

# THE STRANGE ORIGIN OF THE UNITED STATES ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION MEDAL, 1939-1941, WITH MEDAL ROLL

Glenn M. Stein

## Historical Background of the Expedition

In January 1939, President Roosevelt officially approved planning for the United States Antarctic Service (U.S.A.S.) Expedition. Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd Jr. (Retired) began operational planning for a venture “to consolidate previous American exploration and to examine more closely the land in the Pacific sector” by setting up permanent Antarctic bases, systematically exploring the area, and chart the coastline between 72° W and 148° W, as well as the Weddell Sea coast.

The Service was an official agency of the United States government and an interdepartmental project involving the State, War, Army and Navy Departments as well as the Department of the Interior, and others. Most of the pilots and technicians were drawn from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps, while the scientists and dog sled drivers were recruited from the civil service and scientific institutions. Several participants were veterans of one or both of Byrd’s previous Antarctic expeditions.

The U.S.M.S. *North Star* (a wooden arctic supply ship, operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs) (Figure 1) and U.S.S. *Bear* (AG-29) (Figure 2) sailed for Antarctica in November, arriving at the Bay of Whales in January 1940, the site of West Base (Little America III). The *Bear*, carrying a Barkley-Grow seaplane, made an exploratory



Figure 2: The *Bear* (photo by E. C. Helm, Photographer; NA, RG-126-AS, [www.usas1939.org](http://www.usas1939.org).)

cruise from January 19 - March 3, concluding at the site of East Base, Stonington Island, along the western coast of the Antarctic Peninsula. The Americans originally

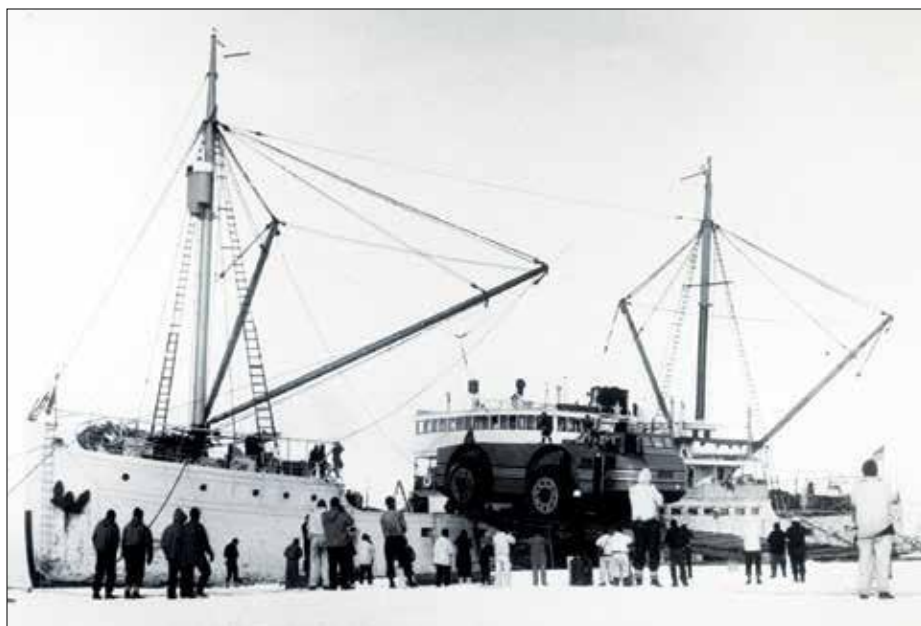


Figure 1: *North Star* unloading the Snow Cruiser at West Base (courtesy Finn and Edith Ronne Antarctic collection.)

named the latter the Palmer Peninsula and today the peninsula's southern half is called Palmer Land. The bases were 1,600 miles apart by air and 2,200 miles by sea and were constructed from prefabricated buildings. Two ice parties consisted of 27 men at East Base, 32 at West Base, at least 150 Alaskan Malamutes, Eskimos, and Siberian Huskies (plus 18 puppies), two Curtiss-Wright Condor biplanes (Figure 3), two light Army tanks, two tractors, and the Snow Cruiser (fitted to carry a Beechcraft biplane atop) stationed at West Base. The Snow Cruiser was 55 feet long and 20 feet wide, with 10-foot tall retractable tires, and weighed over 37 tons; but the design proved faulty for the Antarctic terrain, and it was converted to a stationary crew quarters. The *North Star* departed West Base January 24 for Valparaiso, Chile, to take on supplies; she then sailed for East Base, arriving on March 5. Both ships left for the United States on March 21, 1940.



**Figure 3: The Condor biplane on a barge at East Base (photo by A.J. Carroll, Chief Photographer; courtesy Finn and Edith Ronne Antarctic collection.)**

The work carried out from West Base included biological and geological survey parties to the Edsel Ford Mountains, a survey party to the Pacific coast (which went to Mount Hal Flood), and a geological party to the Rockefeller Mountains (Figure 4). Meanwhile, at East Base, a weather station was set up and a survey party went to the Eternity Range while sledding parties went to the Weddell Sea coast and to King George VI Sound. Aerial surveys were also made from the base. With help of ground surveys, aircraft added over 1,500 miles of coastline to the Antarctic map and most of the coast between the Ross Sea and the Antarctic Peninsula was charted. November and December 1940 saw the operation of the first high-altitude meteorological station in Antarctica. Scientific observations were conducted in many areas, among them: seismology, cosmic rays, auroral phenomena, botany, glaciology, ornithology, meteorology, physiography, structural geology and zoology.



