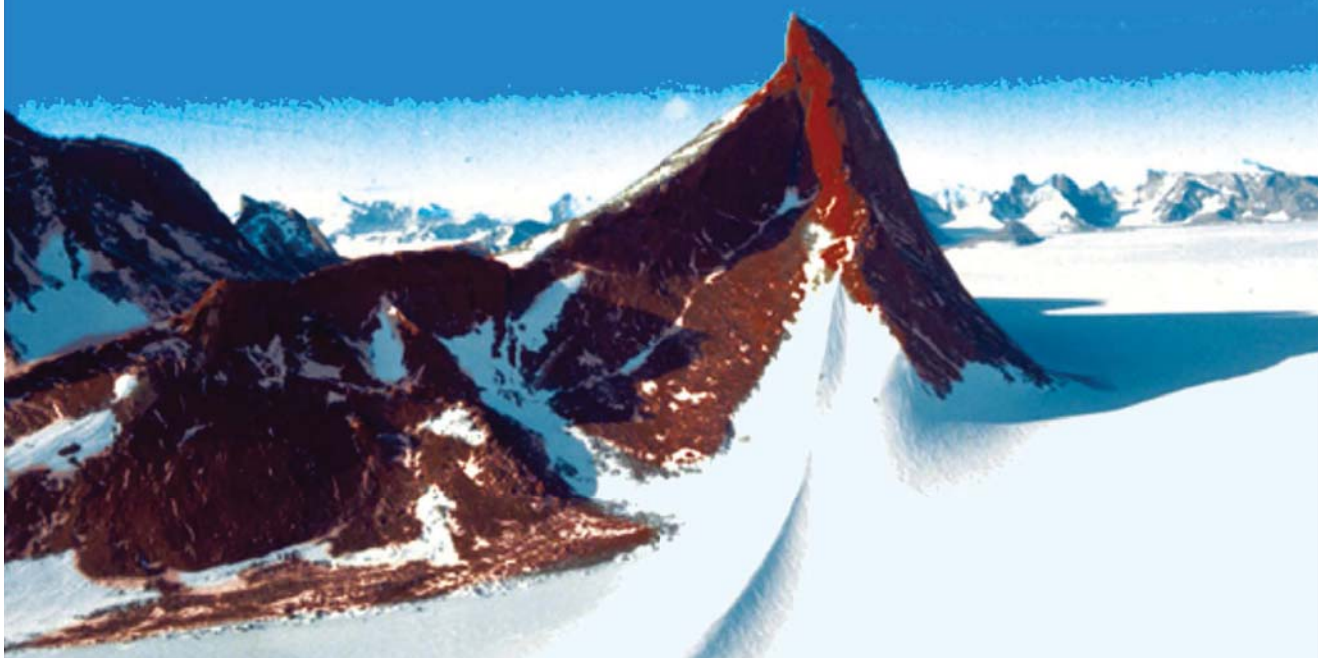
Heinz Schön

Mythos Neu-Schwabenland



1938/39

BERSERKER
BOOKS

Bizarre rock formations in the eternal ice: the central Drygalski Mountains in New Swabia

You know German history inside out? Did you also know that in 1938/39, the German Reich laid claim to 600,000 square kilometres of Antarctica with a spectacular expedition?
600,000 square kilometres of Antarctica? Just Nazi propaganda? Not at all: on
5 August 1952, the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany insisted in an official "Bundesanzeiger" on Germany's claim to 84 German names for areas, mountains, mountain ranges and mountain ranges "in the territory of New Swabia". In January and February 1939, members of the 82-strong German expedition flew over a huge area of Antarctica in Lufthansa catapult planes – launched from the expedition ship "Schwabenland" – at constant risk to their lives, photographing and mapping a region that had never before been seen by human eyes. Suddenly, 4,000-metre-high mountains, frozen freshwater lakes and a huge oasis emerged from endless white expanses and were captured in spectacular photographs. A great feat of discovery! Hundreds of steel arrows with swastika flags were dropped from the air around the area to assert the Reich's claims under international law.
After 1945, speculation ran rampant: Had German submarines fled to New Swabia? Was Hitler still alive and had he found safety there? Had the Germans built bases for secret weapons at the South Pole? Did the increasingly frequent reports of UFO sightings have anything to do with German wonder weapons? At the end of 1946 — perhaps for this reason? — a huge US armada consisting of warships, a submarine, an aircraft carrier and 4,000 marines under Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd set sail for Antarctica. Was this "Operation Highjump" of a military nature? Did it end in disaster? Was the operation really only for research purposes, as was claimed,
, or was there a military background after all? Why did spectacular accidents occur that resulted in fatalities?
This exciting non-fiction book persistently pursues all the pressing questions about Neuschwabenland and documents, among other things, a conversation with the only surviving participant of the 1938/39 expedition. Around 100 photos, many of them in colour, allow us to experience the discovery and transport us to a region of the South Pole that most Germans have no idea even exists, let alone know the name of: New Swabia!

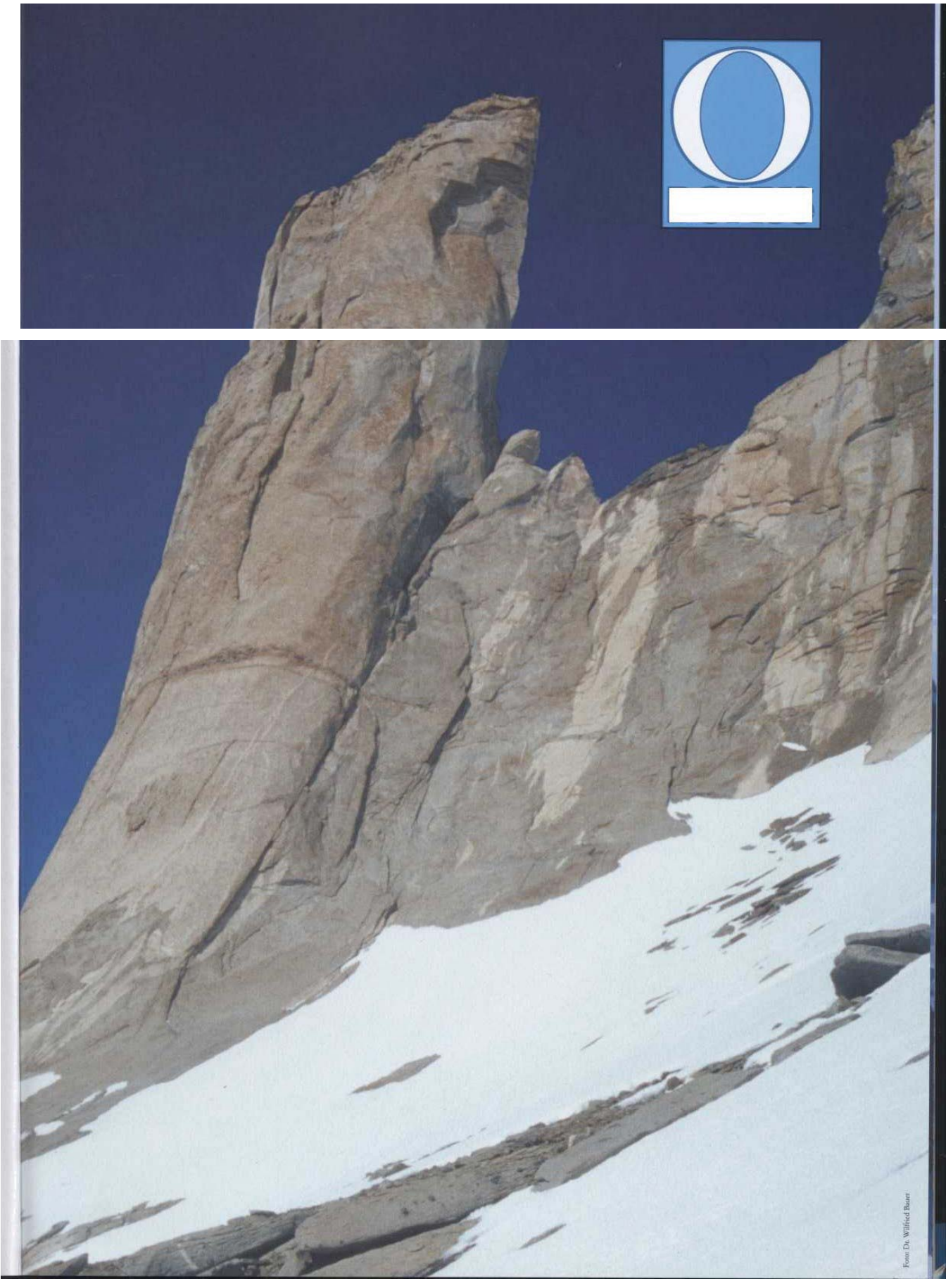


Foto: Dr. Wilfried Bauer

Foreword

On the trail of a mystery

I first heard about Neuschwabenland, Hitler's last secret colony in Antarctica, in the summer of 1960.

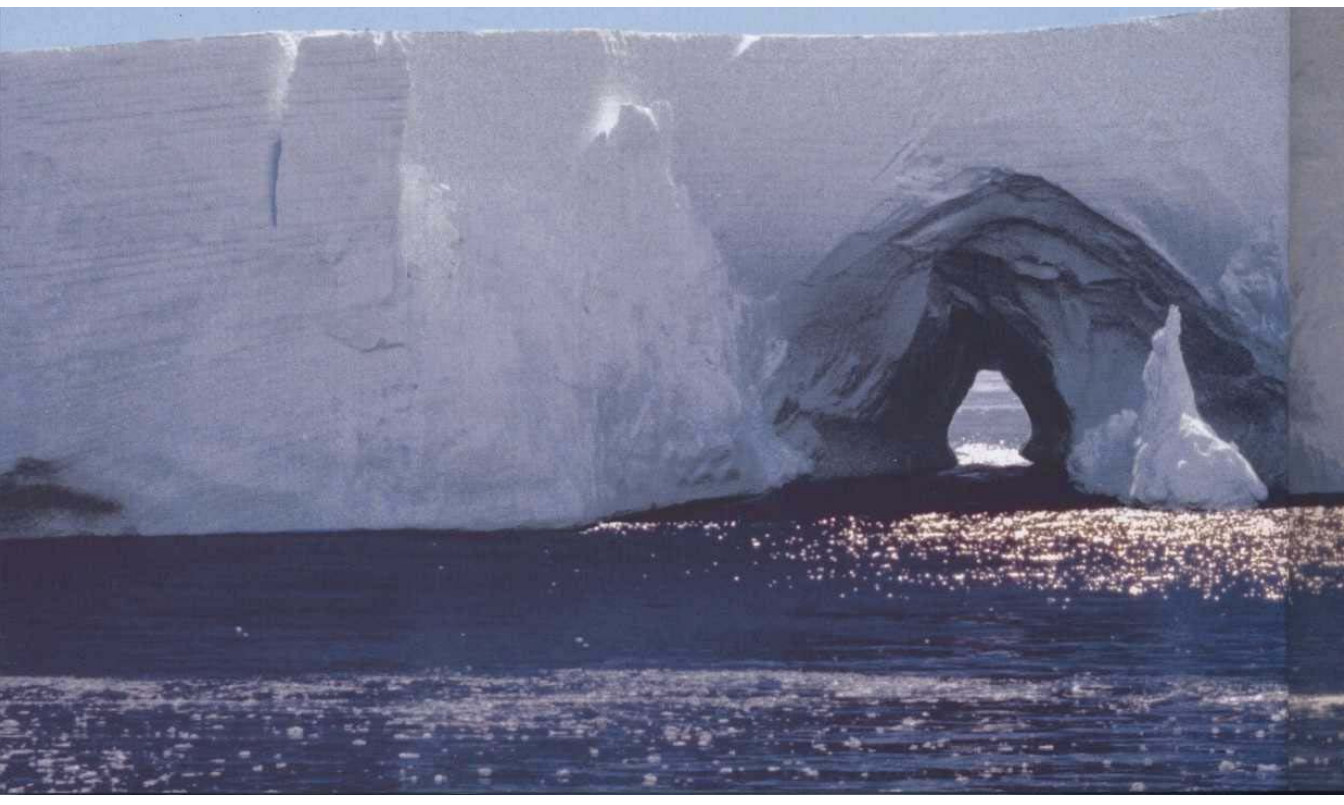
Rear Admiral Conrad Engelhardt, who headed the "Baltic Sea Research Centre" formed on behalf of the Federal Government at the East Academy in Lüneburg, where I was a volunteer, had assigned me the task of identifying all merchant ships that had rescued refugees from East Prussia, West Prussia, Danzig and Pomerania across the Baltic Sea in 1944/45. These included ships belonging to the Deutsche Dampfschiffahrtsgesellschaft (DDG) "Hansa" shipping company in Bremen, such as the freighters "Moltke-fels", "Neidenfels", "Stolzenfels" and probably also the freighter "Schwarzenfels". However, I was mistaken about the latter. In February 1934, the DDG Hansa had already sold the freighter Schwarzenfels which had been built in 1925 by Deutsche Werke in Kiel and subsequently used in service to India, to Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH).

What did Deutsche Lufthansa want with a cargo ship?

My research revealed that DLH had acquired the ship for use as an aircraft base in transatlantic air traffic and that it had been converted for this purpose at Deutsche Schiffs- und Maschinenbau-AG, Weserwerk, in Bremen until 15 August 1934. It was commissioned as a catapult ship for Deutsche Lufthansa under the new name "Schwabenland".

The motor ship "Schwabenland", 8,188 gross registered tonnes, 142.7 metres long, 18.4 metres wide, equipped with two 1,800 P5 diesel engines and twin screws, which enabled a maximum speed of twelve knots, was initially commanded by Captain A. Lipa on behalf of DLH. He was replaced by Captain Alfred Kottas on 13 May 1935.

During my further research, I discovered that M/S "Schwabenland" was rebuilt again in 1938 and then used as an expedition ship for a several-month Antarctic expedition that was kept secret from the general public. Now my interest in the fate of this ship was fully aroused.



ship was fully aroused. At the time, I had no idea that my further research would occupy me for over 40 years.

It was only from the report published in 1942 on behalf of the German Research Foundation by Alfred Ritscher, captain of the merchant navy and senior government official at the High Command of the Navy, which was not easy for me to obtain, that I learned details about the expedition carried out with the M/S "Schwabenland" in the Antarctic summer of 1938/39. It was dedicated to Reich Marshal Hermann Göring and was entitled *Scientific and Aeronautical Results of the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39.* The fact that this expedition led to the occupation of New Swabia, a South Polar region the size of Germany within the borders of 1937, prompted me to gather all available information about New Swabia that had been withheld by both the Reich government and the post-war federal government. This also included reports on the economic and strategic importance of Antarctica. At first, it was difficult and time-consuming to obtain reliable information, but gradually the picture became clearer.

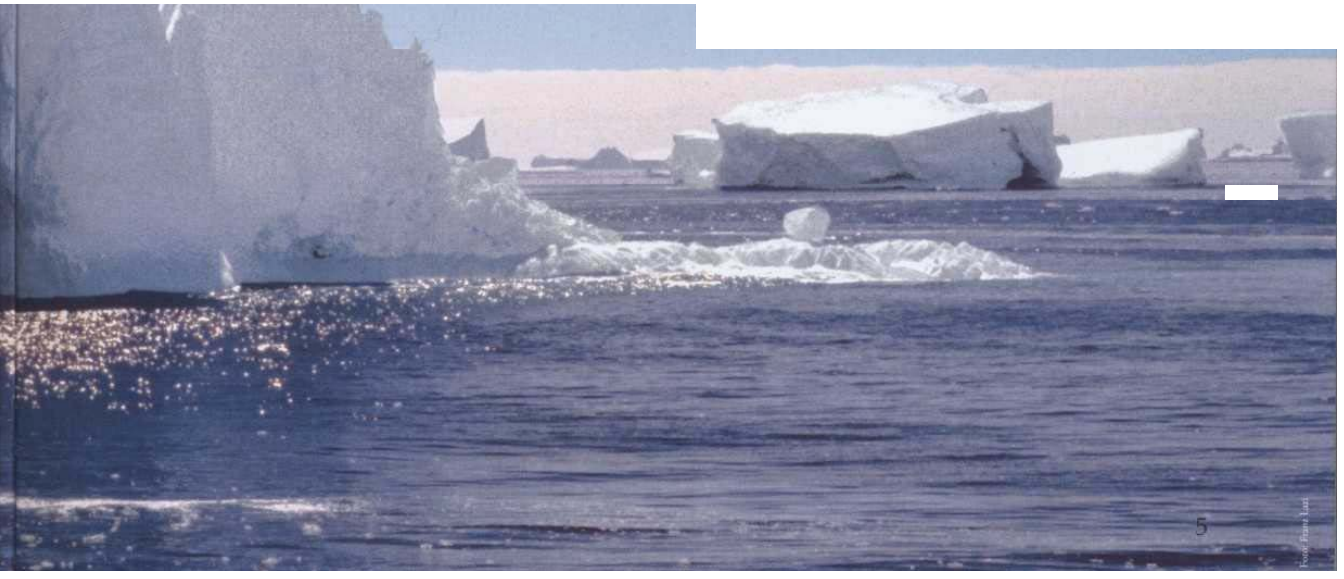
Neu-Schwabenland research reached a whole new level with the introduction of the internet.

Neu-Schwabenland research with the introduction of the Internet. It became clear that that there are obviously no limits to the legends surrounding New Swabia and that assumptions that cannot be proven or are demonstrably false are turned into facts. Anyone searching for "New Swabia" on the Internet today will find a wealth of information, much of which contains only half-truths or is completely fabricated.

There is talk of conspiracies, of the Thule Society, of German submarines that allegedly fled en masse to South America at the end of the war in 1945, of submarine bases in New Swabia, of UFOs that may be stationed there, of a forced flight by American admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd into the "hollow Earth" (he is said to have published the route of another flight at the North Pole in a "diary"), an attempt by the Americans to conquer New Swabia in 1946 with an aircraft carrier, several ships and aircraft and 4,000 soldiers 47, which ended in failure, and finally of an American atomic bomb dropped on New Swabia.

Verifying the accuracy of such information required years of research, resulting in this first comprehensive German documentary about Hitler's last secret, New Swabia in Antarctica, which was taken over in 1938/39. The documentary is an important chapter in the history of the Third Reich and German history in general, but not least also in Antarctic research, for which German scientists achieved outstanding achievements during the Antarctic expedition of 1938/ 39 with the Deutsche Lufthansa catapult ship M/S "Schwabenland", which remains unknown or is deliberately concealed to this day.

November 2004, Heinz Schön



Introduction

Antarctica, the most peaceful part of our Earth

The continent of Antarctica is the coldest, driest, stormiest, most inaccessible and hostile place on Earth. However, the shining ice desert at the end of the world is also the most peaceful part of our planet as a weapon-free zone. Here, humanity's dreams of world peace are a reality.

The Antarctic region includes some offshore islands, covering an area of 14.1 million square kilometres. The most important island groups are South Georgia, South Sandwich, South Orkney and South Shetland, all of which are British possessions. With the exception of the whaling station Grytviken on South Georgia (600 to 1,200 inhabitants), they are as uninhabited as the entire South Polar region, where the crews of scientific observation and research stations make up the entire population.

According to recent research, the Antarctic continent does not appear to be a contiguous landmass, as previously assumed, but rather breaks up into a series of islands of varying sizes at its edges, particularly in the Fallen Antarctica region between Graham Land and the Ross Sea. These are partly mountainous, up to 5,140 metres high, and covered by a large inland ice mass, in which the Weddell and Ross Seas form large bays.

The exact extent of the Antarctic area This has not yet been determined precisely, as it is almost completely covered by an ice sheet that is on average 2,000 metres thick, and in some places even up to 4,000 metres.

Antarctica contains 90 percent of the world's ice. It has been calculated that the weight of the total 24 cubic kilometres of ice caused the Earth's surface to sink by 500 to 1,000 metres. With an average height of about 1,500 metres above sea level, Antarctica is the highest continent on Earth.

If, for whatever reason, this enormous mass of ice were to melt, the sea level would rise by 60 to 70 metres. The result: more than half of the inhabited world would be flooded.

Recent calculations have shown that the ice mass in Antarctica is increasing by over 1,000 cubic metres per year, raising fears that the Earth is approaching a new ice age. Only about 320,000 square kilometres of the Antarctic surface, estimated at approximately 14 million square kilometres, are ice-free.

The Antarctic continent is located 3,000 to 4,000 kilometres from South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, but only 1,000 kilometres from the southern tip of South America. With the exception of the Antarctic Peninsula (Graham Land) off South America, the entire continent lies within the Antarctic Circle. Temperatures here can reach as low as 90 degrees below zero, and even in the Arctic summer, temperatures rarely rise above 0 degrees. Storms are frequent and often reach wind speeds of 320 kilometres per hour.

Between 80 and 600 millimetres of precipitation falls annually, mostly in the summer as snow. Only a few peaks, narrow coastal strips and islands are ice-free.

Apart from mosses and lichens, almost nothing grows in Antarctica, even though it contains almost 70 per cent of the world's fresh water, which is covered by an ice cap. Land animals are almost completely absent from Antarctica, but there are large numbers of penguins and marine mammals such as seals and whales. The economic importance of Antarctica lies largely in whaling.

But whaling is not the real reason why many countries are keen to ensure that they do not miss out when the continent is eventually divided up.

Under the enormous ice sheet, but also in the sea off the coast, there are believed to be fabulous mineral resources waiting to be discovered and promising huge profits, large oil fields like those in Iran or precious metal deposits as rich as those in South Africa.

The ideas some countries have about the treasures hidden under the ice are evident in a statement by former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who said: „ „One day we may discover that the South Pole is made of pure gold, and none of it will fall to us." Malaysia demanded as early as the beginning of the 1980s that Antarctica be declared the „common heritage of mankind".

There is no doubt that mineral resources are waiting to be discovered under the ice of Antarctica.
All countries that want to secure their share of Antarctica are convinced of this, and the question of how these resources could be extracted from the ice sheet has been the subject of lively debate for years.

The fact is that nothing of significant commercial value has yet been found in Antarctica. Even if the predictions of great riches were to come true, their exploitation would be unimaginably difficult and the costs immense. However, once the necessary technology has been developed and become practical, the development of Antarctica will begin.

The oil off the coast could be worth extracting in the foreseeable future. Geological data suggests that there are large sediment basins in the continental shelf under the ice, but the extraction costs would still be very high.

The question of who discovered Antarctica cannot be answered.

More than 200 years ago, from 1772 to 1775, sailed around the Antarctic continent but did not sight the landmass. The Englishman Edward Bransfield, a seal hunter, was the first to sight the northern tip of Graham Land, part of the Antarctic mainland. In 1820, Graham Land, also known as the Antarctic Peninsula, by Great Britain.

In the same year, the American seal hunter Nathaniel B. Palmer sighted the Antarctic continent.

A French expedition under Captain J. Dumont d'Urville led to the discovery of Adaeland in 1839/40 and its annexation by France.

From 1839 to 1843, Englishman Sir James Clark Ross circumnavigated the continent. He mapped approximately 800 kilometres of the coast of Victorialand, discovered the Ross Sea and Ross Island, which were named after him, and claimed both for Great Britain.

However, there are other claims to discovery. An American seal hunter is said to have been the first to set foot on the ice, the French hoisted the first flag, the Norwegians were the first to reach the South Pole and survive an Arctic winter. Americans sent the first aircraft, the British were the first to cross the continent, and the first Antarctic child was born in 1978 in an Argentine research station.

Antarctic research continues. Further discoveries and surprises are sure to follow.

Foto: Dr. Wilfried Bauer

Secret mission for Alfred Ritscher

Göring plans expedition to Antarctica

The German Reich government in Berlin noted with great concern the efforts of other countries to secure parts of Antarctica by means of expeditions and the establishment of research stations. The activities of European countries on the unclaimed continent were observed particularly closely. These included above all Great Britain, France, Norway and Russia.

In his capacity as commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, Hermann Göring at the beginning of 1938 brought up the topic of "The Antarctic and Germany" at a meeting with Adolf Hitler. The issue at stake was "feeding the German population in the event of war." Göring's suggestion that a German expedition should not only secure whaling in Antarctica but also expand it was welcomed not only by the Reich Chancellor but also by a number of ministries and institutions, for whom whaling and the development of new whaling grounds in Antarctica were not the decisive factors in favour of an Antarctic expedition.

Securing Germany's share of the natural resources believed to lie beneath the ice and on the seabed off the coast, including 01, as well as the strategic importance of Antarctica for a possible naval war, were extremely important tasks for a German South Pole expedition.

After Hitler gave Göring the green light for his plan to prepare a German Antarctic expedition and begin in 1938, the preliminary work began, for which the Reich Minister had secured a hand-picked team of staff.

German expeditions to Antarctica

In order to inform himself, Göring first requested a report on previous German activities in Antarctica, which he received a few days later.

Eduard Dallmann, born in Blumenthal near Bremen in 1830, became a ship's boy in 1845, passed his nautical exams at the Bremen Maritime Academy in 1850 and 1855, and became helmsman on the Bremen South Sea whaling ship "Otaheite". From 1860 to 1864, Dallmann sailed as captain of the Oldenburg whaling ship "Planet".

On 17 August 1866, Dallmann was the first person to land on Wrangel Land. From 1866 to 1872, he sailed as captain on the whaling barque Graf Bismarck, built for Hackfeld at the Bosse shipyard in Bremen-Burg. In 1873/74, Captain Dallmann set sail for the Antarctic on a whaling expedition for the Polar Shipping Company of Hamburg aboard the sailing steamship Grönland. During this voyage, he managed to sail along the coast of Graham Land and thus explore part of the west coast of the Antarctic Peninsula. Dallmann also found the passage between Antwerp Island and the continent, which he named Bismarck Strait. Eduard Dallmann's great achievement was to prove that the actual continent of Antarctica lies behind the offshore islands. Dallmann, an excellent captain and outstanding navigator and cartographer, became a German Antarctic pioneer.

No major German Antarctic expeditions took place until the end of the century, but there were some important events connected with the white continent. In 1874, Captain von Reibnitz searched for a suitable location on the Ar-kona to observe the transit of Venus in the southern Indian Ocean, while in 1874/75 the Gazelle expedition under Captain Baron von Schlei-

nitz carried out oceanographic research in the three southern oceans.

On behalf of the Hamburg Steamship Company, Captain Carl Anton Larsen sailed to the Seymaur Islands and the east coast of the Antarctic Peninsula in 1888 and 1893 with the Norwegian whaling ship "Jason". He was the first person to see the back of the peninsula.

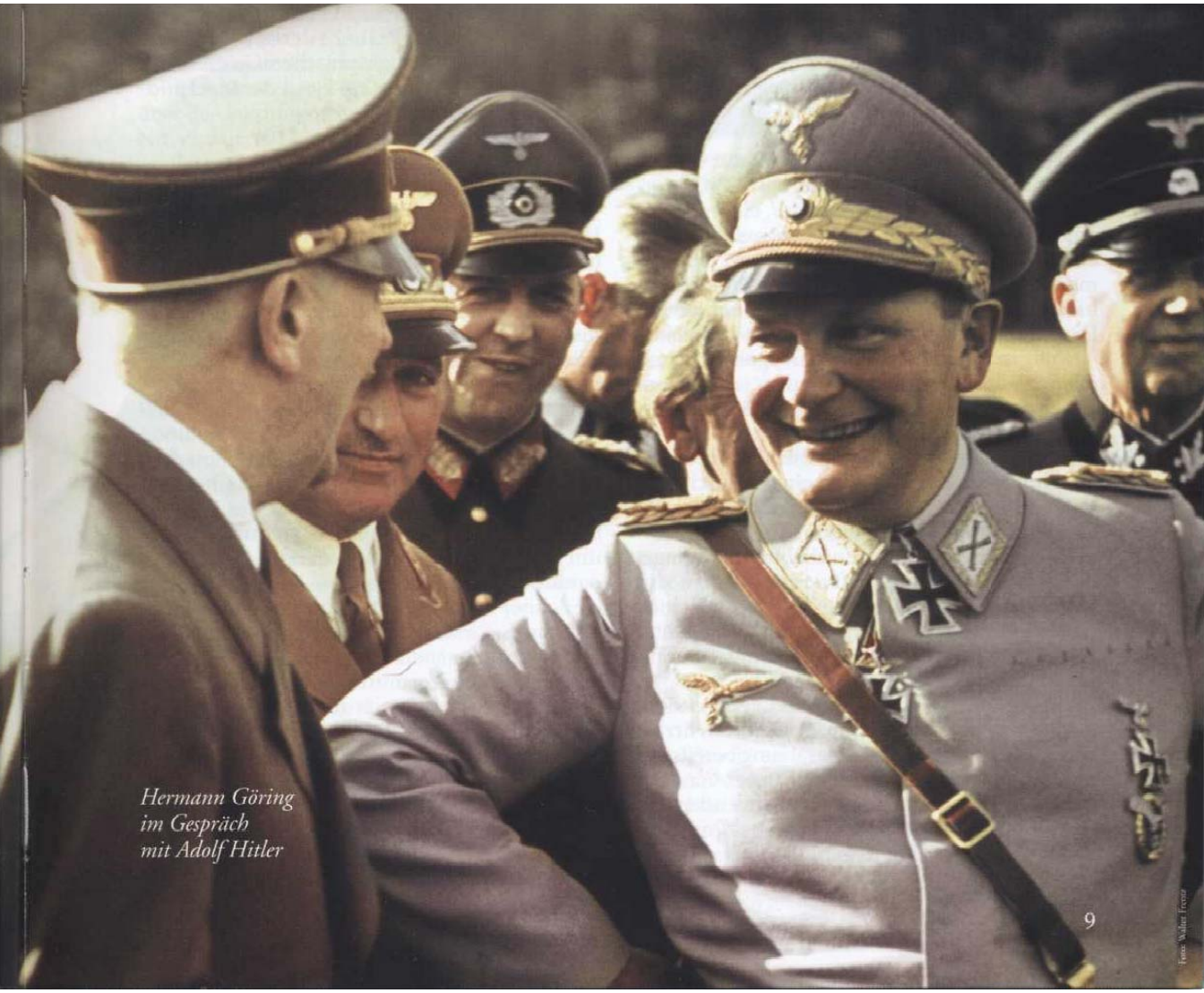
Under the leadership of Professor Karl Chun, a deep-sea expedition carried out in 1898/99 on the ship "Valdia" brought back important findings from the Kerguelen Islands to Enderby Land.

Against "Antarctic inaction"

The International Geographical Congress, which took place in Berlin in 1899, brought new impetus to Antarctic research. The action programme adopted by the congress prompted three countries – Sweden, England and Germany – to launch expeditions in the late summer and autumn of 1901.

The deliberations and the decision on the action programme were the result of an initiative by Georg von Neumayer, chairman of the German Commission for South Polar Research and member of the International Polar Commission, who had vehemently denounced the "Antarctic inaction".

Georg von Neumayer, born in the Palatinate in 1826, was an internationally renowned scientist in the fields of nautical science, magnetism, meteorology, hydrography and astronomy, and founder of the German Naval Observatory in Hamburg, saw the exploration of the South Polar regions as his life's goal and therefore supported it both through his influential position and through scientific work, which earned him the reputation as the "father of German South Polar research". In recognition of his outstanding scientific work, the Bavarian Crown honoured Georg von Neumayer with a personal title of nobility in 1900.



Hermann Göring im Gespräch mit Adolf Hitler

Neumayer, like Alexander von Humboldt, was a believer in the phenomenon of terrestrial magnetism. Based on his observations of ice movements and ocean currents, he concluded that it was possible to travel deep south from the Indian Ocean via the Kerguelen Islands. East of the coastal strip, in the area between 50° and 100° east, he suspected a deep bay extending far south.

The Drygalski Expedition 1901–1903

On 18 July 1901, German Emperor Wilhelm II appointed Erich von Drygalski, born in Königsberg in 1865 and professor of geography and geophysics at the University of Berlin, as leader of a scientific Antarctic expedition. The German Imperial Government approved 1.5 million Reichsmarks for the expedition, which was used to build a ship, the sailing vessel "Gauss".

Following a route for the 1901 expedition worked out by Georg von Neumayer, Drygalski sailed south along the 90th degree of eastern longitude. He wanted to determine whether there was actually land between the coast sighted by polar explorers Wilkes and Kemp.

When Drygalski reached Antarctica at 92° East in his sailing ship "Gauss" at the end of February 1902, he saw a vast, ice-covered land stretching out before him. In honour of his employer, the German emperor, he named this land Kaiser-Wilhelm-Land. Earlier, on 21 February 1902, he had discovered the Drygalski Islands in East Antarctica, which were named after him.

Completely unexpectedly, Drygalski's ship, the sailing vessel "Gauss", had become stuck and was trapped by ice. This unplanned break, which caused a number of problems, was used for research work. They sailed south across the ice floes, found an extinct volcano, which they named Gaussberg, collected rock and lava samples, took ice measurements and unearthed small animals. Drygalski introduced aerial surveying in Antarctica. A tethered balloon was raised to a height of 500 metres using a rope winch and an anchor, and photographs were taken of the surrounding area.

At the beginning of March 1903, the situation on the sailing ship became increasingly critical as the coal supplies were exhausted and the crew was already forced to use the oil-rich bodies of penguins as fuel. It was high time for the Gauss to escape from the ice trap.

It was thanks to the ingenuity of the crew and their captain that this was achieved in mid-March 1903. During the previous Antarctic summer, Drygalski had ordered the men to sprinkle ash from their ship onto the ice until they reached the nearest stretch of open water. The ash absorbed enough heat from the sun to melt a channel almost two metres wide, along which the ice split. This enabled the ship to be freed from the ice and begin its journey home.

Upon his return, Drygalski was disappointed to learn that the emperor had lost interest in the expedition; he had obviously hoped that Drygalski would reach the South Pole, which was only achieved eight years later, in 1911, by the Norwegian Roald Amundsen.

The evaluation of all the research results recorded during the Drygalski expedition took 16 years and filled 20 volumes and two atlases. In 1906, Erich von Drygalski was appointed professor at the University of Munich and became its rector and chairman of the Geographical Society in 1921/22. A fjord on South Georgia Island was named after Drygalski.

