. You can be sure that they had their special iceberg spotter sitting on the radar all night long.

That night, I went out on deck as usual and the old Southern Cross was nearly overhead. We were getting there, and the winds had that icy feel when they struck me in the face. The next morning when I went out on deck for my usual look around, the sky was completely overcast and it was downright cold, with a capital "C". That was when I went back to my little cabin and hauled out a pair of those "long handles" that K8TRW had sent me, and when I went back out on deck, I felt a lot more comfortable.

All during this part of the trip, I spent as much time on the bands as possible to give the fellows a running account of our progress to the island. I think it would make DXpeditions a lot more interesting if every DXpeditioner would do the same thing. This gives the fellows a chance to follow your progress as you get near that rare spot. I suppose this is what you might call part of the "chase." As you get nearer and nearer to the spot, the fellows will know approximately when they can look for you from the island. This gives them a chance to phone the boss to pull the, "I am sick", deal. I think this is much better than just popping up from some spot without warning and making many of the gang miss you, unless they take off three or four days.

When we were about 100 miles from Bouvet, the sea was completely covered with ice floes. The little ice breaker just plowed into the floes and broke them up into smaller pieces as we went through. They told me about getting caught in the ice once in March, and had to have an American ice breaker come to their aid and break a path for them to get out.

I think it was the 4th day out that we at last saw Bouvet Island in the distance. I got on the air that night and told the boys

that I had at last arrived and hoped to land the next morning. I had found that it was sun-up at about 2:15 AM (local time, that is) down there. I got into the sack for a short night's rest at about 11 PM. I was too excited to do more than get an hour or so of sleep before they woke me up to say, "This is it . . . let's go".

Everything was loaded into the big lifeboat, very carefully wrapped in canvas and oil cloths and secured with rope to keep it from sliding all over the boat.

We had found a spot on the map which was on the northwest corner of the island, called "Circumcision Point". Just the right spot for propagation to the USA, Europe, Africa, South America, and even some of Asia. But, the VKs and ZLs were very well shielded by sheer cliffs, both to the south and southeast. This spot was about the size of two city blocks and was well above high tide.

It took about two hours of hard work for us to go the 1000 feet or so from where the ship was anchored to where we wanted to land. The temperature, I estimate, was about 20 degrees and the wind was absolutely murder when it struck me in the face. I had on the following clothing: regular undershorts and shirt, then two pair of those red long insulated underwear, a flannel shirt with long tails, two pair of woolen pants, one pair of regular socks, and then a pair of woolen socks coming about 6 inches above my knees . . . then a very heavy turtle neck sweater. I also had a wool headpiece covering all but my eyes, and a big heavy overcoat and last but not least, a pair of fur lined gloves coming almost to my elbows. *And I was still cold!*

Getting all my stuff ashore was no easy task and to this day I'm surprised we didn't lose some of it in the rough swells which kept hitting us. But we made it . . . I was at last on Bouvet!!!

I had an African chap, and lots of penquins to keep me company. We had lots to do after the lifeboat departed. A tent to put up, an antenna to install in frozen ground, the putt-putt to get cranked, a fifty gallon drum of petrol to roll up to the point I had selected for it, a tank of compressed gas,

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and even a small gas heater had to be moved to the camp site.

At last I had arrived at this bleak, frozen, ice and snow covered island some 1,500 miles southeast of Capetown, South Africa. We were there in what they call mid-summer—around the fifth of December. The ice pack was some 150 miles or so north of the island, and it took a South African ice breaker to get through all that frozen ocean. I sure would hate to try going there in a smaller boat even in their "warm season".

The island from a distance looked like a very large chocolate cake with white frosting on its top side. The top of the island (at least about 9/10ths of it) is a high plateau, and this portion was covered with a glacier some 200 to 300 feet thick. This glacier was making all kinds of noise all day long and all night long; cracking, popping and snapping. Then there was a tremendous splash when a big chunk of this frozen snow dropped off to the ocean below. These chunks at times were as large as two or three moving vans.