**Figure 4: Geologist Paul H. Knowles and his dog team with Neny Island in the background, April 23, 1940 (photo by A. J. Carroll, Chief Photographer; NA, RG-126-AS, [www.usas1939.org](http://www.usas1939.org).)**

With the start of war in Europe in September 1939 and with international tensions rising, the decision was made to evacuate the two bases rather than exchange personnel for continued occupation. The *Bear* and *North Star* arrived at West Base in January 1941, evacuated the base and met up at Adelaide Island on February 24 to do the same for East Base. Ice conditions were not favorable, so on March 19, in case the conditions caused operations to lengthen, the *North Star* was sent to refuel and reprovision at Punta Arenas, Chile. Fortunately, this was not necessary and the ship sailed for Boston with the West Base personnel, arriving on May 5.

Meanwhile, the *Bear* anchored at Mikkelson Island (called Watkins Island from 1952 onwards) on March 22 to await the two flights of evacuated men from East Base. After everyone was retrieved, the *Bears* sailed for the United States, and arrived at Boston on May 18.

During the aerial evacuation the records detailing their work were saved, but clothes, gear and expensive instruments had to be left behind. In addition, East Base leader Richard B. Black had to make the agonizing decision to kill the dogs - 61 of them. Knowing it was his duty to shoot them. He wrote that "one of the dog drivers, who had spent so much time on the trail with the animals approached Black and requested to do the job himself. "You don't want to do that job," he told his superior. "I know those fellows better than you do. Go up on the hill, and I'll be along shortly." While on their tethering chains, 33 dogs were then shot.

Although the first flight of base personnel safely reached the *Bear*, the second flight had to turn back due to the aircraft's uncertain condition, and since 14 of the men had to stay at the base for another year, the remaining 28 dogs would be needed for survival. If the flight *did*





**Figure 5: The Gold Medal to Lieutenant Commander Clay W. Bailey, U.S.N. (photo by Adam Rohloff, 2015; courtesy National Museum of the U.S. Navy.)**

appropriation of funds “for the preparation of reports and maps” expired on June 30, 1943, after which the U.S.A.S. ceased to exist. - Author], no office, no authority, no work, and furthermore, Paul was away from Washington, too, most of the time. I could see later, it was a way out for the Admiral, realizing that all hands were for us being honored - he could not be that selfish in public to stay alone.

### **Design, Qualifications, and Naming**

On September 24, 1945 Congress passed an act to establish the United States Antarctic Expedition Medal, 1939-1941 (Public Law 79-185, 59 Stat. 536), which was signed by President Roosevelt.

**Obverse:** The center of the medal features a globe viewed from an angle below, showing Antarctica surrounded by the following wording: **SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN / LITTLE AMERICA / SOUTH POLE, PALMERLAND / ANTARCTICA** (Figure 5). Upon a three-level ribbon above: **SCIENCE / PIONEERING / EXPLORATION**. Encircling the globe: **THE UNITED STATES ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION..1939.1941..**

**Reverse:** The reverse is plain (Figure 6), except for the following inscription: **BY.ACT.OF / THE.CONGRESS. OF.THE / UNITED.STATES.OF.AMERICA / TO [blank space for recipient’s name] IN.RECOGNITION.OF. / INVALUABLE / SERVICE.TO.THIS.NATION.BY / COURAGEOUS. PIONEERING.IN.POLAR / EXPLORATION. WHICH. RESULTED / IN.IMPORTANT.GEOGRAPHICAL / AND. SCIENTIFIC / DISCOVERIES.**

**Diameter:** 1¼ inches (+3/54, - 1/32)

**Thickness at Rim:** 0.096 inch (+.010, -.005)

**Ribbon:** Watered, with corded edges, the ribbon consists of three broad stripes of ice blue, white, ice blue; the white stripe has two thin red stripes near the outer edges. The ice blue and white symbolize the cold of Antarctica, while the red represents sacrifice.

**Suspension:** Integral knob and ring, and suspended from a slot brooch, but the author has seen one unnamed bronze example with a full wrap brooch.

**Qualifications:** As with the Byrd Antarctic Expedition Medal, 1928-1930, this award was created in three levels. Byrd appointed a medal committee of three, Commander Cruzen, Dr. Paul Siple and Finn Ronne, to determine the qualifications:

Gold Medal: (1) Commanding Officer, U.S.A.S., (2) Second-in-Command, U.S.A.S., and (3) all members who wintered over on the Antarctic continent.

Silver Medal: All members who made the trip to the Antarctic in 1939-1940 and again in 1940-41.

Bronze Medal: All members who made only one trip to the Antarctic.

## Metals:

Gold: 10k gold-filled (plated) over copper alloy, satin finished with burnished highlights

Silver: sterling (oxidized), relieved and satin finish

Bronze: red brass (oxidized dark gray, giving a pale greenish-gold color), relieved and satin finish

**Designer:** John Ray Sinnock, Chief Engraver of the United States Mint in Philadelphia, is credited with the design, but Finn Ronne stated, “I worked on the design of the medal with the Herald Section in the Quartermaster Corps.” It is therefore possible Sinnock sculpted the medal, rather than designed it.

**Case:** A rectangular blue-grey box, with interior beige plush bottom pad and silk upper lining, and a spring catch.

**Manufacturer:** United States Mint

**Naming:** Thus far, the author has determined the naming was dealt with in at least four ways: (1) engraved in large and small thick capital *serif* letters, (2) engraved in large and small thin capital *serif* letters, (3) engraved in large and small thin capital *sans serif* letters, (4) issued unnamed.

