

* On the NOTAM Found on Together We Served:

Winter of 1967/68 (24MAR1967) - a Coast Guard cutter (CGC BARATARIA) in the vicinity of Cape Sarichef had a boiler explosion. There were, I believe, two (four) men in the boiler room at the time who were scalded and badly burned. There was no port in the vicinity, so they contacted us by radio, arranged to anchor the ship as close as possible to the shoreline, put the injured men on stretchers into lifeboats, and got them as close to shore as possible. Several of us waded out in the surf, in the dead of night, to intercept the lifeboats, and retrieve the injured men. That was the coldest I have been in my life, but very soon we went numb. The thing I remember most, was looking into the eyes of an injured man that I was porting through the surf, and him begging us not to let him fall into the surf. We got them to shore, and to a waiting plane for evacuation. I never heard how the men fared. Written by Marshall Brewton

Station life...

We made two trips per month from the Cape to Scotch Cap Light, carrying rotating personnel, provisions, mail, etc. I made several trips to Scotch Cap for maintenance and repair of electronic equipment there. Sometimes we took a Grumman Goose from Reeve Aleutian Airways. Other times, we took a 4-wheel-drive truck or a Thiakol tracked vehicle. During the winter 1967-68, I made a trip with EN1 Hubbard. Even though the trip was only about 17 miles as the crow flies, it took about 8 hours by Thiakol. We made it there OK. Hubbard serviced the motor-generator, I serviced the electronics, and we spend the night there. The next morning, we started the trip back to Cape Sarichef. It was a beautiful, sunny morning. We checked in with the Cape by the radio on board the Thiakol. During our trip back, winding our way along the mountain foothills, we encountered a terrible blizzard. We lost radio contact with the Cape. The chief was driving, and the visibility was so bad, I had to get out and walk in front of the Thiakol to guide the chief along the gravel mountain road. We finally made it down the mountainside to an old airstrip at Sennett Point, which had a Quonset hut where sleeping bags had been left in case of emergency. We waited out the blizzard in the Quonset hut. There was a stove which was the only source for heat, but when we lit the stove, the heavy winds blew the smoke into the hut, and we had to shut it down. When the weather finally subsided, we tried to resume our trip, but the starter had completely iced-up. I got under the engine and tried to thaw out the starter with flares. I was eventually overcome with fumes from the flares. We decided to wait it out in the Quonset hut overnight for help to arrive. Back at the Cape, the crew was worried about us, so they set out on a rescue mission to find us. That night, we saw flares lining the path in the distance, approaching the near-by river. We ran to the river, which was frozen over. The CO led the rescue team making their way across the river, suddenly, the ice broke, and the CO went plunging into the icy water. The team pulled him to safety, and seeing that we were OK, said they would be back in the morning to get us. The next day, we tried again to start the Thiakol, but it wouldn't start. We left it there, and there it stayed until after I left the next April. - Marshall