When the bands quieted down, it was interesting to watch and listen to things happening to that ice. But to me the penguins and other bird life were even more interesting, as well as a number of seals and sea lions which hung around all the time. At times these sea lions would have a fight and what a lot of roaring and grunting took place! Trying to count the penguins was an impossible task since they were always on the move. At first they were very friendly, in fact this business of being friendly was the biggest trouble with them. It got to the point where we became the center of attraction to them. They were not afraid of us at all, even when we had to use a small piece of aluminum pipe to keep them a distance away from us. Everything we did there was difficult—did you ever try driving a piece of aluminum pipe into frozen ground? Well we finally got it down, not too deep of course, but when we got ready to depart it was frozen solid and we could not get it out of the ground. It's probably still right there where we drove it in! Getting the tent anchors in that frozen ground was a little difficult too, even though they were made out of sharpened pieces of steel. We put up our little "pup tent", size about 4 by 6 feet. Not enough room for our two folding cots and the card table for the rig. This card table ended up being placed

at the entrance, when the flaps were extended, the operating position was about 50% shielded and about 50% out in the open. I operated with my folding chair right up against the end of the cots facing out, I was in the shelter, but the rig and most of the operating table was outside the tent. The antenna (a vertical Hy-Gain) was 33 feet from the rig and the "putt-putt" (power plant) was 250 feet away. After battling those doggoned penguins every step of the way we finally got everything put together and connected up. My hands were nearly frozen, even though I had on a pair of fur lined and covered gloves. You can be sure it crossed my mind that no one back in the states, in their well heated houses or apartments had any idea of all this happening to me. Even to this day, it's amazing to me that I stuck to the task, freezing, with teeth chattering, doing all this to give the boys another new country. The DXing bug must have given me encouragement to overcome all this and to put up with all this "ungodly" hard and miserable work to give the boys all over the world a little more excitement and something to chase again. I don't think there is a thrill in the world that's more exciting than to be the center of attraction to thousands of DXers with all of them in there madly calling you for that "new one". I sure wish I had a better command of the English language so I could describe this feeling to you. If you are a true DXer and have snagged some new ones, you have just a small idea of how I felt at Bouvet as well as at the other Brand new countries I put on the air for the first time. Even right now, sitting here in Cordova, South Carolina, writing this article gives me another thrill, thinking about it again. Even with all the things that happen each day to make these events slide to the back of your mind, you still have time to lie in bed at night just before you go to sleep and think back on all these wonderful experiences. Up to this time I am quite sure that Bouvet island is the high spot on my list of experiences I have gone through, at least up to this time—of course later on putting Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim, and even Red China on the air, almost exceeds the excitement of the Bouvet Island operation. Just like the Gough Island operation; right after the tuning up, there was ZS1RM (Marge-in Capetown again) in there, she just said (on CW), "Gus?" Back I came and said "yep, it's me Marge." Then

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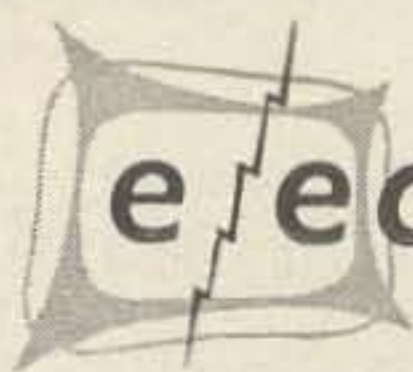
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the world fell in on me. More doggoned stations calling than I have ever heard, even up to this day of DXing. I had kept everyone well informed as to my progress on the way to the island by operating MM all the way from Gough Island until Bouvet was sighted. Since my "ETA" had been given out to the boys, they all were on hand, standing by for me when I fired up. Many of them I found out later had stayed at home, playing sick, or taking their vacations so they would not miss this one. I know, with all those thousands calling me every minute of every day I operated, that some of them never did make the grade—to these I say I am sorry—I sure wish I could have stayed longer. I did stay 4 and ½ days and operated practically around the clock while down there—total number of QSO's at the end of that time was almost 5,000 and still the pile-up sounded larger than the first day there. It was great fellows! The thrill is still with me when I sit or lie back and think of it all.

