

SPRING TRAVERSE MEETS SOVIET PARTY

Members of the Casey Spring Traverse party, who are conducting glaciological research of the ice sheet far to the west of the station, met a Soviet Traverse party travelling between Mirny and Vostok on 7 November. This was the first time traverse groups from the two nations have met in the field, although expeditioners have met during summer operations on a number of occasions.

The meeting point was at 69°S, 95°E some 1,000 km from Casey and 300 km south-south-east of Mirny. The meeting was arranged following Ham radio contact between the Casey party and Mirny.

Many flares were fired by both parties when they sighted each other, then the Australians were invited for a meal and drinks in one of the large Russian vehicles. By coincidence the meeting took place on the Soviet Union's National day.

During the two days the groups were together each briefed the other on their equipment. The Australian party of six had three D5 prime movers and some ten sledges, and its aim was scientific research ("ANARE News", August, 1983, p. 75). In contrast, the Soviet party was made up of twenty men (sixteen mechanic-drivers, medical officer, navigator, radio operator and a cook) and had sixteen vehicles. Its task was to carry building materials, stores and fuel for Vostok station, 1440 km inland of Mirny. The Australians had left Casey on 2 September, and the Soviets departed Mirny on 1 November.

The two groups parted on the 8th, the Soviets heading for Vostok while the ANARE party ("ANARE News", September, 1983, p. 112) stayed at the meeting place to establish their most westerly ice movement marker before heading back to Casey, where they are due around the end of the year.