The author is aware of the naming on three extant gold medals: **LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CLAY W. BAILEY USN** (thin *sans serif*) (Figure 5); **LOUIS P. COLOMBO** (thick serif) (Figure 6), and **ELMER L. LAMPLUGH** (thin serif) (Figure 7). Since the publication of the author’s “Three For Three: Receiving America’s Early Antarctic

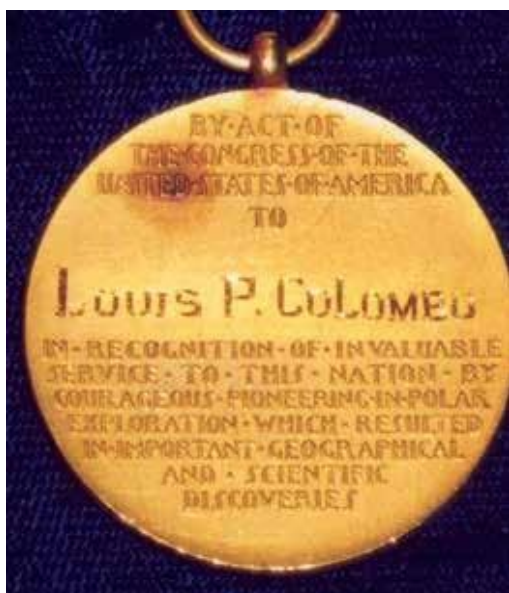


Figure 6: Reverse of the Gold Medal to Louis P. Colombo (photo by R.L. Colombo.)



Figure 7: Elmer L. Lamplugh’s Gold Medal (ebay, January 2010.)

Medals” (JOMSA, January-February 2011), he was able to obtain much higher quality images of Lieutenant Commander Bailey’s medal - showing it is a gold and not silver issue, and the naming is in *sans serif* rather than serif lettering.

According to the Sotheby’s lot description of Byrd’s medal (November 10, 1988), it is named **Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd USN (Ret)** and although there is no image of the reverse, given the wording, it is most likely engraved in the same manner as Bailey’s (as opposed to the serif lettering the author indicated in his 2011 article). Byrd’s medal is further described as a “unique in gold [unmarked], in case of issue, with typewritten name attached and similar style citation [as appears on the medal’s reverse].” The latter may have been the practice at various presentation ceremonies.

Robert Rowland Johnson wrote to the author in 2015 that his silver medal is named **ROBERT R JOHNSON BM2 USN** (Figure 8) and this is consistent with Bailey’s medal, so it too is likely engraved in the same style. Johnson is shown on the *Bear*’s crew list as a Coxswain but was promoted to Boatswain’s Mate 2nd Class while onboard. By contrast, the silver medal presented to George Washington Gibbs Jr. (Mess Attendant 1st Class/Officers’ Cook 3rd Class, U.S.S. *Bear*) was issued unnamed.

The variance in naming is a mystery and unfortunately, the sampling is not broad enough at the time of writing to make more precise determinations.

**Number originally struck:** “[T]hese medals were manufactured in number according to the original list of awardees submitted by Admiral Byrd” (Lieutenant Edward Kufahl, U.S.N.R., Assistant Director, Medals and Awards Division, November 27, 1951.) The author has



Figure 8: Robert R. Johnson's medal group including his silver United States Antarctic Expedition Medal and Antarctic Service Medal (courtesy Robert R. Johnson.)

not specifically identified Byrd's "original list" among the documents held in the Byrd Papers. However, a list of those entitled, with presentation details, procedure requested for presentation and mail record of notification letters for the medals (Folder No. 7304, undated) is the best candidate for a document based on the original list. The numbers originally struck *appears* to be: gold - 60, silver - 49, bronze - 51; total - 160.

**Number issued:** gold - 58, silver - 48, bronze - 37; total - 143.

#### Medal Roll and Issuance Details

The first medals "presentation" was on November 29, 1946, by the Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, but only 19 expedition members could attend, since several of the intended recipients were involved in the massive United States Navy Antarctic Developments

Project (nicknamed *OPERATION HIGHJUMP*).

In his retrospective writings, Finn Ronne describes what unfolded in Forrestal's office:

Time for passing out these medals did not arrive before the latter part of November 1946. Secretary Forrestal of the Navy decided to do the presentation only after Byrd had pressured him into doing it by Senator Byrd, the Admiral's brother. He, Forrestal, set his limit too, namely that he would present only three medals: to one person representing the West Base, another person representing the East Base, and finally one officer representing the ships forces. Since I was the senior member of East Base, I stood at attention with the other two men, Commander Richard Cruzen and Paul Siple, when Forrestal came out to the large office from his private quarters. He then gave a short speech; then he fastened the medal on a clip already there on my coat, to be followed by the other two men. He then walked directly out of the room into his own

quarters again.

Admiral Byrd at the time was standing way back in the crowd of about 40 people. The rest of the expedition members then came forward and scrambled for their medals, all of them now located on a table. Standing right there, I saw one box with Byrd's name on it. I took it, stuffed it in my pocket and started walking out into the corridor. I slid up alongside the Admiral, and said: "You didn't get your medal by the Secretary, Admiral?" Before I was able to go any further, he said: "Was there one on the table for me too?", upon which I reached for the pocket and said: "Here I have your medal Admiral - I found it on the table over there."

SO ENDED THE STORY OF THE MEDALS\_ I EVEN GAVE ONE TO THE PERSON WHO OPPOSED THE DECORATION FOR THESE MEN FROM THE BEGINNING. HE DID TAKE IT THOUGH, WHEN I GAVE IT TO HIM.

