# A Round-the-World Cruise by *Southwind*

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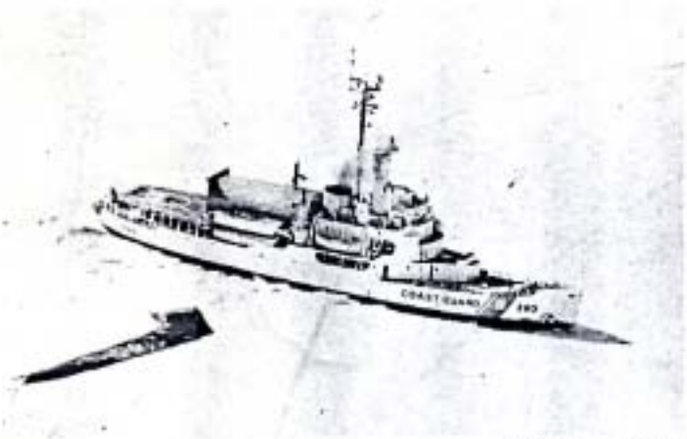


*U.S. Navy Photo*

**Figure 1. The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Southwind* (WAGB-280) in the pack ice.**

Although icebreakers may be a familiar subject to many readers of the *Antarctic Journal,* the broad spectrum of tasks performed by these vessels may not be fully realized. For this reason, it appeared appropriate to document a recent icebreaker deployment, giving an account of the myriad subsidiary projects undertaken in conjunction with the primary task.

The United States Coast Guard Cutter *Southwind* (WAGB 280) (Fig. 1), whose *Deep Freeze 69* deployment is the subject of this article, is a 25-year-old icebreaker with a unique history of service under four commission pennants.[2] *Southwind*'s 269-foot hull is specially designed and strengthened for the sole purpose of breaking ice. Her shell is of high-tensile steel, ranging in thickness up to 1⅝ inches where it is needed most. Within this special-purpose shell are six diesel engines whose generators deliver 10,000 horsepower to two powerful motor-driven propellers; enough fuel to drive the ship 38,000 miles; stores for a seven-month voyage; and 200 officers and men, who bring dedication and ability to their tasks.

Oversimplified, that is *Southwind*. What follows is the story—in part—of *Southwind*'s participation in *Deep Freeze 69* and her homeward cruise.

## The Primary Job

*Southwind* was designated a unit of the Ross Sea Ship Group for *Deep Freeze 69* by the Commander, Task Force Forty-Three. In support of United States scientific and logistic activities in Antarctica, the Ross Sea Ship Group was assigned the following tasks:

Load *Deep Freeze* cargo bound for New Zealand and the Ross Sea area.

Transport designated officer, civilian, and enlisted passengers.

Break and maintain a shipping channel through the fast ice to Hut Point, McMurdo Station.

Provide helicopter support.

Furnish personnel, helicopters, boats, and equipment to assist in cargo handling.

Prepare cargo offloading and loading sites.

Backload retrograde cargo from Hallett Station to McMurdo Station.

Support science programs in the McMurdo Sound area with boats and helicopters.

Provide scheduled logistic support for Campbell Island.

Continue to completion a hydrographic survey of Winter Quarters Bay to ascertain the feasibility of berthing a T5 tanker.

The performance of these tasks can be said to have started at Wellington, New Zealand, on November 13, 1968,[3] when operational control of *Southwind* shifted to the Commander, U.S. Naval Support Force, Antarctica, although this omits description of the many preceding days spent en route in a nasty North Atlantic, a calm Caribbean, an interesting transit of the Panama Canal, and a placid Pacific. *Southwind*'s brief stay was most successful from the standpoint of rest and recreation; hospitality seemed to be the motto of the people of Wellington, who also hosted at this time the crew of USS *America*.

*Southwind*'s first commitment after leaving Wellington on November 22 was to land mail and supplies at New Zealand's subantarctic Campbell Island. Arrival and departure were made on November 25, with all cargo being transferred ashore by small boat and helicopter from an anchorage in Perseverance Harbor. *Southwind* then headed south to a rendezvous with USCGC *Burton Island,* which was met in open water on Thanksgiving Day.

The next morning, *Burton Island* and *Southwind* entered the pack at about 178°W. and rendezvoused with USCGC *Glacier* (Fig. 2). The Ross Sea Ship Group was now formed, with its commander (CTG–

[1] Commanding Officer of USCGC *Southwind* from October 1966 to June 1969.

