

Comments from the ANARE Club President - Joe Johnson.



I was delighted to hear of this ... there would be no Antarctic expeditioner living more worthy of recognition than Dick and I was delighted to see his name come forward. The honour is well overdue and I would have liked it to have been a higher one – e.g. Member of the Order. Thank goodness he is still alive!

As I'm sure you know, Dick was involved in 13 voyages to the Antarctic and served for 11 of these as the supply officer and second-in-command – Phillip Law described him as “my lieutenant”. In several instances these voyages were, literally, in uncharted waters and involved quite a degree of exploration. They also involved five different vessels, sailing under different flags and therefore involving crews with a very limited grasp of English.

It is worth looking at the details of those voyages:

1951 Macquarie Island *River Fitzroy* (Australian) – Supply Officer

1952 Heard Island *Tottan* (Norwegian sealer)

1952 Macquarie Island *Tottan*

1953 Heard Island *Tottan*

1953 Macquarie Island *Tottan*

1954 Macquarie Island *Kista Dan* (Danish)

1954 Mawson *Kista Dan* (Establishment of Mawson Station and Reconnaissance of Vestfold Hills for future Davis Station)

1955 Mawson *Kista Dan*

1956 Mawson *Kista Dan*

1957 Macquarie Island *Kista Dan*

1958 Mawson *Magga Dan* (Danish)

1958 Macquarie Island *Thala Dan* (Danish)

1959 Macquarie Island *Thala Dan* – Voyage leader.

I always saw Dick as a self-effacing, modest man - to give one example of his self-effacing nature, in 1954 he, together with Phil and two others made the first landing in the Vestfold Hills, later to become the site of Davis Station. Dick arranged an Australian flag, lashed it to a spar, brought it ashore in a small boat, erected a cairn of stones in which Phil Law would leave a proclamation, and set the flag up. He then took a photograph showing Phil grasping the flagpole and the other two nearby. This subsequently became the subject of a two shilling stamp, essentially designed by Phil, and as it was an engraving, Dick could – and I feel should – have been incorporated in it. This did not eventuate and, to the greatest extent of my knowledge, Thompson has never mentioned his omission from the stamp. I'm attaching a copy of it.