The first night there was "something", yes sir. When the sun went down (about 10:30 at night), those darned penguins crowded around the tent when I turned on the light over the operating table, and it

was a continuous battle, with both me and the South African chap beating them off trying to keep them from coming into the tent. Those pretty little fellows, that look so tame and helpless, are real rough ones when they struck us on our legs with their little stublike wings and it was not beyond them to, at times, take a nip at you with their beaks either. We soon got to the point where it was no fun battling these creatures all night. I kept the South African chap rather busy most of the time pouring "petrol" in the "putt-putt", and trying to control the penguins. In between times he would crawl into the sack to keep warm.

The little gas heater sure did come in handy. When I was operating, I usually had an army blanket over both me and the whole rig; with a kerosene lantern burning between my legs to attempt to keep warm. The second night there we had a snow storm. It must have been a five or six foot snowfall. When it started falling and started to get real cold, the wind felt like it was directly from the South pole and the temperature fell down to about 15 degrees (F). To me, it felt like minus 15, and snow came down it seemed in

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"chunks"—it was so darned cold, I just QRT, and to keep warm, crawled into the sack, putting the little heater at the foot of our cots and closing the flaps. The heater was turned up "wide open" and I was so doggoned tired I am sure I was sound asleep in about 2 minutes. I had set the alarm clock to go off at 5 AM the next morning and I am glad to say I am a very light sleeper. I think the bell on the clock clanged about once and I reached over and turned it off and leaned over and turned up the lantern which had been burning all night. I intended on going outside to crank up the putt-putt and get going on the air. I found that I could not even open the test flap! I woke up the helper in the other cot, and we both finally got the tent flap open and found that the tent was almost covered with snow. It was broad daylight at this hour down there, and the sun was up nice and bright. We went out to the power plant, and after trying about 15 minutes we could not get it cranked at all. Then we drained out all the oil and took it back to the tent and put it over the little single burner gasoline stove to get it about to the boiling point. We rushed it back to

the power plant and poured it in quickly and then primed the engine by pouring raw gasoline directly into the spark plug hole. The very first pull on the cranking cord, she started off and I was back in business as LH4C! I went back to the Rig and found the SWR up to about 5:1 then it dawned on me that the snow had the antenna base drowned—we practically dug our way to its base and found the snow about 4 feet deep and away we went with our snow shovels and removed the snow from around the antenna (we did not worry about the ground plane radials being covered). The first "One by one CQ" produced the right results—sounded like a thousand fellows calling me—and before that first call I had only heard two stations having a rag chew. Everyone must have been standing by just for me!—The "Gus watchers" were really on the job that morning. Everytime you worked one, it seemed two took his place and the pace never did seem to slacken even up to the last day of operation. Nothing like this had ever happened before, and to this day I still get a thrill thinking about it all.

. . . W4BPD

Gus: Part 29

Bouvet Island

All the while we were on Bouvet Island, the ice breaker was slowly circling the island, taking pictures and plotting a depth chart of the ocean in the immediate area around the island. They were down there with the idea of looking into the possibilities of finding a place on the island to install a weather station. I am not sure of the exact size of Bouvet island, but I would estimate it to be about 5 miles on each side, and it is more or less square in shape. The wind seemed to blow all the time from the southeast, and that's where the cold weather came from I suppose. Why anyone would want to possess such a place on this earth is beyond me, unless someday the earth shifts on its axis and Bouvet Island is shifted further north making it a habitable place to live.