So according to Ronne, only gold medals to himself, Cruzen, and Siple were actually presented by Secretary Forrestal. In a Navy news release dated the same day, Forrestal requested Byrd to "make arrangements to present medals to the members who could not be present." When addresses were known, letters and follow-up letters were sent, offering presentation options by specified individuals. The July 7, 1947

follow-up letter on behalf of Byrd to Dog Driver Louis P. Colombo was no doubt typical:

1. Presented by the governor of the state
2. Presented by the Commandant of the Naval District/ Commanding General of the Area
3. Presented by the Secretary of the Army or Navy
4. Presented by Admiral Byrd

A careful record was kept in columns on a four-page document with dates of these letters and replies, along with the recipients' requested procedures for presentations who evidently also had the option of having medals transmitted directly to themselves. Five columns under the heading "Presented by" were titled as follows: Secretary of the Navy, *Mount Olympus*, Admiral Byrd, Ronne, and Other. The U.S.S. *Mount Olympus* (AGC-8) was the flagship for Operation High Jump.

In light of what Ronne wrote about the Secretary of the Navy's presentations - which conflicts with the Navy's news release that stated Forrestal presented medals to all 19 men - the author has chosen to include "collected



**Figure 9: Officers and men of the U.S.S. *Bear* at Horseshoe Island, Antarctica, March 11, 1940 (photo by A. J. Carroll, Chief Photographer; NA, RG-126-AS, [www.usas1939.org](http://www.usas1939.org).)**

in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946” beside the names of the 16 entitlees concerned. Notably, a list of undelivered bronze medals (Byrd Papers, Folder No. 7304, July 17, 1950) features a notation for 11 men with unknown addresses: “These men appear to be Interior Dept. Request made to Int[erior] Dept. for information on whereabouts.”

**U.S.S. *Bear* (Figure 9)**

Lieutenant Commander Richard H. Cruzen, U.S.N., Captain & Second-in-Command of Expedition - Gold - Presented by the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Lieutenant Commander Peter J. Neimo, U.S.N. - Silver - Transmitted.

Lieutenant Commander George J. Dufek, U.S.N., Navigator - Silver - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946. Medal changed “from Bronze to Silver for exploratory flight” by the medal committee.

Lieutenant William N. Crofford Jr., U.S.N., 1st Officer - Silver - Transmitted.

Commander Ladislaus L. Adamkiewicz (Medical Corps), U.S.N. - Silver - Transmitted, requested presentation by commanding officer.

Chief Boatswain William H. Daly, U.S.N. - Silver - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Bendik Johansen, Sailing Master & Ice Pilot/ 1939-40/ 1940-41 - Bronze/Silver? - The medal committee discussed excluding him from receiving a medal, but ultimately decided “no change recommended.” However, there is no trace of Johansen within any of the medal-related documents in the Byrd Papers (Folder Nos. 633 and 7304). An oversight, or was he purposely excluded?

Chief Machinist Frank L. Dawley, U.S.N. - Silver - Presented by Commander Gerald L. Ketchum, USS *Burton Island* (AG-88), 1947.

Charles C. Allen, Machinist Mate 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Commander, Naval Forces, Western Pacific.

Earl S. Bawtinhimer, Quartermaster 3rd Class/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Edward F. Bradshaw Jr., Aviation Machinist’s Mate 3rd Class/1939-40 - Bronze - Presented by Commandant, 12th Naval District, U.S. Naval Air Station, Alameda, California.

Joseph A. Daigle, Radioman 3rd Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Frederick G. Dustin, Aviation Mechanic (civilian)/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted and presented by Byrd onboard the U.S.S. *Mount Olympus*, at Wellington, New Zealand, in March 1947. According to Stewart (Volume 1, p. 469), “He was due to winter-over at East Base as a mechanic, during USAS 1939-41, but in March 1940 was transferred to West Base,

being replaced at East Base by [Hendrik] Dutch Dolleman.” However, a list of personnel for the bases features Dustin under “RETURNED TO STATES” (Byrd Papers, Folder No. 7234).

Homer J. Ertenberg, Carpenter’s Mate 3rd Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Ernest M. Flaherty, Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Byrd in Boston, May 3, 1949.

George W. Gibbs Jr., Mess Attendant 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Lieutenant Commander J.C. Spitler, Commanding Officer, Service Force, Pacific Fleet, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 1947 (Figures 10 and 11).



**Figure 10: Chief Cook George W. Gibbs Jr. receiving his Silver Medal from Lieutenant Commander Spitler, at Pearl Harbor in 1947 (courtesy Leilani Henry.)**



**Figure 11: George W. Gibbs Jr.’s medal group, mounted as worn, including an impressed named Navy Good Conduct Medal (GEORGE W. GIBBS, JR. 1942), and unnamed Silver Medal (courtesy Leilani Henry.)**

Roger Hawthorne, Assistant Field Representative for U.S.A.S. 1939-41 & Reporter (Associated Press) - Silver - collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946. He was due to winter-over at East Base, but returned home on the *Bear* and was replaced with Harry Darlington. Hawthorne returned to Antarctica during the second half of the expedition.

Arthur J. Hill, Pharmacist's Mate 2nd Class - Silver - Presented by Commandant, 14th Naval District.

John L. Hostinsky, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Commandant, 11th Naval District.