Filchner with the "Deutschland" in Antarctica

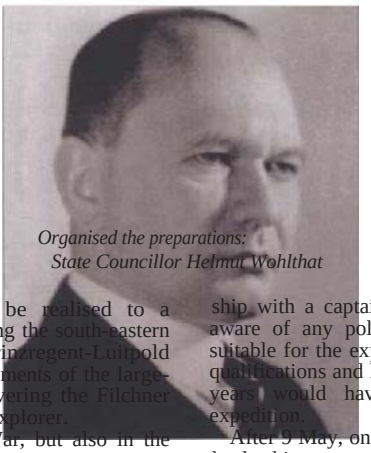
With the departure of the Norwegian polar ship "Deutschland" from the port of Hamburg, the next German Antarctic expedition began on 3 May 1911. The leader of this South Pole venture was the 34-year-old cuirassier officer and geophysicist Wilhelm Filchner, who was born in Munich. Filchner had led an expedition to Spitsbergen a year earlier, which served as preparation for his 1911/12 expedition. With this second German Antarctic expedition, he pursued the ambitious goal of not only reaching the South Pole, but also being the first to cross Antarctica to determine whether it formed one or two continents.

Filchner initially concentrated his work on exploring the area south of the Weddell Sea. He wanted to determine whether the assumption of other polar explorers was correct, namely that the large indentations of the southern Ross and Weddell Seas continued southwards, met and thus formed a passage separating the West and East Antarctic in the form of a large, ice-covered sea arm.

The Filchner expedition's work was hampered from the outset by ice barriers that restricted the movement of his research vessel, the Deutschland. The ship was trapped in a pack of ice for a week. It was not until the end of January 1912 that Filchner reached the Antarctic continent in Coats Land. Following the coastline to the west, the "Deutschland" made a surprising discovery at 35° west: the counterpart to the Ross Barrier. Filchner managed to follow this line for another 350 kilometres or so. After that, pack ice made it impossible to continue. Approximately 600 square kilometres of table ice, which had suddenly broken free in stormy weather in stormy weather, prevented the establishment of a German research station in this eastern corner of the shelf. Filchner immediately attempted to leave this dangerous area with his ship, but was unsuccessful. On 10 March 1912, the "Deutschland" was stuck again. For nine months, the ship and its crew drifted across the Weddell Sea, only reaching November 1912, when the ant- When the Arctic summer began, it was released again.

Of the original expedition expedition programme could only be realised to a limited extent. These included reaching the south-eastern tip in the Weddell Sea, naming the Prinzregent-Luitpold Coast, taking the first precise measurements of the large-scale drift of the pack ice and discovering the Filchner Ice Shelf, now named after the polar explorer.

Not only during the First World War, but also in the years that followed, Antarctic research came to a standstill — and not only in Germany.



Organised the preparations: State Councillor Helmut Wohlthat

Initial preparations for the third German Antarctic expedition

Göring noted with interest that Germany had only conducted two official Antarctic expeditions to date, with varying degrees of success, and that German polar explorers and scientists had also been involved in foreign Antarctic ventures. However, he was also aware that no German researchers had been to Antarctica since the Filchner expedition 25 years earlier and no further expedition had been carried out.

As the person responsible for the Four-Year Plan, Göring knew Göring was well aware of the importance of whaling in the Antarctic for Germany and how necessary it seemed to secure it and open up new fishing grounds. He felt it was high time to send a large expedition to the Antarctic.

On 9 May 1938, he was presented with a plan drawn up by staff at his ministry for an Antarctic expedition to be carried out in the Antarctic summer of 1938/39. He approved it and commissioned State Councillor Helmut Wohlthat, Ministerial Director z.b.V., to carry it out.

summer of 1938/39. He approved it and commissioned State Councillor Helmut Wohlthat, Ministerial Director z.b.V. (for special use), with the preparation of the expedition and granted him full powers.

The ministerial official had only six months to complete this major logistical undertaking, as Göring had set the start of the expedition, the departure of the expedition ship, for Saturday, 17 December 1938.

On the day the order was received, for example, the Ministerial Director had no ship with a captain or an expedition leader. Nor was he aware of any polar explorers or scientists who seemed suitable for the expedition, which placed high demands on qualifications and health. Under normal circumstances, two years would have been needed to prepare for the expedition.

After 9 May, on Wohlthat's initiative and often under his leadership, meetings were held almost non-stop, departmental discussions took place in the various ministries, telephone calls were made, letters were written and everything possible was done to prepare the great Antarctic expedition as well as possible in the short time available.

In his preparations, Ministerial Director Wohlthat followed the concept agreed with his superior, Hermann Göring, which contained detailed information about the expedition's tasks. According to this, the aim was to secure Germany a right of co-determination and its fair share in the forthcoming division of Antarctica by means of an exploratory expedition into Antarctic waters and the interior of the Antarctic continent.

and thus create the conditions for the German Empire's unrestricted right to continue whaling, which was vital for the 80 million people living in the country. The scientific research of the expedition was to build on the research of Erich von Drygalski (1901-1903) and Wilhelm Filchner (1911-1913).

Accordingly, the tasks were divided among the individual scientific fields as follows:

- Geography: Obtaining a map of the coastal area in the work section by means of photogrammetric surveying from the air.
- Meteorology: Weather consultation for the aircraft and exploration of the upper layers of the atmosphere using radiosondes.
- Oceanography: Relief mapping of the sea floor using echo sounders, surface observations with the Sund-Schöpfer. Temperature measurements, hydrographic series, exploration of ice conditions.
- Biology: Observations of whales, seals, birds, plankton catches and collection of data on the food selection and consumption of whale crabs.
- Nautical science: Testing nautical equipment and tables, measuring depth of keels; verifying information in German nautical charts: producing coastal views for nautical manuals.

In order to accomplish this multitude of important tasks in the

In order to be able to cope with the challenges of the few months of Antarctic summer, the State Council decided to abandon the previous cumbersome and time-consuming practice of polar research with dogs and sledges and to replace it, especially for inland exploration, with a modern scientific and technical aid: the aeroplane.

Deutsche Lufthansa as a partner

In 1934, 17 years after Lindbergh's first transatlantic flight, Deutsche Lufthansa became the first airline in the world to connect America and Europe by air.

Deutsche Lufthansa's first scheduled transoceanic flight took place on the route Berlin – Stuttgart – Seville – Bathurst – Natal to Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. The
11,369-kilometre route was completed in five days.

The actual Atlantic crossing began in Bathurst, British Gambia. The only aircraft suitable for this enormously long stage was the Dornier Wal flying boat, but even this was unable to cross the Atlantic non-stop. Refuelling in flight, which Deutsche Lufthansa tested, did not cause too many difficulties under the conditions at the time.

A solution was provided by the aircraft carrier known as the "floating island", which, with the aid of a towing sail and a crane, could take on board a landed seaplane (flying boat), refuel it and then launch it again with the aid of a catapult.

The first ship to be converted into such an aircraft carrier by Deutsche Lufthansa was the steamship "Westfalen", built in 1905 by the Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen (NDL) shipping company, which, equipped with a tow sail and a Heinkel large aircraft catapult, entered service on behalf of DLH.

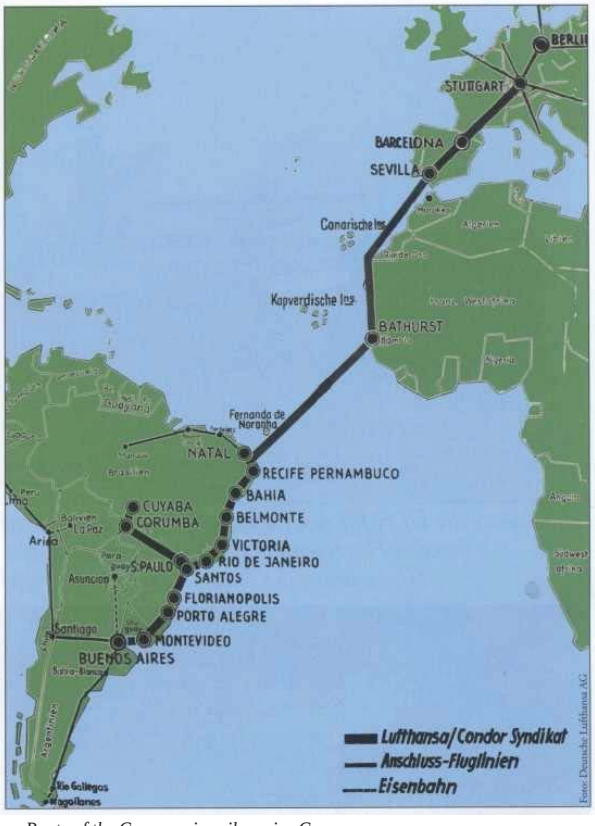
After the "Westfalen", Deutsche Lufthansa took over the motor ship "Schwarzenfels" from the German Steamship Company "Hansa" in Bremen in 1934, had it converted into an aircraft base ship and put it into service under the new name "Schwabenland". Two further new aircraft base ships followed with the Ostmark and the Friesenland.

Between 1934 and 1937, Lufthansa aircraft completed 309 flights in the South Atlantic air service, covering 2,420,416 flight kilometres.

There could be no better partner for the Antarctic expedition planned by the Reich Air Ministry in Berlin in 1938 than Deutsche Lufthansa, which agreed to participate in the expedition and support it as a partner during the very first meeting. DLH offered the ideal conditions for a partnership. It had years of experience in overseas flight operations and an excellent technical and commercial organisation. It also had four floating aircraft bases, each with two Dornier Wal seaplanes and a highly trained and experienced flight crew.

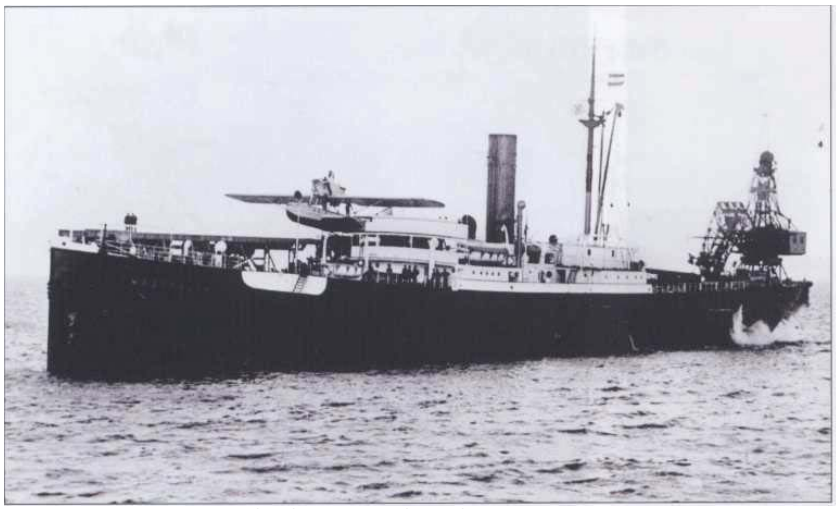
DLH immediately agreed to make its
steamship "Westfalen", which served as an aircraft base between Bathurst and Natal, for the expedition. In return, the ship was to be transferred to Rio de Janeiro, where it would be reinforced with ice and

Alfred Ritscher was the ideal person to lead the expedition. The 60-year-old government councillor in the High Command of the Navy combined the skills of a ship's captain, flight captain and polar explorer.



Route of the German airmail service German — South America 1934 Here, the Dornier Wal flying boats "Passat"and "Koreas"of the DLH had proven themselves on many Atlantic crossings in the early 1930s.

A ten-ton Dornier Wal on the catapult of the aircraft carrier "Friesenland" of Deutsche Lufthansa (DLH)



In 1934, DLH deployed its first floating aircraft base for airmail service to South America — the steamship "Westfalen".

Here, the flying boats were launched forward.

As the only ship capable of launching aircraft, this crane from the Berlin-based company could be tilted up to an angle of

From the German Steamship Company "Hansa (Bremen), DLH took over the motor ship "Schwarzenfels". After its conversion into an aircraft base, it was renamed "Schwabenland".

South The scheduled airmail service began after 1934. A letter weighing up to 5 grams cost

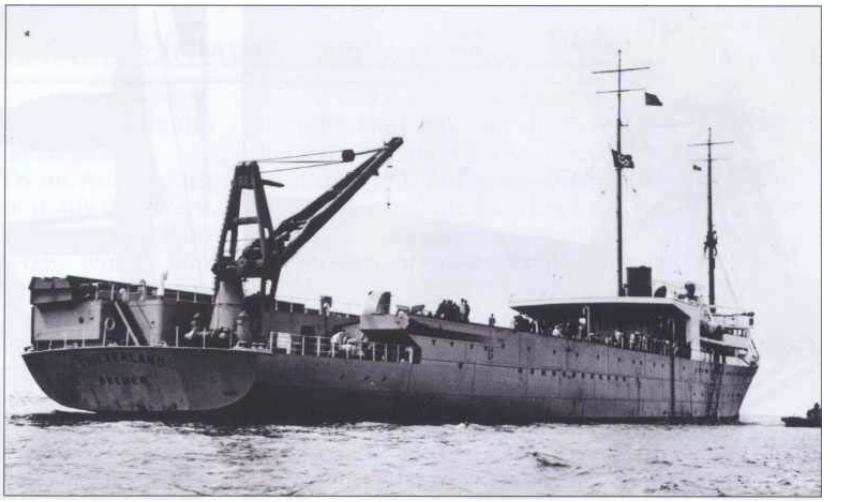
The airmail route was operated by the Berlin post office Ctind

State Secretary Erhard Milch, Ministerialrat Dr Heinz Orlovius, Baron Günther von Gablenz and others observe the landing manoeuvre of a seaplane from the "Schwabenland" in Hamburg on 17 August 1934.

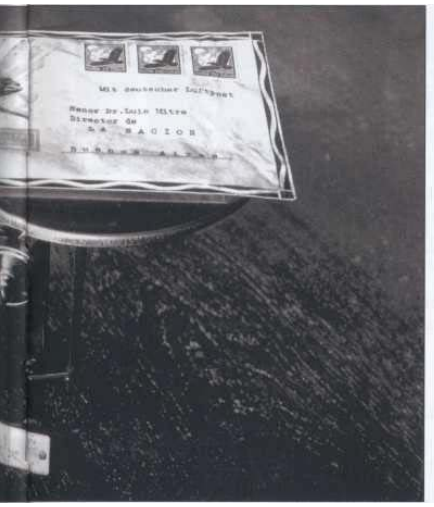
Hamburg on 17 August 1934.

Here, the Blohmc seaplane is being towed by the aircraft carrier catapulted

The "Westfalen" was equipped with a slewing crane. Becker could lift loads of 15 tonnes from ships at an angle of 15 degrees.



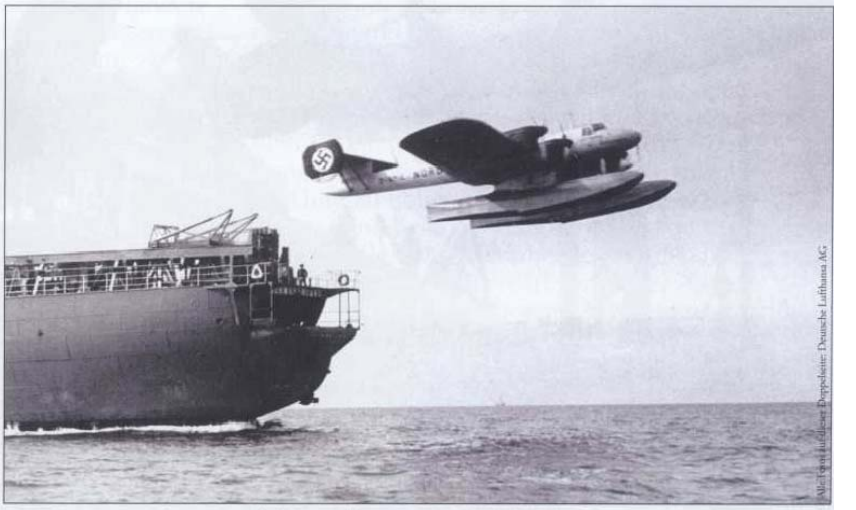
The motor s h i p Friesenland was a new aircraft carrier commissioned by DLH.



m Erika was delivered by DLH on 3 February at a cost of 1.75 Reichsmarks. Collection points for these and the post office was 9 in Stuttgart.

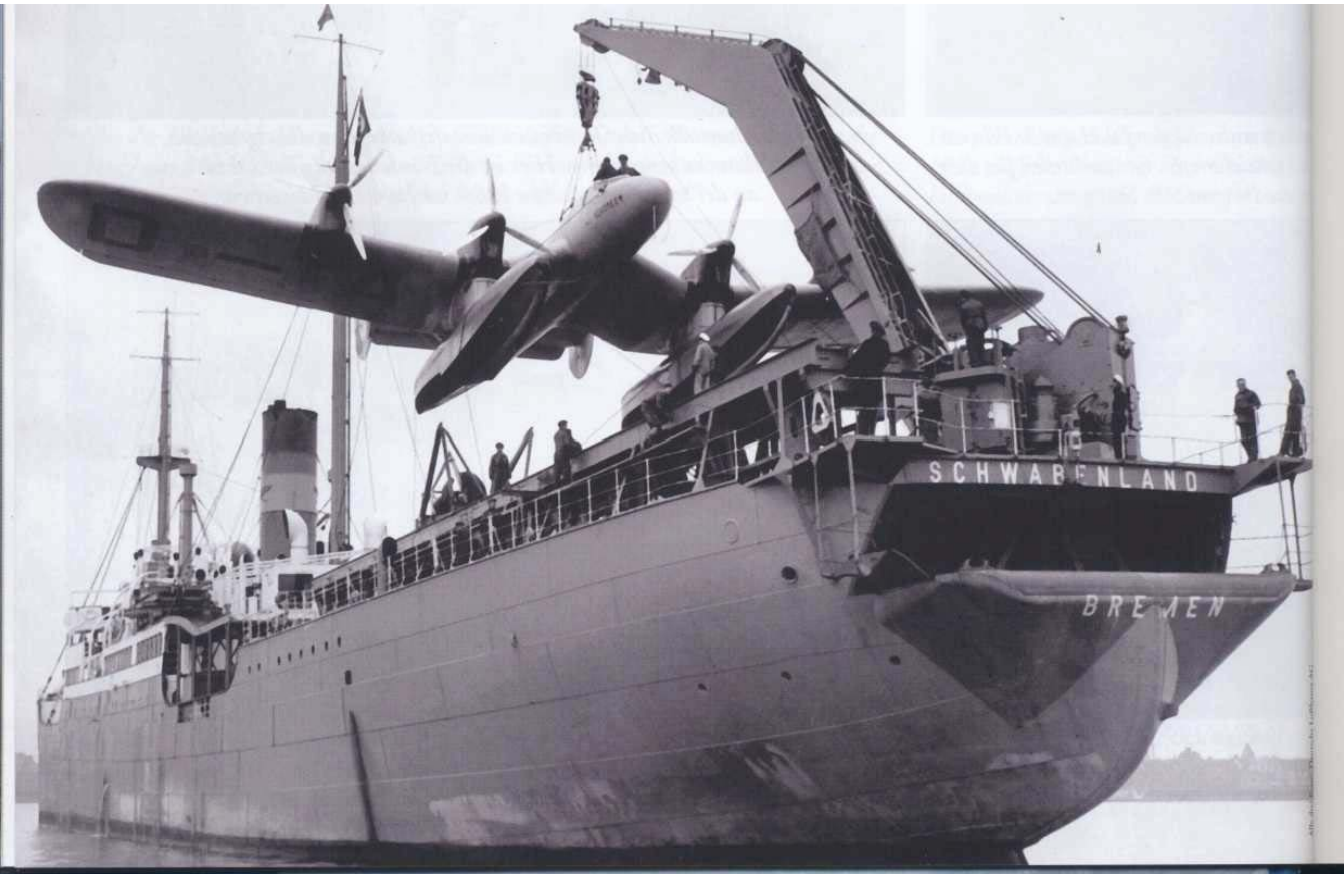
The actual Atlantic crossing began in Bathurst/British Gambia in West Africa. This is where the DLH branch is located. on the West African coast in 1935.

& Vo ß Ha 139 "Nordmeer (North Sea)" ktschiff„ Schwabenland" from artet (around 1937).



It is clear to see that the flying boats were catapulted backwards, which made the folding crane necessary.

In the 1930s, DLH's aircraft carrier ships ensured smooth transatlantic mail service. Top left: Dornier Wal flying boat "Taifun" on the catapult of the „ Friesenland` : Top right: Control panel for the catapult systemof the "Westfalen".Bottom: The Blohm & Voß Ha 139 "Nordmeer" seaplane on the crane of the "Schwabenland"



be properly equipped. It was hoped that this would be achieved by the end of November 1938.

Built as a cargo steamer in 1905/06 on behalf of Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen at the shipyard J.C. Tecklenborg shipyard in Wesermünde and launched in After serving on the North American route, the steamship "Westfalen" was chartered by Deutsche Luft-Hansa in 1932, purchased a year later and then converted into an air traffic control ship by Deutsche Schiff- und Maschinenbau AG (Deschimag) in Bremen.

On 3 May 1933, the Westfalen left the port of Kiel for its first trial run. The second series of trials began under the direction of the flight director of Deutsche Lufthansa, Baron von Buddenbrock, on 6 October 1933. The ship's captain was A. Dettmering. After these two successful trial voyages, the Westfalen began service as an aircraft base in the South Atlantic in February 1934.

In order to test the relatively old ship's suitability for the planned Antarctic expedition, State Councillor Wohlthat, who was in charge of the "Antarctic Enterprise", sent retired naval architect Kaye to Rio de Janeiro. Kaye was also an expert for Germanischer Lloyd and supervisor of the four catapult ships of Deutsche Lufthansa.

Ship's captain and flight captain Alfred Ritscher

One of the most important and difficult tasks for State Councillor Wohlthat was undoubtedly the search for a suitable leader for the South Pole expedition.

This person had to have polar experience, be a pilot and, if possible, also a merchant ship captain. To solve this problem and find a suitable man, the State Councillor came back to a recommendation made by Rear Admiral Dr Conrad, who did indeed know a man who fulfilled these requirements and who was currently working as a government councillor in the Nautical Department of the High Command of the Navy and would certainly be available for the task intended for him.

That man was Alfred Ritscher.

Alfred Ritscher, born on 23 May 1879 in Bad Lauterberg in the Harz Mountains, was the son of a doctor. He left secondary school with his school-leaving certificate and set his sights on going to sea and becoming a captain. In 1897, he made his first voyage as a ship's boy on the Bremen-based full-rigged ship "Emlie". He spent five and a half years sailing , passed his certificate as a helmsman on the high seas at the Maritime School in Bremen in 1903 and his master's certificate at the Maritime School in Altona in 1907. He then sailed for four years with the Hamburg-America Line and Hamburg-Süd.

By now an experienced and successful ship's captain, in 1912 he was offered a position by the Imperial Navy Office on the newly created maritime handbook, which he accepted. There he met the polar explorer Schröder-Stranz, who was planning a scientific expedition along the "Northeast Passage" for the summer of 1912 and, as a trial run, a crossing of the Northeast Land of Spitsbergen. The expedition's goal was to test people and equipment in the ice. Ritscher accepted Schröder-Stranz's offer to captain the expedition ship Herzog Ernst and take charge of the aeronautical department, i.e. exploration by aircraft, for which he first had to obtain his pilot's licence. He succeeded in doing so, although he crashed during the test flight due to a broken tailplane and was seriously injured.

The expedition was plagued by bad luck, and the planned circumnavigation of Spitsbergen proved impossible. The ship sailed along the west coast and continued northward beyond the North Cape of Nordostland. Despite a sudden change in the weather, which pushed the polar ice towards the north coast, Captain Ritscher managed to steer his ship out of this dangerous situation and onto the beach at Sorgebucht. The crew would have starved to death if help had not arrived quickly; they had only expected to be away for the summer and had therefore taken less provisions with them.

.

Without hesitation, one day later, on 20 December 1912, Captain Ritscher set off in temperatures of over -30 degrees Celsius to seek help for the starving crew of his expedition ship. Accompanied by his expedition dog Bella, he covered the 210 kilometres to the nearest settlement, the coal town of Longyearbyen in Advent Bay in the Icefjord, in seven days. Shortly before arriving, he broke through the ice, which resulted in frostbite and cost him half of his right foot.

This solo march in the Arctic cold, snowstorm and darkness was a unique feat of energy by Alfred Ritscher, who had no polar clothing and had never stood on skis before.

had ever been on skis before. His only food was a few kilograms of barley groats and some dried reindeer meat.

When he reached his destination completely exhausted, he was able to report the course of the expedition home by wireless and arrange for the urgently needed rescue of the crew members left behind on the expedition ship; this was carried out immediately.

After returning from his unsuccessful North Pole expedition, Ritscher returned to his work at the Imperial Navy Office.

During the First World War, Ritscher was a reserve officer in the Imperial Navy in naval aviation positions, most recently as commander of the naval land aviation corps. After the war, he returned to the Imperial Navy Office. He temporarily moved to Deutsche Lufthansa, where he headed the flight navigation department. In 1933, he returned to his position at the Imperial Navy Office, most recently as a government councillor in the High Command of the Navy.

A mission under oath

In July 1938, Captain Alfred Ritscher, who was almost 60 years old, spent his 14 days of holiday, as he did almost every year, in the Harz Mountains, where he was born and raised. He had rented a room in a guesthouse in Siebertal and enjoyed the peace and quiet that he missed so much in the hustle and bustle of Berlin.

The calendar showed 26 July 1938. A glorious summer's day had begun. Ritscher was an early riser. He sat with other guests at the breakfast table in the garden of the house, unaware that this day would mark a significant turning point in his life. Suddenly, the landlady rushed out of the house and called to him: "A telephone call for you, Captain."

"Who wants me so early in the morning?!" Ritscher muttered to himself as he went to the telephone.

It was only the post office in nearby Braunlage. A dutiful official informed him that a pile of letters had been left for him to collect, including one from Berlin that appeared to contain something important.

Intrigued by this message, Ritscher set off for Braunlage in his little DKW car immediately after breakfast. The letter, which he immediately found among many others, was indeed important, very important even. The sender was Rear Admiral Dr. Conrad from the High Command of the Navy in Berlin, whom he knew well. He informed him in confidence that the government was sending a scientific expedition to Antarctica and that he would be offered overall command if he was willing to take it on. As the matter was very urgent, he was to report to him in person in Berlin on 1 August for initial information.

Just two hours later, Ritscher sent an urgent telegram to the admiral in Berlin, containing only the brief message: "Of course I'm ready – I'll be there on 1 August!"

In his memoirs, he describes what awaited Captain and Government Councillor Alfred Ritscher at the High Command of the Navy in Berlin "when, on 1 August, initially as the head of the planned operation, which had not yet been confirmed by higher authorities, I attempted to get an idea of the state of affairs": "Lufthansa provided me with an office in their Atlantic flight operations department, and I was even allowed to dictate letters to the department head's busy secretary when she had time! Secretaries were in short supply at the time; I searched in vain for a typist, while at the same time the preparatory work in all areas had to be tackled with the utmost urgency. It was necessary to establish contact with the relevant officials at the ministries, authorities and institutes involved, to determine the shipping route, to outline the plan for the nautical and scientific tasks, to order the necessary equipment and to discuss the tasks in detail. Furthermore, suppliers had to be found for clothing for the ship's crew, for polar equipment for the flying personnel, including flight and marching clothing, for sledges, skis, cooking equipment, tents, etc.
and similar items and obtain prices for them, have arrows made for the purpose to be specified later and try them out in a suitable place, procure rifles and ammunition, compile a suitable library, and
for the purpose to be specified later and to test them at a suitable location, to procure rifles and ammunition, to compile a suitable library and, above all, to obtain the photographic equipment required for photogrammetric surveying of the Antarctic interior and to install it in the aircraft. In addition, all other photographic and cinematographic equipment and materials had to be assembled and procured; it was important not to forget to give Norddeutscher Lloyd, which was responsible for the management of the ship, instructions regarding the compilation of a suitable food and medical equipment list for the more than 80-strong ship's crew, to procure pemmican from abroad as emergency provisions for landing parties, and to obtain scientific equipment from all parts of the empire.

for the ship's crew of over 80 men, pemmican as emergency provisions for landing parties from abroad, scientific equipment from all parts of the Reich and even from abroad; all this had to be done as cheaply, as well and as quickly as possible. For we were only three months away from the latest departure date, 15 December 1938. However, there was not a penny in the coffers, so that all orders had to be postponed again and again until the very last possible delivery date.

The politically turbulent times – it was all about the reunification of the Sudetenland with the Reich – were a hindrance, as the War and Aviation Ministries were fully occupied with their own tasks."

Bad news from Brazil

Like a bolt from the blue, the radio message from Marinebaurat Kaye in Rio de Janeiro struck Berlin at the end of August: "The catapult ship 'Westfalen' of Deutsche Lufthansa is not available for the Antarctic expedition!"

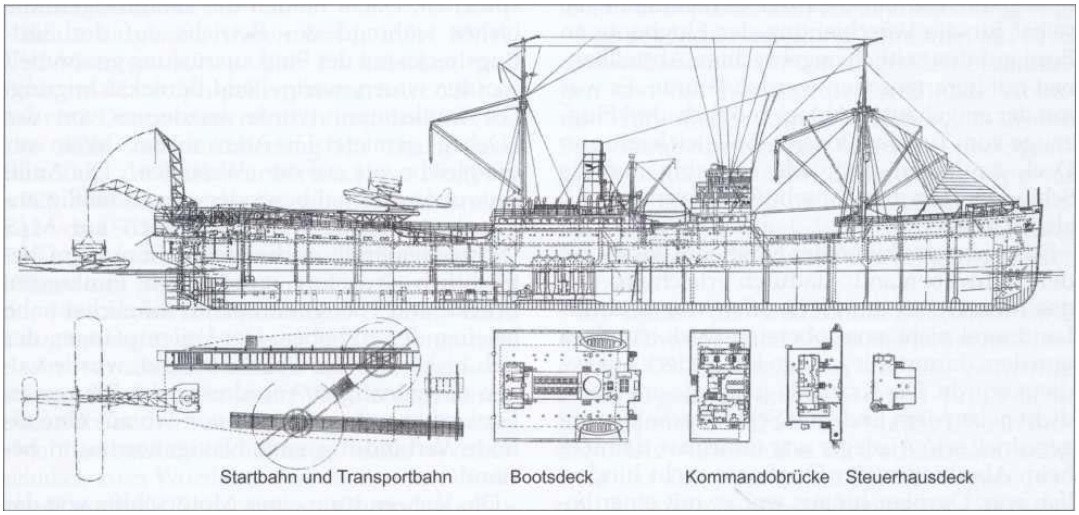
The reason: the Westfalen, built in 1905, was no longer up to standard. The time required to repair and convert the dilapidated 33-year-old freighter, which had been converted into a catapult ship for Antarctic expeditions, made it impossible to complete the work on time.

When Ritscher took up his new post in Berlin at the beginning of August and learned that the "Westfalen" was in Rio de Janeiro

He was against it being turned into an expedition ship. He knew the ship from his time with Lufthansa and was aware of its condition. He was right to worry that the urgent repairs and extensive modifications couldn't be properly supervised in such a faraway country and that it would be almost impossible to guarantee that it would be finished on time. "Least of all," Ritscher writes in his memoirs, "would it have been possible to maintain the secrecy of the undertaking in Rio de Janeiro, which had been sought by all means and had been largely successful in Germany until the very end." (3)The decision not to use the catapult ship

Under these conditions and circumstances, repairing and rebuilding the "Westfalen" in Rio de Janeiro under time pressure was, for the Ministerial Director z.b.V. Wohlthat, the official responsible for the Antarctic expedition at the Reich Air Ministry in Berlin, as well as for the director of Deutsche Lufthansa, Baron von Gablenz, who, immediately after learning of the loss of the " " "Westfalen" suggested the aircraft base "Schwabenland" as an expedition ship. This suggestion was particularly welcomed by Alfred Ritscher, who was also familiar with this ship.

It would have been irresponsible to lose even a single day. Therefore, the Reich Air Ministry and the Atlantic flight operations management of Deutsche Lufthansa agreed to transfer the motor ship "Schabenland" to Hamburg from the port of Horta in the Azores after its last catapult launch for North Atlantic flight service on 20 October from the port of Horta in the Azores to Hamburg.



This line drawing shows the expedition ship "Schwabenland" in longitudinal section and its upper decks.

MIS "Schwabenland" becomes an expedition ship

The motor ship "Schwabenland" was originally called "Schwarzenfels". It was built by AG Deutsche Werke in Kiel on behalf of the German steamship company "Hansa" in Bremen and, after its completion, was used in service to India.

In 1934, Deutsche Lufthansa purchased the freighter with the intention of converting it for transatlantic air transport. The conversion to a catapult ship was carried out within a few months at Deutsche Schiffs- und Maschinenbau-AG Weserwerk in Bremen.

On 17 August 1934, the ship was launched by Deutsche Lufthansa under its new name "Schwabenland" in Bremerhaven at the lumbuskaje of Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen. Among those present was State Secretary Erhard Milch, who had flown to Bremerhaven especially for the occasion in his Ju 52/3. The DLH then gave the press the opportunity to view the M/S "Schwabenland" with all its facilities and witness a catapult launch.

The knowledge and experience gained with DLH's first catapult ship, the „Westfalen", was now taken into account in the second aircraft carrier, the M/S "Schwabenland", which was built from the outset for tropical service. Unlike the Westfalen, the aircraft catapult on the Schwabenland was located on the aft deck. The aircraft were therefore launched backwards. The front of the aircraft catapult was designed as a 360-degree rotating turntable so that part of the catapult itself could be used to move the flying boats on board to the parking rails attached to the side. The built-in system made it possible to have three Dornier Wal aircraft on deck at the same time and to place each one on the catapult track for launch as desired.

The boarding of the flying boats was made easier on the Schwabenland by the fact that the motor vessel was open at the stern and the land sail was operated from the main deck below rather than from the top deck. The crane was located at the stern, close to the end of the catapult; its jib could be folded away so that it did not interfere with the launch of the flying boats. In addition, it was equipped with a special device that made it possible to take the flying boats on board even in rough seas. The crane had a lifting capacity of twelve tonnes and a test load of 15 tonnes. The crane was designed to be able to operate even at a greater angle of inclination. The searchlights mounted on the crane, manufactured by AEG, had a light intensity of 60 million Hefnerkerzen (HK).

Since the motor vessel "Schwabenland" was equipped with two diesel engines, single-acting four-stroke engines with a total output of 3,600 hp, there was no need to install a special diesel system to supply the compressed air required for the aircraft catapult. This was taken from the engines and initially compressed to 60 atü. An additional compressor compressed it to 160 atü and fed it to the compressed air chamber of the launch system.