[2] *Antarctic Journal,* vol. III, no. 1, p. 20.

[3] All times are local.


*U.S. Coast Guard Photo*

**Figure 2. USCGCs *Southwind*, *Burton Island* (right foreground), and *Glacier* together in the pack ice. This photograph illustrates the close maneuvering sometimes required of icebreakers.**

43.3) in *Burton Island*. Starting on November 29, the three icebreakers proceeded through the pack in column, weaving and pushing their way from polynya to polynya, sometimes in open water, sometimes grinding to a halt in pressured and ridged floes. Helicopters were often aloft to recommend the paths of least resistance. The approach to McMurdo Sound was ultimately made west of Beaufort Island.

On December 3, the ship group met the edge of the fast ice. This ice presented an entirely different situation. Up to then, the icebreakers had been transiting the offshore pack, in which there is generally some open water between adjacent floes. This provides space for displacement of the ice as the ship moves along. Even if the pack should consolidate, through the action of weather, and the icebreaker finds herself beset—a helpless but not disgraceful condition—it is not dangerous for a strengthened vessel. A wind shift will relieve the pressure eventually, or another icebreaker may break her free. (This reciprocal arrangement, in fact, was employed several times.)

Fast ice, however, is an entirely different matter. There is no open water, and there are no widening cracks—just a solid field of ice, perhaps several feet thick, extending from shore to shore. With no place for the ice to move laterally, the icebreaker can proceed only by employing its weight and the shape of its bow (which acts as an inverted inclined plane) to rise up onto the ice and break it. If the ice is less than four feet thick, the icebreaker may, under full power, move ahead steadily and continuously with a slight humping motion.

The task group commander was faced with the problem of how best to utilize the three icebreakers to form a channel through the fast ice to Winter Quarters Bay. (The first of the relatively thin-skinned supply ships was due near the end of December.) CTG–43.3 detailed the more powerful *Glacier* to commence breaking one channel, while 3 miles to the east, *Burton Island* and *Southwind* would work together to break what became known as the east channel.

The cutting of the east channel made a most impressive scene. *Burton Island* and *Southwind*—sister ships of the *Wind*-class—were working 50 to 75 yards apart in the fast ice, employing the "railroad track" technique. Alternately, each ship backs and rams. Picture *Burton Island* backing off three or four ship lengths, applying full power and charging. Faster and faster she goes down the right side of the channel. By the time her bow reaches the notch in the ice, she has attained full speed. Despite her tremendous mass, her bow leaps out of the water, rending and smashing the ice ahead before she settles and comes to a halt. As *Burton Island* is backing off for her next onslaught, *Southwind* makes her full-power approach down the left side of the channel. When *Southwind* meets the notch, geysers of water shoot into the air as the ice ahead of her folds under her weight. A crack shoots through the ice, running over to the right side of the channel just vacated by *Burton Island*. In this manner, the two ships ram the ice every 6 to 8 minutes, hour after hour, day after day, creating a channel 100 to 150 yards wide.

Initially, great progress was made—a ship's length or more at each ram. But the ice, which at its northern edge was about 3 feet thick, steadily increased in thickness as further penetration was made towards Hut Point. With still 25 or so miles remaining, it was found that the icebreakers advanced only 10 to 25 yards per ram, totalling on some days a bare 1 or 1.5 miles. For 15 days the channel cutting continued, with time out occasionally to rerun the channel, which was refreezing. *Glacier*, meanwhile, was making good progress in the west channel, and the two parallel channels had been joined by cracks and cross channels. Wind and current carried the large floes thus created out to open water.

Early in the morning of December 19, after the channel had been pushed through 37 miles of ice to within 5 miles of Hut Point, one blade of *Southwind*'s starboard propeller could stand the strain no longer. Its failure terminated *Southwind*'s participation in channel-cutting operations. *Burton Island* carved out a turning basin and assisted *Southwind* in turning around. With her bow snubbed tightly in the notch in *Burton Island*'s stern (a configuration that was wryly nicknamed "*Burtwind*"), *Southwind* was towed out of the channel to open water, *Southwind* giving a push with her one good shaft when needed. After pumping all unneeded fuel and lube oil to *Burton Island* and *Glacier*, *Southwind* headed back to Wellington for repairs.