Walter J. Jakobczak, Machinist's Mate 1st Class - Silver - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, "Deceased - no immediate family". Chief Motor Machinist Mate Jakobczak was killed in action onboard the U.S.S. *Plymouth* (KG-57), off Elizabeth City, North Carolina, August 5, 1943.

Elmo H. Jenkins, Boatswain's Mate 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Robert R. Johnson, Coxswain (promoted to Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class) - Silver - Transmitted and presented by Byrd onboard the U.S.S. *Mount Olympus*, at Wellington, New Zealand, in March 1947 (Figures 12 and 13).

Sidney Kanefsky, Seaman 1<sup>st</sup> Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Jack C. Keck, Quartermaster 3rd Class - Silver - Presented



**Figure 12: Robert R. Johnson receiving his Silver Medal from Admiral Byrd, U.S.S. *Mount Olympus*, Wellington, New Zealand, March 1947. (courtesy Robert R. Johnson)**



**Figure 13: United States Antarctic Expedition Medal recipients aboard the U.S.S. *Mount Olympus*, Wellington, New Zealand, March 1947. Five have just received their medals from Admiral Byrd, while the remainder were already in possession of their awards. (courtesy Robert R. Johnson.)**

by Commanding Officer.

Anthony W. Kelczewski (afterward Wayne), Seaman 1st Class - Silver - Presented by commanding officer, Naval Training School (Salvage), Bayonne, New Jersey. He changed his surname to Wayne after World War II and died in Schenectady, New York, October 6, 2013.

Joseph G.V. L'Esperance, Coxswain/1940-41 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Joseph L. Littleton, Officer's Cook 3rd Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer.

James T. McFarlane, Electrician's Mate 1st Class - Silver - Transmitted.

Robert A. McLean, Torpedoman's Mate 3rd Class - Silver - Presented by Byrd to widow in Boston, May 3, 1949. Torpedoman's Mate 1st Class McLean was declared dead while missing onboard the U.S.S. *Amberjack* (SS-219), when lost off Rabaul, February 16, 1943.

Frank B. Messer Jr., Chief Machinist 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Receiving Station, Guam, Micronesia.

Charles L. Meyer, Chief Machinist's Mate (Acting Appointment) - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer, U.S.S. *Molala* (ATF-106), "with personal letter."

Curtis H. Michael, Coxswain/1940-41 - Bronze - Presented by Commandant, 12th Naval District.

Robert J. Mulhern, Coxswain - Silver - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Cyrus Napier, Officer's Cook 3rd Class/1940-41 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Clayton E. Nelson, Chief Machinist's Mate (Permanent Appointment) - Silver - Transmitted to widow. Lieutenant Nelson was lost during training exercises in the U.S.S. *S-28*, off Oahu, Hawaii, July 4, 1944.

Charles E. Nusbaum, Ship's Cook 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Byrd in Boston, May 3, 1949.

Walfred A. Nylund, Radioman 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer, U.S. Naval Training Center, San Diego, California.

Fred W. Schmohe, Electrician's Mate 1st Class - Silver - Transmitted.

Roger G. Scott, Yeoman 3rd Class - Silver - Presented by Vice Admiral Thomas L. Sprague.

Thomas G. Smith, Machinist's Mate 1st Class - Silver - Transmitted.

Kenneth R. Stuart, Chief Machinist's Mate/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Emil Swenson, Ship's Cook 2nd Class/1st Class - Silver - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown. Promoted to Ship's Cook 1st Class for the second half of the expedition.

Walter Szeeley, Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class - Silver - Transmitted.

David Taylor, Mess Attendant 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Base Commander/Island Commander, Saipan.

Gerald A. Temple, Coxswain/1940-41 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

William H. Vrobel, Coxswain - Silver - Transmitted. Presented by Commanding Officer?

Joseph W. Wallace Jr., Yeoman 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Vice Admiral Thomas L. Sprague.

George E. Wycoff, Machinist Mate 1st Class - Silver - Presented by Commanding Officer, Optical School, Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.

### **U.S.M.S. *North Star***

Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd Jr., U.S.N. (Retired), Expedition Commander - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Isak K.T. Lystad, Master - Silver - Transmitted to wife. Died in Seattle, Washington, May 26, 1945. The medal committee discussed excluding him from receiving a medal, but ultimately decided "no change recommended."

Ellsworth L. Bush, Ice Pilot (Merchant Marine Master)/1940-41 - Bronze - He participated in the expedition, as Stewart (Volume 1, p. 253) lists him as "one of the replacement sailors on the *North Star* for the second half of USAS 1939-41." He is also identified as an ice pilot in another publication (Anonymous, June 1941). Oddly, a letter from the Department of the Interior to Byrd (August 3, 1948) specifically lists Bush's address, asking for the presentation of his medal - however, there is no indication a medal was ever issued. An oversight, or was he purposely excluded?

Charles Salenjuss, 1st Officer - Silver - Transmitted.

John E. Wahlborg, 2nd Officer - Silver - Transmitted. See son John O. Wahlborg, Ordinary Seaman, below.

Jack Ruttle, 3rd Officer - Silver - Transmitted.

William H.E. Schroeder, Fourth Officer/1939-40 - Bronze - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Phillip F. Lindner, Additional Mate/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted by mail at his request.

Herman Sanwick, Chief Engineer - Silver - Transmitted.

Thomas E. Holland, 1st Assistant Engineer - Silver - He appears on the ship's personnel list and on the Department of the Interior's payroll, but there is no trace of Holland within any of the medal-related documents (Byrd Papers, Folder Nos.

633 and 7304). An oversight, or was he purposely excluded?

Gordon Lien, 2nd Assistant Engineer - Silver - Transmitted.