It was also possible to dispense with the installation of a special cooling system, as the ship had already been equipped with a well-functioning cooling system for service in India. In cooperation with a Berlin shipyard, a motorboat was developed for the special purposes of a floating aircraft base, which could assist the flying boats during landing manoeuvres on the high seas if necessary.

.

As with the steamship "Westfalen", the motor vessel "Schwabenland" was tasked with providing air traffic control services, the necessary weather advice and direction finding. The radio equipment on the Schwabenland was therefore similar to that of the Westfalen. Here, the radio equipment had met the high requirements in a completely satisfactory manner. The experience gained with the radio equipment during its operation on the southern flight route was largely taken into account. The radio station was again leased from the "Debeg". The selection of equipment was the same as on the "Westfalen". This time, the equipment was arranged in a particularly practical manner, for which the existing radio room originally located on M/S "Schwabenland" was considerably enlarged to bring the radio room, bridge and navigation room as close together as possible. The direction finder, which had previously been located on the bridge, was moved to the radio room due to the favourable layout of the rooms, from where there was a direct connection to the navigation room.

The use of a motor vessel such as the "Schwabenland" as a floating aircraft

base was particularly advantageous for Deutsche Lufthansa in terms of operating costs. Under certain circumstances, the ship could be out of service for long periods of time, but it also had to be able to be made ready for sea quickly. A steamship must be under steam at all times for this purpose, whereas a motor vessel can be made ready to sail in a very short time without any further preparation.

In any case, the technically superior for use as a catapult ship than the steamship "Westfalen", so that the decision in favour of M/S "Schwabenland" was only to be welcomed.

On board the M/S "Schwabenland" were two flying boats of the proven ten-ton Dornier Wal type, which had been developed for DLH's South Atlantic mail service and had performed this service with considerable success between the west coast of North Africa and the east coast of South America since 1933. One flying boat, of the D-AGAT type, was named "Boreas", the other was of the D-ALOX type and was named "Passat". "Boreas" had been in service in the South Atlantic since September 1934, "Passat" since July 1934, and both had already made many Atlantic crossings.

While "Boreas" completed all flights without incident, "Passat" was less fortunate. In December 1936, the flying boat had to make an emergency landing about 400 kilometres off the African coast after losing its rear propeller in open sea. After drifting for 24 hours, it was taken on board the DLH aircraft "Ostmark", which had been summoned by radio, and after repairs were carried out, it resumed its service in air traffic over the South Atlantic.

Both flying boats were equipped with two BMW VIU engines, each with 630 hp, and black-coated propellers. They had dual controls and dual instrumentation for night and blind flying. Each flying boat could carry 4,720 litres of fuel, which at a speed of 150 to 170 km/h ensured a range of 16 flying hours or approximately 2,500 to 2,800 kilometres. The empty weight of the aircraft was 6,318 kilograms for the "Passat" and 6,336 kilograms for the "Boreas"; this included the radio equipment and marine equipment, which consisted of a four-man inflatable boat with paddles, a drift anchor with lines, a drift anchor retrieval line, a swivel shackle, two throwing lines, an axe, a toolbox for repairs during flight and a well-stocked first-aid kit.

In addition, special equipment was on board in case of an emergency landing.

The crew of each flying boat consisted of four men: the pilot, the flight engineer, the radio operator and another crew member.

After entering service, the M/S "Schwabenland" aircraft base carried out a total of 180 catapult launches with its two flying boats in the first two and a half years, from 15 August 1934 to February 1937. The ship was stationed alternately in Bathurst and Fernando de Noronha, with the exception of August to October 1936. During this time, a series of test flights were carried out over the North Atlantic.

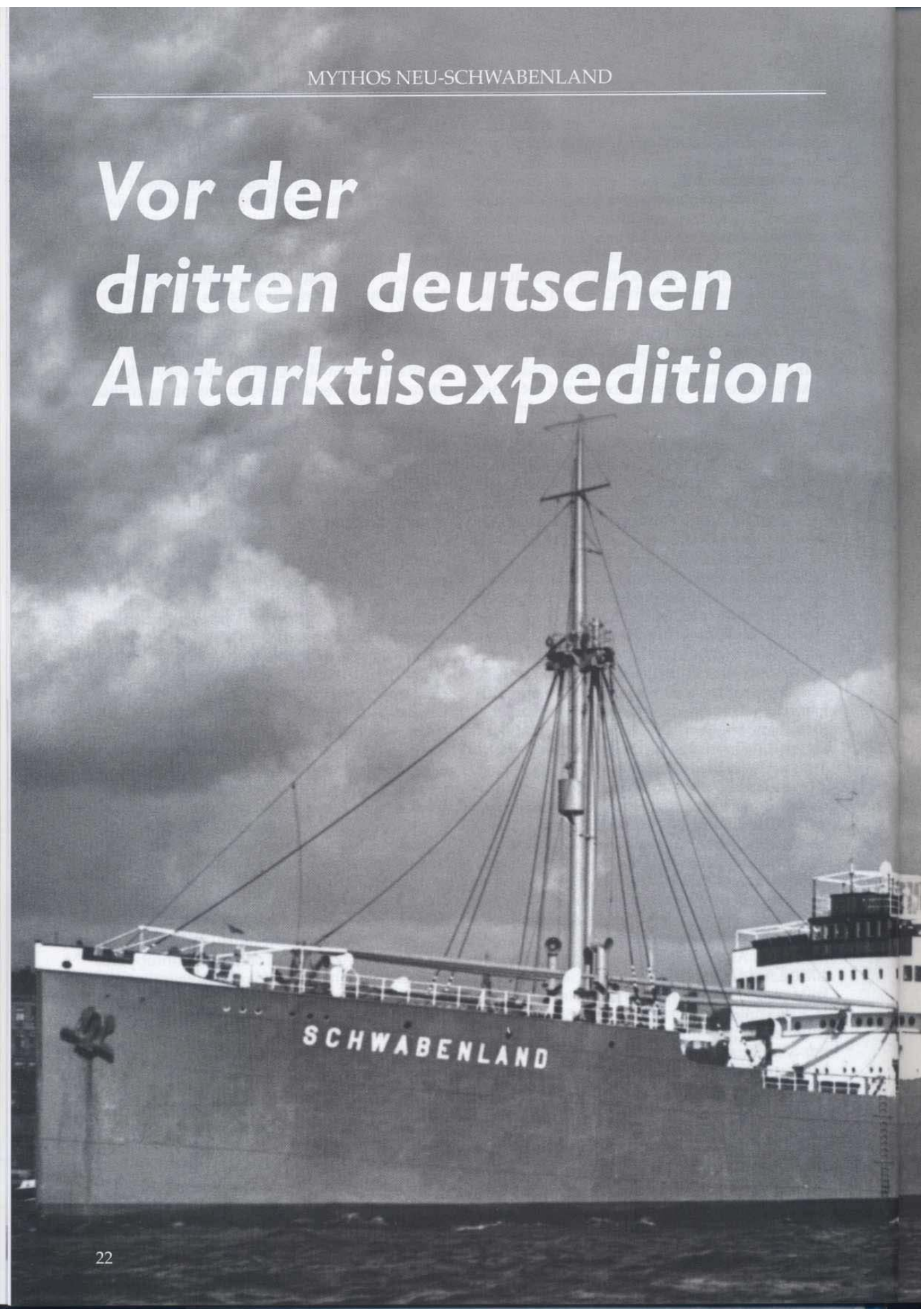
The catapult ship "Schwabenland" were the ports of Porta Delgada in the Portuguese Azores, Port Washington near New York, Port Sydney in Canada and Bermuda. In transoceanic service to South America, Bathurst at the mouth of the Gambia River was chosen as the station for the African side and the island of Fernando de Noronha off the coast of South America.

When it entered service, the M/S "Schwabenland" was commanded by Captain A. Lipa, who had been provided by the German steamship company "Hansa" in Bremen. He was succeeded on 13 May 1935 by Captain Alfred Kottas of Deutsche Lufthansa.

Since the M/S Schwabenland was almost entirely self-reliant at its ports of call, Deutsche Lufthansa ensured that a doctor was also on board. The necessity of this became apparent for the first time on 29 December 1934 when the kitchen boy developed appendicitis. He was operated on and was back on duty in no time. Before the M/S Schwabenland was put into service, new living quarters had been fitted for the flight crew and workshop personnel. "Schwabenland" had been fitted with new living quarters and lounges for the flying crew and workshop personnel, a large swimming pool had been installed, and gymnastics and sports equipment had been purchased. A sound film projector and the daily Ocean Press provided entertainment on board and lounges for the flying crew and workshop personnel, a large swimming pool was installed and gymnastics and sports equipment was purchased. A sound film projector and the daily *Ocean Press* provided entertainment and information as well as variety in leisure time.

In service with Deutsche Lufthansa, M/S Schwabenland covered a total of 73,766 nautical miles by autumn 1938. It was docked twice, on 21 June 1935 in Rio de Janeiro and on 12 August 1936 in Bremen. The stays in Germany between 1 July and 15 August 1936 and 1 November and 15 November 1936 were used for repairs and conversions.

Vor der dritten deutschen Antarktisexpedition



As the crew members warmed up

The Ka-lapult ship M/S "Schwaberrland" in the port of Horta in the Azores, ready for its Antarctic expedition, which is scheduled to begin in mid-December 1932. Expedition leader Alfred Ritscher is still in the midst of preparations for this month-long expedition.

tte'a I1e'Händve..Ing:...,'.:...

e

Working hours often exceeded twelve hours a day.

a day.

He received significant support from fully

ten of the German Ltifthansa. Dieše 'hatté sicl3

had already clarified in September with preliminary investigations

that the fuel mixture for the aircraft engines was suitable for speeds of up to 50 degrees and for N u!1 purposes. They agreed

auch schon die Vorbereitungen für den Umbau

der beiden Dornier-Wal-Flugboote „Boreas" and "Pessat" were able to use their weapons in Tra-

The two airships

on board the M/S "Schwafienland" were

arktisexpedition die wichtigsten Aufgaben übernehmen würden, mußten mit Kufen und gegebenenfalls mit Bremsen für Landungen auf dem Eis versehen werden, darüber hinaus

eie a drop box

.

tJn , which were 1.20 to

metre-long throwing arrows from

the ant æiner Bøschaffungsliste, the

beaondemn Haiømløeum

above, not to b e classified. Firnien. The plan

drop-down door, as this had never been produced before. 8efie,1genureineEntwurfst i-

nung vor.

Es war für Ritscher eine wertvolle Hilfe, daß auf Vermittlung der Deutschen Lufthansa die

Company Dwrier-Muœfhuumniz Friedrich Owlœ

am Bodensee die Herstellung übernahm und

the Luftwaffe arranged for the arrows to be tested.

lassen wollte.

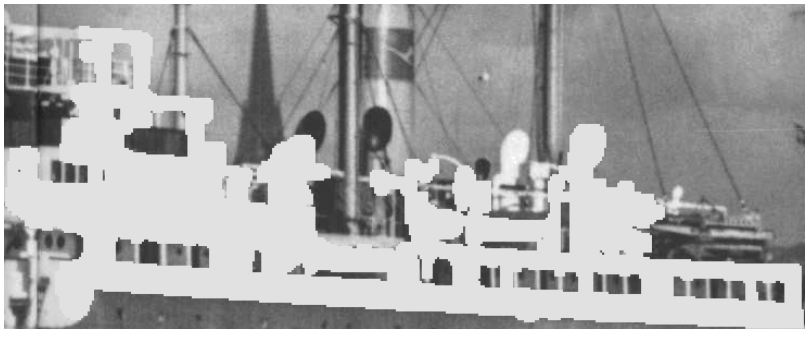
Die Pfeile sollten vorn mit einer 30 Zentimeter

long Siahlspilze unc4 and at the rear i-u13 Enr4e with

three-pronged stabilising fins ›'ei schen

, of which eight were printed with the official emblem, the Hakenkreuz.

sollte das abgeflogene Gebiet in der Antarktis in Abständen von 20 bis 30 Kilometern entlang aller Flugwege abgesteckt werden, um auf diese Weise eine der Bedingungen für die Besitzergreifung des eingegrenzten Gebietes zu schaffen.



Samples of these arrows were tested by the Air Force testing centre in Travemünde at various airports in numerous trials; they underwent several stages of development in terms of shape, equipment, weight and paint finish. The final design was tested on the Pasterzen Glacier in the Großglockner region, i.e. in terrain that placed similar demands on the arrows as those expected in Antarctica. It was found that when dropped from a height of 500 metres above ground level, they penetrated the firn ice to a depth of 35 centimetres and were either not deformed at all, only slightly deformed or more severely deformed.

The workers at the Dornier metalworking shops in Friedrichshafen who manufactured the arrows had no idea what they were to be used for.

New task for MIS "Schwabenland"

On 28 October 1938, the M/S "Schwabenland" was due to arrive in Hamburg from Horta in the Azores, and the conversion of the ship, for which plans were already in place, was to begin on the same day. But which shipyard would be able to take on this job in the short time available?

Alfred Ritscher could hardly believe it: one shipyard after another, with which he had negotiated personally, turned him down. Whether it was Weser AG in Bremen, the Blohm & Voß shipyard in Hamburg, Howaldtswerke Deutsche Werft in Kiel, Seebeck and a number of others – every day it was the same story.

Finally, Ritscher found interest at Deutsche Werft in Hamburg. One meeting in a small group was followed by another. All questions and problems relating to shipbuilding and mechanical engineering were discussed. One of the most difficult issues was the procurement of the necessary skilled workers. Everyone involved made every effort to find a viable way to take on the contract. The negotiations, led by Trost, an engineer with a degree from the Reich Ministry of Economics, were attended by Schneider, chief engineer and head of the nautical engineering department at Norddeutscher Lloyd, retired naval architect Kaye and other experts.

At the end of all the talks, Director Dr. Scholz agreed that Deutsche Werft in Hamburg would accept the contract as general contractor. The condition for this was the provision of 104 welders, burners, chisellers, boilermakers and coppersmiths, turners and shipbuilders from other shipyards, as well as the takeover of part of the engine repairs by Deutsche Werke Kiel.

With this decision, the shipyard director boldly overcame all concerns and doubts and guaranteed that the complete conversion of the ship would be completed by 15 December of that year. Ritscher was pleased to have solved this difficult problem. Time was pressing. The final phase of preparations for the third German Antarctic expedition had begun.

Although it was intended to follow on from Drygalski's first expedition (1901-1903) and Filchner's second (1911-1913), it differed from these in two fundamental ways. The first two Antarctic expeditions had the sole aim of exploring parts of Antarctica. The preparation and execution of the expeditions were public, and nothing was kept from the population, not even the successes and failures. In nationalistic Germany, at a time of increasing international tensions, things were different. There were political constraints and necessary considerations, especially in foreign policy. The focus was not only on further exploration of a part of Antarctica, but also on taking possession of the areas that had been flown over and marked out with German swastika flags. All this was done under the strictest secrecy. It can be assumed that the expedition also had military strategic intentions, as both the High Command of the Navy and the Reich Air Ministry were involved in the preparation and personnel of the expedition.

Expedition office moved from Berlin to Hamburg

Since the arrival of the M/S Schwabenland in Hamburg was scheduled for 28 October and it was certain that the ship would be converted in Hamburg, it was necessary to move the expedition office from Berlin to Hamburg.

In mid-October 1938, a young scientist with excellent references contacted Ritscher in Berlin and offered to assist the expedition leader. Since Ritscher was overwhelmed with work at the time

, he hired this young man, Dr Herbert Todt, as an assistant on 20 October. Within a few days, Dr Todt proved himself to be a prudent, determined and hard-working employee, so that Ritscher could send him to Hamburg with a clear conscience, with the task of setting up an expedition office and finding a skilled typist.

Just a few days later, the office was able to move to Hamburg, where new
Rooms were made available in Glockengießerwall, and the work could be continued and completed in its entirety under far better personnel and spatial conditions.

The office had its hands full in the days and weeks that followed. It had to order the countless items of equipment that had been selected and ensure that they were delivered and stored on time, arrange for the timely delivery of polar clothing for the ship's crew, select the literature for the ship's library from a list provided, and ensure that the firearms, ammunition and fur clothing were delivered. Collection warehouses had to be set up for all of this, and transport to the expedition ship had to be arranged in good time.

That was by no means all. A very important task was to conclude the contracts with the scientific expedition participants.

A considerable amount of the necessary preparations

State Councillor Wohlthat had entrusted the task to Reich Minister Hermann Göring, who delegated the leadership and overall responsibility for the Antarctic expedition to several participating ministries, authorities, institutes, private societies and companies, so that the work was distributed among many shoulders. This was also necessary to avoid delays. Everyone was obliged to adhere strictly to the specified schedule.

The Nautical Science Department of the High Command of the Navy and the scientific institutes under its authority, the German Naval Office, Nautical and Hydrographic Department in Hamburg and the Naval Observatory in Wilhelmshaven, took the lead in carrying out important tasks. The experience they had gained on their own major scientific research voyages in the Atlantic Ocean provided a solid foundation for the scientific part of the Antarctic expedition.

Under the personal direction of Rear Admiral Dr Conrad, the work programme for the geophysicist, oceanographer and meteorologists was jointly developed. The scientists and the expedition ship were equipped with the necessary instruments and equipment.

Together with the Air Force High Command, which was as interested in long-range weather research as the Navy High Command, the Naval Observatory and the Reich Office for Weather Services provided meteorologists and their assistants with extensive material for the radio probe ascents and set up the appropriate facilities for this purpose on board. In addition, the High Command provided the necessary equipment for the radio probe ascents and set up the appropriate facilities for this purpose on board.for radio probe ascents and the appropriate workplace facilities were created on board. In addition, the Air Force High Command was responsible for equipping the aircraft with a wide range of on-board equipment and for procuring special clothing for the aircraft crews.

The Reich Ministry of Food and

The Institute for Whale Research in Hamburg, which was subordinate to the Ministry of Agriculture, carried out the biological tasks of the scientific work programme. The director of the institute, Dr Peters, who had undertaken several voyages as a whaling inspector on German whaling ships, provided valuable information on the meteorological, climatic and nautical conditions to be expected in the Antarctic and the main fishing grounds of German whalers in the Atlantic sector of the Antarctic. He also took on the task of procuring the appropriate scientific equipment for the expedition participants he had selected as biologists. The Reich Ministry of Economics was tasked with negotiating with shipyards for the conversion of the catapult ship M/S "Schwabenland" into an expedition ship and with overseeing the conversion itself.

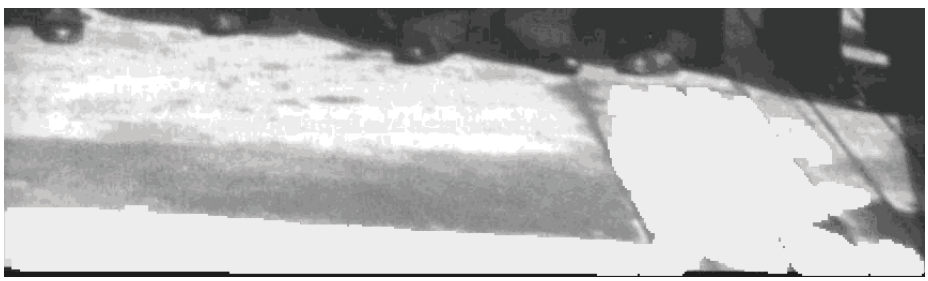
lead to an acceptable result.

The German Naval Observatory in Hamburg, the Naval Observatory in Wilhelmshaven, the Reich Office for Weather Services and the Institute of Marine Science in Berlin all supported the procurement of equipment for the meteorologists, geophysicist and oceanographer. The oceanographer also received valuable input for his expedition tasks at the Institute of Marine Science.

Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen not only provided

only provided an exemplary crew from its own personnel for the ship, it also ensured that the 82

Expeditionsteilnehmer der dritten deutschen Antarktisexpedition an Bord der „Schwabenland". Mit im Bild: Flugkapitän Rudolf Mayr (ganz links), Luftbildner Max Bundermann (6.v.l.), Schiffskapitän Alfred Kottas (7.v.l.), Flugkapitän Richardheinrich Schirmacher (9.v.l.) und Luftbildner Siegfried Sauter (ohne Uniformmütze)



M/S "Helmholtz". M/S "Schwabenland".

In addition to the expedition ship M/S "Schwabenland" and the two aircraft, Deutsche Lufthansa made its commercial organisation, its Atlantic flight operations management and its technical management available. It selected the aircraft and flight personnel, supervised the conversion of the aircraft, determined the suitable fuel for the aircraft and procured it.

Hansa-Luftbild GmbH equipped the expedition ship from its own stocks with measuring instruments for surveying tasks, assembled the aerial photography equipment, adjusted the aerial photography equipment in the aircraft and provided experienced and capable aerial photographers for the expedition.

From catapult ship to expedition ship

Right on schedule, the M/S Schwabenland arrived in Hamburg on the night of 27 October 1938. The ship was immediately moored to the piles so that the heating oil tanks could be emptied and degassed before conversion work began. On 1 November, the ship was docked.

An army of engineers and workers then poured onto the deck, cargo holds and engine room of the meticulously scrubbed and painted ship with its white, yellow and brown superstructure, transforming it in no time at all into a huge multi-storey construction site to which curious onlookers were denied access. Work was carried out around the clock in day, night and Sunday shifts, as the delivery date for the trial run on 15 December 1938 at 8 o'clock sharp was was fast approaching.

The conversion programme for M/S Schwabenland was enormous. Until then, the ship had been used by Deutsche Lufthansa almost exclusively in tropical waters. However, the expedition's destination was the coldest and stormiest waters on earth, with predominantly high seas. The Antarctic waters further south, which the ship would be sailing in, posed even greater demands on the structural integrity of the hull and its outer skin due to the risk of ice.

For this reason, it was necessary to install an ice protection belt along the entire length of the ship, from 60 centimetres above the low-load line to 60 centimetres below the light load line, covering approximately two plate decks. On the bow, a shoe had to be fitted to a height of at least one metre above the deep load line. The thickness of the plates in the bow and in the engine room area was to be 25 millimetres, with a stepped thickness of 22 millimetres in between and 20 millimetres at the stern.

In addition, a tank heater was installed for the sea valves and all floor tanks, as well as for the fore and aft peaks, to prevent the fresh water supply from freezing, as well as the installation of a boiler with a heating surface of approximately 125 square metres in a niche of the high tanks at the front edge of the engine room instead of the existing boiler above the existing low tanks, which was too small.

To accommodate the additional 600 tonnes of fuel, cargo hold III had to be converted into a low tank. Additional fresh water tanks were also required.

The bulwark between the middle superstructure and the aft deck had to be raised to full deck height. Furthermore, ice stringers had to be installed in the bow area and frame frames or suitable reinforcements had to be installed to support the outer skin of the ship in the engine room area, as well as iron hatch covers in the cargo holds I, II, IV and V.

Furthermore, some of the dry provisions rooms and cold storage rooms had been relocated and expanded, and a shaft had to be installed on both sides of the keel at the aft edge of hatch I to accommodate two additional echo sounders and the speed log. The bronze propellers had to be replaced with cast steel propellers, and a lookout barrel had to be installed on the foremast above the existing crow's nest.

The conversion programme for the ship was based, as far as the requirements of sailing in ice allowed, on the regions, based on information provided by Captain Otto Kraul, who had gained 20 years of experience in the Arctic and Antarctic as a whaler and whaling captain and was recruited as an ice pilot for the third Antarctic expedition.

The situation was different when it came to converting and refitting additional cabins. Deutsche Lufthansa had already carried out most of the interior work to accommodate the captain, the seven deck officers and engine crew, as well as the pilots, flight crews and launch crews in comfortable cabins. The crews mostly lived in cabins for three; they had a cosy mess under the forecastle, while the aircraft crews and launch personnel had a mess amidships.

Inside the cabin superstructure, in addition to the saloon, there were the cabins and mess for the ship's officers, the cabins for the pilots and the pilot, and a double cabin for members of the Deutsche Lufthansa management who occasionally made business trips on the ship.

However, this was not nearly enough to accommodate all the expedition members, especially the scientists. Therefore, nine additional single and double cabins had to be installed, as well as workrooms for the scientists and separate laboratories for the biologist and oceanographer. After all, 82 men were involved in the expedition, almost twice the number originally planned when the ship was built.

The special requests made during the conversion by the ship's management and individual expedition members for improvements to the facilities and equipment at their workplaces were met as far as possible.

The radio equipment of the M/S "Schwabenland" During its service as a catapult ship for DLH, it was already able to compete with the largest German passenger ships. For use as an expedition ship, a radio telephone system was additionally installed, which was sufficient for radio communication up to a distance of 600 kilometres. As it later transpired, under good atmospheric conditions, flawless communication was occasionally possible up to 1,000 kilometres away.

The entire radio system, including the radio direction finder, was conveniently located in a room adjacent to the chart house on the bridge deck. The radio officer operating the direction finder was therefore in direct contact with the officer on watch on the bridge.

In the chart house, M/S "Schwabenland" had an Anschütz circular compass system and an Atlas echo system with display device.

The Nautical Technical Department of the High Command of the Kriegsmarine had generously provided an HSVA voyage measuring system for the expedition and a universal echo sounder and an Atlas depth sounder for the pilot station located amidships. The trip-measuring device had two display devices, one of which was on the bridge and the other, coupled with a mile counter, was housed in the chart room.

The first electrician, Herbert Bruns from Atlas-Werke Bremen, was responsible for maintaining all of this electrical equipment.

For bridge duty, the same office of the High Command of the Navy provided five powerful night-vision goggles, a rangefinder with a two-metre base and a sextant, so that the M/S "Schwabenland" was also well equipped in this area.

The ship's equipment also included a 60 million HK spotlight, which was located on the observation deck above the bridge.

The motorboat for assisting with launches on the high seas was an important addition to the existing lifeboats. It was located on the aft deck next to the crane, alongside a more powerful motorboat borrowed from the Norddeutscher Lloyd fleet for expedition purposes, which was also to serve as a lifeboat and was equipped with radio telegraphy for this purpose.

As the M/S "Schwabenland" had not carried any cargo as an aircraft base, it was Achieving a favourable trim position with 3,500 tonnes of sand and stone ballast distributed in the lower spaces and in the tween deck. For the voyage in the Arctic Ocean, the deepest possible draught had to be achieved to protect the two propellers. To achieve this, it would have been possible to increase the ballast. The head of the Deutsche Werft shipyard, Dr. Scholz, had a better idea. He suggested combining the higher load with increased safety against sinking by filling the empty lower spaces of the ship with empty corrugated barrels. The problem was to procure several thousand of these barrels in such a short time. It was solved by Mannesmann-Stahlblech-AG agreeing to manufacture and deliver 23,000 barrels, 18,500 of which disappeared into the huge spaces below deck, properly stowed on fascine wood. The tween deck above them was welded watertight and the hatches were screwed shut with iron covers. According to calculations, this barrel load should have kept the ship afloat for some time, even if two of the lower compartments were to spring a leak during the journey through the ice.

The transport of 1,785 tonnes of fuel for The ship's engines were powered by an additional tank with a capacity of almost 600 tonnes. This guaranteed the ship a range of 24,000 nautical miles and made it unnecessary to refuel on the return journey. The rest of this fuel was not taken on board until one day after the trial run.

Scientists and crew complete

By the end of October, it was clear which scientists would be working on board the M/S Schwabenland during the Antarctic expedition. One by one, they introduced themselves to the expedition leader, Captain Alfred Ritscher.

The first to arrive was Dr Ernst Herrmann, who had been selected as a geographer by the Reich Minister of Education. He was followed by the first meteorologist from the German Naval Observatory in Hamburg, Dr Herbert Regula, and Heinz Lange from the Reich Office for Weather Services in Berlin as the second meteorologist. Karl-Heinz Paulsen introduced himself to Alfred Ritscher as an oceanographer, followed by Leo Gburek, a geophysicist from the Earth Magnetic Institute in Leipzig, and Erich Barkley, a trainee biologist from the Reich Fisheries Office, Institute for Whale Research in Hamburg. The last to arrive were the two technical assistants, meteorologist Walter Krüger from the Reich Weather Service in Berlin and Wilhelm Gockel from the Naval Observatory in Wilhelmshaven.

The two pilots, Rudolf Mayr, pilot of the Dornier Wal flying boat "Passat", and Richardheinrich Schirmacher, pilot of the Dornier Wal flying boat "Boreas", as well as the crew members of both aircraft, aircraft mechanics Franz Preuschoff and Kurt Loesener, radio operators Herbert Ruhnke and Erich Gruber, and the two aerial photographers who were participating in the expedition on behalf of Hansa-Luftbild GmbH, Max Bundermann and Siegfried Sauter, had already made the acquaintance of Captain Ritscher. All the important positions on the scientific staff and among the flying personnel were thus filled.

The captain of the expedition ship M/S "Schwabenland", Alfred Kottas, the Ka-
Pitän Ritscher, who knew Herbert Amelang from his time at Lufthansa, introduced his officers to the expedition leader: Herbert Amelang as first officer, Karl-Heinz Röbke as second officer, Hans Werner Viereck as third officer, Vincenz Grisar as fourth officer, ship radio operator Erich Harmsen, ship radio officer Kurt Bojahr, ship radio officer Ludwig Müllmerstadt, chief engineer Karl Uhlig, Second Engineer Robert Schulz, Third Engineer Henry Maas, Fourth Engineer Edgar Gäng, Fourth Engineer Hans Nielsen and Electrical Engineer Herbert Bruns.

Special positions among the officers were held by the ice pilot, merchant navy captain Otto Kraul from the High Command of the Kriegsmarine, one of the most important men on the expedition alongside expedition leader Captain Ritscher, and the ship's doctor Dr. Josef Bludau, who had been sent by the NDL Bremen.

American polar explorer Byrd as advisor

The entire ship's crew, which had been nominated by Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen for the third Antarctic expedition, and all the scientists involved met for the first time in the first week of November at the Urania cinema in Hamburg. Expedition leader Ritscher had asked them to attend a special event, and everyone had turned up.

Ritscher had invited the 50-year-old American polar explorer Richard
Evelyn Byrd, born in Winchester, Virginia, to show his Antarctic film
(Virginia), to show his Antarctic film and give the audience
the opportunity to ask questions afterwards. Byrd was
undoubtedly one of the most distinguished and experienced
international polar explorers, who had made flying in the
polar regions his life's work.
his life's work.

Byrd entered the Virginia Military Institute at an early age and subsequently enrolled in the Naval Academy, where he graduated in 1912. During the First World War, which he fought as a naval officer, he commanded the American naval forces in Canadian waters. In 1921, having risen to the rank of rear admiral, he retired to devote himself entirely to polar research, particularly aviation in and over the polar regions.

During the McMillan Expedition to Greenland in 1925, the then 37-year-old gained his first insights and experience as a polar explorer; from Etha, he ventured on flights into the Arctic region. Together with Floyd Bennett, Byrd flew over the North Pole from Ny-Ale-sund on Spitsbergen on 9 May 1926, covering the 2,600-kilometre distance in 15.5 hours. Byrd made his first transatlantic flight from New York to Frankfurt am Main from 29 June to 1 July 1927.

He began his Antarctic expedition in 1928 with two ships, three aircraft and 41 companions. During this expedition, he reached Wal Bay on the Ross Ice Shelf in December 1928, where he and his companions built the Little America station. In 1928/29, Byrd spent the winter alone in Antarctica.

On 28/29 November 1929, he flew over the South Pole with three companions in 18.5 hours. In 1930, he returned to America.

Byrd returned to Antarctica for the second time between 1933 and 1936. He was accompanied by 56 team members, and his base camp was once again "Little America". Byrd lived alone in a small weather station in Antarctica for almost seven months, from 22 March 1934 to 14 October 1934, about 200 kilometres from the main camp.

alone in a small weather station in Antarctica, about 200 kilometres from the main camp.

Both the film and Byrd's remarks, as well as the advice he gave to the expedition leader, the scientists and, last but not least, the pilots of the upcoming third German Antarctic expedition based on his many years of experience, confirmed the international reputation that preceded this Antarctic expert. The press was not invited to the event at the "Urania" cinema in Hamburg, and there was no mention of it in the press.

. The project remained secret.

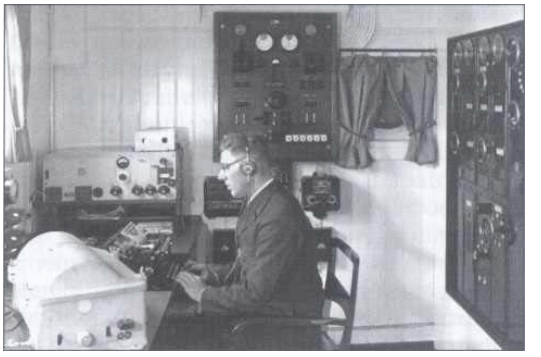
The final phase of preparations

In mid-November 1938, the final phase of the expedition began for Captain Ritscher. He writes about this in his report:

"The final preparations for the voyage were not without their worries. It was necessary to draw up contracts with the immediate circle of expedition participants, insofar as Deutsche Lufthansa had not already done this for its personnel through its commercial management, and to take out insurance for the 82 participants against all possible health risks in the form of various types of accident, disability and sickness insurance, insurance against invalidity, illness and medical treatment abroad, and insurance for personal effects and equipment, in order to protect them against all conceivable contingencies; a high-value life insurance policy was also taken out. disability, illness, medical treatment abroad, and insurance for personal effects and equipment in order to protect them against all conceivable contingencies; high-value life insurance was also taken out for each participant. The entire insurance package was taken over by Delvag (Deutsche Luftversicherungs-Akti-engesellschaft) under its ever-helpful director, Dr. Döhring.

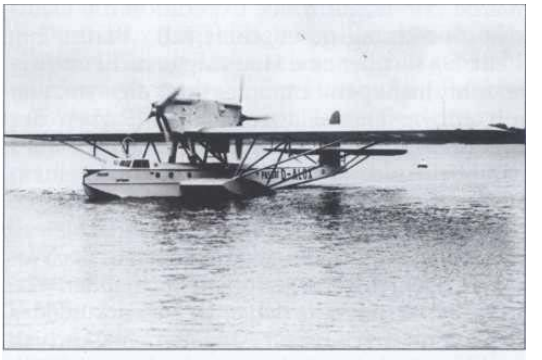
The salaries of the participants were increased by half as a polar allowance based on the standard rates. This arrangement, which not only allowed particularly proven personnel to be deployed in all positions, including the simpler ones, but also to be remunerated accordingly for their increased commitment, meant that, in conjunction with the generous and excellent board set at 2 RM per person per day, it was possible to assemble an excellent, compliant and enthusiastic crew that never failed during the voyage. per person per day, it was possible to assemble an excellent, compliant and enthusiastic crew that never failed during the voyage.