From December 31, 1968 until January 8, 1969, *Southwind* was in drydock, where a complete set of new propeller blades was installed. After refueling, *Southwind* made for McMurdo again. En route, she picked up HMNZS *Endeavour,* which was waiting in the pack to be escorted the rest of the way through the ice. Upon arriving at McMurdo with *Endeavour* at the end of her towline, *Southwind* found that *Burton Island* and *Glacier* had completed the channel into Winter Quarters Bay and broken out the mooring area.

From January 17 until departure from McMurdo, *Southwind* was occupied with the escort of *Endeavour,* USNS *Towle,* USNS *Alatna,* and USNS *Wyandot,* sometimes working with *Burton Island,* sometimes independently. During this period, *Burton Island* returned to New Zealand for a well-earned rest, and *Glacier* departed for the Weddell Sea. *Southwind* also made a round trip to Hallett Station and, between other tasks, wiredragged and sounded Winter Quarters Bay.

All this was interesting work for the men of *Southwind,* who never seemed to tire of icebreaking or escorting. The work assumed a new dimension when it was realized that *Southwind*'s employment held considerable fascination for those on shore. *Southwind* entertained many visitors during this period, some for hours, others for days. During the channel cutting, some of the more agile visitors quickly scrambled down a ladder at the bow and out onto the ice to take pictures of the icebreakers head-on as they charged, reared up, and settled into the shattered ice.

While *Southwind* was engaged in these Ross Sea operations, plans were being developed for her subsequent assignments. These included the establishment of a satellite-tracking station on tiny, subantarctic Heard Island in the Indian Ocean, and a courtesy visit to Tanzania, on the eastern coast of Africa. While *Burton Island* was en route from Wellington to McMurdo, *Southwind* was directed to proceed via Hallett Station to Perth, Australia, to load cargo and receive passengers for the Heard Island project. With *Wyandot* following, *Southwind* left Winter Quarters Bay for the last time on February 7. On this outward voyage, open water was found over the entire route, a condition that would have been most unlikely had it not been for the earlier dogged determination of the icebreakers in breaking the 42-mile channel to McMurdo.

### *Thala Dan* Assistance

The day after her departure from McMurdo, and prior to arrival at Hallett Station, *Southwind* learned by message of the difficulties being encountered by the Danish vessel *Thala Dan,* which was attempting

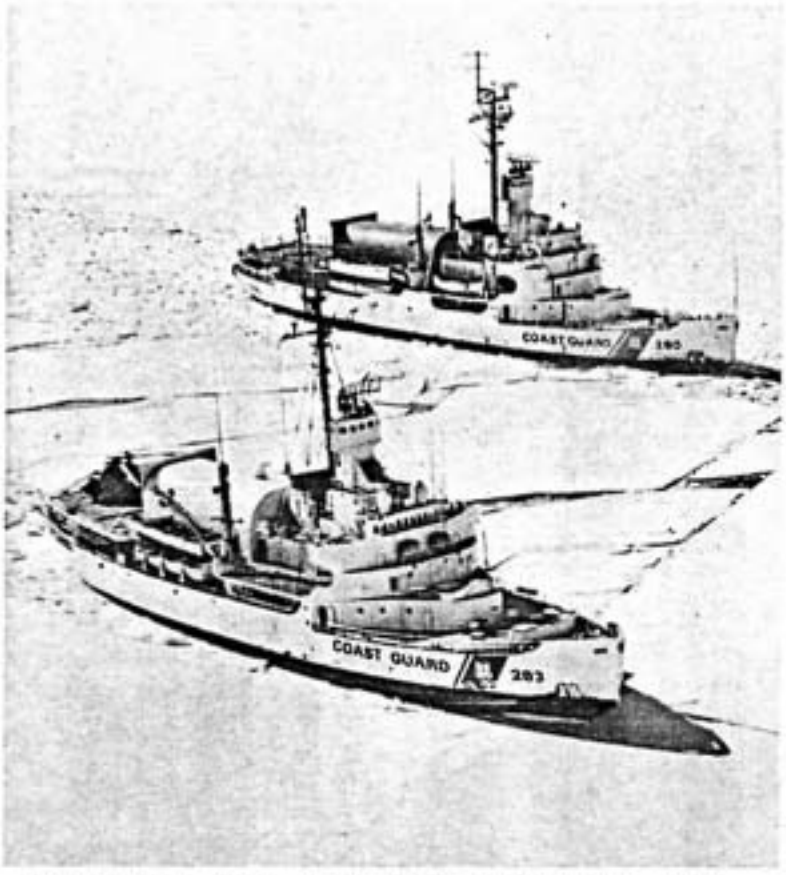
*State Department Photo*

**Figure 3. M/S *Thala Dan* in the pack ice.**

to penetrate the pack to resupply Australia's Wilkes Station on the Knox Coast. *Thala Dan,* at the time, was beset in the pack, unable to move either ahead or astern.

