

CHAPTER 5 - Part 2 - Ice 1967/68

There were a few crew changes in June 1967. The CO was relieved by Cdr D Bamfield, RNZN. Trevor Clarke, known as Crumpy (after Barry Crump) posted off. Crumpy used to volunteer to go up the foremast to the crow's nest as lookout during ice transits - in bare feet. Upon his demise, he had bequeathed one keg of beer to each of the junior ratings messes at Irirangi (where he used to do a lot of deerstalking) and at Philomel.

Prior to this period, Endeavour had undergone a Commodore Auckland's Inspection and sailed out into the Hauraki Gulf to carry out evolutions at sea. Endeavour wasn't a replenishment tanker but could transfer fuel astern from the quarterdeck. Can't remember the name of the ship that was on the other end. George Hill was "killed off" and I was given a couple of evolutions to carry out. Endeavour carried the following portable, emergency equipment.

2 x AN/CRT-3 (Gibson Girl) liferaft sets - 500kHz/8364kHz - the aerials for these were:
1 x lightweight whip which went up through the centre of the liferaft.
1 x long wire aerial which could be carried aloft by either Helium filled balloons or a box-kite.
1 x Type 622 - HF portable transmitter/receiver.

The first one was to take the Type 622 to the Boat Deck aft and send a message to COMAUCK on 3192 kHz via North Head (ZLE30).

Second evolution was to establish communications with ZLD Auckland Radio on 500 kHz using one of the Gibson Girls (so named because it had an hour glass figure like the US Gibson Girl). The Gibson Girl could be operated automatically to send distress calls by an inexperienced person holding the set between his knees and cranking the handle. However, in order to transmit manually, someone had to crank the handle while you transmitted. Kevin Smith did the cranking and I sent the aerial up using the box kite - I had had plenty of practice at this as I used to experiment with it up the Islands - a very soothing pastime. I established communications with ZLD to the satisfaction of COMAUCK's Communications Officer.



AN/CRT - 3 Gibson Girl liferaft radio

The ship refitted from July to October 1967 before transporting a diving team and explosives to Samoa. Ammunition dumping for all three Services was carried out in November 1967. During the refit, I did maintenance on the wire aerials and the cages to the two transmitting whips. I was undoing the last bolt on the cage of the port whip when I smelt burning. My left hand had brushed against the base of the aerial matching unit which inflicted an RF burn between thumb and forefinger, leaving a permanent white scar. At that stage I wasn't aware that a transmitting aerial could still be live, even though the transmitter was turned off. An earthing stick/bleeder was also unheard of.

During August and September, I attended the LRD Refresher Course at the Comms Training School. There were four of us on course - myself, Alex Pryde, Ray Jones and one other. Ray would pick me up from my flat in Russell Street on Saturday mornings in his Jowat Javelin. It wasn't new but it could move. One Saturday, we went hurtling down Calliope Road and turned into Huia Street, didn't quite make it and bounced off the embankment on the left. No damage, just some earth and grass stains down the left hand side of the car.

Endeavour departed Auckland 23 December 1967 after having loaded the bulk of the cargo for Scott Base. We arrived in Lyttelton 29 December to take on aviation fuel and the remainder of the Scott Base cargo. From this point on, we have a much detailed diary of events as four of us decided to start up a paper – “**The Endeavour Times**”. For the first trip, we put out a daily edition, but due to the lack of stationery, the paper was only done every second day on the second trip. We had a crew of about 60, plus scientists, sea cadets and reservists – approximately 85 in all. All contributed to the paper and we have been able to keep a historic document, detailing the events of the 1967/68 season.

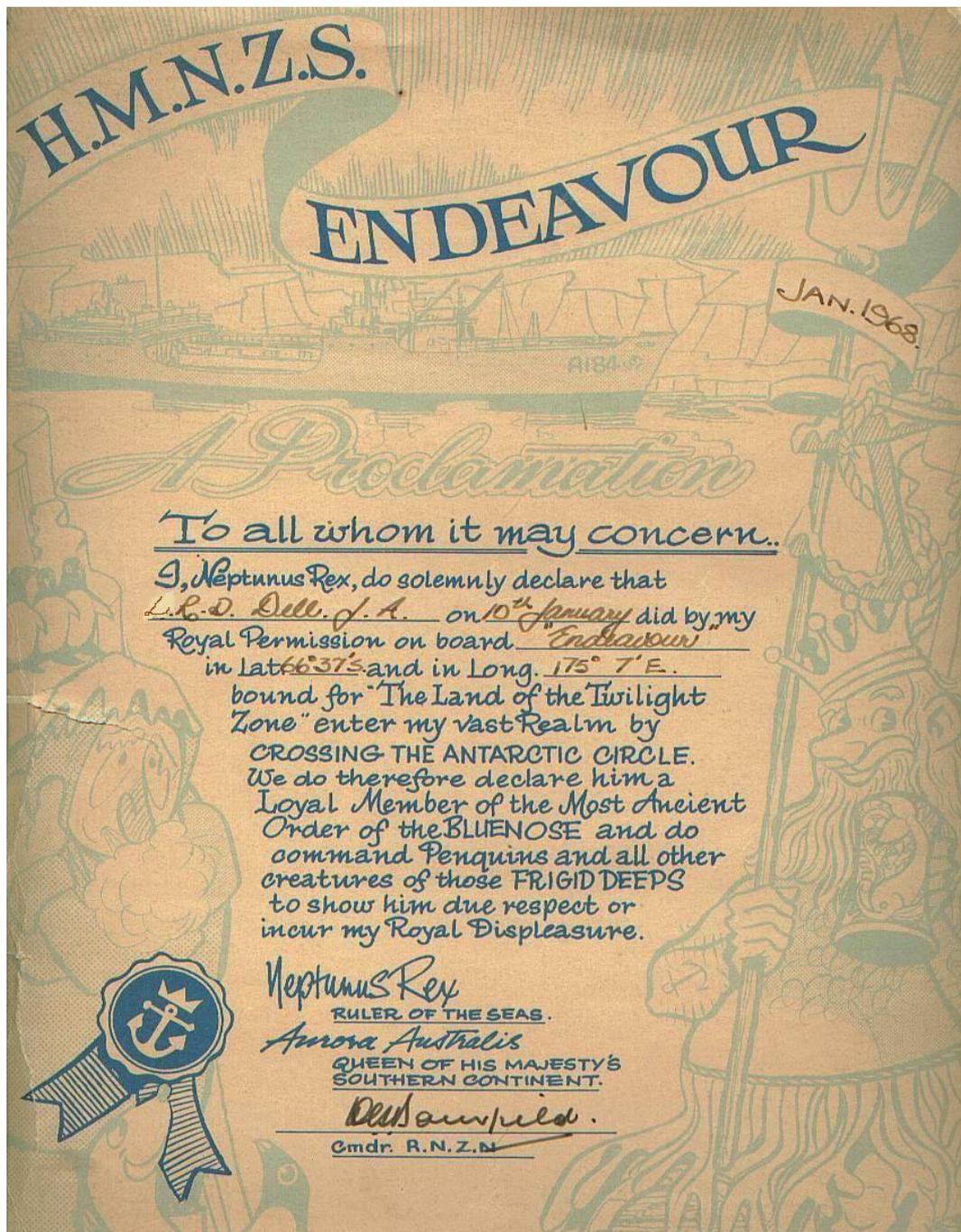
While the ship was in Lyttelton, the Radio Officer (ex-RAF W/T Operator) on the **Magga Dan** came over for a visit. This was the first ship to take tourists to Antarctica and they were unable to get weather and ice reports. He wondered if Endeavour could help out. No problem - daily skeds were organised on 518 kHz for the passing of reports.