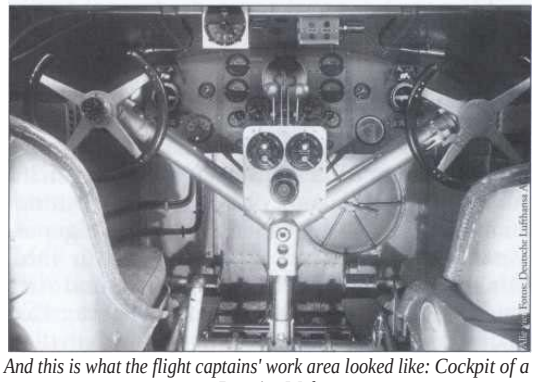
The subordinate position of the heads of the individual service groups, who were independent within their groups, to the expedition management was ensured by a



This is how work was carried out in the radio room of the motor ship "Schwabenland".

The two flying boats of the aircraft carrier "Schwabenland" were the "Boreas"(above) and the "Passat"(below).





And this is what the flight captains' work area looked like: Cockpit of a Dornier Wal

special service instructions issued by the representative for the Four-Year Plan. No serious difficulties arose in this regard. The protocol stipulating the exclusive responsibility of the expedition leader for decisions he made, which was intended for cases of serious disagreement, never had to be invoked. The circumstances were favourable in this respect, as I myself had experience in ship management and as a former pilot and commander of large aircraft formations and as an expedition leader in Arctic sea voyages. In addition, through many years of involvement in the various scientific disciplines, I had gained a comprehensive overview of the scientific tasks to be performed here.

One week before departure, there was still

The question of which flag the expedition should sail under remained unresolved, for which the designation 'German Antarctic Expedition' was chosen. Antarctic

Expedition 1938/39' had been decided, following the example of previous German expeditions. It turned out that neither Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Nord-deutsche Lloyd, nor the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft were in a position to act as shipowners for the venture. Finally, the German Research Society E.B., Berlin, was appointed as the sponsor of the expedition. As it did not have its own flag, the expedition sailed under its own flag, which I designed and which combined the colours of the sea and the air; its blue centre was bordered at the top and bottom by a wide yellow stripe.

The preparations for Christmas

which fell during the sea voyage, were made in the week before departure. Some of the scientists undertook this task with the assistance of the expedition office. With skill and understanding, appropriate and useful gifts were selected; the satisfied, happy faces of the recipients later proved how well the choice had been made.

Flight captain Mayr was given the task of inspecting the special polar equipment already earmarked for the aircraft crews at the well-known sports shop Schuster in Munich, supplementing it if necessary on his own responsibility, and ensuring that it was manufactured and delivered on time and to the correct specifications. In accordance with the principles of the expedition management, this point was not treated narrow-mindedly, despite the obvious need for restraint.

For the intended purpose, only the best was good enough; savings were then made wherever possible in terms of quantity.

For rifles, ammunition and coloured film -

Dr. Herr-mann, who already had experience in this field, was responsible for the on-board recordings. He also purchased the books selected over the past few weeks for the expedition library together with Dr. Todt, the office manager, who was well versed in relevant polar literature, and enriched it with donations of his own writings.

In the collection depots in Travemünde, in the

In the office on Glockengießerwall [in Hamburg] and in the shed at the Deutsche Werft shipyard, valuable equipment gradually piled up into large stacks. As there was still a lack of lockable storage space on board because work was continuing on the ship until the last minute, both inside and outside, the transfer of these goods had to be postponed again and again, finally until the day before departure. On 14 December, all preparations were complete. The ship was moved to the Imperator piles in Waltershofer Harbour and, after one of the flying boats had been taken on board and secured for sea, it was ready for the trial run scheduled for 8 a.m. on 15 December.

The Deutsche Werft shipyard had thus kept its deadline. Only a few remaining tasks had to be completed at the shipyard itself. The conversion of the M/S Schwabenland into an Antarctic-worthy expedition ship had cost around one million Reichsmarks, a third of the total expedition budget.

The trial run

For Captain Alfred Ritscher, 15 December 1938 was a big day. Standing at the railing of his expedition ship M/S Schwabenland at 8 o'clock in the morning, he watched as the last shipyard workers, painters, carpenters, welders, foremen and engineers left the ship via the port side ladder and the trial voyage guests boarded via the starboard ladder from the motor launches.

A sunny morning followed the chilly winter night, and Ritscher had the impression that the clear weather contributed to the festive mood of the passengers.

The banks of the Elbe had donned their winter garb, and the , , , and expedition ships and M/S "Schwabenland" set off and headed for the Heligoland Bight.

towards Heligoland Bay.

The somewhat worried faces of some members of the Deutsche Werft test run command gradually brightened. It became apparent that both thoroughly overhauled engines with the new steel propellers were running flawlessly at all speeds, confirming the success of the work carried out in day, night and Sunday shifts to the limits of their capacity. There were no grounds for complaint.

The guests on board the test run, who were representatives of ministries, authorities, institutes and companies, had the opportunity during the trip to view the workplaces, facilities and equipment created for the scientists, ask them for information and offer advice.

State Councillor Wohlthat, the most prominent passenger on board, gathered the scientists,
the aircraft crews and the ship's officers in the saloon to take the opportunity to emphasise the importance of the expedition one last time before it began. He once again pointed out the organisational regulations that had been made for the expedition, which governed the terms of service on board, but also emphasised the common interests of all expedition participants and their unity under the expedition leadership.

Before State Councillor Wohlthat bid farewell to the participants on behalf of his superior, Hermann Göring, he did not forget to point out the great national significance of the expedition for National Socialist Germany.

A hearty stew lunch was served at long tables in the common room, to which all participants in the trial voyage were invited. Humorous speeches were made and cheerful conversations were held.

Between lunch and coffee, final discussions with representatives of the ministries, authorities and institutions took place under the direction of State Councillor Wohlthat.

Some of the participants did not want to miss the opportunity to experience the ship's journey down the Elbe on the promenade deck or on the bridge, despite the winter chill, and were not prepared to give up their places even as the temperature gradually dropped. These "passengers" were also taken care of and provided with coffee, liqueurs and tobacco.

When evening fell and the end of the test drive drew nearer, a Labskausessen, known in sailors' parlance as "Ze-ment", once again in the common room.

At 6 p.m., the trial run ended in Cuxhaven. The ship then continued upriver on the Elbe and finally moored at the Emperor's Piles to be ready for the next morning to take on the last of the equipment and the second aircraft.

Most of the guests took the train to Hamburg to say goodbye at the main station. A few groups took the opportunity to toast the maiden voyage of the M/S "Schwabenland" with a warming drink.

"All visitors off board – we're leaving!"

The penultimate day, Friday, 16 December 1938, was once again filled with the remaining work, the transfer of the last items of equipment from the collection depots, the transfer of fuel for the aircraft and the transfer of the second aircraft on board.

With that, all preparations for departure were complete, and Ritscher could breathe a sigh of relief: the deadline had been met.

On the morning of the day of departure, Saturday, 17 December 1938, there was once again a flurry of activity on board. This was due to a few visitors, relatives of expedition members who had been brought to the ship by launch, and the Hamburg police president Christiansen with his entourage.

Dr. Todt, the head of the expedition office, brought the most important mail for Alfred Ritsch and the important expedition cash box on board. The secretary who followed him took care of the last telegrams on board and presented Ritschner with the last letters for his signature. Meanwhile, steam tugs crowded around the ship to pump 49,000 litres of fuel for the aircraft.

At 3 p.m., the unmistakable command rang out from the bridge of the
M/S Schwabenland: "All visitors disembark – we're leaving!"
of the M/S Schwabenland blared the unmistakable command from the bridge: "All visitors disembark – we're leaving!"

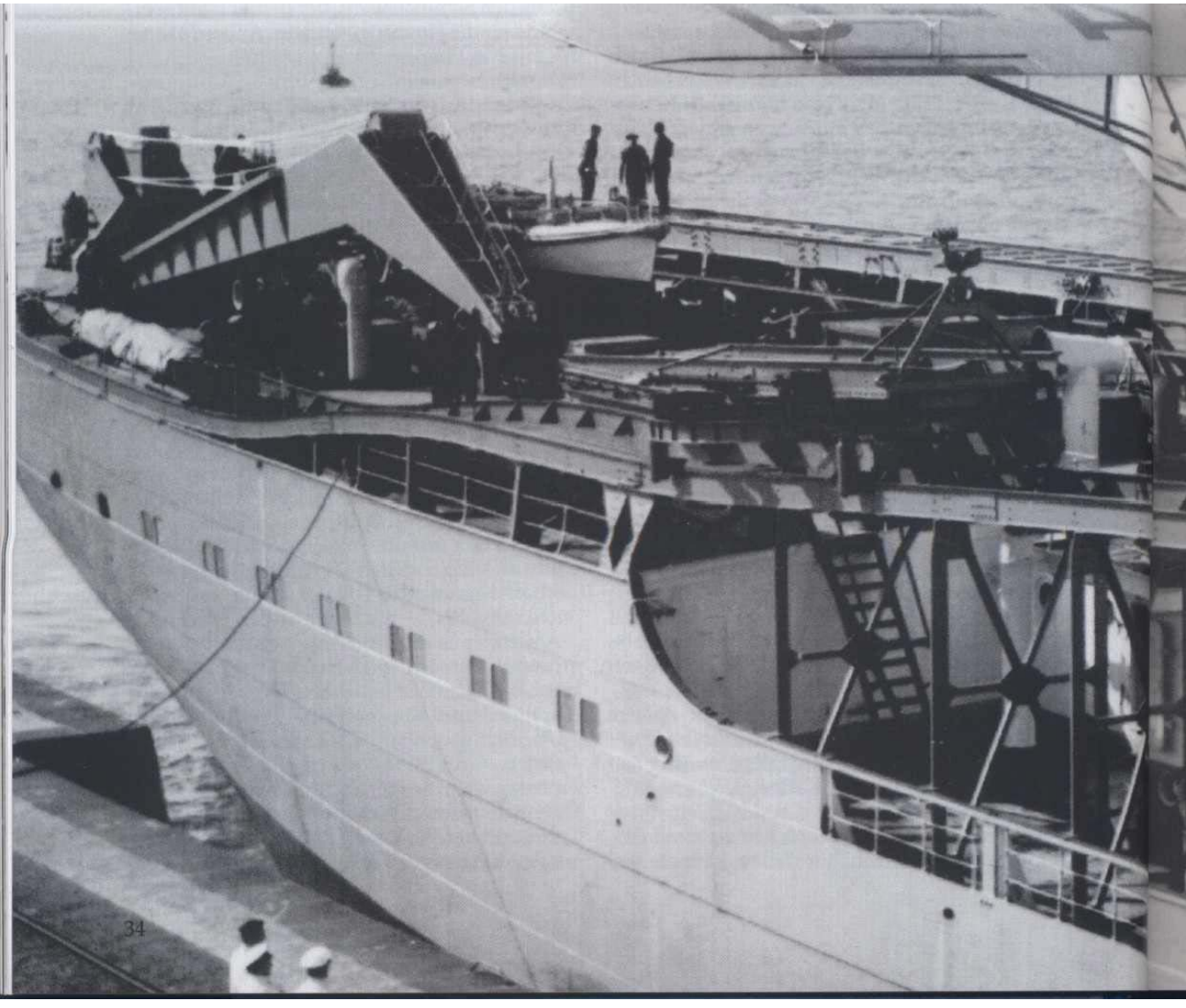
The last guest to leave the ship was Vice Admiral Wolff, the admiral of the Hamburg Naval Base. He had conveyed the warmest greetings of the Commander-in-Chief of the Kriegsmarine, General Admiral Raeder, to the expedition leader, Captain Alfred Ritscher, and the captain of the M/S "Schwabenland", Alfred Kottas. He wished the ship a safe voyage and the crew every success on their Antarctic expedition.

From Hamburg to the end of the world

The departure

Captain Alfred Kottas stands on the bridge of the M/S "Schwa-benland". He looks at the calendar. It is Saturday, 17 December 1938. Then he looks at his watch: 12:33 p.m. A few moments later, a few short commands echo through the bridge. A little later, the ship, pulled by a tugboat, leaves the quay of the port of Hamburg.

For the captain and the ship, but also for Alfred Ritscher, the expedition leader standing next to the captain, this is a historic moment: at this very minute, the




D-AGAT

The third major German Antarctic expedition. A ship sets sail for the end of the world, and the world takes no notice. There is no band playing. Instead of a large crowd waving goodbye, there is only a small group of people on the quay, crew members and other participants in the voyage. The captain's relatives are not among them; he has no wife and no family. For several years now, his "home" has been his ship, the M/S "Schwabenland". He is proud to be allowed to sail it to Antarctica, a continent still unknown to him.

The day began with bright sunshine from a cloudless blue sky. The sun is still shining as the silhouette of the port of Hamburg, the shipyards, the tall buildings and the church towers slowly disappear.

The captain's gaze is now fixed on the sunlit banks of the Elbe as the ship glides downstream. The hands of the large clock on the bridge move forward minute by minute, hour by hour.

At 8.30 p.m., the "Alten Liebe" light beacon flashes near Cuxhaven. The captain sees it as a silent farewell. In the darkness of the starry winter night Winternacht bahnt sich M/S "Schwabenland" makes its way. The thermometer has dropped to 18 degrees below zero.

Several passengers have gathered in the saloon around ice pilot Otto Kraul, who turns out to be an entertaining storyteller and dispels the fatigue that has overcome some of them after the exertions of the last few days.

Around 11 p.m., the group disperses. The men leave the saloon to go to their cabins. There is complete chaos. Everyone had to rush to bring their personal belongings on board. No one had time to unpack and put things away. So almost everything is still in suitcases and boxes that you have to climb over to reach your bunk. Tomorrow is another day for tidying up, stowing away and sorting things out.

On this first evening on board, with night already falling, the order of the day is sleep, nothing but sleep.

Snow flurries instead of sunshine

The next day, a Sunday, begins with sunshine again. There is an easterly wind of 6 to 7, with a sea state of 5. At midday, the M/S Schwabenland is in the middle of the North Sea, about 132 nautical miles west of the lightship Elbe I. Some crew members are enjoying the sun and sea air on the upper deck. The cold air over the relatively warm water has caused heavy sea smoke to form, a phenomenon that is not all that common.

In the late afternoon, the sun disappears and snow flurries begin. It is 4 to 5 degrees below zero, a slight foretaste of the destination. Some ask for their clothing, others join them when the weather does not improve. The fur hats, which almost everyone is wearing for the first time, prompt joking remarks.

As it becomes more uncomfortable on deck, we head Below deck, everyone who hasn't done so yet is trying to tidy up their cabins. For some, this is a task that takes several hours and is only interrupted by dinner.

Expedition leader Ritscher has used Sunday afternoon for a long conversation with Captain Kottas and ice pilot Kraul. The question at hand is: What can we expect in Antarctica?

On the third day of the trip, there is a lot of activity at hatch II, behind which it is completely overcrowded and where all the equipment is stored: boat equipment and manila lines, beer crates, barrels of hardtack, boxes of parachutes, clothing equipment, suitcases and much more, all jumbled together and stacked on top of each other, with no sign of order. When boarding, there was not enough time, light or space to organise everything and stow it away properly. This now has to be done, and it cannot be done in a few hours; it will take several days.

The ship is now making good progress. Captain Kottas is satisfied, as is his first officer Amelang, who is also on the bridge. There is something to see this afternoon: Dover has emerged from the fog off the sunlit English chalk coast. This is nothing new for Kottas and Amelang, who have seen this view many times before on earlier voyages with other ships, but it is particularly beautiful in the afternoon sun.

As expected, the tidying up in hatch II takes several days until the materials and equipment are distributed to the work groups.

A thorough and feverish search proves unsuccessful for a box of fur clothing, a tent and a sledge provided by the well-known airship captain Dr Eckner Ritscher. It then transpires that this generous donation only arrived in Hamburg on the day of departure.

and there was no time or opportunity to transport the items to the port and onto the ship.

Everyday life on board

Life on board soon settled into a regular routine after leaving Hamburg. Everything went according to plan.

For the few athletes who are not on watch, the day begins at 6 a.m. with morning exercises on the upper deck, led by the meteorologists. This is followed by breakfast, which is served between 7.30 and 8.30 a.m. Afterwards, everyone goes about their work.

Lunch is served at 12 noon. While the various missions have enough seats at the tables, the salon only has eleven seats for the 14 expedition members assigned there. Since this would have meant having lunch and dinner in two shifts, another solution had to be found. The pilots' suggestion to have the two main meals in the spacious cabin of pilot Schirmacher, with one other member of the salon always present, was accepted, thus solving the problem amicably. Schirmacher's cabin was close to the salon, so that the stewards had no difficulty in serving everyone at the same time.

A short coffee break following lunch is held together in the saloon, which always provides a convenient opportunity to discuss the many issues of the daily work programme and the anticipated further development of scientific and aviation work.

Tea time is from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The time until dinner at 6 p.m. is filled with ongoing work and the twice-weekly lectures and information events.

After dinner, chess and skat enthusiasts meet to play games, which often last until 11 p.m., even though drinks are no longer served after 10 p.m.

Once a week, there are community evenings , during which the participants who are not on duty get together for a convivial get-together without any programme. The ship's doctor, Dr Josef Bludau, provides expert advice to the head chef, Otto Sieland, and his assistants, who ensure that all meals are wholesome, excellent and well prepared. As is customary at sea, On Thursdays, Sundays and public holidays, these meals are particularly generous as part of the planned catering allowance. Those celebrating their birthday are treated to a poem from the confectioners' guild by baker and confectioner Gottfried Thole. The days fly by, and each day brings the expedition participants closer to their goal.

The scientists' work begins

The next few days bring strong tailwinds. Even with wind force 7, the ship remains remarkably calm. This is good for the "inexperienced" on board, who can slowly get used to the movements of the ship without immediately being struck by agonising seasickness.

At 6:30 a.m. on 20 December, the M/S Schwabenland passes Ushant at the western end of the English Channel. The ship then heads south at high speed. It is no longer so cold. The influence of the Gulf Stream moderates the temperature. The fur hats disappear and are increasingly replaced by tropical clothing.

Long before reaching Ushant, meteorologists Dr Herbert Regula and Heinz Lange, assisted by their assistants, have begun their scheduled work: measuring wind speed and temperature at high altitudes and taking aerological measurements. The meteorologists and their assistants are fully occupied with the radio probe ascents, which take place one to three times a day. Geophysicist Leo Gburek also provides valuable assistance.

The first radio probe ascent is a particularly noteworthy experience for all participants.
An event not to be missed. They crowd around hatch V. After a while, the balloon, which is one and a half metres in diameter, emerges from the hatch shaft with the radio probe. Despite the wind speed of 50 km/h, which causes the balloon to drift almost horizontally for a few hundred metres before gaining altitude, the launch proceeds without a hitch. The geographer, Dr. Herrmann, who has hurriedly fetched his movie camera to film the balloon's first ascent, arrives on deck too late and asks for a repeat. One of the spectators climbs into the hatch to arrange this. It takes a long time. Nothing happens. It is becoming uncomfortable in the damp, cold air. Dr. Herrmann asks those standing around to wait; he needs them for his film shots and offers those who remain a round of grog. Then something moves in the

Hatch V was opened and a shout rang out: "Look out, the balloon's coming!" Now it was time to pay attention. The film camera whirred and, accompanied by the laughter of the spectators, a small colourful children's balloon swayed out of the hatch, passing the astonished face of the geographer, who knew how to have fun. The promised round of grog turned into two.

The geographer is an expert in his field, but initially there is little for him to do on board. In addition, Dr. Herrmann is a talented organiser, enthusiastic, helpful and eager to make himself useful. He organises the sounding service, manages all the expedition supplies as assistant to the expedition leader, gets to know the third ship's officer, Hans Werner Viereck, during his soundings, and looks after the expedition's photographic material, as he is an expert in colour film photography. Third officer Hans Werner Viereck during his soundings and looks after the expedition's photographic material, as he has extensive experience in colour film photography, which he gained on his own expeditions to Spitsbergen.

Oceanographer Paulsen had already begun his surface measurements off the Portuguese coast; the geophysicist had carried out radiation measurements and core sampling at an early stage

, for which the spacious decks of the M/S Schwabenland, with its wind-sheltered corners, provided him with excellent observation points.

Biologist Barkley is not to be envied for the amount of work he has to do.

. He has the most extensive preparatory work of all the scientists on board to complete before the ship reaches the research area, in order to repair his numerous fishing gear and set up his laboratory for recording the rare catches he intends to make.

All the scientists are using the long voyage to conscientiously complete all the necessary preparatory work before the ship arrives in the Antarctic research area.

What do the pilots do when they are not flying?

The two pilots, Captain Rudolf Mayr and Captain Richardheinrich Schirmacher, are also busy preparing for their mission in Antarctica with their crews. The success of the entire expedition depends largely on their successful mission.

The eight men, including the two pilots, two aircraft mechanics, two radio operators and two aerial photographers, not only have to take care of equipping their two aircraft with all their equipment, on which which depends on their safety during the flights and any emergency landings in the icy waters off the Antarctic coast or, what would probably be even worse, on the continent itself. The crews of the two aircraft are also the ones who are exposed to the greatest dangers and on whom the success of the entire expedition depends. The preparations for their missions in Antarctica must therefore be all the more thorough.

The equipment and materials procured in Hamburg during the preparatory period have already been brought out of Luke II into the light of day.

At dusk and at night, in the bitter cold, the last preparations are being made.

Under clear skies, aircraft crews practise using the Libellen sextant. These devices, developed for astronomical positioning from aircraft, differ from the sextants commonly used on ships in that they have a spirit level built into the field of view, which frees the observer from having to use the natural horizon, because if this is obscured by heavy haze, the angle measurement between the star and the horizon will be inaccurate.

In preparation for their missions, the pilots and their crews had to familiarise themselves with the various devices, especially the RKM C/5 series measuring devices from Zeiss-Aerotopograph, which provide individual images in 18 x 18 centimetre format with 60 per cent overlap. A total of 60 film reels, each 60 metres long, were taken along for both devices.

The devices are located in the mail room behind the bulkhead separating it from the fuel compartment, one on each side at an angle of 20 degrees to the horizon, so that they can be clearly seen from

3,000 metres above ground level, they can clearly detect an area of up to 25 kilometres to each side of the aircraft and still provide a flawless image up to 50 kilometres away. Even at a distance of 100 kilometres from the aircraft, the images still provide a good interpretation of the terrain with a high degree of certainty.

On 21 December, three days before Christmas,

it becomes noticeably warmer. Today, M/S "Swabia" off Cape Finisterre, past the Spanish coast. Most of the 82 people on board the expedition ship probably know or suspect that a few hundred kilometres inland, a bitter civil war is raging, people are dying every day, not only soldiers, but also women and children, that bombs are falling, centuries-old monuments are being reduced to rubble

are reduced to rubble and ashes — and that German soldiers and aircraft are also involved in this civil war, volunteers from the German "Legion Condor", whose commander-in-chief is General Field Marshal Hermann Göring.

There are also two aircraft on board the M/S Schwabenland, but they are unarmed and are being used for scientific research on a continent that has never experienced war and is a continent of peace.

Christmas on board

Two days before Christmas, at 11 p.m. on the evening of 22 December, the M/S Schwabenland passes Cape Vincent on the Portuguese coast. Those who are free from their duties and tasks on board join in the late-night preparations for Christmas. The programme has been set for several days. The presents purchased in Hamburg have also been laid out. A collection on board enables further presents to be bought from the ship's supplies.

The following day, 23 December, the ship approaches the African coast. Several echo soundings are carried out for testing and comparison. There is no reason to carry out a series of measurements, as no significant new results are expected.

The dawn of Christmas Day gives the meteorologists a special reason to celebrate: despite wind forces of 6 to 7, they have managed to launch a radiosonde particularly well. The meteorologists, who are not fond of idle spectators, are glad that the number of onlookers has decreased noticeably during the course of the day. They hope that they will win the international prize of 30,000 pounds for reaching the peak altitude of
30,000 metres. That would be the best Christmas present they could wish for.

In the afternoon, Captain Kottas makes all non-essential crew members available for the festive decoration of the common room located amidships on the main deck under the superstructure. Everywhere, the ship has been cleaned for the festive occasion.

At 5:30 p.m., the celebration begins, initially separately in the individual churches due to space constraints, with a festive meal. There is asparagus with ham, not counted by stalks or slices. Everyone can eat as much as they like and can manage. This applies to all 82 participants on all days of the trip. The meals are also the same in all churches.

At 6:30 p.m., the celebration continues in the common room. With ingenuity and skill, the room has been transformed into a banquet hall. In the middle of the room, tables and benches decorated with fir greenery are set up. On the port side are two fresh fir trees with brightly lit decorations. Two tables standing slightly apart are covered with a snow-white tablecloth, concealing the numbered gift packages.

The four walls of the room are decorated with imperial flags, the ship's own expedition flag and colourful signal flags hanging close together. Electricians and photographers have provided additional light sources in the corners of the room. There is also a small ship's band, which is located in a niche on the starboard side. On each table there are three silver-necked bottles of Bill-Bräu beer, a donation from the expedition management.

In a short speech, expedition leader Alfred Ritscher explains the purpose and goal of the undertaking, which requires the full commitment of all
and the comradely cooperation of all to ensure its success. Finally, he wishes all participants a happy journey and every success in completing their tasks on the expedition, as well as a merry Christmas.

At 8 p.m., the celebration is unexpectedly interrupted. The Christmas speech of Rudolf Hess, deputy leader of the Nazi Party, is broadcast over the loudspeakers. However, the atmospheric disturbances are so great that the transmission has to be interrupted. Second officer Karl-Heinz Röbke, acting as honorary political leader of the Schwabenland, concludes this part of the celebration with a "Sieg Heil" to the Führer and the Reich.

This is followed by the distribution of Christmas presents, which hold surprises for some. The small ship's band receives much applause
which contributes significantly to the festive and cheerful atmosphere far from home with its renditions of folk and Christmas songs. The band consists of a violinist, a zither player, an accordionist and a flutist. Since the beginning of the voyage, they have often practised for this celebration in their spare time.

The rest of the evening is filled with stories from seafaring life, in night and ice, with the ice pilot Kraul receiving the loudest applause for his skilful and humorous storytelling.

The later it gets, the more the mood grows and the more talented performers are discovered. The repertoire of the Katapult-

The resourcefulness of the ship's captain, Wilhelm Hartmann, is almost inexhaustible, and the sailor Emil Brandt turns out to be a natural talent.

Shortly after midnight, the first guests leave almost unnoticed. Some go up to the upper deck, look up at the starry sky, and think of home, from which they are more than 3,500 kilometres away, to their families and loved ones in their lives, to communicate with them across distance and time.

Others retreat to their cabins, wanting to be alone with their thoughts, unwrapping gifts they were given when they left Hamburg.

It is not until around 2 a.m. that the last ones leave the festively decorated common room, where they were given a few hours of joy on this Christmas Eve.

Equator baptism on New Year's Eve

In the early hours of Christmas Day, 25 December 1938, the M/S Schwabenland passes the northernmost of the Canary Islands, Lanzarote, and at 7 a.m. Las Palmas lies abeam on the starboard side in the trade wind haze. The air temperature has risen sharply in the meantime.

The ship is sailing in the northeast trade winds. Winds of force 5 to 6 with light pressure are pushing M/S Schwabenland southward. The voyage continues close to the African coast on a straight course, past Cape Verde, with the intention of crossing the equator at 15° west.

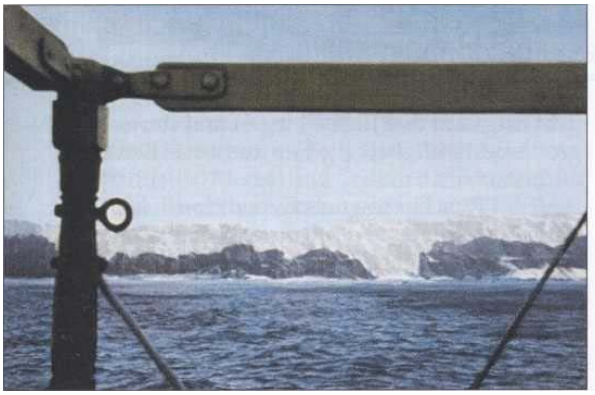
Around noon, the African coast at Cap Corvoeiro emerges from the trade wind haze ahead on the port side. It is monotonous and desolate: sandy beaches and sand dunes as far as the eye can see. The Atlantic swell rolls with full force against the cliffs scattered here and there. Then the sandy beach turns into a rocky cliff that stretches to Cap Blanco. A few test soundings are made with the echo sounder and compared with the chart data; they match. On 27 December, M/S "Schwabenland" encounters the German steamer "Wangoni" returning home "Wangoni" of the Woermann Line returning home: a flag salute is exchanged.

Unfortunately, the trade winds continue to die down, but the current helps the ship to move forward, so that the daily mileage is still around 275 nautical miles. As the speed and tailwind are now the same, The heat is occasionally oppressive, and even the lightest clothing is uncomfortable. Free time is now spent in deckchairs and hammocks on deck. However, the nights bring cool temperatures and allow for a refreshing sleep.

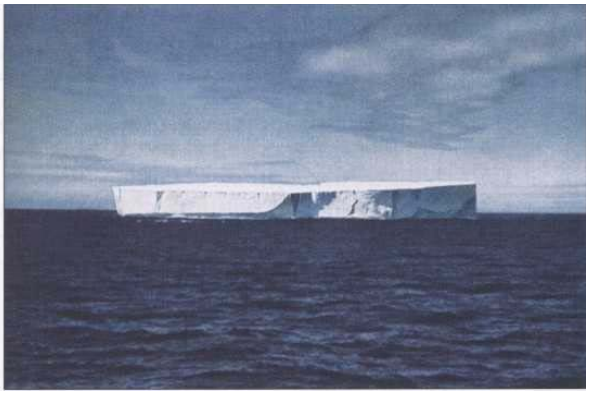
On 29 December, the M/S "Schwabenland" approaches the Balmen Belt. The trade winds die down completely, and the sea lies like a large oily surface, with the ship ploughing a furrow through it. The day after tomorrow is New Year's Eve, not a wintry day, but a warm one to mark the end of 1938. The New Year's Eve celebrations will coincide with the christening of the Aquator, two celebrations at once await the 82 passengers on the "Schwabenland". The anticipation is great. Suddenly, on the afternoon of 31 December, there is a surprise stop. An unpleasant Surprise. From 4:55 p.m. to 7:20 p.m., the ship is unable to continue its journey due to an air jet blockage in one of the engines. The cooling water pipe breaks that occurred a few days ago also show no sign of stopping. The daily mileage has now dropped from 275 nautical miles to 261 on 30 December and to 233 nautical miles on 31 December. It is expected to drop even further the next day. This is unfortunate, but it should not dampen the festive mood of the Aquator christening and New Year's Eve celebrations.

Captain Alfred Kottas has ordered the ship to be cleaned by 2 p.m. After that, he will give Neptune and his "staff" free rein to tour the ship; he will dutifully begin with the on-board report to the captain, where the first welcome schnapps to "Neptune" and his "staff" to tour the ship; he will dutifully begin with the report to the captain, who will also serve the first welcome schnapps to "Neptune" h i m s e l f . His The "staff" then makes sure that all those to be baptised are present and have not hidden away in dark corners or their cabins.

Then the magic begins on the foredeck; all participants are full of exuberance. Catapult operator Wilhelm Hartmann plays the leading role as "Aquator", the pastor of the maritime community; his speeches and admonitions, calculated to tickle the funny bones of the audience and calm the spirits of the initiates, are unsurpassed. The admonitions urge the baptisees to cross over from the northern to the southern half of the sea, cleansed both internally and externally, with "Neptune" providing his sea spirits. The baptised would have preferred to do without this assistance, but they are in the minority and must accept help whether they want it or not. The joy that the water baptism brings is unparalleled.

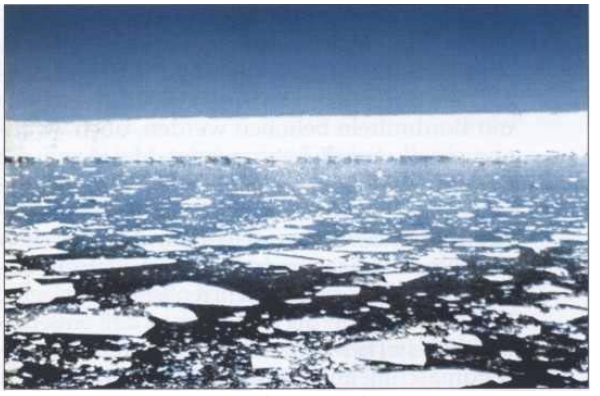


The first impression in the southern ice sea: Bouvet Island



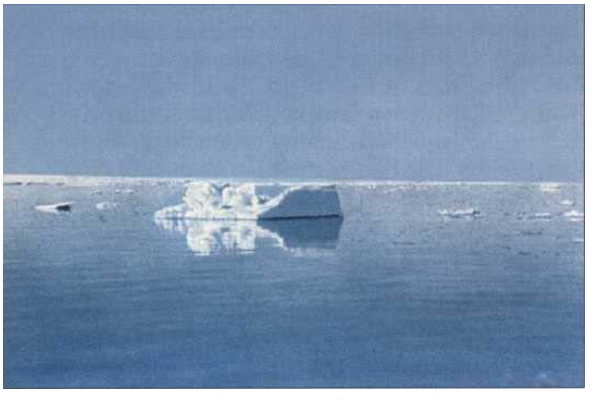
This 1,500-metre-long table iceberg rises 40 metres out of the water and has a draught of 300 metres.

In the crystal-clear water, the ice can be seen far below the surface.

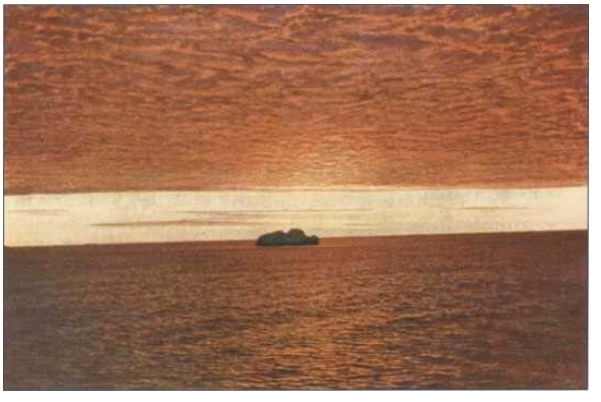


From the edge of the ice shelf, the land rises gradually towards the South Pole plateau.