Pausing at Hallett only long enough to dispatch a helicopter to the station, *Southwind* set out on her 1,800-mile mercy mission. In an effort to minimize the time en route, a satellite readout of ice conditions was requested from Task Force 43's advance headquarters in Christchurch. A return message recommended a track believed to be the shortest route possible while keeping *Southwind* outside the pack.

On February 14, *Southwind* approached *Thala Dan* (Fig. 3) in consolidated pack 5 miles from open water. All hands and passengers were topside on *Thala Dan* to watch *Southwind* make her slow but steady approach through the compacted medium floes. Heavy snow cover made the going more difficult. *Southwind* came up astern of *Thala Dan,* which had been sitting for a week, swung out around her, clearing her side by but 15 yards, and then cut in ahead. The path created by *Southwind* was enough to relieve the pressure of the ice on *Thala Dan*'s side, and she slipped in astern. Because of the total concentration of floes, the ice closed in rapidly about 100 yards astern of *Southwind.* This made it necessary for *Thala Dan* to follow *Southwind* as closely as possible, often within 50 yards, sometimes closer. Reliable bridge-to-bridge FM radio communications permitted instantaneous exchange of information between *Southwind*'s conning officer and the master of *Thala Dan,* who was maneuvering his ship from the "ice house" high up on the Danish vessel's forward mast. The easing of nervous tension was evident during this very close escort as Australian scientists and Danish crewmembers on the forecastle of *Thala Dan* exchanged volleys of snowballs with the American crewmen on *Southwind*'s flight deck.





*U.S. Coast Guard Photo*

**Above. USCGC *Southwind* anchored in Atlas Cove, Heard Island, during cargo offloading operation.**

**Left. USCGC *Southwind* (background) and *Burton Island* cutting channel into Winter Quarters Bay.**

*U.S. Navy Photo*

Just before dark, and about half-way to open water, *Southwind* was suddenly stopped by a stubborn floe. *Thala Dan,* alerted by radiotelephone, attempted evasive action, but there was not enough distance between the two ships to permit *Thala Dan* to stop or sheer completely away. Before she came to a halt, the flare of her bow, overhanging *Southwind*'s main deck, caught the after starboard corner of the icebreaker's flight deck and curled it under. This was the only contact that occurred in an entire season of close calls.

Open water was attained in the middle of the night, and the "miniconvoy" backtracked about 50 miles to a point opposite Wilkes Station. By daylight, it was heading into the pack again. Snow and reduced visibility prevented helicopter reconnaissance, so it was simply a matter of bulling through about 30 miles of fairly solid pack to a good lead that became open water the rest of the way to Wilkes. Then the really hard work started. Even though *Thala Dan* was behind schedule, 20 days had been allotted to offload her fuel and cargo, to exchange wintering-over personnel, and to activate the replacement station that had been built across Newcombe Harbor from Wilkes. Since it was apparent that *Thala Dan* would need an escort out through the pack again, it was agreed that *Southwind* would remain until the work was finished and would contribute personnel, boats, and helicopters to reduce the time involved. The extent of *Southwind*'s participation and the energy expended by her crew may be best illustrated by the fact that the 20 days were reduced to 4.

The modern, well-equipped, well-staffed Casey Station was dedicated on February 19, 1969. It replaces the U.S.-built Wilkes Station, which is slowly being buried in snow. Wilkes had been opened officially on February 16, 1957. A little less than two years later, it was transferred to Australian control, although American scientists continued to work there in subsequent years. These memories of past cooperation were strengthened by the fact that *Southwind,* which was aiding in the deactivation of Wilkes and the opening of Casey Station, had, under her former name of USS *Atka,* assisted in the establishment of Wilkes in 1957.