Claudius G. Ralls, 3rd Assistant Engineer - Silver - Transmitted.

Vernon I. Miller, Engineer/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Dr. Alfred B. Geyer, Ship's Doctor/1939-40 - Bronze - Geyer's entitlement is noted as "questionable" on a Department of the Navy's list of undelivered medals (August 3, 1951), with the later notation "Sent" Lieutenant Edward Kufahl, U.S.N.R. (Assistant Director, Medals and Awards Division) wrote to Byrd's secretary Gladys Wood on November 27, 1951, stating the original list of intended awardees submitted by Byrd did not contain Geyer's name, and asking if "one of the remaining bronze medals should be transferred to his name?" Evidently this is what was done.

Kenneth L. Simundson, Boatswain/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Francis A.T. Bearse, Radio Operator - Silver - Transmitted.

Eric T. Clarke, Physicist (Cosmic Ray) & Observer (Bartell Research Foundation)/1939-40 - Bronze - Presented by Byrd in Boston, May 3, 1949. The medal committee discussed excluding him from receiving a medal, but ultimately decided "no change recommended."

Dana K. Bailey, Physicist/1940-41 - Bronze - Presented, but by whom is not recorded, although he requested Byrd. The medal committee discussed excluding him from receiving a medal, but ultimately decided "no change recommended."

Malcolm Davis, Biologist & Observer (National Zoological Park)/1939-40 - Bronze - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Milton J. Lobell Jr., Biologist & Observer (Bureau of Fisheries) /1940-41 - Bronze - Presented by Ambassador to Chile Claude G. Bowers.

Everett A. Arnes, Civilian Photographer/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Dr. Thomas C. Poulter, Snow Cruiser designer & builder (Armour Institute of Technology's Research Foundation)/1939-40 - Bronze - Presented by Vice Admiral George D. Murray.

Herman O. Hendricks, Machinist/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted.

George M. Grasty, Steward/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Sigfred Sundt, Steward - Silver - Transmitted.

John Kalerak, 2nd Cook/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted.

John J. Gambole, Baker/1939-40 - Bronze - Presented by Byrd.

Paul Holman, Waiter - Silver - Transmitted.

Boston R. Hunt, Waiter/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Carl Weissenborn, Mess Boy - Silver - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Harvey Henderson, Galleyman/1939-40 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Leo G. Belles, Oiler - Silver - Transmitted.

William D. Le Roux, Oiler/1939-40 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

William P. Lee, Oiler/1939-40 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Jesse A. Neiswender, Oiler/1940-41 - Bronze - There is no indication a medal was ever issued.

Franklyn Johnson, Wiper/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Francis Lambson, Able Seaman/1939-40 - Bronze - transmitted

James F. Wiles, Able Seaman/1939-40 - Bronze - Shown as "James F[rancis]. Wiles" on the Department of the Interior's payroll, but "E.S. Wiles" on the *North Star's* undated personnel list, undated list of entitlees and methods of presentation, and Navy Department memorandum (January 5, 1948); not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Cecil W. Cole, Able Seaman - Silver - Transmitted.

Jerry O'Brien, Ordinary Seaman/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Albert E.J. Duggan, Ordinary Seaman/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted and receipt acknowledged October 2, 1951.

John O. Wahlborg, Ordinary Seaman/1939-40 - Bronze - Transmitted. See father John E. Wahlborg, 2nd Officer, above.

Robert W. Bell, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

John E. Boss, Seaman/1940-41 - Bronze - Evidently Boss participated in the expedition, as Stewart (Volume 1, p. 191) lists him as "one of the replacement sailors on the *North Star* for the second half of USAS 1939-41." However, there is no indication a medal was ever issued.

Paulus M. (or V?) "Paul" Bratsberg, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Wesley W. Carscaden, rating unknown /1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Fremont R. Cody, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Arthur C. Corbett Jr., rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

John J. Dolan, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Gunnar N. Hansen, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - "Transmitted and returned "Address Unknown"" as of October 28, 1948, but the medal was evidently afterward delivered to Hansen.

Walter R. Hansen, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Gustav Lund, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

Ralph L. Moller/Muller, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Presented by Commanding Officer.

G.E. Phelps, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

John E. Rose, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Earle Snyder, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Not issued as of November 27, 1951, address unknown.

Frank N. Thompson, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

George N. Weed, rating unknown/1940-41 - Bronze - Transmitted.

#### East Base (Figures 14 and 15)



**Figure 14: East Base**  
(courtesy Finn and Edith Ronne Antarctic Collection.)

Richard B. Black, Base Leader (Lieutenant, U.S.N.R.) - Gold - Presented, but by whom is not recorded, although he requested Byrd.

Paul H. Knowles, Geologist - Gold - Presented by Washington Governor Monrad C. Wallgren.

Herwil McClure Bryant, Biologist & Assistant Radio Operator - Gold - Presented by the Secretary of the Navy.

Herbert G. Dorsey Jr., Meteorologist (Weather Bureau) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.



**Figure 15: The Ice Party of East Base, February 18, 1941**  
(photo by A. J. Carroll, Chief Photographer, NA, RG-126-AS, [www.usas1939.org](http://www.usas1939.org).)

Dr. Lewis S. Sims Jr., Medical Officer & Radioman (Lieutenant (J.G.) (Medical Corps), U.S.N.) - Gold - Presented by Captain William Sinton, U.S.N., Naval Air Station, Squadron 5M, Saufley Field, Pensacola, Florida.