Weathered table icebergs in a jagged field of drift ice from the previous year. All photos on this page were taken in 1939.



Ideal flying weather off the ice shelf coast



Midnight atmosphere in the Antarctic midsummer

By New Year's Eve, however, the "baptised" are back in top form and make up for lost time with the refreshments on offer. The ship's band plays lively music to ensure that this celebration also takes place in the best of spirits. Everyone is in high spirits and New Year's Eve passes in perfect harmony.

MIS "Schwabenland"
with reduced cruising speed

Even before Christmas, Captain Kottas and Chief Engineer Uhlig had been concerned about repeated cooling water pipe breaks, particularly on the ship's port engine. Although the damage was repaired using on-board resources, it forced the ship's management to slow down the ship for several hours each time. Given the advanced season and the time constraints for reaching the expedition's destination, any delay is unpleasant. Most worrying is the fact that the cause of the damage lies in the extremely strong vibration of the entire port engine block, which of course cannot be eliminated. A solution has been found in the form of an elastic connection between the engine and the cooling water pipe, which appears to be working well. In any case, the damage has occurred less frequently since then.

The damage to an engine that occurred on the afternoon of 31 December 1938, which resulted in a reduction in the ship's cruising speed, is more serious than expected. On the first day of the new year at noon, a position fix shows a total distance of 238 nautical miles in the last 24 hours. The chief engineer feels unjustly burdened with guilt and prefers to make himself invisible for a while, as far as this is possible on board a ship, in order to avoid inappropriate criticism. He does not want to be made a scapegoat, because everything that could be done with the available means to remedy the damage was done on his initiative.

As the captain in charge, Captain Kottas can do nothing but accept the ship's reduced speed and hope that the "Rough Forties" far down south will not delay the ship any further. The name refers to the area of the ocean between 40 and 55 degrees south latitude. Violent westerly storms rage there, sweeping unhindered by land masses sweeping around the globe and whipping up high swells due to their great consistency.

As expedition leader, Alfred Ritscher is keen not only to maintain the participants' interest in the expedition's tasks, but also to actively encourage it. To achieve this, he organises a series of lectures, with one or two lectures each week covering all areas of work and tasks. According to his lecture schedule, the ship's doctor, Dr. Bludau, is to talk about hygiene, prevention and treatment of frostbite, first aid in case of accidents, etc., the ice pilot Kraul about handling boats in drifting and pack ice, the scientists about their areas of workand the assistance they require from the crew members assigned to them, the catapult operators and pilots will talk about launching and recovering the flying boats and the support required for this from the skilful guidance of the motorboat, which must always be kept ready, and the foreman of the launch team, Herbert Bolle, will talk about the design and operation of the aircraft catapult. Fortunately, all the lectures are very well attended by the "free watchmen", a sign that the lecture programme is of interest to the trip participants.

Soundings are called for

From the equator, which is scheduled to be crossed at 15° west, the course is set for Ascension Island. From there, the ship will sail along the central part of the South Atlantic Ridge, sounding continuously to complete the incomplete measurements there.

On board the M/S Schwabenland, scientists and electricians take turns on duty.
1st electrician take turns; from Bovet to the ice shelf coast, the pilots also step in a few times.

The South Atlantic Ridge is the part of the Atlantic Ridge that runs along the equator, separated from the North Atlantic Ridge by the Romancho Trench, to about 55° south, where it continues eastward under the name Atlantic-Indian Ridge. The South Atlantic Ridge separates the Angola and Cape basins on the African side from the Brazilian and Argentine basins on the American side of the South Atlantic Ocean.

While the basins have sea depths of up to 6,000 metres, the ridge rises from 4,000

It rises metres above sea level in some places and culminates in the islands of Ascension (860 metres) and Tristan da Cunha (2,320 metres) with their neighbouring islands. In between, other peaks of the ridge reach heights of 2,500 metres below sea level.

The sounding service on M/S "Schwabenland" runs every half hour, and at interesting points where a rapid drop or rise in water depth is detected, the series is condensed to ten-, five- and two-minute intervals. This makes it possible to add considerable knowledge to the information about the bottom relief along this threshold.

Passing Ascension Island

On 2 January 1939, the ship passes Ascension. The small island has only 150 inhabitants. Most of them are workers, employees and civil servants at the British cable station located on the island; they lead a very lonely life. Only very rarely does a ship connect them to the outside world. As the M/S "Schwabenland" only passes close to the island in the late evening, a visit to the island, which would certainly have been interesting, is not possible, especially as the ship is in a hurry and a stop in the harbour would have taken too much time.

Due to another cooling water pipe break

The departure of the M/S "Schwabenland" is delayed again. The elastic connection that was supposed to prevent this has not had the desired effect. Almost every other day there are new breaks, each of which leads to further delays. The chief engineer has a new idea: he has a four-millimetre hole drilled into one of the engine's trumpets. Hopefully this experiment will help. The constant delays are becoming unbearable.

6 January 1939 brings a change. Boat manoeuvres are called for. This applies to everyone on board, not just the crew members of the Norddeutscher Lloyd. With their life jackets on, everyone takes their place in the lifeboats. No one falls into the water. Everyone hopes that the rehearsed "emergency" on the M/S "Schwabenland" will never happen.

Finally, the radio station on the MS Schwabenland succeeds for the first time in contacting Captain Kirchheiß, the leader of the Walkocherei.

"Wickinger" and its fishing fleet, using radio telephony

, even though the distance between the two ships is still over 1,500 nautical miles. However, communication is

Not satisfactory, so another attempt is postponed to a later date. The purpose of the communication is to arrange a meeting point to hand over the radio tubes brought for the "Wickinger".

The new lookout barrel at the top of the foremast,

20 metres above deck, it must be dismantled and placed on the Sahling. There, it is still easily accessible for a skilled and experienced gymnast in light clothing. It is much too small for the body size of ice pilot Kraul, for whom the lookout barrel was intended for hours of sitting in thick winter clothing.

Tristan da Cunha — the loneliest island in the world

In the evening hours of 9 January, the small volcanic island of Tristan da Cunha comes into view. Most of the islands in the southern ocean were discovered by skilled Portuguese sailors at the beginning of the 16th century. Ascension, Fernando de Noronha, Trinidad, St. Helena, Gough and also Tristan da Cunha. With a few exceptions, these islands are British possessions; Trinidad is Brazilian.

The island has the following history: in 1506, it is said to have been discovered by the Portuguese admiral Tristan da Cunha discovered it, then the Dutch found it again in 1643, as knowledge of its existence had long been lost. In 1767, the French arrived, followed by American fur trappers in 1790. After so many visits by so many nations, England deemed it necessary to annex the island in 1806 without further ado, stationing a garrison of soldiers, 50 Europeans and 50 Hottentots there. The garrison was later disbanded. Only one remained, the Scotsman William Glass. He brought his wife over, had 16 children and is the progenitor of the current population there. More or less failed sailors settled here. The women were brought in from the nearby island of St. Helena. According to reports, a whaler friend took care of this business. He brought the women to Tristan da Cunha and lined them up on the beach. The bachelors came and fought over them, and so the women were "married off".

The island of Tristan da Cunha, which covers an area of approximately 115 square kilometres, is home to 128 people who grow potatoes and fruit, keep a few livestock and lead a meagre existence under the rule of their schoolmaster. Nothing ever happens here. The island does not even have a cable connection to the outside world

and ships rarely call at the island to bring food and supplies. Occasionally, a whaling station comes to refuel its fishing boats under the protection of the island.

Every 1.5 nautical miles, the M/S "Schwabenland" passes the island at a distance of 1.5 nautical miles. The islanders seem to have noticed. Lights are lit in the houses. One light flashes on and off frequently, obviously someone is trying to send a Morse code message. The radio operators on board try to respond; they transmit on all possible frequencies and when no answer comes, they flash the lamp in Morse code in English, French, Portuguese and German. But there is no answer.

The journey continues. Tristan da Cunha, the loneliest island in the world, disappears from view.

On the morning of 10 January 1939, the Schwabenland, which was rolling so strongly in a westerly swell with a freshening north wind that, for the first time during the voyage, the lanyard rails had to be attached to the tables to hold coffee pots, cups and other crockery in place.

Confidence of success

After breakfast, a meeting is held under the direction of Alfred Ritscher, attended by the ship's command, the scientists, the flight crews and the catapult operators. The expedition leader reads out the complete organisational plan, which contains the entire work programme at the ice edge. If only part of it can be realised, the expedition will bring home remarkable results. The goal is ambitious, but achievable. Many of those present would certainly be glad to have it all behind them, because the demands of the Antarctic's eternal ice are great. Everyone is challenged. But everyone is also proud to be able to contribute to the success of the expedition with their own efforts.

Ritscher firmly believes in success. This certainty is conveyed to everyone who listens to him. Every word is carefully considered, every suggestion for an aerial reconnaissance mission is based on a careful weighing of the pros and cons. Ritscher's triple experience — he is a merchant ship captain, airline captain and polar explorer with decades of practical experience — makes him the ideal expert for this expedition. However, everything will only go according to plan if every member of the expedition, from the leader down to the ship's boy, feels responsible for the entire expedition at all times.

During the final discussion on necessary flight safety, when an aircraft mechanic asks what would happen if a plane had to make an emergency landing 500 kilometres from the edge of the ice, Ritscher replies: "Rest assured – I'll get you out of there!" He says this in a tone that leaves no room for doubt. After these words, everyone has absolute confidence that they will not be abandoned in the event of an accident.

"Anchor ready to drop"

In the early evening, the uninhabited island of Gough comes into view, its upper part covered by a cloud cover at an altitude of about 400 metres, but the north and east sides are clear enough to allow the ship to approach the cliff-strewn east side to within a good three nautical miles.

Just as the ship is closest to the rocky east coast, the electricity fails, rendering the ship's steering controls useless. With the ship heading straight for the cliffs, the only and last resort to prevent disaster is to order the anchor to be dropped immediately. But before the worst comes to the worst, the reserve dynamo kicks in; the steering works again and the ship is able to avoid the threatening cliffs by making a sharp turn. What would have happened if? It doesn't bear thinking about!

Gough Island is not exactly inviting for involuntary settlement attempts; it is a desolate volcanic rock with a few green mats between the brown-red rocks. Here and there, in a few sheltered spots, you can see some stunted bushes.

The only thing this desolate island obviously has to offer is its bird life, which enlivens the island and its surroundings with many different species. Alba-trosse and terns seem to be particularly at home here. Penguins perform their diving tricks in flocks close to the M/S "Schwabenland".

A little later, the first rain showers sweep across the water. As darkness falls, this last deserted island on the way to the Antarctic waters soon disappears from view.

What are the ice conditions like?

Heading for Bouvet, the Schwabenland continues its journey, drawing ever closer to its destination.

. As the advanced season forces everyone to use every conceivable means to save time and distance, the question arises as to why Ritscher does not head directly for the western or eastern boundary of the working area. He has good reasons for this.

In general, a drifting and pack ice belt several hundred nautical miles wide extends from the Weddell Sea east-northeastward beyond Bouvet. Its extent in width and eastward depends on the ice conditions of the previous winter in Antarctic waters. In ice-rich summers, it can extend as far as 10° and 20° east longitude, while in ice-poor periods it often retreats far to the west and, as the season progresses, is often only divided into wide wakes inwhich an ice-strengthened ship can navigate with the necessary caution to reach an area of less icy waters south of approximately 62° to 65° south.

The drift ice belt is fed by both the one-year winter ice driven in from the south and the ice masses pushing in from the Weddell Sea, which have accumulated there over the years and, under constant pressure from the east, have piled up and towered along the ice shelf coast. This is why the drift and pack ice belt contains much more multi-year pack ice consisting of chunks, which is often interspersed with huge icebergs and is therefore avoided at all costs.

Since neither Captain Kot-tas nor expedition leader Ritscher nor ice pilot Kraul are familiar with this year's ice conditions, there is a risk that the ship could encounter the ice belt prematurely if it continues on its current course. In this case, the ship would be forced to veer far eastward along the edge of the ice until a passage to the south could be found. The ship's command wants to avoid the resulting loss of time at all costs and keep the M/S "Schwabenland" out of danger as it nears its destination.

At Bouvet, however, it is now expected that the ship will be able to head south towards the ice without difficulty and find a passage. Approaching the island also has the advantage of providing a more precise departure point before entering the Antarctic.

The spell of good weather is over. An unmistakable sign of this is the high swell to the west of Gough. The Schwabenland must now prepare for the rough waters of the Forty Fathoms.

As the ship gets closer to Antarctica every day, the scientists and pilots and their crew are busy getting ready for their first job once they arrive. After crossing the 31st degree of south latitude, the biologist has already started collecting plankton samples. For navigating the aircraft, the geographer has designed a map network in Mercator projection on a scale of 1:1,250,000. Each pilot will receive a copy, while one copy will be used as a working map on board the ship to track the flight path using radio reports. The aircraft have been completely overhauled, the food supplies have been stowed in the engines as emergency rations for two men for one month and the emergency equipment for possible emergency landings at sea or inland has been stowed in the engines in such a way that it can be accessed immediately upon arrival atfor one month and the emergency equipment for possible emergency landings at sea or inland are stowed away in the aircraft in such a way that test firing and test flights, together with test recordings of the series of images, can take place immediately upon arrival in the working area.

Icebergs in sight

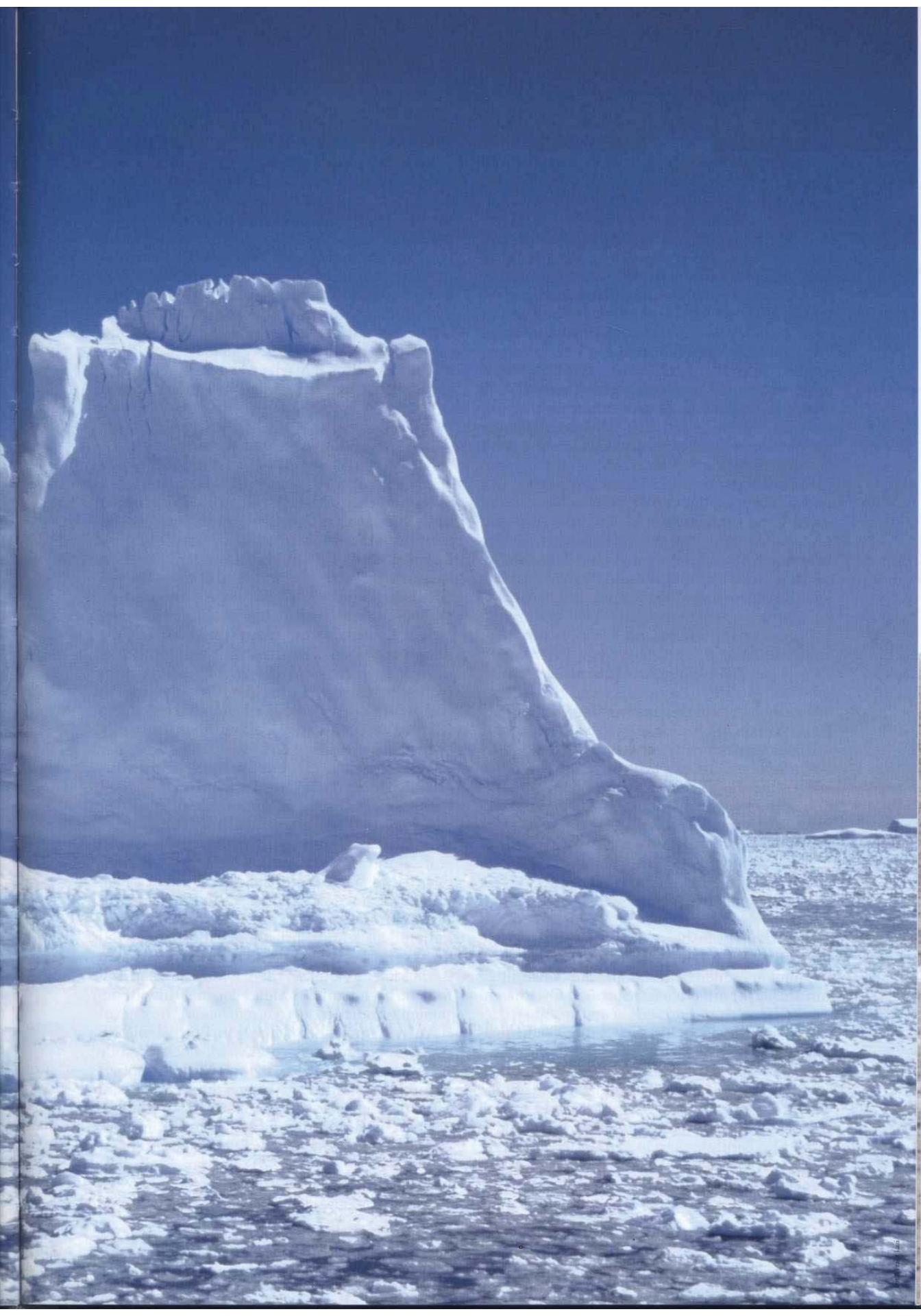
It has become noticeably cooler from day to day. Woolen clothes are replacing lighter clothing. The heating is also being turned on again.

Contrary to expectations, the M/S "Schwabenland" remains spared from the usual stormy weather of the "Rough Forties" over the next few days. However, increasingly dense fog and soon snow flurries force the ship's command to slow down on 14 January 1939 due to the danger of a possible unexpected collision with an iceberg, and during the night even to drift without engine power.

It was not until the morning of 15 January that the fog cleared again. The third officer on watch managed to determine the ship's position, which was about 30 nautical miles from Bouvet Island.

At noon, the volcanic island of Bouvet emerged from the fog beneath its 200-metre-thick ice cover, like a gateway to Antarctica. Its southern part, against whose jagged cliffs the surf rolls in with a loud roar, lies in bright sunshine, while the rarely visible higher northern part is covered by a thick cap of fog. Close to the south coast of the island, a single iceberg drifts, its shape indicating that it originated from glacier breaks on the island. It is the first iceberg that the expedition has seen.

Geradezu märchenhaft wirken diese Eisberge vor der antarktischen Küste. „Ein verzauberter Kontinent", schwärmte der US-amerikanische Polarforscher Richard Evelyn Byrd, „hingebettet wie eine schlafende blasse Prinzessin. Unwägbar und wunderschön, so liegt sie in ihrem eisigen Schlummer, ihre wogenden weißen Gewänder aus Schnee übernatürlich mit frostglänzenden Amethysten und Smaragden besetzt, ihre Träume als schillernde Lichtschleier um Sonne und Mond gewoben, ihren Gesichtskreis von pastellenem Rosa, Gold, Grün und Blau umtönt. So gibt sie sich, die Antarktis, lockendes Land von unvergänglicher Rätselhaftigkeit."



'

Captain Kottas is particularly enthusiastic about Bouvet.

Kottas is particularly enthusiastic about Bouvet. He has mostly sailed in the tropics and warm countries and has never loved ice. He never understood why people would want to relax on glaciers with crampons and ropes when there are so many beautiful warm places on earth. Now that he has seen Bouvet, which has made a huge impression on him, he is beginning to love the ice. He will see mountains of it.

M/S Schwabenland continues its journey to find the most suitable route through the expected pack ice belt towards the shelf ice coast. The number of icebergs that the "Schwabenland" is avoiding is increasing rapidly: there were 26 in the morning and 53 in the afternoon, including some large and dangerous ones estimated to be one kilometre long and about 20 metres high. Most of them are table icebergs. Some suggest that they originate from more westerly regions, probably from the Weddell Sea. There is still no sign of the pack ice belt.

The home post is leaving

The radio operators on the "Schwabenland" have repeatedly attempted to establish radio contact with the German whaling ship "Wickinger" in order to finally get rid of the radio tubes that were brought from Hamburg and are intended for the whaling ship. On 14 January, it was agreed that the tanker "Anna Knudsen", which is supplying the "Wickinger" with fuel, would take delivery of the tubes on 17 January. Even the exact time and meeting point have been agreed.

.

According to preliminary calculations of the expedition ship's course and speed and those of the tanker, both ships are expected to meet at approximately 3:30 p.m. at 63° south, 3.5° east.

And indeed, it works. At 3:30 p.m., Alfred Kottas' "Anna Knudsen" appears ahead on the port side. The tanker is approaching quickly. The

The captain of the "Schwabenland" has made another arrangement: the "Anna Knudsen" is to take with it the letters and cards written by the expedition members over the last few days. This is the first mail from the almost reached "end of the world" to Germany.

At 5 p.m., geographer Dr Ernst Herr-mann sets off as the Schwabenland's postman in the ship's motorboat and, a little later, delivers the mail and the radio tubes to the tanker, not without wishing the captain and crew a "safe journey home".

When he returns on board, Dr Herr-mann has something else with him. Sieland, the first cook, had instructed the radio operators to order a whale fillet during their telephone call with the "Wickinger". The "Anna Knudsen" was happy to fulfil this request. That evening, the meat is prepared in the ship's galley and then eaten, tentatively at first, but then with great curiosity and finally with great enjoyment.

Three captains and a ship

The night of 18 January 1939 is so bright that the water is still clearly visible on the horizon. The air temperature is just above freezing, even though the ship has almost reached the southern polar circle. The expedition ship should have left the outer pack ice belt behind long ago, but strangely enough, there is no drift ice or pack ice to be seen. There are also no signs of the inner pack ice belt.

The snow petrel, a sleek, snow-white seabird that had flown past the ship in the morning, also failed to provide any clarity. This bird is said to

never stray more than 80 to 100 nautical miles from the pack ice boundary. But since its appearance, the Schwabenland had already covered well over 100 nautical miles without any sign of the bright reflection of ice on the cloudy sky, known as ice glint.

As the icebergs have decreased noticeably and the ice conditions are favourable, the expedition ship can continue at full speed without danger. The course leads across the eastern part of the Maud Bank to 65° south, where depths of

2,000 metres have been sounded. The shallowest depths of up to about 1,200 metres are 30 to 40 nautical miles to the west.

On an iceberg photographed from aboard the M/S "Schwabenland" is spotted, large flocks of penguins are squatting. In their midst, towering above them all, is a stately emperor penguin.

Meanwhile, 18 January has passed and the

19. already three hours old. Expedition leader Captain Ritscher shakes off his restlessness and heads for the bridge to join Captain Kottas, the ship's captain. The ice pilot, Captain Kraul, has also been there for a while; he too has been overcome by restlessness.

; he too has been gripped by unease.

According to the Norvegia chart, which the three captains with "ocean-going" licences are studying together, the ice shelf coast must be in the area where the ship is now. The last midday position on the previous day, 1 January, was 66° 8' south. Since then, the ship has been travelling at full speed for twelve hours.

18. January, was 66° 8' south. Since then, the ship has been sailing at full speed for twelve hours.

The three captains are growing impatient. After a brief consultation, they decide to change course from south to almost west. They want to see how far the ship can advance into the impenetrable west at this latitude of 69° south, which has hardly ever been reached before.

There in the west lies the Weddell Sea, which only one person has ever seen free of ice: the explorer Weddell, who managed to reach 75° 30' south in 1823. Despite the most strenuous attempts, no one has ever succeeded in navigating this most terrifying of all seas. Several ships are known to have been crushed and smashed by ice floes here, including Otto Nordenskjöld's "Antarctic" (1903) and Shackleton's "Endurance" (1915). However, Filchner's "Deutschland" (1911) and the English expedition ship

"Discovery II" (1932) managed to save themselves in dire straits.

But the "Schwa-benland" does not want to go as far as the Weddell Sea.

At 4:30 in the morning, a low, bright white haze on the horizon ahead to starboard indicates the pack ice boundary. The expedition leader is relieved. He immediately changes course to 70° south, 5° west to reach the western boundary of the planned working area. The midday observation shows the ship's position to be 69° 9' south, 0° 6' west. Now the white strip on the horizon is already visible ahead.

Two hours later, M/S

Schwabenland is off the pack ice boundary, which stretches northward from here as far as the eye can see, while to the south, a cluster of table icebergs indicates the close proximity of the ice shelf coast.

The cry of "Ice ahead!" on and below the deck of the expedition ship has prompted many to go up to the upper deck. Officers stand on the observation deck, scientists and others on the bridge, and the upper deck is also full of onlookers marvelling at the long-feared and long-awaited ice. It is fascinating to see what is happening here: a wall of ice rising higher and higher, extending to the right and left

and seemingly endless, with no end in sight.

Has the M/S Schwabenland reached its destination? Can work begin tomorrow? Or even today?

At the destination: the first test flight

Expedition leader Ritscher decides to start work today with a test flight. Both aircraft are made ready for take-off during the course of the day.

The first test flight, which serves to test all instruments and on-board equipment and to check for ice, is carried out by "Boreas". There is something of a dress rehearsal atmosphere as the aircraft is launched from the "Schwabenland". Flight captain Richardheinrich Schirmacher climbs into the aircraft, followed by aircraft mechanic Kurt Loesener, radio operator Erich Gruber and photographer Siegfried Sauter. The doors are closed.

closed.

"Boreas" is ready for take-off. The foreman of the launch team, Herbert Bolle, stands at the catapult. He waits for the signal light to come on, which is switched on by the pilot. When it flashes, he flips the lever. In the next moment, "Boreas" races down the runway. The launch is successful.

It is a remarkable historical moment: the first German aircraft over Antarctica!

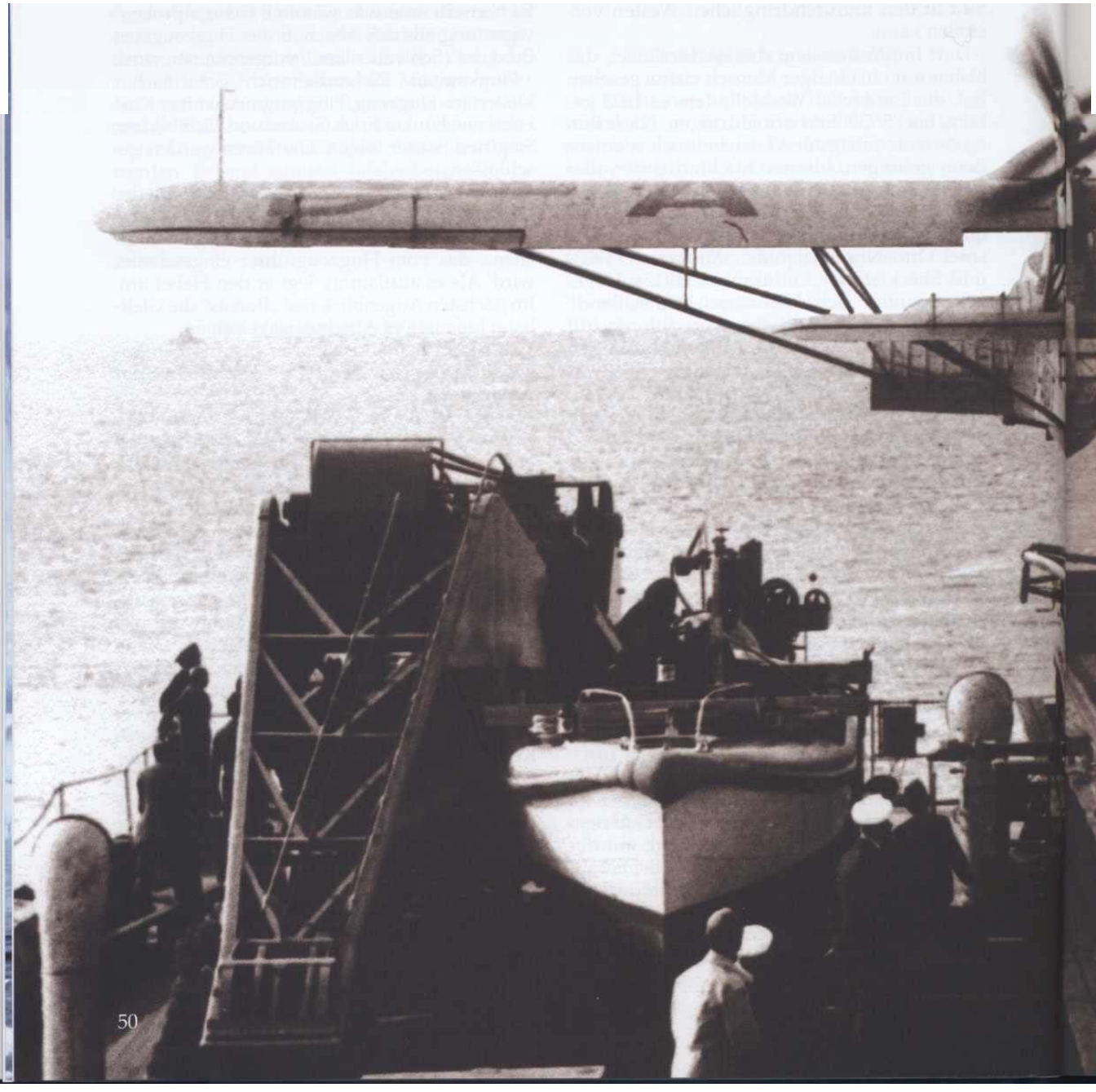
At around 5.30 p.m., "Boreas" returns from its one-hour test flight. The aircraft is brought on board without a hitch. But the pilot has some surprising and exciting news.

The ice edge where the expedition ship is moored is not part of the ice shelf coast. It is separated from the ship by a stretch of water approximately 50 kilometres wide, interspersed with pack ice that extends as far north and west as the eye can see. However, a wide, winding wake offers the possibility of moving the ship further west.

Expedition leader Ritscher and ice pilot Kraul consider moving the ship further west to be advantageous and, in calm weather, responsible; they steer the ship into the wake. Proceeding cautiously in the bright summer night, the ship is able to advance to position 69° 14' south, 4° 30' west. There, however, the tightly packed pack ice forces it to halt.

Only now has M/S Schwabenland reached its destination.

The discovery of New Schwabenland



The flying boats are ready

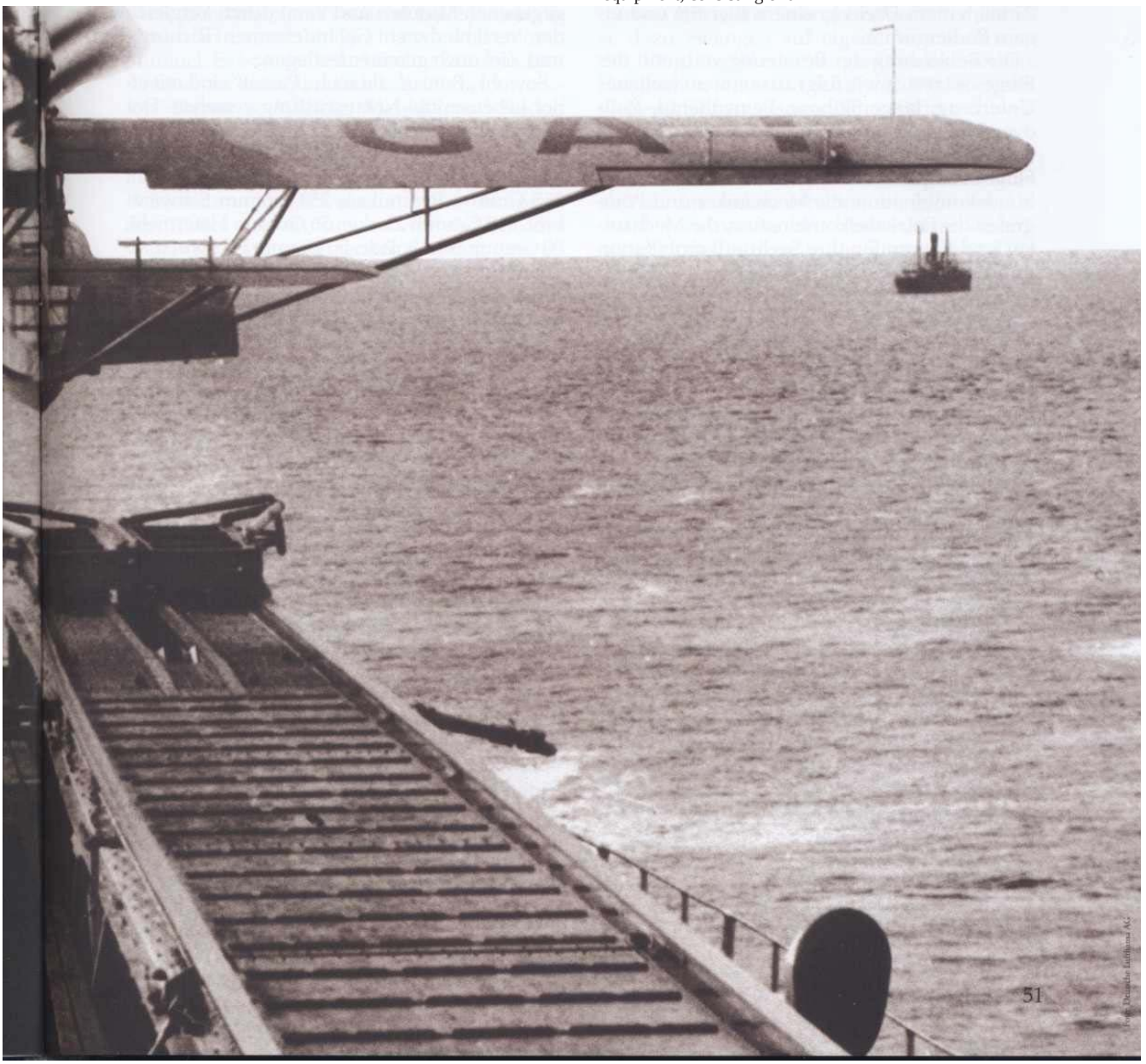
19. January 1939. Alfred Ritscher keeps glancing at his watch during dinner on board the "Schwabenland". He has asked the two flight captains, Mayr and Schirmacher, and the ice pilot Kraul to attend a meeting at 7 p.m.

Shortly after the agreed time, the four men meet. They are about to embark on the most important phase of the expedition: the discovery of a region of Antarctica which, according to preliminary calculations, is about the size of the German Reich. No human being has ever set foot in this area. It belongs to no one; it is unclaimed land covered in ice. No one knows what lies beneath the ice.

Aircraft are to "discover" it, German aircraft: "Boreas" and "Passat", stationed at the floating aircraft base "Schwabenland" of Deutsche Lufthansa.