December, I was promoted to Leading Radioman.

On the first return trip of the 67/68 season, I was going on watch for my last sked of the day (2200-2359) and as I was crossing the catwalk above the tank decks, a very large wave hit the ship amidships on the port side and I was physically lifted off the deck. Luckily for me, my wedding ring caught in a stanchion and stopped me from being washed over the side. It was night time and had I gone over, I wouldn't have been missed for a couple of hours. By then it would have been too late. My left hand was bruised to hell and the wedding ring finger had swollen.



SHIPS OFFICE
12 JAN 1968
H.M.S. ENDEAVOUR



Bluenose Certificate

On **Endeavour** in Lyttelton, between trips to the Antarctic, I was called upon to be the radio op on the Reserve ML – **HMNZS Parore**. A man had fallen overboard off the Inter-island Ferry, **Wahine**, shortly after sailing from Lyttelton and we were going out to look for him. I set watch with the local harbour authority at Godly Head on 2182 kHz on the 618/CAS (no B40 on there at that stage). What immediately struck me was the overpowering stench of the diesel. The wireless shack was right behind the engine room.

As we cleared the heads, **Parore** ploughed into heavy seas and I must have been seasick at least once every half hour. As a sense of “what have I done to deserve this” prevailed over me, I discovered that I had failed to secure the lock on the dial of the CAS. Consequently, I missed our recall to Port by some hours as the receiver had wandered off frequency by a few degrees. This had been caused by the shuddering and vibrations within the boat and a trap for a young sparker that had never been on MLs before. As **Parore** finally returned to calmer waters, I uncurled myself from the foetal position on the deck of the W/T office and cleaned up the mess. I then staggered out to the after end of the boat and was promptly handed a large glass of “squirt” by the Coxswain – a grizzly, 3-badged, leading seaman and a Reservist to boot! I must confess that I felt a trifle embarrassed about being seasick in front of these part timers, but as the contents of the rum glass diminished, I found myself no longer caring what anyone thought!

The irony of all this was that no one had fallen overboard at all. The passenger was found not long after in his bunk suffering from seasickness!

We sailed for the last trip south for the season 8th February 1968. The four editors of "The Endeavour Times" (Myself, Murray Purves, Blue Simmonds and Wayne Philip) were kept busy collating items from the ship's company, drawing cartoons, the daily news, various poets and Rex Handcock provided us with many articles on birds of the Southern Oceans and also doing regular updates of ice positions and where other ships were that were part of Operation Deepfreeze.

Stopped at Campbell Island to offload supplies.



Alongside Elliott Quay

See pic above -

Just inside the door to the left of the "No Smoking" sign on the right, was the Wireless Office. Down below on the Tank Deck, is the entrance to the Shipwrights (carpenters and engineers) workshop. Up in the Pacific Islands this is where they had two 44 gallon drums that were used to make alcohol from an overload of oranges that were given to us from grateful islanders.



Arriving in Winter Quarters Bay 17 February 1968

Photo taken by Carlo Maui, Italian adventurer and photographer who took passage with us on our return.

A rugby match was played between Endeavour and Scott Base - 9 points to 3 in favour of Endeavour.

Sailed from McMurdo 20th February with the gloomy outlook of a four week survey by an onboard civilian scientist who would be using the ship's echo sounder to survey an underwater ridge. However, on the 26th February, the LRM (Rudy McCabe) was doing some checks on the echo sounder and accidentally dropped the induction coil. Rudy was hailed as a hero by the ship's company as we turned north and headed for Auckland after a quick stopover on the 28th at Campbell Island.

By now, rumours abounded about the forthcoming trip to San Francisco. Would the ship be inundated by "Barrack Stanchions"? As I was now a LRD, I expected to be drafted off and replaced by an ARD.