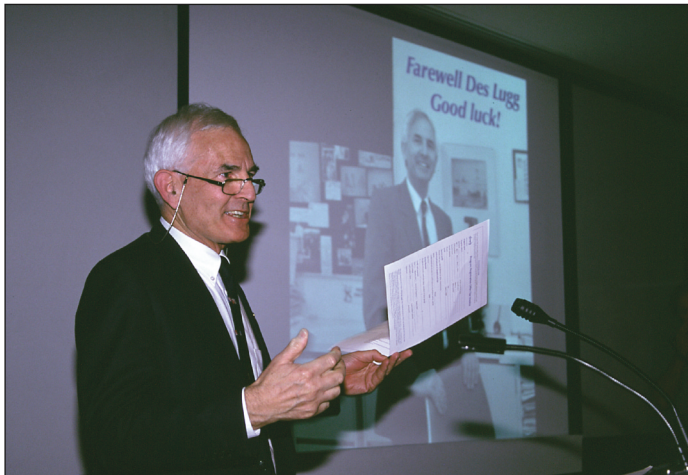


# Retirements

## Distinguished Antarctic veteran 'retires' to take NASA post

WAYNE PAPPS



*Des Lugg reminisces at his farewell function at the Australian Antarctic Division.*

Over three decades in charge of Australia's Antarctic medical program came to an end on 1 June 2001 when Dr Des Lugg left the Australian Antarctic Division to take up a prestigious position with the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The move ended an Antarctic career which began in 1962 with Des's posting to Davis as station medical officer. He became head of polar medicine at the Australian Antarctic Division in 1968, a position he has held until this year.

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Senator Robert Hill, paid tribute to Des for his distinguished career with the Australian Antarctic Division and wished him well in his new career with NASA. 'Dr Lugg's contribution to Antarctic medicine is unsurpassed, meeting the continuing challenges presented by Antarctic isolation and natural conditions as well as the changing demands of new technology, new programs and new social conditions,' Senator Hill said.

For the past 10 years the focus of Des's research has been on the analogy between living in Antarctica and long duration space flight, a link which he will be able to develop in his new work with NASA. Des was awarded the Polar Medal in 1969, and became a Member of the Order of Australia in 1984.

Des considers the great advances in communications technology and the social changes to Antarctic expeditions, notably the increasing numbers of women travelling south, as the major developments during his time with the AAD. He said that despite the improved communications enabling better 'tele-medicine', Antarctica is as difficult and dangerous a place today as it was in the time of Scott and Mawson.

'Antarctica will always be special to me, even though I came with jet-black hair and look what it has done to me,' Des said at his farewell from the AAD on 1 June. 'Antarctica is not metropolitan Australia. It is a special

place and we must look after it and continue to bend our wills to keep it that way.'

'It's the people who have left the great imprint with me. You cannot imagine what all that support and the little kindnesses have meant in cancelling

out the bits one forgets or suppresses.' he told AAD staff. 'You work for a great organisation whose potential I believe has never been totally tapped. You have a rosy future if you are prepared to take your future into your own hands and work together.'

When Des began ANARE service in 1962, Antarctic medicine was 'a one-man band with little money and equipment'. He led the battle to provide expeditioners with the

best medical services possible, as well as to establish medical research on an equal footing with other disciplines. His success in this is emphasised by his appointment to a Visiting Professorship at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), based in Texas, and ultimately as Chief of NASA's Medicine of Extreme Environments department, based at NASA Headquarters in Washington DC. Des left Australia in late September for his new life in the United States.

### Green pastures and white horizons

With the recent departure of Martin Betts the Australian Antarctic Division farewelled one of its longest serving staff members. When he left on 2 May 2001 he reached another milestone in what is to date a 33 year association with the ANARE.

Martin's Antarctic career began in 1968 when he arrived on Macquarie Island as an observer with the Bureau of Meteorology for the first of his two Antarctic winters. After spending 1969 on the Island he headed further south to winter at Mawson in 1971. By this time the ice was well and truly in his blood and calling him back for more.

His prominence in the life of ANARE became established in 1974 as editor of *Aurora*, the journal of the ANARE Club – a position he held until 1981. During this period he secured a permanent appointment in 1977 at the Australian Antarctic Division as the Publications Officer. As media spokesperson and editor he was instrumental in developing the public profile

of the expeditions and, in 1981, further consolidated his role in public affairs with promotion to the position now known as Information Services Manager. In May that year he produced the inaugural issue of *ANARE News*, the forerunner of *Australian Antarctic Magazine*.

Martin's next substantial career move was in 1986 to the position of ANARE Coordinator, head of the then new planning group which, among other things, integrated the planning of the scientific work of the Australian program, coordinated development of the shipping schedules and administered the ASAC Research Grants scheme.

From 1996 until he left the AAD, Martin was a senior policy officer and took the lead in developing relationships with non-government operators in the Antarctic and in ensuring that environmental and other obligations were fully implemented by private visitors to the Antarctic. He was also responsible for providing advice on the growth of the tourism and adventure markets, and established the bi-weekly internet newsletter ANAN which reports to a world-wide audience on non-government activity in Antarctica.

Along with these sustained contributions to ANARE and the AAD, Martin's great passion was the Antarctic itself and opportunities for personal involvement in expedition work. Between 1977 and 2001, Martin was Leader on 12 voyages and Deputy Leader on five. He was also a Field Leader on four occasions, and made other visits to the Antarctic including on Macquarie Island airdrops and as an observer on tourist over flights. There are few places in the Australian area of Antarctic interests that he has not seen at first hand. In 1988 Martin was awarded the Australian Antarctic Medal in recognition of his contribution in Antarctica.

The reader will note that there has been no reference to his retirement. Ice still runs in Martin's veins. While he has left to pursue his interests in farming beef cattle, he is maintaining strong links with Antarctica and the AAD. In his 'retirement' he continues to assist the AAD by researching and writing material for ANAN, and has recently been contracted to be Leader on *Aurora Australis* for its October voyage to Macquarie Island and Casey.



*Senator Ian McDonald (at the time Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Australia's Antarctic Program) congratulates Martin Betts on his Australian Antarctic Medal award.*

GLENN JACOBSON