The expedition leader first asks Flight Captain Schirmacher, pilot of the flying boat "Boreas", for a report on the one-hour test flight that took place a few hours earlier, from 4:22 p.m. to 5:22 p.m. In his report, Schirmacher notes:
"It proved necessary [...] to redistribute all the equipment, as the rear installation of the camera had made the aircraft quite tail-heavy. Furthermore, the radiators had to be covered further." [5]

The flight captain points out that the equipped weight of the ten-ton whale "Boreas"
was 6,336 kilograms. The rigging weight included the marine equipment, consisting of a



a drift anchor, the drift anchor line, the drift anchor retrieval line, a swivel shackle, two throwing lines, a rubber dinghy, an axe, a tool kit for repairs during flight and an on-board first-aid kit.

Added to this is additional weight resulting from fuel for 15 hours (4,200 litres), reserve water, navigational equipment, photographic equipment, 50 drop arrows and ten drop flags, a crew of four in polar clothing and polar equipment in case of an emergency landing. The total flight weight of the "Bo-reas" flying boat is 4,180 kilograms.

The flying boat's navigational equipment consists of a sextant, a drift meter, a sun compass, a sun pen, binoculars, a nautical chart, a 1:250,000 map, a logbook, a compass, a triangle, a pencil and an eraser.

The crew's clothing during the flight consists of the following: woollen underwear, long ski trousers, linen shirt, pullover, woollen socks, fur shoes, fur gloves, leather fur cap. As outerwear, the flying boat captain and radio operator wear sealskin suits, the mechanics and photographers wear fur leather suits, and the mechanics and photographers wear sealskin suits with equipment. In addition, every member of the crew wears a life jacket.

Both flying boats are also equipped for emergency landings. The following emergency equipment is on board each aircraft: two two-man tents, four sleeping bags with rubber mattresses, a sled with a cover and 20 metres of tow rope, four pairs of skis, an ice pick, two Primus stoves with two spare burners and additional equipment, one litre of methylated spirits, ten litres of petroleum, a rifle with a telescopic sight, rifle cleaning kit, 100 shots of shot, 50 bullets, two canisters of green-white-red signal ammunition, a portable shortwave radio, a first-aid kit, four packed rucksacks.

Each rucksack contains: a knife, a sewing kit, a snow shovel, cutlery, a ten-metre-long rope, a spare pair of ski bindings, a packet of macrobiotic food, ski wax, a pair of sealskins, a pair of snow tyres, a pair of gaiters, two pairs of ski gloves, a pair of long woollen underpants, a woollen undershirt, a drinking cup and a toothbrush.

The expedition leader will discuss the topic of emergency landings in detail

the topic of emergency landings is discussed in detail. The planned long-haul flights are expected to take up to nine or ten hours.

What can the flying boat crew do in the event of an emergency landing, how can they survive?

In the event of a water landing, it could be picked up by the motorboat of the "Schwabenland". In the event of an emergency landing inland, engine failure or if the flying boat catches fire, the second flying boat would have to be requested by radio to start the search. This is made easier by the fact that the flying boats maintain the prescribed course and report any course changes to the Schwabenland by radio, giving the exact time, so that the expedition leader knows where the flying boat is at all times.

.

If the second flying boat is needed, it flies the same course as the first, changes direction after the specified minutes and can determine the direction and destination even more accurately by comparing the different terrain features.

Both the Boreas and the Passat are equipped with emergency food supplies. The emergency provisions for four weeks are divided into daily rations, which are packed in linen bags for two men each. Each linen bag contains 255 grams of pemmican, 250 grams of black bread, 115 grams of sugar, 56 grams of oatmeal, 50 grams of chocolate, 50 grams of pea sausage, 40 grams of bacon, 15 grams of tea, 25 grams of butter, 20 grams of powdered milk, 15 grams of cocoa, 20 grams of spices and twelve cigarettes.

After several hours of talks, expedition leader Ritscher is more reassured than before. He is convinced that everything humanly possible has been done to ensure the safety of the aircraft crews. It is imperative that the pilots and crews adhere to the specifications for each flight and maintain constant radio contact with the expedition leader on the "Schwabenland". It has been agreed that only one aircraft will take off at a time, and only when it is on its return flight or has already landed will the second aircraft be given permission to take off.

As the expedition leader says goodbye to the two pilots and the ice pilot Kraul, he glances at his watch once more:

"Thank you very much for the conversation – we'll see you again in four hours!"

!"

"Boreas" takes off on its first long-haul flight.

Midnight has passed. 20 January 1939 has begun. For several hours, the chief meteorologist, Dr Herbert Regula, has been working hard to provide reliable weather forecasts for the next 24 hours

that go beyond his own observations. Every day at 8 p.m., the Quickborn radio station transmits weather data for the whalers, which Dr. Regula listens to regularly.

At 3 a.m., Regula has all the data and predicts very good weather for the next 15 hours. This weather forecast is the first good news of the day for the captain and crew of the flying boat "Boreas". The crew, flight captain Richardheinrich Schirmacher, aircraft mechanic Kurt Loesener, radio operator Erich Gruber and aerial photographer Siegfried Sauter, have been busy since 2 a.m. fuelling their aircraft for its first long-distance flight and preparing it for take-off.

At 4 o'clock in the morning, the sun is high in the sky, because at 69° south, the berth of the M/S "Schwabenland", the midnight sun shines in a glass-blue cloudless sky at the end of January. Although it is Antarctic summer, it is still bitterly cold. The two "salon" stewards, Wilhelm Malyska and Rudolf Stawiki, who are already up, set hot coffee on the table on the upper deck.

Flight captain Schirmacher, dressed in thick fur clothing, looks around while enjoying his steaming coffee. Indeed, the weather couldn't be better for his first long-haul flight of about nine hours. The cloudless sky arches over the icy landscape. There is n o breeze to be felt here in the middle of the ice landscape. Here and there, a few seals lie lazily on the ice floes, undisturbed by the presence of the ship and later by the roar of the aircraft engines.

When all crew members are on board the "Boreas", expedition leader Alfred Ritscher orders the flying boat to take off at 4:38 a.m.

The engines roar, slow down, roar again, and then the eleven-ton flying boat races along the runway, takes off perfectly and shoots into the open air. After a lap of honour around M/S "Schwabenland", the flying boat roars off on its flight towards the pole.

Those remaining on board the "Schwabenland" watch the flying boat with a mixture of concern and envy, but all with the utmost excitement. Never before have human eyes seen what lies far beyond the ice of this Antarctic coast and behind the peaks of the ice-covered mountain ranges. The four men aboard the "Boreas" will be the first humans to see what has been hidden until now.

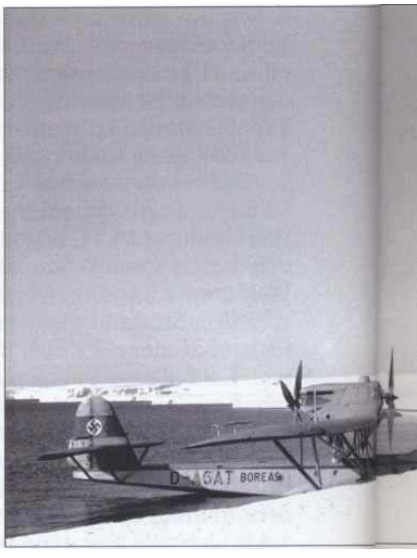
Once again, the aircraft base M/S "Schwabenland" experiences a historic event on its Antarctic expedition: with the successful launch of the flying boat "Boreas" at 4:40 a.m. on 20 January 1939, the expedition's main scientific programme begins: the exploration of the Antarctic sector between 10° west and 20° east in an area that has never been flown over by aircraft and that no human being has ever seen, let alone set foot on.

The flight was carried out according to a precisely planned itinerary. Ritscher wrote about this in his expedition report: "The flight path, including the courses to be steered, turning points and distances, was precisely specified in the organisational plan; deviations from this were only permitted if the conditions encountered made them necessary and were carried out at the pilot's own risk. The plan was to fly 880 km due south from the ship, then 30 km due east, and then take the return route due north, parallel to the outbound flight. These rectangles to be flown around were to connect to each other to the east at intervals of 50 km. The order was based on the range of the aircraft and that of the series measurement cameras. On each flight, under the most favourable conditions, an area of around 200,000 square kilometres could theoretically be recorded from an altitude of 3,000 metres above ground level. Of course, I was aware that peak performance could not be achieved because the terrain in the interior was expected to rise to 4,000 m and the aircraft's climbing performance would hardly exceed 4,000 m. However, based on a conservative estimate, each flight could probably cover at least 65,000 square kilometres in the photograph. Each point of the rectangles flown around would thus be covered at least twice, many three times, and only the peripheral area beyond the southern boundaries of the rectangles, as well as the western boundary beyond the westernmost rectangle and the eastern boundary beyond the easternmost rectangle, would be covered once with the 60% overlapping photographs. This provided the basis for photogrammetric surveying without the need for unnecessary maximum accuracy, which could only have been achieved by triangulation; however, this would have r e q u i r e d a sufficient number o f terrain points with precisely known geographical locations. For our survey flights, however, the only reference points we had were the launch sites.

Technical personnel preparing to launch a flying boat like

This is what the equipment looked

During launch, the flying boat crew is exposed to intense pressure.



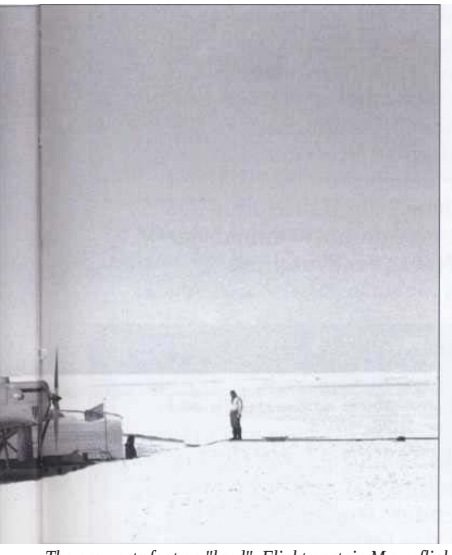
After landing: With "Boreas" on the shelf

Happy to be back on the flying boat mother ship

Flying boat "Boreas" with expedition leader Expedition leader

for a photo flight.

The crane system of the "Schwabenland" must be moved before the flying boat can take off.



The crew sets foot on "land". Flight captain Mayr, flight mechanic Preuschoff and radio operator Ruhnke on the ice

is being prepared for boarding.

The folding crane lifts the flying boat to the catapult launch system for the next take-off.

Alle Fotos auf dieser Doppelseite: Deutsche Lufthansa AG

positions of the aircraft, the readings of their barometric altimeters and the changing aircraft speed."

During the flight, Boreas is in constant radio contact with the ship, and every 15 minutes a message about its position and any incidents is received on the Schwabenland. Alfred Ritscher studies these messages very carefully; they show that the Boreas crew is approaching an extremely interesting geographical area. Flat pack ice extends about 50 kilometres inland, then gradually rising blue-green-white firn ice with a mostly smooth surface, on which the storms that swept across it in winter have left only a thin, hard layer of snow. Rising from the firn ice, first sporadically, then more frequently, are high, jagged or lower, rounded nunataks, and further inland, mountains with razor-sharp, jagged ridges and pointed peaks. To the south, behind a rugged, rocky steep wall that emerges in places, the inland ice rises in a gentle curve to a height of over 4,000 metres, descending almost without interruption to the ice shelf to the west of the mountain range in a fairly even slope through rocky formations. To the east, however, separated from the mountains we flew over by a second glacier basin, a 60 to 100 kilometre wide chain of north-south mountain ranges and massifs disappears into the distance.

600 kilometres south of "Schwabenland", "Boreas" has to turn back. On the return flight, which begins as scheduled at 11 a.m., the photographer suddenly notices that the starboard measuring device has failed. The mission is aborted and course is set for M/S "Schwabenland".

During the flyover, striking mountains and peaks are immediately given names corresponding to their shapes, such as "Kugel" (ball), "Kegel" (cone), "Matterhorn", "Klotz", "Hasenrücken", "Napf-kuchen", "Teufelswand" and the like. This information is entered into the prepared work card on board the ship, which not only provides an approximate map image, but also serves as a valuable aid in the event of an emergency landing of the aircraft, enabling it to be safely located by the reserve aircraft and, in the worst case, its crew to be rescued or supplied with materials and food.

After a flight time of eight hours and 57 minutes, the "Boreas" reaches the "Schwabenland" air base at 1:35 p.m. When the flying boat landed near the ship, a festive welcome was prepared. The entire crew stood at the stern of the Schwabenland and watched as the aircraft was lifted out of the water. Catapult operator Wilhelm Hartmann stood at the crane and lifted the eleven-tonne "Boreas" effortlessly out of the water. It was a great moment for everyone watching.

When the flight crew disembarks, they are immediately surrounded: "What did you see?" "How was it?" "Is it cold there?" Questions buzz around the deck, drowning out the whirring film cameras capturing the historic moment of the "Boreas" Boreas from its first long-distance flight on 19 January 1939.

Then came the bad news from photographer Siegfried Sauter about the failure of the series camera. He does not know the reason. His guess: the shaft is broken. As there is no replacement camera, it must be repaired as quickly as possible. Foreman Herbert Bolle, technical assistant Walter Krüger, aerial photographer Max Bundermann from the Passat and Siegfried Sauter work through the night to repair the damage and get the camera up and running again; from then on, it works perfectly during the Boreas' subsequent flights.

MIS "Schwabenland" in the ice trap

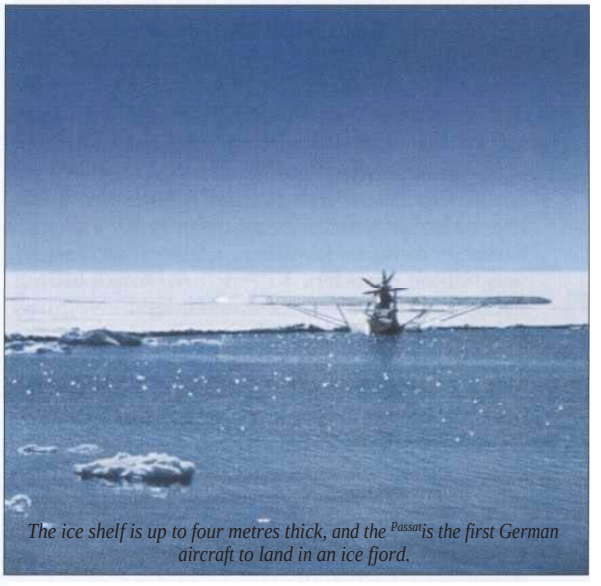
While the flying boat "Boreas" is still on its return flight, M/S "Schwabenland" finds itself in an extremely dangerous situation. The ice conditions around the ship have changed very rapidly. Increasingly stormy winds and the current have pushed the ice and the wake in which the ship is located together to such an extent that there is a danger of being crushed by the ice. No open water can be seen from the bridge of the Schwabenland. The water in the wake is apparently completely filled with ice. If this is confirmed, the ship would be lost. However, the returning flying boat Boreas reports that a winding wake may still allow a way out to the east.

At 13:10, Alfred Ritscher instructs the flying boat "Passat", which was launched from the "Schwabenland" for a test flight, to investigate the ice "Schwabenland" at 13:10 to take off on a test flight and radio back with information on the ice situation and whether and how the ship could free itself from the ice.

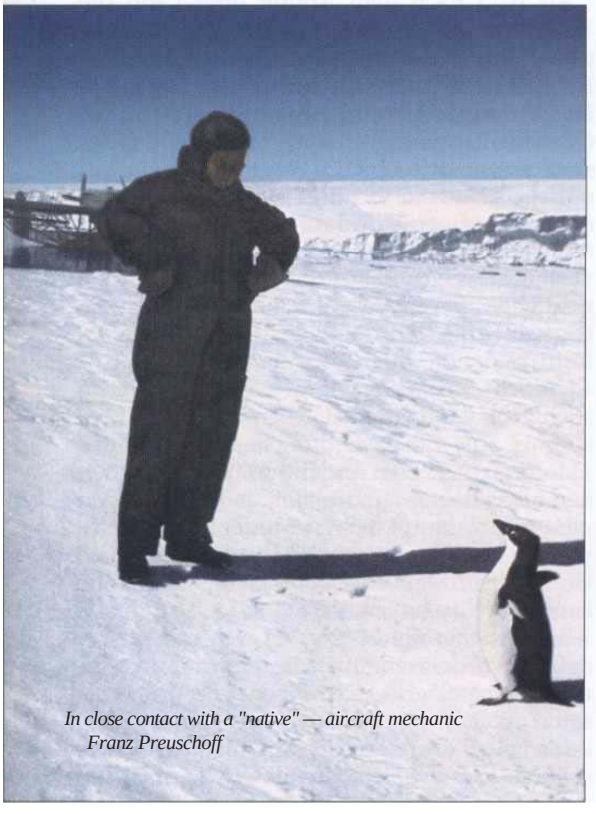
Flight captain Rudolf Mayr and his crew complete this task brilliantly. In repeated approaches, the Passat flies ahead of the Schwabenland, along a narrow

Flight captain Rudolf Mayr, together with his mechanic Franz Preuschoff and radio operator Herbert Ruhnke, plants the Reich flag in the western bay as a sign of international ownership of New Swabia.

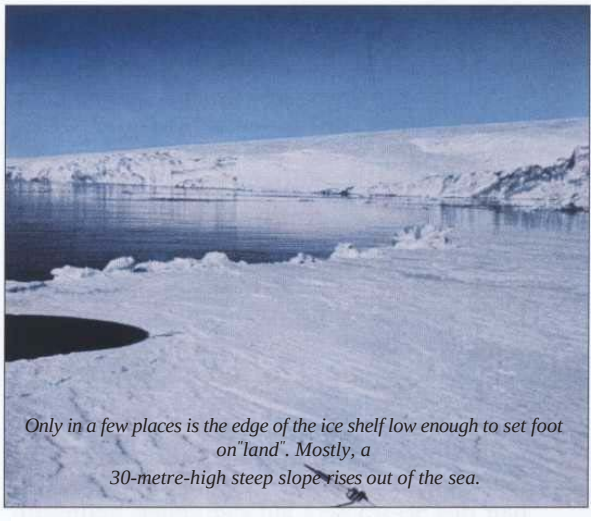
An emperor penguin has been captured and taken aboard the Boreas.



The ice shelf is up to four metres thick, and the Passat is the first German aircraft to land in an ice fjord.



In close contact with a "native" — aircraft mechanic Franz Preuschoff



Only in a few places is the edge of the ice shelf low enough to set foot on"land". Mostly, a 30-metre-high steep slope rises out of the sea.

len, an ice-free waterway visible only from above, which winds its way through the pack ice in an easterly and south-easterly direction, and thus guides the endangered ship out of the ice trap in which it is stuck along a waterway approximately 20 nautical miles long. This 20-mile passage placed high demands on the seafaring skills of Captain Kottas and his deck officers. The ship was repeatedly shaken by powerful impacts caused by deep-lying chunks of ice. However, the ice-reinforced "Schwabenland" escaped without damage.

The incident also proves that ice pilot Kraul's assessment of the ice conditions was correct. Wakes, open waterways through the pack ice, will no longer be used in future.

Ritschert reports on the danger that the Antarctic ice posed to the Schwabenland: "With the wind picking up, we could only have forced our way through the pack ice field, which was littered with icebergs and heavy chunks, at considerable risk with our iron ship. [...] This is because an ice field extending for many hundreds of kilometres in all directions is in constant motion, but not as a uniform whole, as it consists of thick and thin floes, chunks of ice and icebergs of various sizes, and the movement of these individual components is determined by their draught, the undercurrent, the surface current or the wind. Icebergs, which can have a draught of several hundred metres, (5) /6 to (6) /7 of their mass lies under water, often counteract the movement of the ice floes with the speed of the surface current plus that of the undercurrent, pile it up in front of them and then push and pile it up with elemental force into humps and pyramids of the most bizarre shapes. These structures, with their jagged foundations and spurs protruding far below the water, then break away from the icebergs, pass through the pack ice and drifting ice, and often survive for more than one winter; the compacted masses are harder than granite and mean certain death for any ship that gets caught between them and cannot escape their crushing force in time. We therefore contented ourselves in future with laying our 'Schwabenland' as close as possible to the outer edge of the pack ice and took great care to keep the stern free of ice.

The scientists are not idle on 20 January either. The oceanographer takes serial measurements of the temperature and salinity of the seawater at the first hydrographic station: a sounding with a bottom sample yields 2,000 metres. The biologist uses the time to catch plankton with the breeding net, and various other activities can be observed on board.

On the bridge, the next launch position is moved eastward to 68° 43' south, 2° 53' west, and at 11 p.m. the ship reaches the new launch position.

Ritscher has scheduled the launch of the next flying boat Ritscher has scheduled the launch of the next flying boat for the next morning, 21 January, at 4:56 a.m.; the flying boat "Passat" with flight captain Rudolf Mayr and crew members Franz Preuschoff, Herbert Ruhnke and Max Bundermann is to be used first.

The "Passat" is launched on its long-distance flight

On 21 January at 4:56 a.m., as planned
with its regular crew from the pack ice edge, about 100 kilometres north of the edge of the ice shelf, for a long-distance flight.

After a successful catapult launch, the aircraft climbs steeply. The flying boat, heavily overloaded at 10,700 kilograms, climbs very poorly.

Shortly after take-off over land, the
the temperature drops by 14 degrees, Captain Mayr notices that the flying boat's trim device is becoming increasingly difficult to operate. The trim device is used to regulate the weight distribution according to fuel consumption and is operated from the pilot's seat by means of a hand wheel. Its failure must be compensated for by constant – and, as the air temperature eventually drops to minus 24 degrees – increasing pressure on the elevator, which leads to a high consumption of energy by the pilot.

The difficulties that the "Passat" reports by radio to "Schwabenland "cause concern for Ritscher. One message follows another:
"Engines are sputtering, outside thermometers do not seem to be displaying correctly, as the temperature is not changing at all, outside temperature must be at least minus 30 degrees." The next message: "Strong gusts. Aircraft barely controllable."

Ritscher's concern grows. He knows what it would mean if the aircraft had to make an emergency landing on the ice. The expedition leader orders the Boreas to be made ready for take-off immediately so that it can come to the aid of the Passat if it touches down anywhere on the ice.

On board the Passat are over 60 parachutes, which could be used in an emergency to drop provisions, tools, heating materials and other additional equipment. However, it is questionable whether there would be any chance of rescuing the aircraft crew before the end of the summer.

While the worst is feared, the Passat reports: "12:17 p.m., trim back to normal at minus 14 degrees Celsius."

After a flight time of nine hours and twelve minutes, the Passat seaplane lands at Schwabenland at 2:06 p.m.

At the end of his written flight report, flight captain Mayr devoted only a few lines to the dramatic minutes on the Passat: "Due to the extreme cold of around -15°C, both barometers failed. At -17°C, the flying boat's trim device could no longer be moved and only became fully operational again at -7°C. The failure of the trim device made flying extremely difficult." ([8])

When the flying boat, with its crew back on board,
back on board the "Schwabenland", Ritscher breathed a sigh of relief: "That went well," he commented on the frightening moments.

Alfred Ritscher aboard the "Boreas"

On 22 January, the weather deteriorates and, according to meteorologists' forecasts, is set to remain so for several days. The morning flight of the Passat, which took off at 6.29 a.m. and returned at 1.47 p.m., lasting seven hours and 18 minutes, has already been affected.

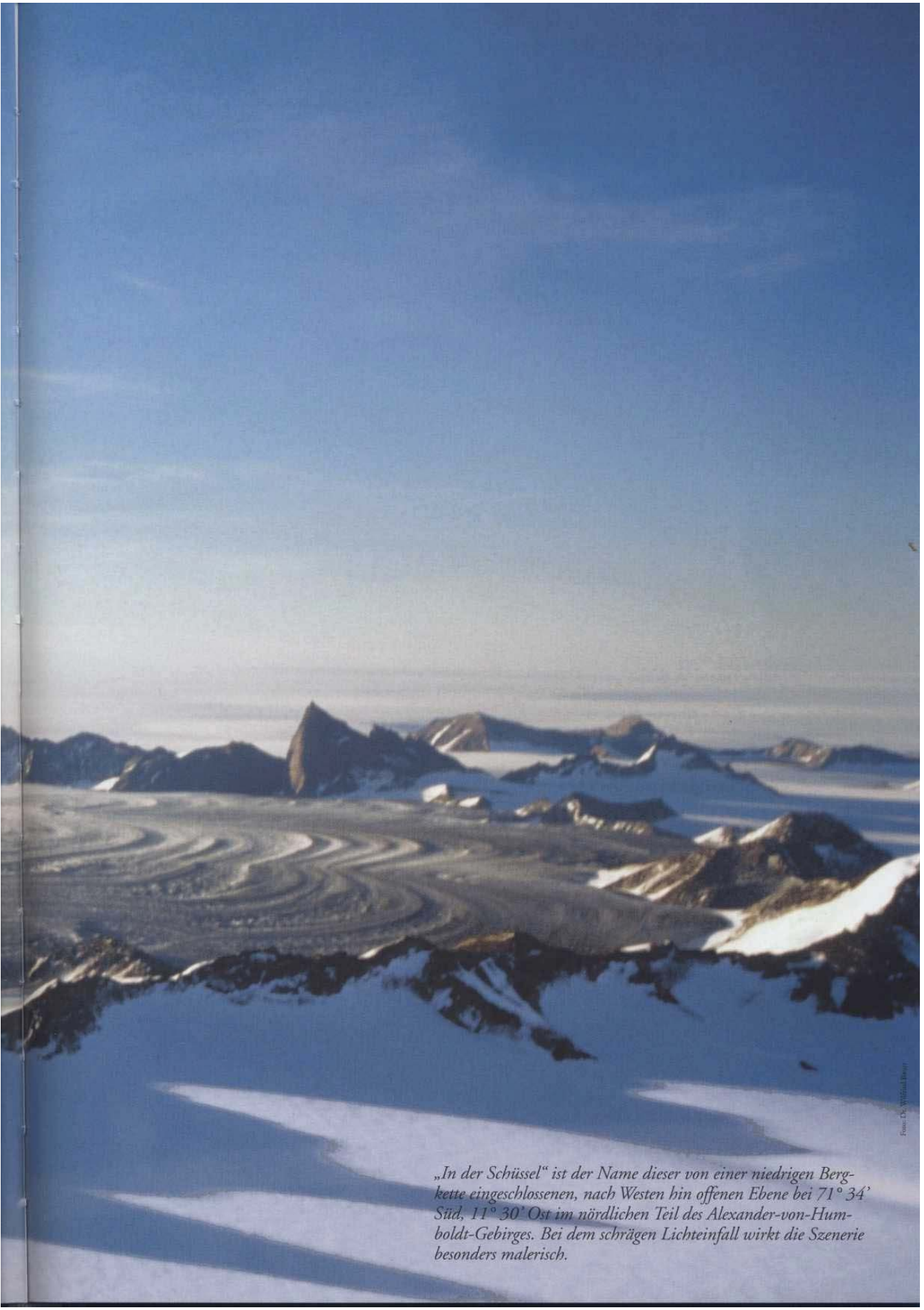
Before the weather deteriorates further, the expedition leader decides to take a seat on the "Boreas" flying boat, which takes off at
1:36 p.m. and lands at the "Schwabenland" after three hours and 42 minutes. Ritscher has to take a break from aerial photography during this flight.

Ritscher describes this flight as follows: "In order to get an overview of the section of terrain explored so far before the weather deteriorated, I took off in the afternoon of that day with the Boreas on a special flight over the mountains. [...] Course 69° S, 0° 29' W on Kugel and
'cone'; cross the coast of the ice shelf at 0° 45' W, then the apex of the bay filled with pack ice on its western side; 50 km inland is apparently the inner boundary of the ice shelf; blue-green-white firn ice with a thin,
hardened snow cover rises behind it, gradually at first, then more steeply; [...] in the south, the 'Matterhorn', 'Klotz', 'Pyramid' and the even higher mountain ranges behind them stand out clearly under the cloud cover; they reach, albeit only a few hundred metres above the firn ice, up to 2,000 and 3,000 metres above sea level; to the west, an ice highland arches, rising to the south and gradually sloping to the north; there are no mountains or nunataks there; visibility below the clouds is still estimated at 150-200 km. Flying back at a distance of 40-50 m, we pass 'Kugel' and 'Kegel', sugar loaf-shaped, rounded basalt-like rocks made of reddish-brown rock with a stick- or box-like structure; then heading north at an altitude of 5-10 m above the firn ice, which lies in long, dune-like waves with east-west ridges, to a fjord-like bay at 5° W; this cuts about 25 km southwards into the ice shelf. At the inner end, about 1 km inland, there are compressions, folds and fractures in the ice shelf, which therefore appears to be resting on land or cliffs. Numerous seals at the inner end of the bay, where the ice edge is only about 1 m high, penguins in flocks, which try to get to safety by sliding onto their bellies as the aircraft approaches; The fjord appears to be a good landing site and must be investigated on the next special flight, as must the western bay at 4° W, which also has a low ice shelf edge; probably also due to its proximity to land. [.. .]

To capture the overall impression of the flight
Of course, there was far too little time to take any notes, especially as the flight was so low to the ground and seemed to be travelling at breakneck speed; but it has remained indelibly etched in my memory.

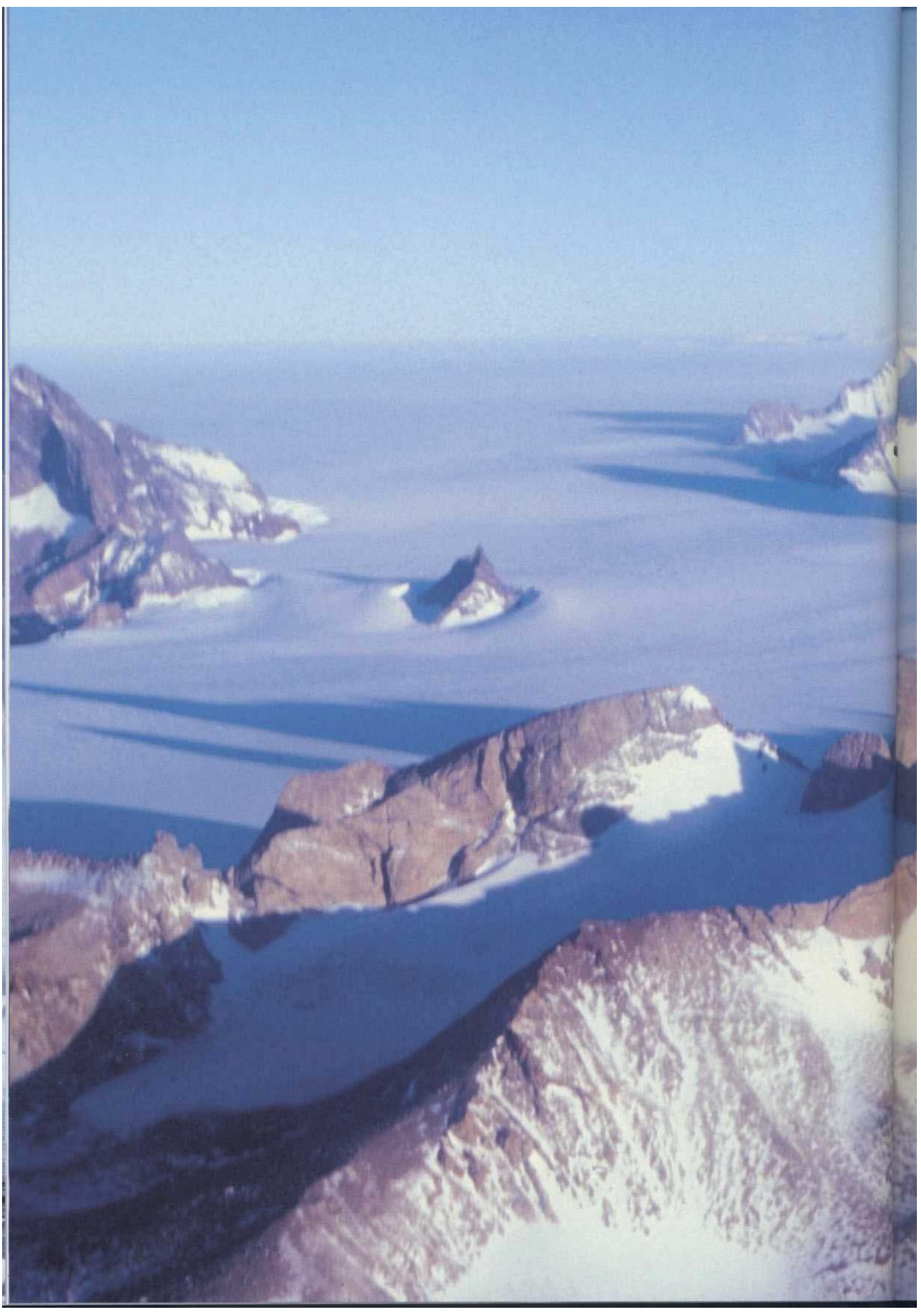
The reason for maintaining a low altitude on the return flight was to check the firn ice surface for landing possibilities, because I intended to land at two locations as far south as possible in the work section after completing the survey work, to raise the German flag there as a symbol of ownership and to deposit a corresponding document, and also to be able to assess the landing conditions in general for other aircraft types on later expeditions." ([9])

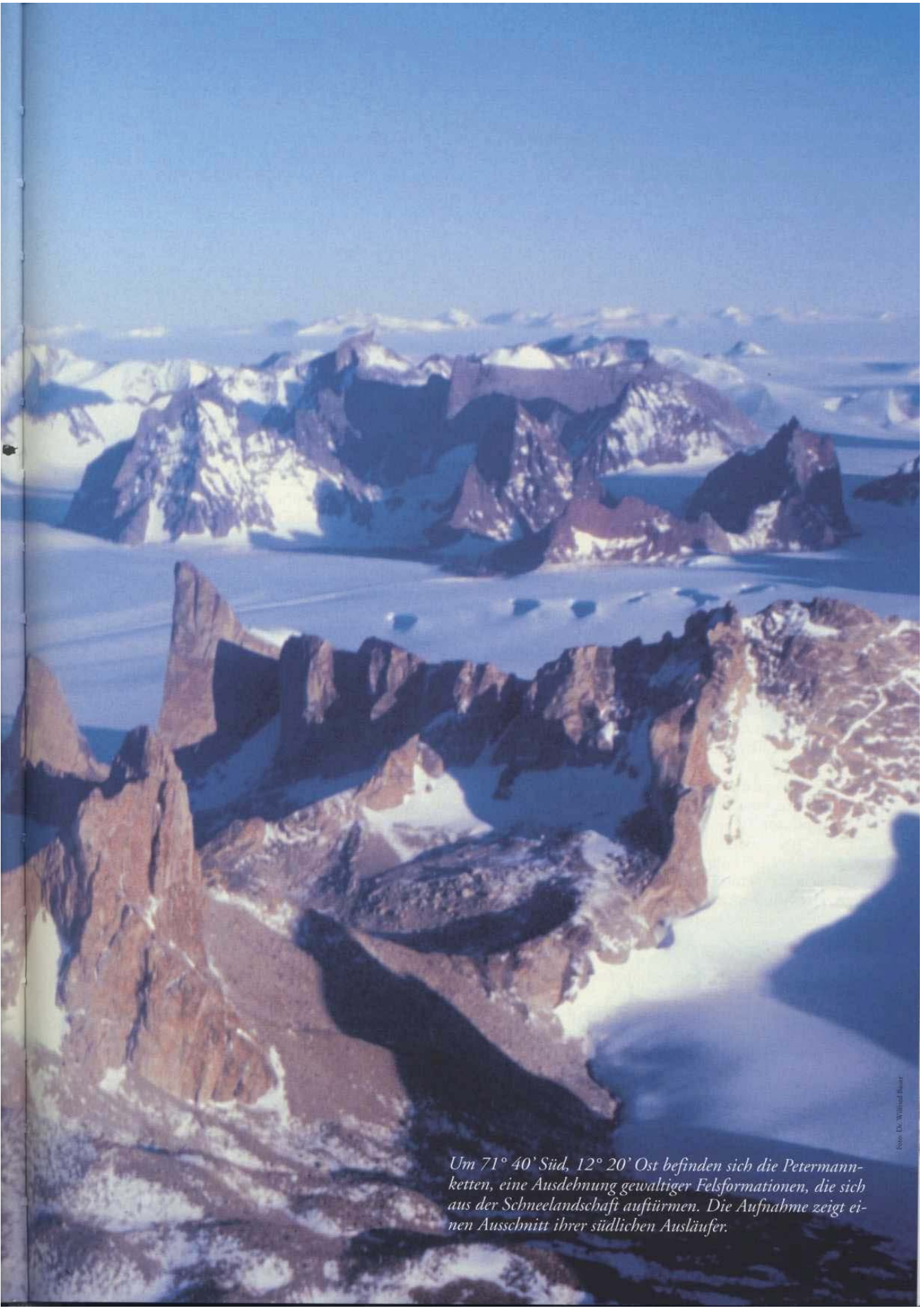
When the flying boat "Boreas" is back on board the "Schwabenland", Alfred Ritscher is the first to disembark. He returns enthusiastic, partly because of the landscape he has seen, but also because, as a former war pilot, he has had his hands on a control stick again for the first time in years.