*Southwind* and *Thala Dan* departed Casey around midnight on February 19, following a route determined by helicopter reconnaissance the preceding day. That night, however, there were many more floes than expected. By dawn, the two-ship convoy was making only very slow progress in snow and greatly reduced visibility. The floes, heavy with snow, were closing in directly astern; even up close, *Thala Dan* had difficulty maintaining headway. Time after time, *Southwind* had to back down to push away with her stern a large floe blocking the path of the cargo ship or pinning her sides. The range between the ships during these maneuvers was often measured in inches. Towing was attempted, then abandoned because *Southwind* herself was having problems with the pack. When the snow stopped that afternoon, there was the frustrating sight of open water no more than 8 miles away. It seemed that there had to be an easier way, and the helicopters found it. They recommended that the two ships backtrack a few miles, then proceed west and north through less concen-

trated pack. Exiting the heavy pack as night fell, *Southwind* went on ahead to scout and found progress quite easy in 6 oktas of brash and small floes having little snow cover. *Thala Dan* was advised of these conditions, and it was suggested that she join *Southwind*.

The scene that followed was vividly impressive. It was a quiet, pitch-dark night. The surface of the water was nearly covered with brash and floes. *Southwind* was proceeding slowly, awaiting *Thala Dan*. Surrounding the two ships were hundreds of monstrous tabular icebergs. Carbon-arc searchlight beams from both ships swung back and forth, as the ships weaved and turned. Piercing through the darkness, the brilliant shafts pointed out the best route to follow—and the dangers. They illuminated, one at a time, the ghostly giants, many of which passed close aboard and utterly dwarfed the two puny intruders. Altogether, it was a fascinating, eerie, and thrilling evening that made it truly a night to remember.

The next morning, *Southwind* and *Thala Dan* entered open water and assumed their respective tracks, *Thala Dan* heading for Melbourne, and *Southwind* for Fremantle, the port for Perth, capital of Western Australia.

Thus ended an adventure in international cooperation, in which a United States icebreaker assisted a Danish ship under charter to French and Australian expeditions and helped, too, in the establishment of a new Australian station dedicated to the advancement of science. This assistance epitomizes the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty.

## On to Heard Island

The seven-day voyage to Perth was uneventful except for the onset of evaporator problems which were to plague *Southwind* for many days. Arriving at Fremantle on February 27, *Southwind* proceeded immediately to load cargo and receive passengers for her next project, the establishment of a satellite-tracking station on Heard Island. In addition to personnel of the U.S. Army Topographic Command (formerly the Army Map Service), *Southwind* was to carry three stalwart Australians who would conduct a wildlife census and glacier study for the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE). Following a well-earned rest, *Southwind*, her water problems still unsolved, departed Fremantle for Heard Island on March 4.

The construction of the PAGEOS (Passive Geodetic Satellite) tracking station on Heard Island proved to be the least glamorous, but one of the most interesting projects awarded *Southwind*. The glacier-covered island lies in the southern Indian Ocean at 53°S. 73°E., some 900 miles north of the Antarctic Continent but still within the Antarctic Convergence. Information available to *Southwind* prior to her arrival at Heard Island indicated that it would be cold, windy, and cloudy at her destination, with frequent gales, an average of only 1.7 hours of sunshine per day, and rain or snow to be expected on 300 days of the year. The lack of safe anchorages also presented a problem. Atlas Cove appeared to be the safest, but it enjoyed a reputation of being unusable half the time, often being swept by gales commonly gusting between 60 and 100 knots. Needless to say, "apprehension" was the byword en route to Heard Island.

*Southwind* arrived at Heard Island on March 11 in relatively pleasant weather with a falling barometer, 3-mile visibility, 20-knot wind, rain, and 10-foot seas. The "fair" weather held long enough to enable the shore party, consisting of 20 *Southwind* personnel and 6 Topographic Command personnel to land in Atlas Cove, using LCVPs. There, they commenced to locate prepositioned supplies which, together with the cargo aboard *Southwind*—including the electronic, timing, and photographic equipment—would support the tracking station for nine months.

As the first day wore on, Heard Island began to live up to its reputation, with rain, fog, 45-knot winds, and 6-foot swells within the confines of Atlas Cove. This was obviously not an environment suitable for offloading delicate precision instruments. Indeed, it wasn't suitable for remaining at anchor, and as darkness approached and the weather worsened, prudence dictated a retreat to open water. At sea, *Southwind* rode out a gale, first heading into, and then running before, 30-foot seas, jealously guarding the 40 tons of critical cargo lashed to her flight deck.

