



Update #13
UNCLOS Continental Shelf Project
Ward Hunt Island Ice Camp
March 27th to March 30th

Friday, March 27th

Weather: -40°C, no wind (what else?)

Anti-inflammatory medication is a beautiful thing. Much of our day was spent either; 1) digging out equipment that has been buried in a cement-like snow that only the arctic knows how to make, 2) unloading groceries from incoming aircraft, or 3) relocating 400-pound barrels of fuel (gas, diesel, or Jet B) from the airstrip to their appropriate location. By the end of the day, I have discovered muscle groups in my body that I never knew existed.

Despite the challenges we face in our daily routine, morale in camp couldn't be better. Everyone chips in to assist where required, as our ultimate purpose is clear to all - get the camp operational and comfortable. The great food the cooks continue to prepare might have something to do with it as well.

Today the remaining Danish contingent (Christian Marcussen¹, Morten Solvsten², Uni Bull³, and Henrik Anger⁴) arrived from Eureka. Their hair sure looked clean. Apparently the helicopters have been on their way north, however they were grounded today in Resolute Bay due to white-out conditions.

A landmark event occurred in camp today; the first showers were taken. (Knowing when to arrive in camp: Denmark: 1, Canada: 0). The hot-water-on-demand system doesn't work quite yet, but that was not going to stop us any longer. Desperate times call for desperate measures. By getting the shower's water pump operational, we filled the shower's reservoir with water that had been heated on the bathroom's stove. As soon as the water is taken off of the stove it cools rather quickly, so the showers had to be quick. Despite having a shower that lasted all of 32.6 seconds, it was definitely worth it.

Saturday, March 28th

Weather: -46°C, no wind

Although the 'to-do' list for getting operational is getting shorter, many ongoing chores required to keep the camp running are always available in the event someone is looking for something to do. Tasks such as burning garbage, filling the snow-melter or pumping diesel to top-up each barrel that supplies the stove in each tent must be done on a daily basis.

¹ Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland - Denmark

² Danish Hydrographic Service

³ Danish Hydrographic Service

⁴ Danish Hydrographic Service



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Just before lunch, Photographer Janice Lang had all hands congregate for a group photo. Being the perfectionist that she appears to be, everything had to be just right. Standing still in -46°C is tolerable with your face mask on and hood pulled tight over your head, however Janice wanted bright, exposed smiling faces. Jim Weeden⁵ chose to wear a tropics T-Shirt and shorts, which he quickly got in to just before when he *thought* the photo was to be taken. It didn't rush Janice in the slightest ... poor guy. After lunch Janice, Dick MacDougall, Christian Marcussen and Julian Goodyear left camp on the Twin Otter, to begin their south-bound journey.

Our Wildlife Monitors Tom and Randy took the skidoos for a small journey around Ward Hunt Island today. They took along a shot gun, a hand-held GPS, a digital camera and a VHF radio. Upon their return, they reported seeing the tracks of two polar bears approximately 7Km to our west, as well as the tracks of foxes, wolves, and a small herd of Peary Caribou. I guess we aren't alone up here after all.

Sunday, March 29th

Weather: -30°C, overcast with a light breeze.

Today the overcast took all definition out of the landscape such that land blended seamlessly into the sky with no horizon. Known as 'white-out' conditions, aviation pilots wisely opt to keep their machines grounded during these times. The helicopters continue to remain in Resolute Bay, presumably for the same reason. As one may expect, the camp's airstrip had no traffic other than the Bobcat which continued blowing snow to widen the runway and make an area for offloading / staging fuel barrels. The ATV was also used to smooth out a transition area at the ends of the airstrip, such that a plane can motor off the runway in the event another plane needs to land while it is on-site. With the tracks, winch and plow installed, this machine is ideal for almost any terrain one might face in the arctic. The only problem is that if it *were* to get stuck, it would *really* be stuck.



photo courtesy John Mercuri

700cc Diesel-Powered ATV

⁵ CHS Central and Arctic Region



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The hot-water-on-demand system became operational today, so showers can occur providing there is water. Due to the snow-melter's capacity to handle a large volume of snow, it will take a few days before it will become fully operational. For now we still need to melt snow over our stoves in large pots.

Monday, March 30th

Weather: -30°C - sunny and clear in morning, winds increasing to 25 knots in afternoon with drifting snow.

The Buffalo aircraft made its' first arrival into camp today. Twenty barrels of Jet-B fuel were offloaded out of its' rear-end. It will be dropping off 40 barrels per load from now on, however the pilot wanted to test out the airstrip before hauling in a full load.



photo courtesy John Mercuri

Waiting to offload cargo of fuel, to be rolled out of the Buffalo's stern

A portion of the day was committed to providing the Hydrographers with a re-orientation on the equipment they will be using with the helicopters, if they ever arrive (still stuck in Resolute Bay). Strong winds came quickly in the afternoon, resulting in snow blasting above every surface, rapidly drifting into crusted ridges wherever it could find shelter. It is likely we will be spending a fair bit of time digging ourselves out tomorrow.

George Schlagintweit
Ward Hunt Ice Camp