„In der Schüssel" ist der Name dieser von einer niedrigen Bergkette eingeschlossenen, nach Westen hin offenen Ebene bei 71° 34' Süd, 11° 30' Ost im nördlichen Teil des Alexander-von-Humboldt-Gebirges. Bei dem schrägen Lichteinfall wirkt die Szenerie besonders malerisch.

Foto: Dr. Wilfried Bauer





Um 71° 40' Süd, 12° 20' Ost befinden sich die Petermannketten, eine Ausdehnung gewaltiger Felsformationen, die sich aus der Schneelandschaft auftürmen. Die Aufnahme zeigt einen Ausschnitt ihrer südlichen Ausläufer.

Foto: Dr. Wilfried Bauer

No rest for the scientists

Although the flights of Passat and Boreas have been attracting particular attention and interest since 19 January, this does not mean that the scientists on board the Schwabenland are idle. On the contrary, they can carry out their tasks particularly well when the aircraft are in the air. Expedition leader Ritscher always ensures that there is no "idle time".

Biologist Erich Barkley, geophysicist Leo Gburek and geographer Dr Ernst Herr
mann use the time to take a motorboat out to the pack ice and carry out scientific work there.

Dr. Herrmann and Leo Gburek, who have met several times on Spitsbergen, are delighted to finally be able to set foot on the ice again. Gburek wants to take a magnetic measurement, the device is set up, the heavy tripod stands firmly in place. But it is impossible to take a reading; the magnetic needle dances back and forth. The ice floe on which the device stands is not as solidly built as the tripod, and it rocks with every swell. The biologist has more luck, capturing a few birds for his collection. All in all, this excursion is not entirely satisfactory.

Also unsatisfactory on board the "Schwabenland" is foreman Bolle's attempt to fix the trim problems on the flying boat.
"Passat". Despite all his efforts, he is unable to improve the situation. A makeshift solution is found: to relieve the depth control, the photographer must leave his workplace behind the aircraft's centre of gravity with his 190-kilogram series image recording device after completing his aerial photographs and move forward into the fuel compartment.

First flight period completed

The weather deteriorates, bringing more clouds over land and sea, snow and sleet showers with north and east winds, combined with moderate swells. The flight scheduled for 5 a.m. on 23 January is postponed and then cancelled altogether. It is not possible to continue the photographic work. There is an increased risk of icing in the air for the aircraft and an increased risk of breakage during landing on water and recovery by crane.

The interim report on the first flight period, presented by expedition leader Alfred Ritscher on the evening of 22 January, concludes with the following results: During the missions of the flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat" from the aircraft carrier "Schwabenland", around 250,000 square kilometres have been explored, of which around 140,000 square kilometres are contiguous and some of which have even been photographed with multiple overlaps. The flight paths have been marked at intervals of 20 to 30 kilometres with drop arrows, those dropped at the turning points bearing the German Reich flag.

The results of the flights to date will be transmitted to Hermann Göring, the person responsible for the Four-Year Plan, in Berlin on the evening of 22 January in the second weekly radio telegram. The text will be announced at the evening briefing on board the "Schwabenland".

Due to the changed situation and weather conditions, which make the cancellation of several flight days likely, the expedition leader makes an important decision on the evening of 22 January. The bad weather limits the possibilities for using the two flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat" and the associated aerial photography work. This requires a fundamental change in the flight paths. The aim is to avoid wasting valuable time and film material and to concentrate on the most important tasks that still need to be completed.

In the very unfavourable conditions for the expedition
The weather conditions mean that the pack ice no longer poses any major difficulties for the Schwabenland, because the further east the ship moves, the narrower the pack ice belt becomes off the ice shelf coast; in some places it only extends 30 or 40 nautical miles north of it. This distance can be easily bridged by aircraft, so there is no reason for the ship to enter the pack ice belt. The 20th of January had shown that this could be fatal for the ship.

The bad weather also affects the ship's berth. Between 22 to 24 January, the "Schwabenland" drifts with the loose drift ice, it drifted so close to the pack ice again in 40 hours that at night it had to return part of the way to the launch position for the next flight.

Diese Aufnahme von den nördlichen Teilen der Filchnerberge entstand auf dem Fotoflug des „Boreas" am 31. Januar 1939. Den aufragenden Felsen nannte die Besatzung spontan „Gralsburg". Im Hintergrund sind die Drygalskiberge zu sehen.

Der bei 71° 24' Süd, 13° 20' Ost liegende Ritschergipfel (im Hintergrund zu sehen) wurde zu Ehren des Leiters der Deutschen Antarktischen Expedition 1938/39, Kapitän Alfred Ritscher, benannt.

Period of bad weather and waiting time

The weather plays a crucial role in the operation of the Boreas and Passat flights. Flights can only take place in good weather, with either clear skies or at least overcast conditions. This experience, which ice pilot Otto Kraul had already communicated to the flight captains on the outward journey, was confirmed by the weather conditions encountered in Antarctica. Offshore winds, i.e. south-easterly and south-westerly winds, always indicate good weather conditions for flights, while easterly and northerly winds mean that the weather is likely to deteriorate, with snow showers and the risk of icing on the aircraft.

Neither the chief meteorologist, Dr. Regula, nor the experienced ice pilot Kraul, nor any external weather station can provide any information about the duration of the bad weather that began on the night of 22 January and led to the suspension of flight operations. At times, there are small signs of an improvement in the weather, but these remain faint glimmers of hope as there is no fundamental improvement. So the wait continues – for an indefinite period.

The flight calm is very welcome for the launch crews led by foreman Bolle and catapult operator Hartmann. On the first three days of flying, they were on duty for up to 18 hours a day and are now finally finding time to catch up on maintenance work on the aircraft. Overall, the workload expected of the launch crew is enormous. Preparations for each catapult launch on the M/S Schwabenland take at least an hour. Once the launch is successful, the second aircraft has to be cranked out of the so-called "Versaufloch" and transferred to the catapult, a process that takes a good four hours. In the meantime, preparations must be made for the long-range aircraft to return. Then the catapult launch for the special flight takes place. When the long-range aircraft returns, it is hoisted on board with a crane, lowered into the "Versaufloch" and lashed down. After the aircraft returns from its special flight, it is also hoisted on board, placed on the catapult as a long-range aircraft and prepared for take-off early the next morning. This is the work programme for the launch crew for one day.

During the flight period, each member of the take-off crew has to make do with three to four hours of sleep; more is not possible. The smooth running of the catapult launch and the resumption of flight are essential prerequisites for the overall success of the expedition. The compensation for this enormous effort is the greater leisure time on the outward and return journeys.

In addition to the flight crews, the scientists are also hoping for more favourable weather. Among them is Dr Ernst Herrmann, the geographer. He writes about this waiting period: "For now, we are stuck in one place. The weather remains miserable. Flights are out of the question. The only variety is the food. Breakfast (1) /29 o'clock, lunch 12 o'clock, coffee (1) /2 4 o'clock, dinner 6 o'clock. -

How do we protect ourselves against scurvy? Remember that countless earlier polar expeditions were ruined by this terrible disease. Scurvy is a deficiency disease caused by a lack of vitamin C. In modern ship galleys, the cold storage rooms are large enough that any quantity of fresh vegetables can now be taken along. The daily supply of fresh potatoes is also a good counterbalance. Old James Cook, whom his contemporaries praised as the only ship's captain who knew how to bring his crew home safe and sound, filled half the ship with sauerkraut. [...]

And us? We have fresh meat and fresh vegetables in cold storage, even some fruit. Even modern canned vegetables are cooked in such a way that most of the vitamins are preserved. We also take pure vitamin C in pill form [...]

Our daily diet on the ship also switches to an 'anti-scurvy' regime. Finely chopped onions appear on the table as an accompaniment to meat, fish, salad, buttered bread, sausage and Swiss cheese. "[10]

Sunshine at last

On 28 January, the long-awaited improvement in the weather finally seems to be arriving.

At 9 o'clock in the morning, the "Schwabenland" sets off south-east and eastwards along the pack ice boundary to the next launch site at 69° 46' south, 1° 13' east, which is reached in the evening. It is the southernmost point ever reached by a ship in this region.

Alfred Ritscher reports: "The visibility under the cloud cover was exceptionally good, but the air, ice and water were strangely dead; apart from a few birds, there was hardly any sign of animal life, neither seals nor whales nor penguins appeared as far as the eye could see from the ship.

29 January brought flying weather. Visibility was clear. Only a few clouds hung over the western horizon, suggesting that the wind would turn westward and bring good weather of some consistency.

After the usual weather briefing by the meteorologist, the flying boat "Boreas" takes off at 5 a.m. for its domestic flight according to the new flight path. Schirmacher's brief flight report of the nine-hour long-distance flight reads as follows: "Despite the low outside temperatures of -22°C, the radiator cover and engines are running well. The starboard barometer failed but is now working again [...]. FT traffic was normal.

[...] The take-off was good. The aircraft climbed better than on the first flight, as less fuel was used due to the expected flight time. 06.18 Reached the starting point of flight III according to the flight plan. 07.27 Abaft the cone and sphere, reached the lower limit of the Astra cloud, which the heavy aircraft was unable to pass through due to immediate severe icing. Below us were some rocks protruding from the crevasse-ridden ice. 08.05 Reached the north-western foothills of the new eastern mountains and set course for the south-western foothills due to further low cloud in the west. 08.40 At the end of the south-western foothills, followed the mountain range until
09:30. The mountain range we have flown over so far is shaped like a Y. From the intersection of the north-western and south-western foothills, a small southern foothill extends, which joins the rocky slopes further south observed on the first flights in a large curve. From our location at 09:30, we fly along the mountain range at a distance of 30 km on a course of 85, and at 09:45 we are north of Hohenstaufen and at 10:00 north of the cube. At 10:18 a.m., we changed course to 175 across the mountain range and at 10:35 a.m., we flew along the southern edge of the mountain range on a course of 260.
At 11:55, we reached the western end of the chain and course to 360° until 12:00. With the weather remaining good, we flew over the middle of the chain again on a course of 80° to obtain the best possible map view. Upon reaching the end point, the end of the mountain range was not visible after 0. At 13:15, with a course of 323, we flew towards the Schwabenland, descending in altitude, passing the edge of the ice shelf on the starboard side at 14:09 with many wakes extending southwards.

To the south of the mountains we flew over today, the ice plateau continues to rise to about 4,000 m; further mountain ranges to the south could not be identified. The mountain range thus appears to border the high ice plateau to the north, with the connection to the lower-lying ice being formed by enormous glaciers."[12]

This "Boreas" flight on the morning of 29 January is one of the most important and successful
. It expanded the area of the surveyed terrain by at least 70,000 square kilometres and provides information about the extent of the mountain range, the eastern end of which appears to lie about 500 kilometres further east. The flight lasted almost ten hours and covered a distance of 1,500 kilometres.

"Passat" lands in an ice fjord

"Boreas" is still in flight when "Passat" is launched from the "Schwabenland" at 10 a.m. In view of the flight cancellations during the days of bad weather, the expedition leader does not want to lose any more time.

For Passat, this is a special flight with a subsequent landing in an ice fjord. In addition to flight captain Rudolf Mayr, aircraft mechanic Franz Preuschoff and radio operator Herbert Ruhnke are on board the aircraft. Aerial photographer Max Bundermann has to be left behind because Alfred Ritscher has ordered that geographer Dr Ernst Herrmann fly with the expedition and take charge of this important mission.

In his flight report, flight captain Mayr notes, among other things: "According to the expedition leader's flight order, an off-aircraft landing was to be made in an ice fjord. The location of the ice fjord had been determined by flights on previous days to be approximately 70.00° S, 02.30° W. Seen from the air, the fjord appeared to be a favourable landing and mooring place for aircraft, and there seemed to be land in the immediate vicinity of the ice. Between the fjord and the open water was a pack ice belt about 40 nautical miles wide. I studied the fjord carefully from the aircraft for a long time and only landed after I was completely convinced that it would be possible to take off again. The available landing and take-off area in the ice-free water was approximately 1,500 m. At 11:42, we landed in the fjord and were able to moor the flying boat to a layer of ice about 40 cm thick and then secure the aircraft with ice anchors and lines. The mooring area was about 500 m wide in a north-south direction and about 2 km deep in a westerly direction. After these 2 km, the ice rose slowly.

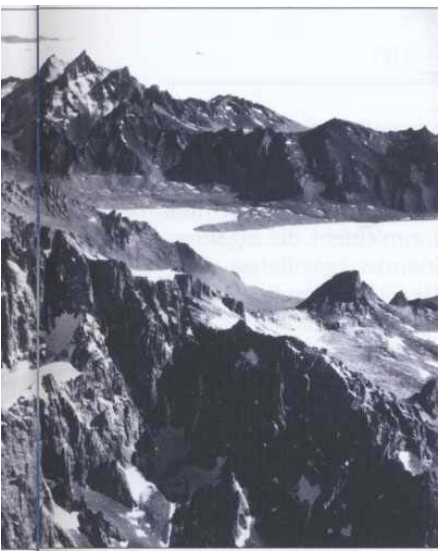
The Mayr chain, discovered by flight captain Rudolf Mayr at 72° 03' south, 2° 45' east

Named after the organiser of the (71°40' south, 12

This steep rock face is located in the western Mühlig-Hofmann Mountains.

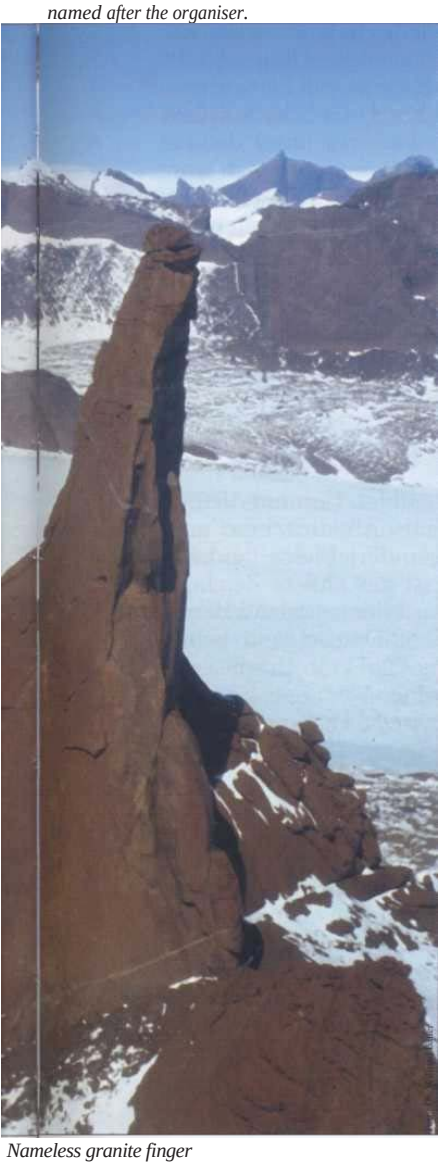
Bizarre formation:.)

Southern foothills (left) and eastern edge of the Mühlig-Hofmann Mountains (right)



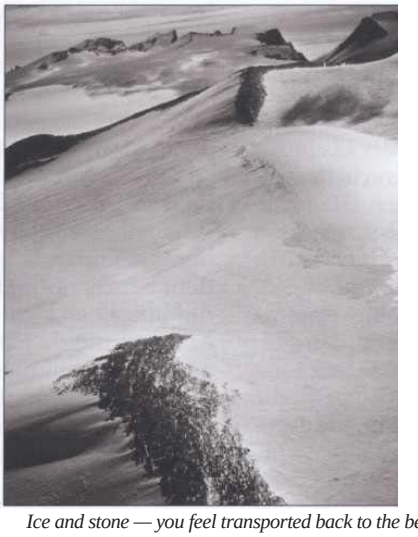
The W ohlthatmassiv 30' East) was named after the organiser.

One of the endless "ice rivers", glaciers that can sometimes be several kilometres wide



Nameless granite finger

Impression in stone: millions of years shaped this rock.



Ice and stone — you feel transported back to the beginning of the Earth's history.

with a gradient of 1-2% and merged into the ice shelf without any visible transition. The north and south sides of the fjord were bordered by hills about 70 metres high (completely covered with ice). Preuschoff climbed the northern hill, but was prevented from reaching the highest point by wide cracks in the ice. At an elevated point about 500 m inland to the south, where solid land could be assumed to be under the ice cover, I hoisted the German flag. Herr-mann took photographs and made an echo sounder measurement next to the seaplane landing stage. Immediately after landing, I took three sun altitudes with the dragonfly sextant and two more four hours later, so that the location of the fjord could be precisely determined: 69.55° S, 03.57° W."

Geographer Dr Ernst Herrmann, who took part in this "trade wind" flight at the special request of the expedition leader, reported on it in a somewhat humorous manner: "The ' pleasure flight' in the afternoon has a special task: to investigate some locations on the edge of the ice shelf that are known from previous flights to see if they are suitable for landing. The locations in question are bays cutting about 25 km deep into the ice shelf. During flights I, II and special flight 1, it was unanimously agreed that both bays had not changed position during this period and that, in contrast to the surrounding area, they only had gently sloping ice edges on their western side. It seems likely that land is close by. [...]

The two bays are flown around as instructed; the larger one appears more suitable for landing because there is less drift ice. After a successful landing, it is possible to step onto the ice edge, which is only about 30 cm high. [...]

The ice edge mentioned above is part of the ice shelf that fills part of the bay. Behind it, on three sides, there is a gently rolling terrain of solid land covered with a layer of ice, as far as can be observed. The thickness of the ice cannot be determined. The 50 to 70 m high hills consist of glacier ice and are domed by pressure. Any crevasses are covered by firn.

The bay is partly filled with completely flat shelf ice, with the ice edge about 1 to 2 km away from the hills. Echolocation with a handheld echo sounder at the edge reveals a relatively shallow water depth of 435 m, which also indicates proximity to land.

The ice floe is criss-crossed by a few crevasses only a few decimetres wide. The thinness of the floe is clearly evident here, as the swell passes under the plate and shifts the crevasse walls vertically against each other. A load test of the ice plate, which is about 3 to 4 m thick, cannot be carried out.

However, it seems safe to me to unload a depot at such a location, but it should be noted that the relatively thin ice sheet can break up due to the swell and be driven out of the fjord in pieces by offshore winds.

The extent to which it is possible to approach the bay described with a small vessel depends on the drift ice conditions. During three approaches within 10 days, both bays were free of ice except for a few drift ice blocks, perhaps even during the entire period; but two days later, during long-range flight VI, there was already so much ice (partly due to the break-up of the ice shelf where we had previously landed) that it was no longer possible to land again. However, I had the impression that the drift ice came only from outside and was driven in and out by the ebb and flow of the tide and local winds. Despite occasional break-offs, the edges of the bay are only insignificantly involved in the formation of drift ice.

Mayr measures the sun's altitude several times with a libelline sextant and determines
the exact geographical location of our landing site.

So much for science! Now for politics! We take a drop flag and stick it a few hundred metres inland into the ice. This is the outward sign that we Germans have entered this no man's land and claim it for Greater Germany.

The first German colony! " [14]

Encounter with Antarctic inhabitants

Dr. Herrmann continues: "Here comes a native! He comes rushing from far away, running, falling, sliding a little on his stomach, jumping up, running on, falling again, sliding down a small slope on his stomach, then jumping to his feet, gesticulating, shouting, running on... He is wearing a tailcoat, the white shirt front becoming increasingly visible, only the tie is missing, which he forgot in his excitement ...

Then he falls for the third time onto his white shirt... never mind, he slides, jumps up... until finally, a real little three-foot-tall penguin, he stands in front of us and looks at us curiously from all sides... a penguin.

We communicate as best we can. First with "Good morning!" and "Heil Hitler!" That doesn't make much impression on him. Then Ruhnke crouches down so that he is as small as the penguin, flaps his arms like wings and dances around him. He likes that better. He joins in. It goes without saying that he also thinks we are just a variation of his own kind. Like him, we walk upright on two legs and have a kind of wing that we can wave around in the air. We're just a little bigger, and our beaks aren't very developed yet, and we don't have beautiful shiny black tailcoats. That's the only difference.

Soon a few more will join us, all Ade-

Little penguins that are too curious. After a while, an emperor penguin appears, almost twice as large, solemn, full of dignity. He does not run excitedly towards us, he strides. The nervous flapping of his smaller relatives does not bother him; he strides closer, takes a good look at the strange guests, turns around and wants to walk away again. Then Mayr takes him by the hand, or more precisely, by the tips of his wings, and he willingly follows his big uncle here and there. Of course, he resists getting into the aircraft, but it is no use; he has to keep his brothers and cousins company in the hold. [...]

Everyone on the ship is excited about the new passengers. A pen is quickly built so that the little creatures cannot escape again. " [15]

In the daily briefing on the evening of

29 January, Alfred Ritscher praises the day's efforts of the flying boats "Boreas" and "Pas-sat" and their crews, who, in his opinion, have done "outstanding" work.

More than 180,999 square kilometres have now been photographed on four domestic flights. This result is reported to the representative for the four-year plan in Berlin by radio with the weekly report.

At midnight, the sun sinks below the horizon for the first time during the "Schwabenland" expedition in the Southern Ocean at the edge of the ice shelf. It had already set "officially" the day before, but refraction had caused it to remain visible

light remained visible for another day, albeit shielded by the continent.

Commemoration of the "Day of the Seizure of Power"

The next day, 30 January, is a "national holiday" in Greater Germany, commemorating the day Adolf Hitler seized power six years earlier.

The entire crew and all scientists gather at 10 a.m. in the festively decorated common room. Only the crew of the flying boat "Passat" is missing, as they took off from "Schwabenland" at 9 a.m.

"Schwabenland".

The third officer, Hans Werner Viereck, reads a speech on behalf of the second officer, Karl-Heinz Röbke, who is the local NSDAP leader on board. Incidentally, all expedition participants form the "M/S Schwabenland local group". This is not unusual, but was common practice on all German merchant ships between 1933 and 1945.

At 7 p.m., all expedition participants gather once again in the common room to listen to Adolf Hitler's radio address, which, however, only reaches the M/S "Schwabenland" in fragments due to atmospheric interference. Otherwise, the holiday on the Schwabenland proceeds like a normal working day, not least because the weather is expected to deteriorate again.

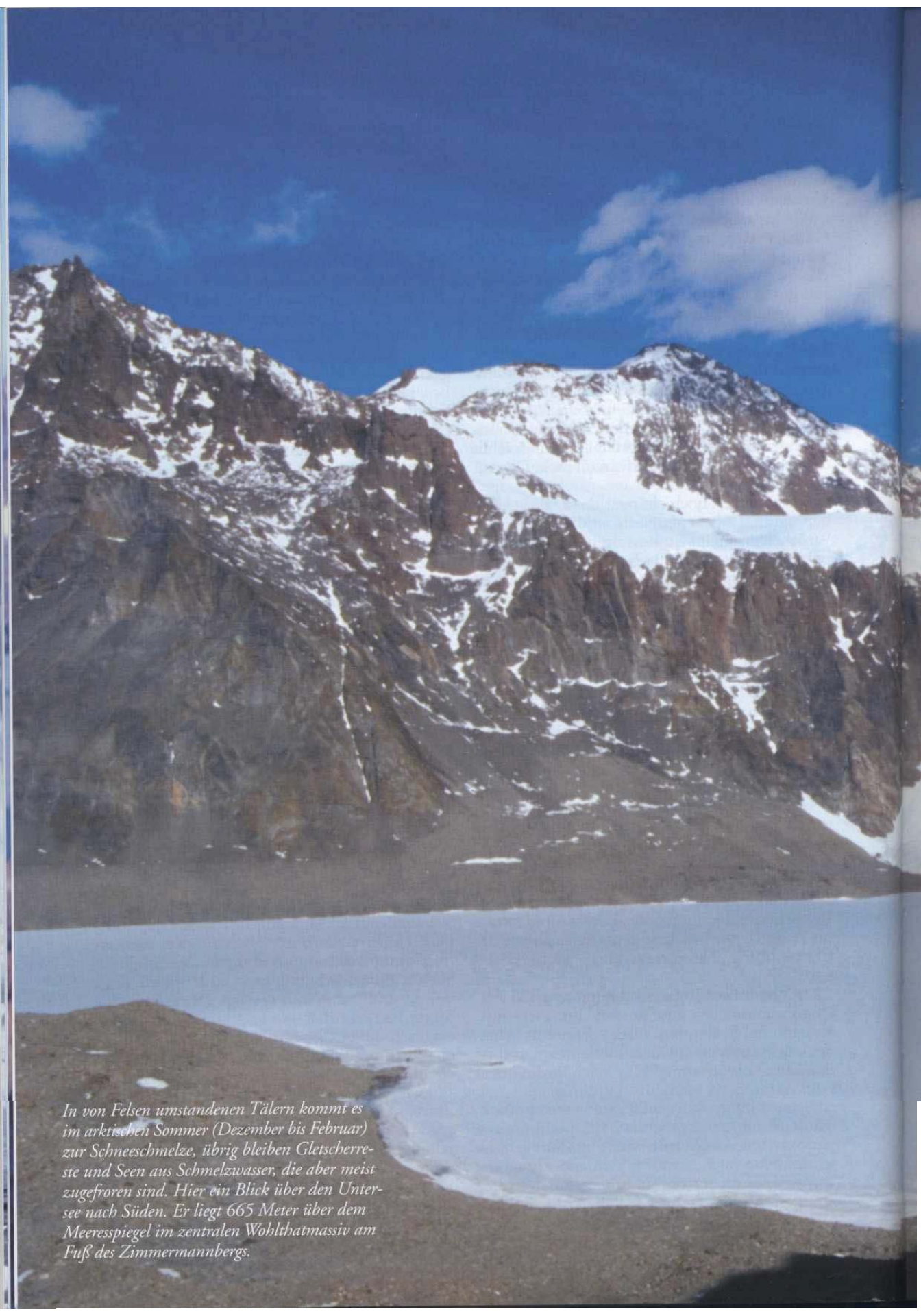
Early in the morning, Ritscher, Kottas and Kraul had already noticed that the current

had driven the "Schwabenland" eight nautical miles westward again in the last few hours.

The flying boat "Passat", which took off at 9 a.m. for a photo flight, returns to the air base after six hours and 53 minutes, at 3:53 p.m. The barometers also failed on this domestic flight, and the trim failed again despite previous overhaul on board. The pilot notes that the Passat can only be used to a limited extent in future. However, the instruments, engines and radio worked perfectly.

Before the Passat returned,

"Boreas" took off at 2 p.m. on a research flight. Its mission was to fly along the edge of the ice shelf in search of a landing site. The four-man crew had to leave aerial photographer Sauter behind, but in return



In von Felsen umstandenen Tälern kommt es im arktischen Sommer (Dezember bis Februar) zur Schneeschmelze, übrig bleiben Gletscherreste und Seen aus Schmelzwasser, die aber meist zugefroren sind. Hier ein Blick über den Untersee nach Süden. Er liegt 665 Meter über dem Meeresspiegel im zentralen Wohlthatmassiv am Fuß des Zimmermannbergs.

Foto: Dr. Wilfried Bauer

taken on board as a guest of geophysicist Leo Gburek to enable him to take geomagnetic measurements at the edge of the ice shelf or on a large ice floe.

As the ice shelf edge proves too high to dock, the flying boat sets course for a free wake to land on an ice floe. However, the floes are also unsuitable for the planned observations and measurements, so the flight is aborted and the aircraft heads for the fjords observed to the south-west of the ship. There, the "Bo-reas" lands at 16:35 in a large wake. The aircraft is anchored to the edge of the ice shelf, which is about 1.50 metres high. Gburek carries out his magnetic measurements. When crossing the ice shelf, it is discovered that the surface of the ice shelf, which appeared completely smooth and flat from the air, is criss-crossed in all directions by cracks and crevasses that have been blown away by the snow and pose a great danger. When marching across the ice shelf, it therefore seems important to secure the individual participants by roping them together. Landing with the ten-tonne whale, reinforced only by skids, therefore involves a great risk, as the machine could break through one of the many crevasses after touching down.

At 6:55 p.m., the return flight takes off at 6.35 p.m., reaching the ship.

Towards the end of 30 January, shortly before midnight, crew members and scientists, aircraft crews and their assistants, and anyone else who is available, gather on the upper deck of the Schwabenland for a unique midnight spectacle. Ritscher, Kottas, Kraul and several ship's officers stand on the bridge, all gazing spellbound at the fascinating play of colours of the polar lights.

Expedition leader Alfred Ritscher describes this experience as follows: "At midnight, the sky lit up in a blaze of colour never seen before; the horizon resembled a glistening golden ribbon, above which the most delicate shades of green, pink and blue were woven into a transparent veil, topped by a layer of alto strat*us* clouds that reached almost to the zenith and were dotted with rosy red on the underside, casting a warm glow over the entire landscape ."

For all those who witnessed it, this midnight hour will be one of the most beautiful experiences of the expedition.

Hunting penguins with the trade winds

31 January begins gloomily. In line with the progress of the photographic work, "Schwabenland" set course eastward during the night and reached the next launch position an hour and a half after midnight: 69° 33' south, 7° 12' east, right at the edge of the pack ice, about 30 nautical miles north of the ice shelf. The noticeably decreasing brightness forced the launch times to be set later each day.

Therefore, the launch of the "Boreas" for the next photo flight on 31 January did not take place until 8:08 a.m. Due to weather conditions, flight captain Schirmacher is unable to carry out his original mission, which is to photograph the mountains further east. As thick cloud cover already lies over the inland ice and the massif further east, Schirmacher flies west, as visibility is still good. When the weather deteriorates there too, the "Boreas" begins its return flight and lands at 5.13 p.m. after a nine-hour flight at the "Schwabenland" after a nine-hour flight.

The Passat had already taken off at 1:57 p.m. The flight mission: coastal reconnaissance with an off-site landing. Flight captain Mayr had left the photographer behind and taken biologist Barkley on board as a guest to give him an insight into the animal life at the edge of the ice and to determine their astronomical position.

Mayr initially flies westward without a specific course, searching for a place to land, but without success. When the radio message from the Boreas arrives, reporting that all the fjords are full of ice and there is no possibility of landing, the Passat heads east.

At 3:40 p.m., Preuschoff spots a large colony of emperor penguins on a large ice floe at the southern edge of the pack ice. There is enough open water between the edge of the ice shelf and the pack ice to land and take off.

The Passat lands at 3:42 p.m. and is secured with the ice anchor that Preuschoff has forged. Flight captain Mayr is the first to climb onto the ice shelf at a low point and plants a drop arrow with the German Reich flag.

The four-man Passat crew then begins catching penguins, which Mayr describes as follows: "Like a well-trained police squad, the four of us swept between the penguins and within 25 minutes we had five live emperors sitting in the

Whale. It was absolutely necessary to carry out this manoeuvre as quickly as possible, as the pack ice we were lying on was constantly shifting and pieces were breaking off the not particularly confidence-inspiring ice floe as we transferred the penguins to the flying boat. As the wind was favourable, blowing away from the ice floe, we were able to drift away from it after completing our catch and started the engines at a manoeuvrable distance from the ice. At 16:22, we took off for the return flight. [...] At 18:00, D-ALOX landed at M.S. ‚Schwabenland'. "[17]

An iceberg calves

After consulting with meteorologists, Alfred Ritscher fears that the next day will bring further deterioration in the weather. He is also aware that, at this late stage of the Antarctic year, there is little hope of a return to better flying weather. On the contrary, the Antarctic winter seems to be just around the corner.

.

