Operation Deep Freeze and the International Geophysical Year

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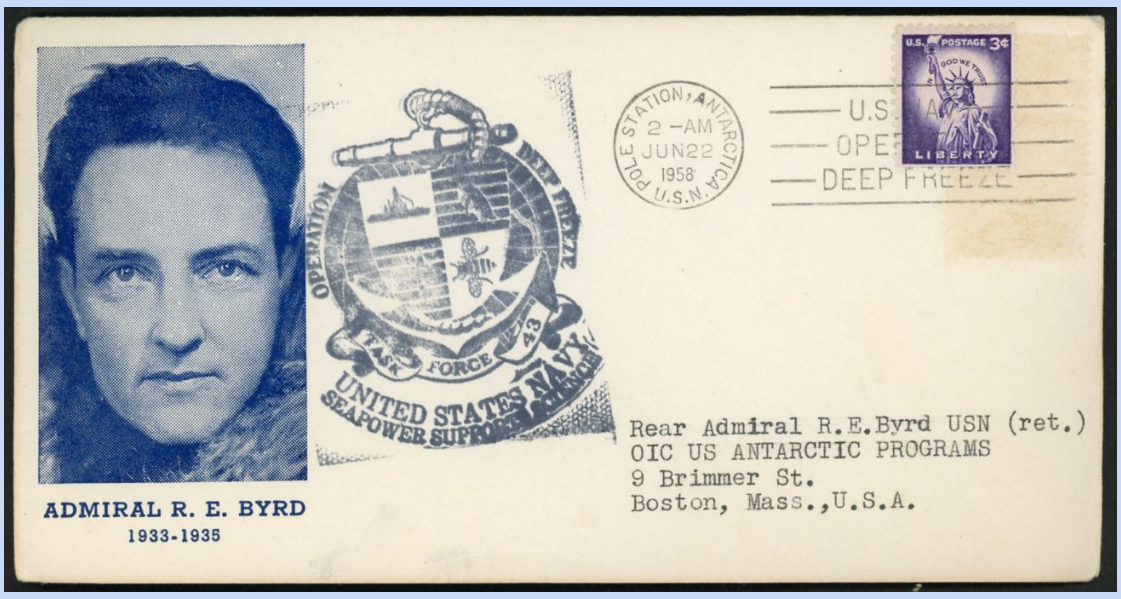
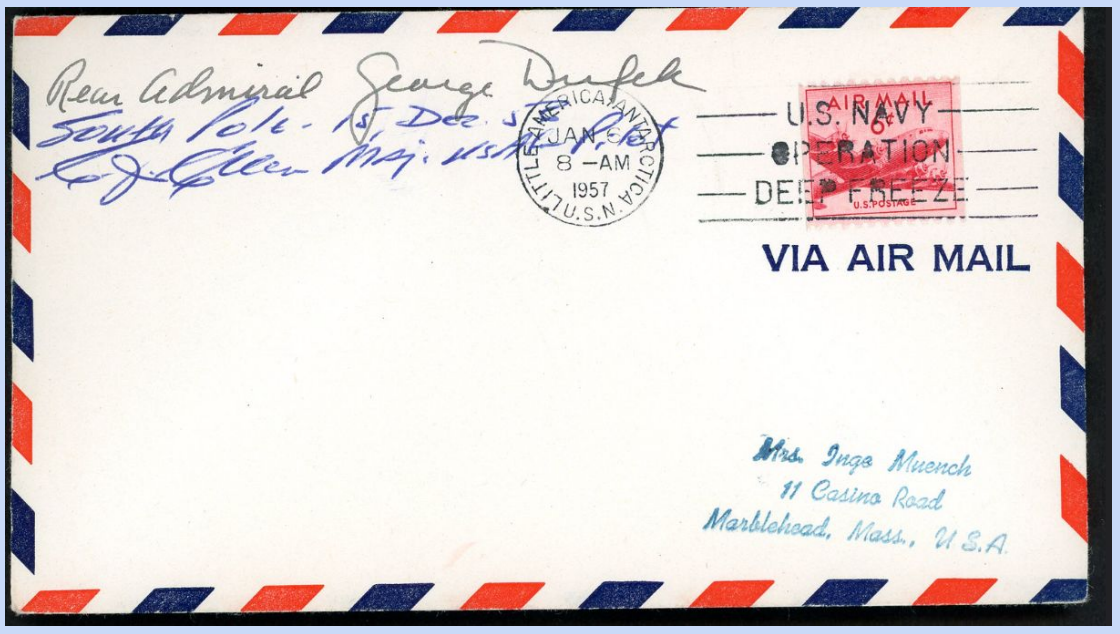
The International Geophysical Year (IGY), July 1, 1957 – Dec. 31, 1958, was called the most ambitious and successful scientific program ever undertaken. Scientists from 67 nations measured many characteristics of the Earth. Notable achievements included launching the first satellites and exploration of Antarctica. Operation Deep Freeze (ODF) is an ongoing series of U.S. Navy missions to Antarctica. ODF originated to provide infrastructure for U.S. IGY operations in Antarctica. Here I present some ODF-related philatelic items from my IGY thematic collection related to key personnel.



Polar explorer Rear Adm. Richard E. Byrd was appointed officer-in-charge of Operation Deep Freeze. Cover US214 in my collection depicts Byrd, is franked with postage stamp Scott #1035, was postmarked at Pole Station, Antarctica, on June 22, 1958 (during the IGY), has a cancellation slogan of "U.S. Navy Operation Deep Freeze," bears the Walt Disney-designed logo for U.S. Navy ODF Task Force 43, and is addressed to Byrd at his home in Boston. (Scale of all scans is about 75%.)

This cover (US259) was sent airmail (Scott C39), in an airmail envelope, postmarked on Jan. 8, 1957 (before the IGY started), at Little America, on the coast of Antarctica. The cancellation includes the slogan "U.S. Navy Operation Deep Freeze." It was signed by Rear Admiral George Dufek at the South Pole, 1956-12-15. Dufek was commander of ODF Task Force 43 which was charged with support and logistics for the IGY expedition.



Cover (US260) was sent airmail (Scott C40), postmarked on Oct. 1, 1957 (during the IGY), at Pole Station. The cancelation includes the slogan "U.S. Navy Operation Deep Freeze." The cachet denotes the IGY, the South Pole station, and the U.S. IGY organizations. The cover was signed by Paul Siple, who accompanied Richard Byrd on his first expedition to the Antarctica in 1928, and became the first scientific leader at Pole Station. It was sent to aerophilatelist Robert Schoendorf.

This cover (US160) includes the U.S. IGY stamp (Scott 1107) which portrays the solar- terrestrial research of the IGY. It was cancelled at (Amundsen-Scott South) Pole Station in 1958 (no date), during the IGY. The cachet has a Navy Seabee "supporting the world" for Deep Freeze. It's addressed to IGY scientist Stan Ruttenberg.