The remainder of *Southwind*'s stint at Heard Island was spent under relatively favorable conditions enabling rapid offloading by LCVPs and two LARC amphibious vehicles, although they did it with an ever-present sea swell entering the cove and breaking on the beach. The shore party worked from dawn to dusk daily, setting up a 3-generator power plant, leveling the terrain, assembling prefabricated buildings, installing plumbing, heating and wiring systems, and renovating usable buildings from the ANARE station abandoned in 1957.

An interesting sidelight to the Heard Island venture was the establishment there of an amateur radio station by *Southwind*'s operations officer. Although marked "Australian" on maps, Heard Island is listed in the ham register as a separate country, and it had never been heard from. The hastily constructed station, given its own call sign by the Australian government, was operated continuously, night and day, for the entire period. Over 2,800 contacts were made by jubilant amateurs in 87 countries.

In the midst of the Heard Island project, *South-*

*wind* was advised that *Thala Dan* was in trouble again, being unable to penetrate the outer pack for the annual resupply and relief of Dumont d'Urville, the French antarctic station. *Southwind* immediately announced her readiness to assist. With the chance of returning to Antarctica to assist *Thala Dan* looming very large on her operational horizon, *Southwind*'s previously marginal freshwater situation—a result of the malfunctioning evaporators—suddenly became intolerably critical. Glacial meltwater provided an unlimited, but not easily accessible, source of fresh water on Heard Island. After damming one meltwater stream to form a pool, crewmen pumped water into 15-man rubber lifeboats that had been inflated inside LCVPs and LARCs, which then transported the water to *Southwind*. Because 65,000 gallons of fresh water were needed, the use of these jury-rigged water lighters would have required 3 days of round-the-clock operations.

Direct pumping offered the only possibility of expediting the watering operations. This entailed maneuvering *Southwind* to within 400 yards of the shore and within five feet of Atlas Cove's rocky, poorly charted bottom. Utilizing every available foot of hose, the connections were made and pumps started. Fresh water began to splash into *Southwind*'s tanks, but before long, the hose parted under the stresses of its own weight and the attention of playful leopard seals, who found canvas and rubber a new taste thrill. After several unsuccessful attempts to rerig the hose, it became apparent that rubberboat lightering operations would have to be resumed on a continuous basis to obtain as much water as possible prior to departure the following day.

*Southwind* left Heard Island in the evening of March 17, leaving behind the six Topographic Command personnel, a completely self-sustaining satellite-tracking station, and one LCVP, which had broached in the surf and been washed ashore during the water-lightering operation.

The next day, *Southwind* learned that *Thala Dan* had been joined by another Danish supply vessel, and that the combined helicopter strength of the two ships was adequate to ferry passengers and cargo across the pack. The station was relieved without the necessity of entering the ice, eliminating the need for *Southwind* to dash southward.

## Across the Indian Ocean to Africa

*Southwind* set out from Heard Island for a different type of "icebreaking," one not dependent upon the strength of her hull or her engines. The forthcoming venture in the field of "diplomatic icebreaking" would rely solely on the appearance of *Southwind* and her crew, and the manner in which they conducted themselves during the first visit by a U.S. Government vessel to the United Republic of Tanzania since the union in 1964 of the republics of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

In order to restore *Southwind*'s external appearance, which had suffered severely during the four months spent operating in and around the Antarctic, a 3-day stopover in Port Louis, Mauritius, was scheduled to commence on March 25. This was intended to be a working visit, but the sight of this strange-looking vessel in their harbor apparently aroused the curiosity of local officials, and *Southwind* soon found herself readying her sideboys and honor guard to receive official visits from the Governor General, the Mayor, and other Mauritian dignitaries. In addition to the honor of receiving these distinguished visitors, *Southwind* gained invaluable experience in the protocol of honors and ceremonies, which was to be the main theme of the Tanzanian visit. Working around and between official visits, the crew managed to paint the hull and repair many of the scars of ice and weather.

After a 4-day run across a mirrorlike western Indian Ocean, during which her facelifting was completed, a rejuvenated *Southwind* rode the morning tide into the beautiful little harbor of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. A polar icebreaker riding at anchor was, to say the least, a unique sight in this African harbor. A shipboard press conference was followed by official calls on such personages as the Second Vice President of Tanzania, the Chief of Defense Forces, the Inspector General of Tanzanian Police, and the Mayor of Dar es Salaam. The return calls were most impressive, with honors rendered to the dignitaries as they debarked from *Southwind*'s helicopters on the ship's flight deck or ascended the accommodation ladder to the quarterdeck.