Radio conditions were fine almost all the time. The bands went out about 3 AM and would start to open again around 6 AM. But all signals had that far away sound most of the time, with the exception of stations in the southern part of Africa, which was only around 1,500 miles away, making them just the right distance to get their first hop reflection from the Heavyside layer. Oh yes, you should have heard those S-9+ signals from ZS2MI over on Marion Island and the same with signals from the VP8's over on the Falklands, South Georgia, South Shetlands, and the signals from the boys down on Antarctica were "out of this world"—solid S-9+ everytime I heard them.

It's funny how your source of QRM shifts as you travel around in the world. On Bouvet it was the ZS stations and a few VP's and the others on Antarctica. But since there were not too many of these, it was no bother to me unless they were within a few kHz of stations I was in QSO with. Bouvet was just about the most QRM-free spot I have even been, I would say. The W/K's, most of the time, were up around S-8 when the band was open, and it stayed open to W's

almost all the time. The W's actually were the QRM makers!

The most difficult places to work were Australia and New Zealand, not because of the distance, but because they were fairly well shielded from the point where I was located on Bouvet. How any VK or ZL ever got a signal through to me seems impossible, since they were on the other side of the straight up and down cliffs. Possibly it was some kind of reflection or back scatter, but I did manage to work a few of them. To the rest, I say, "I'm sorry—but I tried my best to work everyone I could hear."

Each day I had a number of schedules with the boat as it circled the island doing survey work. Just how many times they made this circuit I never did find out. I think they made each trip around a little further out so they could have a good depth chart of the waters around Bouvet in case they ever wanted to return there at some future date. The longer they stayed the better it suited me.

At the end of the 4th day they told us to be ready to depart the next morning around 10 o'clock. That night I stayed up and never did get in the sack. I did manage to have a few QSO's on 80 meters after all the other bands went dead. But the vertical I used was not made for 80 meters and the SWR was something around 10:1 as near as I could measure. Which made for not too good efficiency on that band and when you consider I was only barefoot all the time, I guess I did OK. The next morning about 9 o'clock we had our last QSO from Bouvet Island. My stay at Bouvet was not as long as I would have liked it to be, but at least I got there and made almost 5,000 fellows happy by giving them another "new one." It seems absolutely impossible for anyone to go there unless they come across another "ice breaker" to get them there. To charter one of these monsters is out of the question with the normal contributions you receive from the fellows back home. You

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could probably charter one of these boats but considering the cost of chartering a much smaller boat, I would think it would be something like \$10,000 per day. The price continues while you are on the island operating. So by doing a little quick figuring, let's say it takes two days from Capetown to get there, plus five days on the island and then 2 days more back to Capetown you will have tied up the ship for seven days—\$70,000. We all know that a ham DXpedition can't afford to spend this kind of money just to put one DX spot on the air.

After a lot of rushing around taking down the tent, taking the vertical down and separating all the sections so it could be put back into the waterproof bag, wrapping up the power plant, all the suitcases, etc. took about one hour. We just made it by the time the small boat came up for us. After slipping all over the frozen rocks and loading the lifeboat as it went up and down with the slow-moving ice floes, we jumped into the boat and after another hours trip we arrived back at the ice breaker. The derrick-like crane lifted us back on to the ship and The Bouvet Island DXpedition was over. The captain of the ice breaker decided to

head south after LH4 land, possibly even going down to the South African weather station on Antarctica. While the ship banged away at the ice floes, I got busy and put up a long wire for some /MM operation.

While we were on our way, I wanted to keep the boys informed of our progress. My own opinion of Bouvet Island—it's a miserable, cold, damp, Godforsaken place and not fit for humans. My last view of the island, some 10 or 15 miles away, was a big white chunk of ice sitting on top of the water. I got going on the air late that afternoon and the first 3 QSO's I had asked me, "when was I going back to Bouvet." They said they had missed me! I told them not to hold their breath until I returned. Of course, if I had the chance, I would go there again tomorrow.

