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ANTARCTIC RADIO STATION RENOVATED

"You've been listening to Radio WASA, the U. S. Navy's 100 watt FM radio station in McMurdo, Antarctica."

One of the largest, if not "The" largest morale factor for the 1,000 men of Operation DEEP FREEZE stationed on the frozen, isolated continent of Antarctica is Radio WASA. Located 2,365 miles due south of the nearest population center in New Zealand, and more than 11,000 miles from their homes in the United States, these dedicated men relish any contact with the outside world. Radio WASA is normally the only contact they have and it provides them with all types of music, news and weather. One of the volunteer announcers calls the station "The most Wonderful Antarctic Station Anywhere."

Although the station spaces had been brightened up during the winter seasons, when the station's old AM transmitter gasped its last breath, the Electronic Technicians decided to pitch in and use their spare time to completely renovate the station.

Four of the Electronic Technicians (ETs) who spearheaded the modernization are Robert Flint of Farmingville, N.Y.; Walter G. Harris of Fort Walton Beach, Fla.; Keith M. Miller of La Crescenta, Calif.; and Michael J. Provot of Badaxe, Mich.

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In a period of six weeks, the station had taken on a new look. The new control room had been completely soundproofed, new special electronics equipment had been installed including a new FM transmitter that had been shipped in from the states, and a short wave receiver which allows them to broadcast special events aired by the American Forces Radio Service.

Under the watchful eyes of Station Manager Tom Wilborn of Fairdealing, Mo., a new control panel was designed and built by ETs to simplify the operation of the station.

The station is on the air from 6:30 a.m. until 11 p.m. seven days a week. Station Manager Wilborn, a Navy Journalist and broadcast specialist, is the only person assigned to the station, but uses volunteer announcers in the evenings. ET Harris also serves as an announcer, as does ET Flint, and Provot is the station engineer. Flint will be the station manager during the wintering over period; March until October.

Working in their off-duty hours, as a self-help project, these men have given the morale at McMurdo Station a real "shot in the arm." Radio WASA now is affiliated with the Armed Forces Radio and Television System and receives programming, in addition to newscasts five times a day. Last season, all they received was one newscast per day.

During the cold, dark winter at McMurdo that is facing the wintering-over crew of Operation Deep Freeze, the efforts of the men from the Electronics division of Antarctic Support Activities will be appreciated every time the announcer says, "You are listening to Radio WASA, the U. S. Navy's 100 watt FM radio station in McMurdo Station, Antarctica.