On the premise that people-to-people diplomacy is the best way to make a goodwill visit successful, *Southwind* was opened to the public for both afternoons of her 2-day stay in Dar es Salaam. Meanwhile, many of her crew, immaculate in tropical white uniforms, investigated the exotic east African city, and *Southwind* athletes shared honors with the Tanzanian Defense Force's basketball and volleyball teams. Approximately 2,000 Tanzanians took advantage of the opportunity to tour the unusual American vessel.

A request from the U.S. Consul at Zanzibar resulted in *Southwind* stopping at the legendary "Clove Island." During her 12-hour stay in Zanzibar, *Southwind* managed to duplicate on a smaller scale all that had been accomplished in Dar es Salaam. It was with a great deal of satisfaction that *Southwind* set sail from Zanzibar, completing 3 days of creating goodwill among the leaders and populace of Tanzania.

*Southwind*'s final (but first purely recreational) stop was in the colorful African resort city of Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, where she arrived on April 8. With no cargo to handle, no official visitors to receive, and no frantic efforts to restore the ship's appearance, all hands spent 3 days thoroughly enjoying themselves in the bustling modern city.

## Homeward Bound

Having taken on enough diesel fuel to get her back to Baltimore easily, *Southwind* departed Lourenço Marques on April 11 on the long last leg of her journey around the world. After the expected rough seas around Cape of Good Hope, the icebreaker was welcomed by a most cooperative Atlantic Ocean. Her tired old engines, however, had been so strained and knocked about in antarctic operations that they started to gulp lubricating oil at a rate that surpassed all earlier consumption records. It became necessary to cut back to two-engine operation, extending the lengthy deployment by a few more days. But the seas were calm, and the sun was shining heartily; with all chores successfully accomplished, holiday routine was observed each afternoon after quarters and drills.

Arrangements were made by radio message to have drums of lube oil ready at Bermuda for helicopter pickup as *Southwind* cruised by. As it turned out, this scheme fitted in very well with an assistance case *Southwind* was called upon to perform. An American bulk-cargo carrier had requested medical advice for a seaman thought to have a bleeding ulcer. Communications were established when *Southwind* was 325 miles away, and a rendezvous point was agreed upon. When the two ships were 25 miles apart, *Southwind* dispatched a helicopter bearing the icebreaker's doctor, a corpsman, and all the equipment the doctor thought necessary to sustain the merchant mariner. The medical team was lowered to the merchant ship, and a blood sample taken immediately from the patient was dispatched in the hovering helicopter to *Southwind* for testing. When tests revealed that the patient had lost much blood, the doctor lined up donors of the proper blood type among the crew of the merchant ship.

The patient, still in critical—but stable condition, was transferred to a hospital in Bermuda the following morning. After the cargo airlift was completed, the doctor and the corpsman were returned to *Southwind* by helicopter. It can be stated with a certain amount of conviction that *Southwind*'s doctor saved the life of the seaman, adding the capstone to a long but exciting cruise.

On May 6, *Southwind* discharged her helicopter detachment at Norfolk, Va., and that afternoon and evening she made a leisurely trip up Chesapeake Bay. In the morning of May 7, *Southwind* moored at her berth at the Coast Guard Yard in Baltimore, where many of the crew were reunited with their families to the accompaniment of a local band.

## The Big Picture

What had transpired in the 207 days since *Southwind*'s departure from Baltimore on October 13, 1968? Fuel consumption had totaled 1,290,000 gallons. Nine ice escorts had been conducted. *Southwind* had been beset in the ice on three occasions and struck once, but the ice proved no match for her—she ultimately broke an estimated 15,000,000 tons of ice at a cost of just one 3½-ton propeller blade. She had participated in the construction and commissioning of two new stations. In visiting 14 places around the world, she had entertained some 7,500 visitors. She had operated her helicopters for 250 hours and her boats for 302 hours. She had transported 30 passengers and 280,000 pounds of cargo to various places in the Southern Hemisphere.

In short, she had completed a 35,000-mile, around-the-world voyage without major incident and accomplished all assigned tasks.*

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*The crew of *Southwind* was subsequently awarded the Coast Guard Unit Commendation Ribbon for exceptionally meritorious service.