The further south we went, the heavier and thicker the ice pack became. It took a lot of backing up and full steam ahead to break up the ice for the ship to get through. An ice breaker works like this: the bow of the ship protruded some distance out from the ship at a very slight angle. Up under the bow the bottom of the ship had a rather sharp edge and when the ship wanted to get through the solidly

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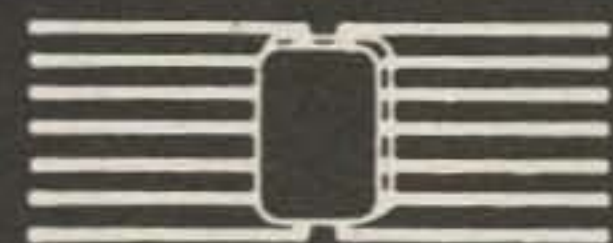
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200	.70	.95	1.30
300	.90	1.25	1.70
400	1.20	1.60	2.10
500	1.50	2.00	2.50
600	1.80	2.40	
700	2.20	2.80	
1000		4.00	

frozen ice pack it would back away from the ice and then full steam ahead. The ship would slide up on the ice and the sheer weight of the boat plus the sharp edge underside would sort of break and cut through the ice. When the ice broke there would be a sharp snap, then a big splash as the bottom of the boat hit the water up under the ice. Then it would back away and steam ahead into the solid ice again. This was repeated over and over, gradually bringing us closer to Antarctica.

After about 3 days and nights of this maneuvering we were finally some 200 or 300 miles south of Bouvet and all the time the ice pack was getting thicker and the weather getting much colder. It was rough going and very slow forward motion too. At the rate we were going, it's hard to say how long it would have taken us to get to the continent of Antarctica. I never did get the chance to find out because one time we banged into the ice and then the water started to freeze in back of the ship, making it difficult to back up for the next banging ahead job. The Captain decided, right then and there, that it was time to stop going south since the ice breaker might get frozen

into the ice pack if the weather and water got a bit colder. After a lot of back and forth effort the ship was finally turned around and we headed straight for Capetown, South Africa.

All this time I was on the air except when I was out on deck watching all the action that was taking place breaking through the ice pack. Getting back to Capetown took three days and nights. After two days we departed from the ice floes. The ice pack starts at a sharply defined line and when you leave this line you only see a few pieces of floating ice here and there and an occasional iceberg.

Leaving the ice floes, we came into what I call the "whale waters." Many of them were seen, usually in herds it seemed to me. Sometimes as many as 25 or 30 would be seen with their water spouts spouting water. When we were close enough I could actually hear them "blow." I suppose that's where the expression "there she blows" comes from. Many times the ship would get right into the middle of a "herd" of these whales and most of them would dive straight down, with that big tail flipper sticking straight up. When you consider the size of these animals,



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it's hard to believe how well they can get around in the water. Nothing sluggish about them that I noticed; they had plenty of life. The afternoon of the 3rd day, the big mountains just out of Capetown could be seen. Suddenly we were back in civilization again—and it did seem good to be back.

There on the docks were my friends Jack and Marge (ZS1OU and ZS1RM) waiting for me. They both pitched in and helped me unload everything and we went to their home some 25 miles out of the city at a beachside place called the Strand. As usual, they had their "Fridge" full of Cokes especially for me. Their fruit season had come in while I was away, so they were loaded with every kind of fruit you could imagine. Peaches, grapes, figs, plums, apples, melons and some other fruits I had never seen before. Since my stay was a short one, I didn't have time to really "do my duty" in regards to eating all that fruit.

With regrets, the time came for me to depart. I had lots of places to visit and operate from before heading back to South Carolina . . . and Peggy. . . . W4BPD

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Mark Losseff — Ex U2GU and active SWL

We have been informed of the passing of Mark Losseff of Kaluga, U.S.S.R. Mark was an amateur before the war and was licensed as U2GU. He was the first Russian amateur to work the U.S. on 7 MHz in August 1927. This was done with 5-watts power, and a two-tube receiver. He was also a commercial operator aboard merchant ships and ice breakers. He was a political prisoner during the time of Stalin, and had been an active SWL since the war.