Finn Ronne, Chief of Staff and Transportation Engineer (Department of the Interior) - Gold - Presented by the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Arthur J. Carroll, Chief Photographer (Photographer 1st Class) - Gold - Presented by Colorado Governor William L. Knous.

Ashley C. Snow, Pilot (Aviation Chief Machinist's Mate, Naval Aviation Pilot) - Gold - Presented by Commandant, 11th Naval District.

Earl B. Perce, Assistant Pilot-Radio Operator (Radioman 1st Class, Naval Aviation Pilot) - Gold - Presented by Commander, Naval Air Transport Service, Moffett Field, California.

William A. Pullen, Plane Mechanic (Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class) - Gold - "Transmitted at his request."

Zadick Collier, Aviation Mechanic (Technical Sergeant, U.S.M.C.) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron, USMC Air Station, El Toro (Santa Ana), California.

Elmer L. Lamplugh, Chief Radio Operator (Radioman 1st Class) - Gold - Presented by California Governor Earl Warren to widow. Lieutenant Lamplugh, U.S.N., was killed in a motor vehicle accident in Seoul, Korea, September 22, 1949.

Howard T. Odom, Radio Operator (Radioman 2nd Class) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Carl R. Eklund, Ornithologist, Assistant Biologist & Dog Driver - Gold - Presented by Ronne.

Donald C. Hilton, Assistant Surveyor & Dog Driver - Gold - Transmitted.

James G. Dyer, Cadastral Engineer, Surveyor & Cartographer (General Land Office) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary, November 29, 1946.

Charles W. Sharbonneau, Carpenter (Corporal, U.S. Army) - Gold - Not issued as of November 27, 1951. The July 17, 1950 list of undelivered medals is annotated "Deceased Letter in mail," and the annotation "awaiting correct address." However, Sharbonneau died in Lafayette, Louisiana, March 9, 1984.

Archie C. Hill, Cook (Ship's Cook, 1st Class) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Robert Palmer, Assistant Meteorologist & Supply Officer - Gold - "Transmitted at his request" and "Presented" both appear in the records, without further comment.

Harrison H. Richardson, Dog Driver & Meteorological Observer - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Joseph D. Healy, Dog Driver - Gold - Presented by Byrd in

Boston, May 3, 1949.

Lytton C. Musselman, Dog Driver & Radioman (2nd Lieutenant, U.S. Army) - Gold - Presented by California Governor Earl Warren.

Clarence E. Steele, Tank & Tractor Driver (Sergeant, U.S. Army) - Gold - Transmitted. A list of those entitled (Byrd Papers, Folder No. 7304, undated) features the annotation, "Ref'd to Dr. Siple".

Anthony J.L. Morency, Tank & Tractor Driver (Private 1st Class, U.S. Army) - Gold - Transmitted and presented by Byrd onboard the U.S.S. *Mount Olympus*, at Wellington, New Zealand, in March 1947.

Harry Darlington III, General Duty & Radioman (U.S.N.R. enlisted man) - Gold - Presented by Ronne.

Lester Lehrke, Sailmaker & Communications (Chief Boatswain's Mate 1st Class) - Gold - Presented by Idaho Governor Charles A. Robins.

Hendrik Dolleman, Tractor Driver (Private, U.S. Army) - Gold - Presented by Byrd in Boston, May 3, 1949.

#### **West Base**

Dr. Paul A. Siple, Base Leader (Geographer) - Gold - Presented by the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Lawrence A. Warner, Geologist - Gold - Presented by Colorado Governor William L. Knous.

Jack E. Perkins, Biologist - Gold - Transmitted.

Dr. Ernest Lockhart, Physiologist - Gold - Presented by Byrd in Boston, May 3, 1949.

Roy G. Fitzsimmons, Physicist - Gold - Deceased - transmitted to father. Captain Fitzsimmons, U.S.A.A.F. was killed returning from active duty in Cuba, May 5, 1945.

Murray A. Wiener, Assistant Physicist & Auroral Observer - Gold - Presented by the Secretary of the Navy.

Arnold Court, Meteorologist - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Leonard M. Berlin, Cadastral Engineer & Surveyor (General Land Office) - Gold - Delivered medal personally in Washington, D.C., by the Medals and Awards Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel.

Dr. Russell G. Frazier, Medical Officer - Gold - Presented by Utah Governor Herbert B. Maw.

Charles S. Shirley, Chief Photographer (Photographer 1st Class) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Loren Wells, Sailmaker, Photographer & Meteorological Observer (Boatswain's Mate 1st Class) - Gold - Presented by Captain Wilton S. Heald, U.S.S. *Union* (AKA-106).

James McCoy, Pilot (Aviation Chief Machinist's Mate, Naval Aviation Pilot) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Walter R. Giles, Assistant Pilot & Radio Operator (Staff Sergeant, Naval Aviation Pilot, U.S.M.C.) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina.

Clay W. Bailey, Chief Radio Operator (Lieutenant Commander, U.S.N.) - Gold - Presented by the Secretary of the Navy.

Orville Gray, Plane Mechanic (Aviation Machinist's Mate 1st Class) - Gold - Presented, but by whom is not recorded.

Jerry A. Reece, Radio Operator (Radioman 1st Class) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer, Fleet Airborne Electronics Training Unit, Pacific, Naval Air Station, Ream Field, San Ysidro, California.

Charles F. Passel, Assistant Geologist & Radio Operator - Gold - Transmitted.

Vernon D. Boyd, Chief Mechanic (Ordnance Inspector, U.S. Army) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, November 29, 1946.

Raymond D. O'Connor, Carpenter (Private, U.S. Army) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer, Squadron K-2, Lowry Field, Denver, Colorado.

Sigmund Gutenko, Steward & Cook (Ship's Cook 1st Class) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Isaac Schlossbach, Executive Officer (Lieutenant Commander, U.S.N., Retired) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy, November 29, 1946.

Raymond A. Butler, Dog Driver & Assistant Geographer - Gold - Presented, but by whom is not recorded, although he requested Byrd.

Richard S. Moulton, Chief Dog Driver - Gold - Presented by Byrd.

Louis P. Colombo, Dog Driver - Gold - Presented by Lieutenant Colonel William N. Colyer, Battalion Commander, 373rd Armored Infantry Battalion, Wildflecken, West Germany, January 1954. One presentation list (Byrd Papers, Folder No. 7304), states his medal was presented by the "Commanding General, 9th Infantry Div. Fort Dix, N.J.," but this is incorrect.

Jacob Bursey, Dog Driver - Gold - Presented by Byrd.

Malcolm C. Douglass, Assistant Meteorologist & Dog Driver - Bronze - Medal committee: "Recommend reduction from Gold to Bronze Medal due to moral turpitude". During the expedition, Douglass exhibited strong suicidal tendencies; he eventually committed suicide, September 22, 1951 (Stewart, Volume 1, pp. 450-51). A list of entitlees (Byrd Papers, Folder No. 7304, undated) features the annotation "Ref'd to Dr. Siple," and his Gold entitlement is noted as "questionable" (August 3, 1951), with the annotation, "Deceased 1951". There is no

indication a medal was ever issued.

Adam Asman, Tank & Tractor Driver (Sergeant, U.S. Army) - Gold - Presented by Commanding Officer.

Harold P. Gilmour, Official Recorder, Expedition Historian & Administrative Assistant to Admiral Byrd - Gold - Presented by Ambassador to Chile Claude G. Bowers.

### **Snow Cruiser (West Base)**

Dr. F. Alton Wade, Leader & Senior Scientist (Geologist) (Miami University, Ohio) - Gold - Transmitted.

Theodore A. Petras, Pilot (Master Technical Sergeant, Naval Aviation Pilot, U.S.M.C.) - Gold - Collected in the office of the Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, November 29, 1946.

Felix L. Ferranto, Radio Operator (Corporal, U.S.M.C.) - Gold - Transmitted.

Clyde W. Griffith, Engineer (Machinist's Mate 2nd Class) - Gold - Presented by Medal of Honor recipient Commander George L. Street III, U.S.S. *Requin* (SS-481), U.S. Submarine Base, Key West, Florida.

### **No Medals: Individuals Who Traveled to Antarctica and Returned**

Leland S. Curtis, Commercial Artist / *Bear* / 1939-40 - Medal committee: "no award due to participation based primarily on self-interest."

Ennis C. Helm, Photographer / *Bear* / 1939-40 - Medal committee: "no award due to participation based primarily on self-interest."

Hollis E. Richardson, Dog Driver / *Bear* / 1939-40 - He was responsible for the dogs proper training prior to the expedition and was supposed to winter-over at East Base, but a stomach ailment forced Richardson to return home on the *Bear*.

Argentine and Chilean Naval Observers / 1939-40 - They were excluded by the medal committee from receiving medals.

A final note on the issuance of these medals. On August 16, 1948, Chief Clerk M.A. Crawford (Medals and Awards Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel) replied to Gladys F. Wood (Byrd's secretary), "regarding requests for Medals from men whose names are note listed:"

Replying to requests of this kind I usually tell them that the members of the Expedition entitled to the Medals are those whom Admiral Byrd considered to have performed outstanding service and who were designated by him to receive the honor bestowed by Congress.

Of course there is the chance perhaps that someone meriting the award may have been overlooked. We have in some instances referred persistent requests to the Admiral. I don't recall ever having made awards to a member of an expedition not mentioned in Admiral Byrd's original list.

The *Bear's* Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Robert Rowland Johnson returned to Antarctica two more times, for Operation Highjump (1946-47) and Operation Windmill (1947-48), and also received the retroactive Antarctic Service Medal, established in 1960. When the author last spoke to Johnson in May 2020, he was 99 years old - and very much looking forward to marking a century in July.

Johnson is the last known survivor of the 1939-41 United States Antarctic Service Expedition.

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Folder No. 633 - Recommendation for award of the medal and exceptions, Cruzen, Siple, and Ronne to Commanding Officer, U.S. Antarctic Service, undated memorandum; Crawford to Wood, requests for medals from men not on Byrd's original list, August 16, 1948; "Congressional Medals Awarded to Eight Members of United States Antarctic Expedition of 1939-41," news release, May 3, 1949; "Byrd Awards Medals to Antarctic Crewmen," *The Boston Herald*, May 4, 1949.

Folder No. 7231 - The United States Antarctic Service, Personnel - East Base (#1.) Tentative, September 22, 1939.

Folder No. 7234 - Assignment Personnel - East Base; Assignment Personnel - Snow Cruiser; Assignment Personnel - West Base; Officers and Crew of U.S.S. *Bear*; Expedition Men Sailing on U.S.S. *Bear*; Personnel of *North Star*; Expedition Men Sailing on the *North Star*; The United States Antarctic Service, Field Personnel (Antarctica); The United States Antarctic Service, Personnel List, Revised December 22, 1939; United States Antarctic Service - West Base Winter Party, Navy Department, Immediate Release, February 20, 1940.

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