He therefore decides during the night of 1 February to

1. February to head east so that he can at least observe the discoveries made so far from on board.

. Heavy snowfall and a lot of loose ice near the pack ice in the

The eastern horizon is obscured, disrupting the night voyage. Because the ice belt off the coast is very wide and the ice shelf coast is almost out of sight, the course must be set to the northeast. Finally, ice appears ahead on the starboard side. It turns out that here, at 0°, a mighty ice shelf tongue juts northward to 69° 10' south. The sky is still completely overcast.

Just south of the Schwabenland, 27 huge icebergs are counted, one of which is estimated to be a kilometre long. Another, about three kilometres from the ship, calves in the early morning with a mighty roar that can be heard even in the closed cabins. Two humpback whales, which have been swimming around the ship for a while, are not disturbed by this. Their appearance in this area leads the biologist to conclude that this is due to the increase in plankton and the proximity of the pack ice edge. As it turns out later, the M/S

"Schwabenland" is indeed close to the pack ice

, which is so tightly closed that no ship can break through it.

A flight scheduled for 2 February at 2 p.m. is postponed, then cancelled altogether. The weather is still unsuitable for flying on 2 February.

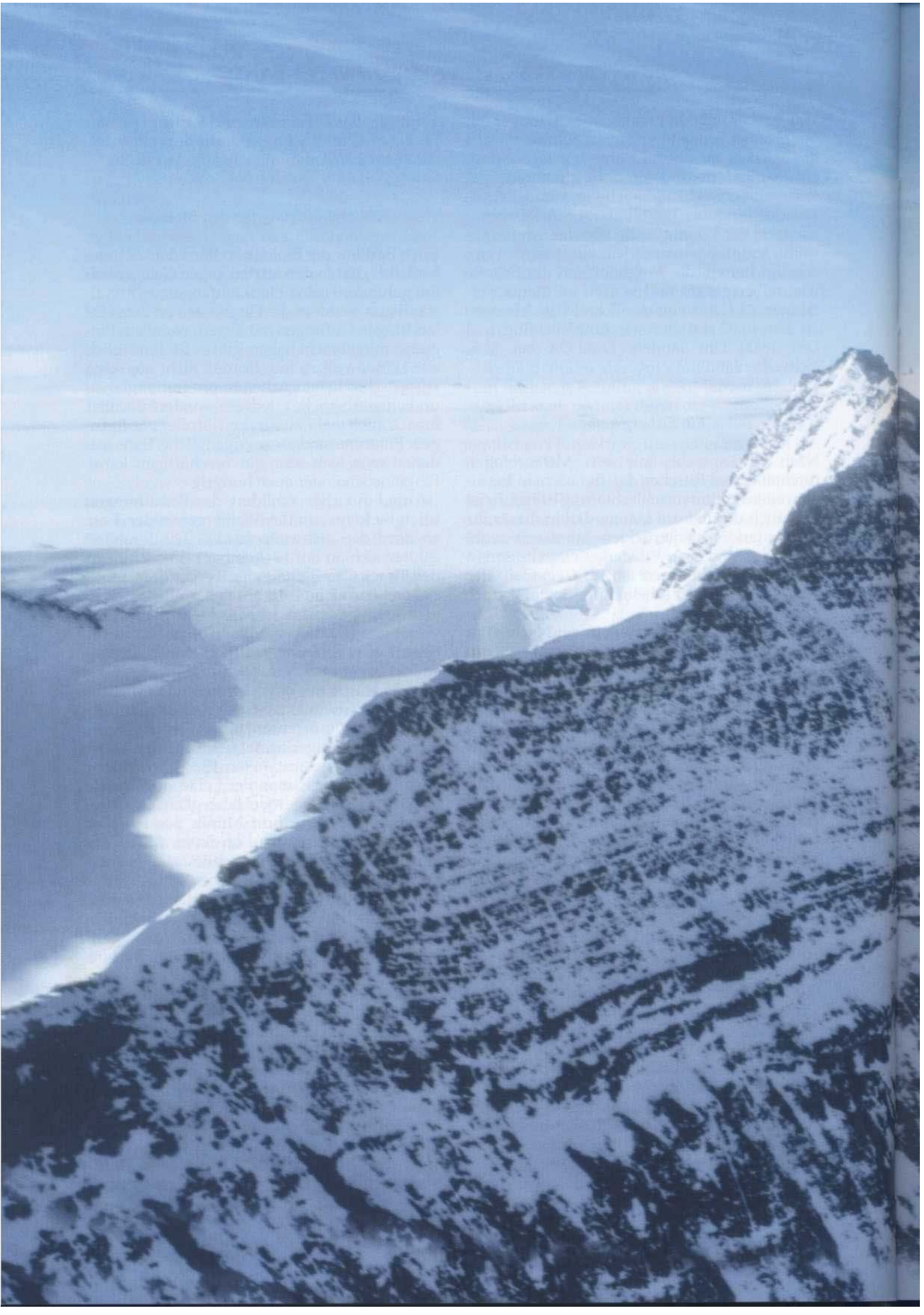
Full employment for the biologist

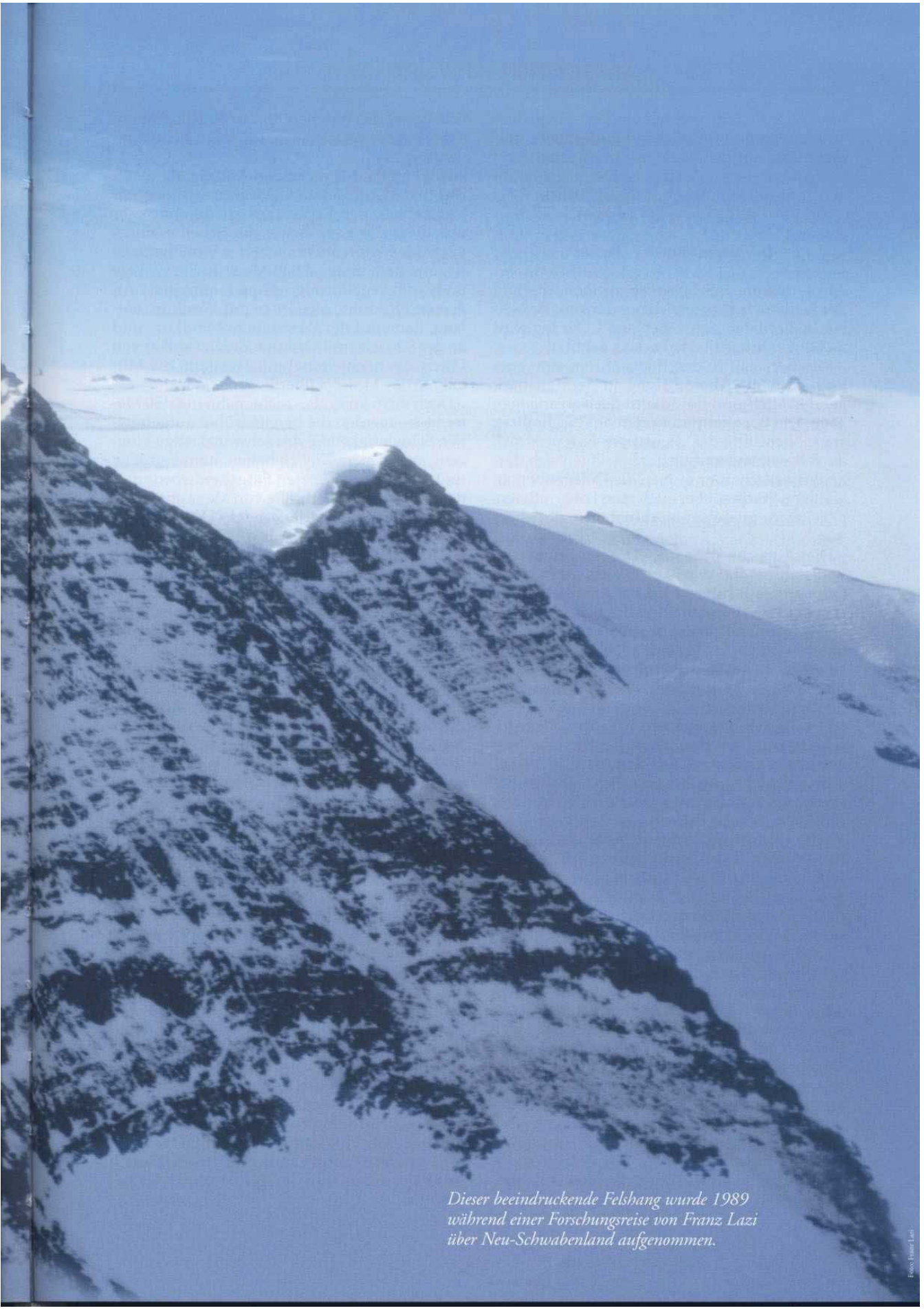
Erich Barkley, the biologist on board the "Schwabenland", has found opportunities to complete his plankton catches in recent days. Since the flying boats returned from their inland flights with loads of animals, mainly penguins, he has had his hands full every day. Not only does he have to complete his scientific work according to schedule and without compromise, he also has to spend a lot of time caring for the animals. Penguins are approachable animals that are very easy to work with, but they are also hungry.

Alfred Ritscher describes Erich Barkley's efforts to ensure the welfare of the animals on board the Schwabenland: "The penguins seemed to feel very comfortable on board. In order to keep the animals company and bring them home safely, as many more were to be caught as the food supplies would allow. The colourful emperor penguins, stately birds, stretching to a height of about 90 cm and weighing 30–35 kg, were with their comical movements, waddling gait and their um-

With their melodious trumpeting sounds, which they used to indicate both their hunger and their gratitude for being fed, they were a constant source of amusement throughout their captivity on board; but much more agile and active, and more comical in their facial expressions, are the Adelie penguins, three of which seized their freedom in an unguarded moment themselves .

The biologist Barkley solved the question of their diet by offering them well-watered salted herrings, which, after a short period of acclimatisation, they readily accepted and tolerated well. Feeding time always attracted a large crowd of spectators around the animals, in the midst of whom their loving keeper initially had great difficulty in overcoming the hunger strike of his charges. Finally, however, he could hardly resist their appetite, so that, in view of the herring barrels that were emptied all too quickly, he had to look for other suitable food; scraped beef with grated hard bread in the form of meatballs and, as an experiment, seal blubber then served as a substitute; we also looked enviously at the portions of eggs we had saved for ourselves in the stomachs of the eternally





Dieser beeindruckende Felshang wurde 1989 während einer Forschungsreise von Franz Lazi über Neu-Schwabenland aufgenommen.

Foto: Franz Lazi

hungry animals disappeared. Nevertheless, their round bellies shrank more and more. Only fresh fish bought on the return journey in Cape Town and Pernambuco restored some of their appearance.

The last flight of the "Passat"

On 1 and 2 February, there is no question of launching the two flying boats; they remain on board the "Schwabenland". The day is spent on boat trips to the pack ice.

Ritscher sees the boat trips as a welcome and meaningful change from the strenuous flying and shipboard duties of the past few days. The boat trips take place in the afternoon. Not only the flight personnel who are off duty, but also crew members take part. Scientists use the opportunity to conduct further studies, but also to take photographs. There are plenty of interesting subjects to photograph.

The expedition leader has entrusted the supervision of the boat trips to the ship's first officer, Herbert Amelang, who has the seafaring crew of the
Schwabenland. The trips through the ice are not without danger; they place high demands on the seafaring skills and decisiveness of the boat crews.

The second day ends with a social evening on board, which is skilfully led by geophysicist Leo Gburek.

During the night of 2 to 3 February, the weather clears up unexpectedly. It is 6 degrees below zero. The wind conditions do not promise good weather. In this area, this is only likely with winds from the north-west to west. However, the wind is blowing from opposite directions. Nevertheless, visibility to the east and south is still good. Only on the western horizon, from southwest to north, is a bank of clouds piling up to half the height of the zenith. The sea is calm, with only a slight swell from the north. At 5 a.m., the captain talks to the meteorologists and the two pilots to see if the two flying boats can be used in these conditions. As there are no concerns, the expedition leader decides to use the flying boat "Passat" first, with take-off scheduled for 7.19 a.m. will be.

The ship has now reached its new launch position at 69° 5' south, 14° 46' east.

, the flying boat will take off with 9,660 kilograms, including fuel for a ten-hour flight.

Flight captain Mayr has been tasked with exploring the easternmost and final mountain range in the expedition's area of operation. He flies over the longitudinal axis of the ice shelf on a south-easterly course and reaches the Wohlthat Massif, from which several jagged, pointed peaks rise to a height of 4,000 metres. He flies along its northern side heading west, then along the western side heading south and along the southern side heading east. Finally, he wants to fly over the centre line of the massif once more from the east, heading west.

But it doesn't get that far. At 4,150 metres...
At this altitude, the difficulties encountered earlier in keeping the tail-heavy aircraft level become increasingly greater, and during the last hour of flight, Mayr and Preuschoff must combine their physical strength to compensate for the failure of the trim device by constantly pushing down on the elevator control. In the downdraft, a catastrophe is narrowly averted. This can only be prevented by the aerial photographer quickly dismantling his measuring cameras and fleeing with them to the front of the fuel compartment.

The air temperature at flying altitude has dropped to an estimated minus 32 degrees Celsius, perhaps even lower, but this can no longer be checked because the outside thermometer has failed. The barometer and pitot pressure are also not working. The engines had already started to run irregularly when they reached the northern edge of the mountains.

It was only on the return flight, when the temperature dropped to minus seven degrees after leaving the high altitudes at around 1,000 metres, that the engines, instruments and trim returned to normal.

The difficulties encountered with the trim and the engines are so serious that under normal conditions it would be unthinkable to continue the flight. However, as the altitude is very good and there appears to be suitable landing terrain on the ice everywhere to the north of the mountains, which could have been reached in gliding flight, Captain Mayr decides to fly around the mountains despite these obstacles. At 2 p.m., after a flight time of six hours and 41 minutes and a distance of approximately 1,000 kilometres, the Passat lands at Schwabenland. It is the last flight of this aircraft on the expedition.

Pack ice and bad weather

Although Alfred Ritscher is disappointed that flight captain Mayr has to report by radio at around 1 p.m. that the flying boat "Passat" is no longer available for further missions due to the recurrence of defects, he is very satisfied with the results of the last "Passat" flight.

Based on radio messages received by Ritscher from Passat during the morning, he assumes that, despite the difficulties encountered, the last flight of the Passat has gained a new 70,000 square kilometres of land, as documented by photographs. In addition, the clear air to the south

"Passat" has gained new territory of approximately 70,000 square kilometres, as documented in photographs. Furthermore, the clear air to the south and beyond 20° east has been confirmed, meaning that the expedition's mission in the east has been fulfilled.

But on the morning of 3 February, the expedition leader is preoccupied with entirely different problems. According to meteorologists, a new and prolonged deterioration in the weather is expected, and ice reconnaissance has revealed that enormous masses of pack ice are approaching from the east, already reaching 120 nautical miles off the coast and advancing westward to within about 50 kilometres of the Schwabenland.

The "Schwabenland" is in danger. The ship is moored on the south side of a wide and deep ice bay, where it is no longer advisable to remain for long given the advanced season and the formation of new ice that has been observed. If the pack ice belt closes outside, the expedition ship would find itself in an unpleasant and dangerous situation in the next few days.

On the morning of 3 February, Ritscher makes an important decision on his own behalf. He does not want to wait until he is forced to retreat with his ship from the ice advancing from the east. Before that, he wants to get an overview of the eastern part of the expedition's working area.

So at 12:40 p.m., he takes off in the flying boat "Boreas" on a reconnaissance flight. On board with him are flight captain Schirmacher, aircraft mechanic Kurt Loesner and radio operator Erich Gruber. After an hour and seven minutes, the "Boreas" returns and lands on the

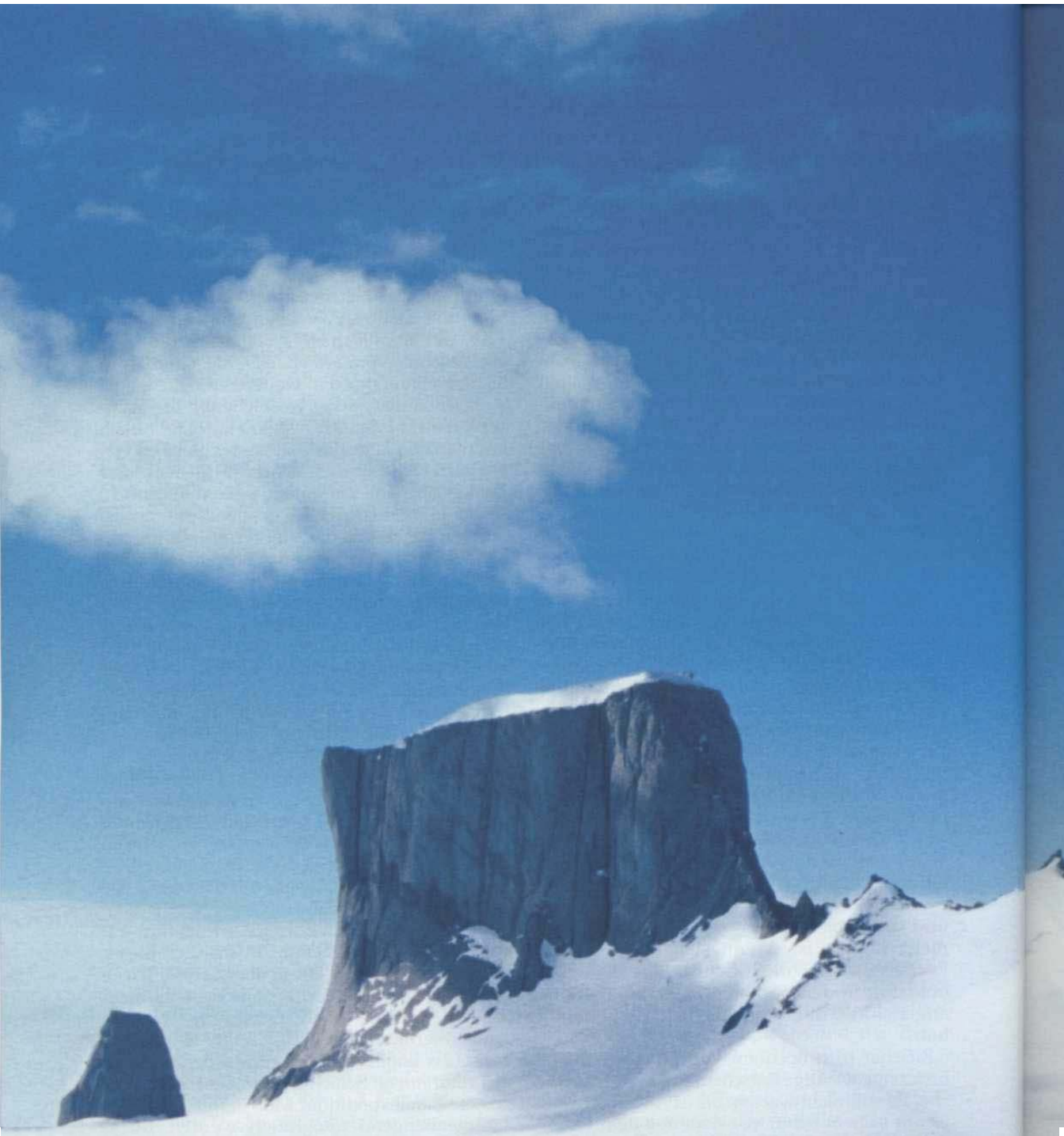
Schwabenland.

Ritscher discovers lake district

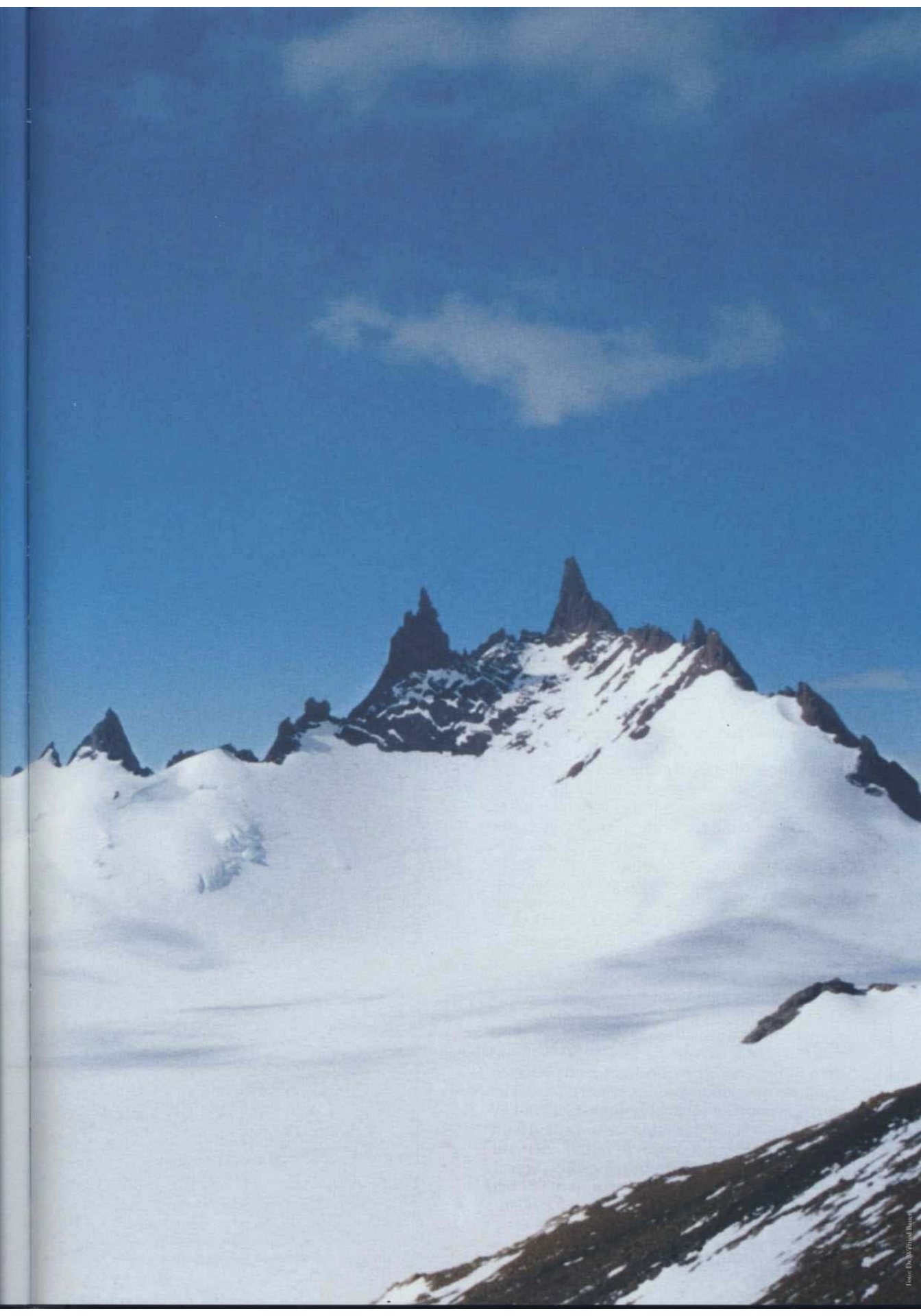
Alfred Ritsch's personal notes on this flight, during which ice-free lakes and a strip of ice-free terrain were discovered, state the following: "12:10 p.m., crossing the northern edge of the ice shelf at 15° 0; the brownish-red dust is barely visible from above;

12:20 p.m. from a height of 400 metres on the port side, a bank of clouds abeam, ahead on the port side, the eastern massif in sight, on the starboard side in the distance, the first signs of the next one further west; visibility is then almost 300 kilometres. From a distance, the reddish-brown mountain ranges of the eastern massif resemble multiple triangular prisms, like building blocks on a white tablecloth, and are more closed in shape than the rocky elevations further west with their needle-pointed finger-like or round columns, towers and turrets; few independent glaciers; in valleys open to the east there is a lot of snow, while the western sides are often completely snow-free, as are the highest ridges, peaks and steep slopes; some peaks are up to 4,000 m above sea level; 3:30 p.m. 3,700 m altitude, air temperature approx. -30° C; below us on the firn ice, a number of round ponds of frozen meltwater; as we approach the eastern massif, a snow-free strip of terrain appears on the starboard side, between whose humps there appear to be ice-free areas of water; Must be investigated on return; from the ice valley between 13° and 14°, from an altitude of 3,700 m, clear view to the south as far as the bare inland ice at over 4,000 m and to the north-west over the firn ice of the Borfeld; Return flight heading for the pond area; fly over this criss-cross at 50-100 m above ground level; ponds transparent to the bottom, apparently several metres deep with no ice formation, although the outside thermometer shows -5° C, embedded between tuberous, rounded hillocks of reddish-brown layered rock; base for a later land expedition? Must be photographed tomorrow; return flight close over the Borfeld and the ice shelf tongue; firn ice net-like with many 1-2 m deep gullies, some of which carry meltwater. " [59]

In the evening, the expedition leader leads a meeting to discuss the day's events and the results of the flights. Flight captain Mayr , a discussion takes place about the day's events and the results of the flights. Flight captain Mayr reports in detail on the difficulties encountered by the "Passat" flying boat and explains why it cannot be used for further long-distance flights; this also restricts the use of the "Boreas" flying boat, as it is intended as a



Blick auf den westlichen Ausläufer des Mühlig-Hofmann-Gebirges



the consequence is that, like the "Passat", the "Boreas" can now only be used for coastal flights.

Despite little prospect of better flying weather, the "Boreas" is scheduled to take off the next morning to photograph the pond area as a whole.

The night of 3 to 4 February brings a Further deterioration in weather conditions, but progressing more slowly than expected. At around 6 a.m., snow showers approaching from the south-east reach the ship. As pack ice is also approaching from the east, Ritscher orders the ship to head west in order to leave the area of low pressure and find an opportunity to launch the flying boat "Boreas". Ritscher wants to have photographs taken of the marshland area about 150 kilometres from the Schwabenland.

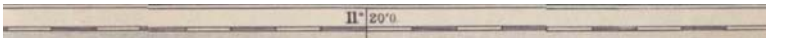
The "Boreas" is launched from the "Schwabenland" at 9:55 a.m. On board are flight captain Schirmacher, aircraft mechanic Loesener, radio operator Gruber, aerial photographers Bundermann and Sauter, and guest Dr. Regula, the chief meteorologist.

The row cameras are left behind to lighten the aircraft. For the first time, two aerial photographers are flying with the expedition, a sign that the expedition leader attaches great importance to photographs of the Borean Lake District, as it will later be called. The photographs on this flight will be taken only with the Siemens hand-held camera and a colour film camera.

Flight captain Richardheinrich Schirmacher reports on this important photo flight: "The flight was scheduled to investigate the ice conditions north and west of the ship's position and to photograph the Borean lake district discovered the previous day. A course of 359° was steered from the ship's position until 10:45, with no major ice floes sighted in the area overflown.

At 11:05, a course of 180° was set, from which...

However, at 11:38, it had to be abandoned due to deteriorating weather conditions. At 12:05, the north-western corner of the drift ice was reached, with low cloud cover allowing a flight altitude of only 300 m. The rest of the flight followed the outer edge of the drift ice, which lay parallel to the ice shelf coast at a distance of approximately 20 nautical miles. The weather over the continent itself was more favourable, so that the photo assignment could be carried out. At 13:30, the lake district was reached and flown over on a westerly and northerly course until 13:47. At 14:06, the return flight was started, which was carried out at low altitude for photographic purposes. At the photographer's request, the shelf ice coast and the drift ice were flown over at low altitude.



At the edge of the weather front

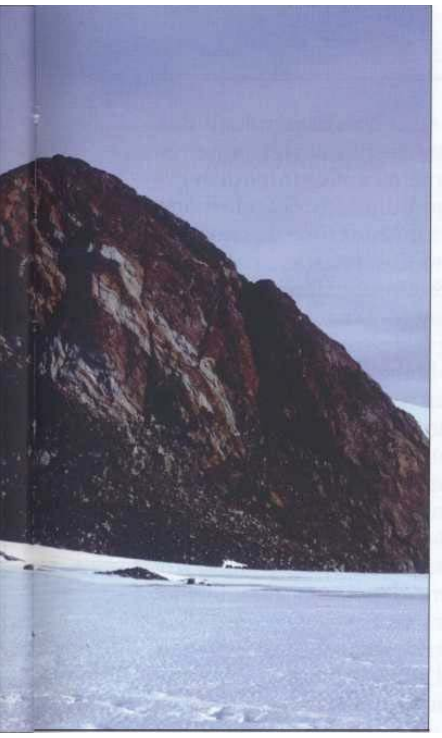
Alexander von Humboldt

aai & F.ebnzar J09g ¥m da'

German Antarctic Expedition

These photographs by photographer and film director Franz Lazi show the diversity of the Antarctic landscape in

The Schirmacher Oasis area: a rugged snowfield (top left), an ice-free mountain peak (top centre), earth-coloured



hills (top right), the edge of a glacier tongue (bottom left) and a wide view of the oasis — here the blue lakes can be seen in the background (bottom right).

To supplement the expedition film. The landing took place [...] at 3:10 p.m. "[20]

A boat trip to the loose pack ice in this area was carried out on the same day to investigate the ice. In addition to the geophysicist, the second and third officers of the "Schwabenland" took part.

On the evening of 4 February, the expedition leader announces that the Schwabenland will head west to investigate the ice conditions at the western boundary of the working area. If it is not possible to continue westward, the return journey will begin. On the way there, the two aircraft are to be used once again for coastal flights, and there should be an opportunity to

boat e x c u r s ions.

On the same evening, expedition leader Ritscher concluded a special meeting with the two flight captains and the crews of the flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat," declaring their tasks complete. He expressed his gratitude for their outstanding performance. The only thing left to do was to carry out a reconnaissance flight the next day, 5 February, to give the two scientists Lange and Paulsen, who had not yet been able to take part in any flights, the opportunity to complete their work.

The last German flag is hoisted.

Early in the morning of 5 February, low-hanging clouds cover the inland area. The special flight scheduled for 9 a.m. to explore the coast and the pack ice situation must first be postponed until 11:30 a.m. and then postponed by another ten minutes.

At 11:40 a.m., the Boreas takes off with the Passat crew on board.

crew on board. In addition to flight captain Mayr, aircraft mechanic Preuschoff and radio operator Ruhnke, oceanographer Karl-Heinz Paulsen and second meteorologist Heinz Lange are also on board.

Flight captain Mayr reported on this last flight of the Boreas, saying, among other things: "The aim of the flight was to find a suitable landing site in the west or centre of the large ice shelf at 0° longitude and to enable the oceanographer to work on the ice shelf. [...] At 13:37, we landed between the ice shelf and the pack ice. At the landing site we found, the ice shelf protruded about 1.70 m above sea level. Landing was only possible because there was an offshore wind at the time of the manoeuvre. We moored the flying boat again using the tried-and-tested Preu

We secured the ice anchor. The glassy, brittle nature of the ice made it extremely difficult to drive the anchor into the ice. Since the ice rose evenly from our location to the height of the normal ice shelf at about 25 metres, I assumed that this spot was also above land and hoisted the German flag. Astronomical positioning was not possible due to the clouds. Huge flocks of seals and penguins were lying near our landing place in inaccessible terrain. We were able to bring two live emperor penguins back on board. Oceanographer Paulsen lost his briefcase while climbing onto the ice shelf. At 3:35 p.m., we started the engines and began

At 3:46 p.m. for the return flight. Um At 4:45 p.m., we landed at M.S., Schwabenland.

One of the emperor penguins brought back by the Boreas crew puzzled the biologist; he could not classify it as one of the known species based on its appearance. It was only later that it became clear that it was moulting.

Last night and last day in Antarctica

While the flying boat "Boreas" was still en route, the M/S "Schwabenland" had continued its journey westward and was at position 69° 00' south, 0° 00' east on the evening of 5 February.

Alfred Ritscher wrote the following about the last night and the last day of the expedition: "In the evening, the ship lay [...] close to the pack ice edge, which stretched from there in a north-westerly direction to the horizon. In view of this ice situation and the continuing deterioration of the weather, it was impossible to continue the exploration beyond 11(1)/2' W. Further progress in this direction was impossible for the ship, and the fully operational aircraft would have had to fly 1,000 km there and back if it had flown only along the ice shelf coast without venturing inland. In an emergency, it would have been impossible to bring help either by air or by ship. Waiting for the pack ice to recede westward was also futile at this time of year, in the opinion of the ice pilot, and the meteorologist saw no signs of the weather improving in the near future. I therefore declared the expedition's departure to be over on the evening of that day and set the return journey for 12 noon on 6 February. The morning was to be spent on a

Boat excursion to the pack ice to take ice and declination measurements, conduct film studies and hunt seals and penguins. The location 69° 00' south, 0° 00' was to be the starting point of the oceanographic, biological and meteorological survey along the prime meridian, as planned in the expedition programme.

The announcement of the end of the voyage was followed by a small celebration in the individual messes and common rooms. In view of the boat excursion to the ice scheduled for early the next morning, a proper community celebration was decided against. The fourth weekly report was sent to the representative for the four-year plan, this time with the overall results of the expedition's activities. At the same time, permission was requested for a detour to South Georgia, which was intended to further enrich the scientific results and ice experience with a view to later undertakings. (") (22)

The next morning, 6 February, at 5 o'clock, three boats, the two motorboats and the workboat, are launched. Scientists and members of the aircraft and ship crews, a total of 25 men, are taken to the edge of the pack ice. The weather is gloomy and the sky is overcast. The north swell, which increases during the morning, indicates an approaching storm. The pack ice in this area is interspersed with a few table icebergs.

The boats find some shelter from the swells and surf in the ice bay, but the vertical movement of the ice is still considerable there and makes landing difficult.

Just how necessary Otto Kraul's warning to be careful on the ice was became clear when, upon stepping onto the ice floes, trade fair steward Rudolf Burghard fell between two floes while jumping from one to the other and was in danger of sinking. Only the fact that he is roped up and can therefore be quickly pulled back to safety by his comrades saves his life. The brief dip in the water would nevertheless have been enough to cause mild frostbite, and he is taken to hospital for several days.

Some film footage is shot, four seals are shot and four Adelie penguins are brought in. The geophysicist takes pieces of ice with him for later investigations on board.

At 12 noon, all boats are back on board and back in action. The biologist and oceanographer with their assistants remained on board to begin the station work planned for the planned cut. This takes even longer than the allotted time. It is not until 3:20 p.m. that the wire from the oceanographer's series machine and the biologist's fishing net are hoisted on board.

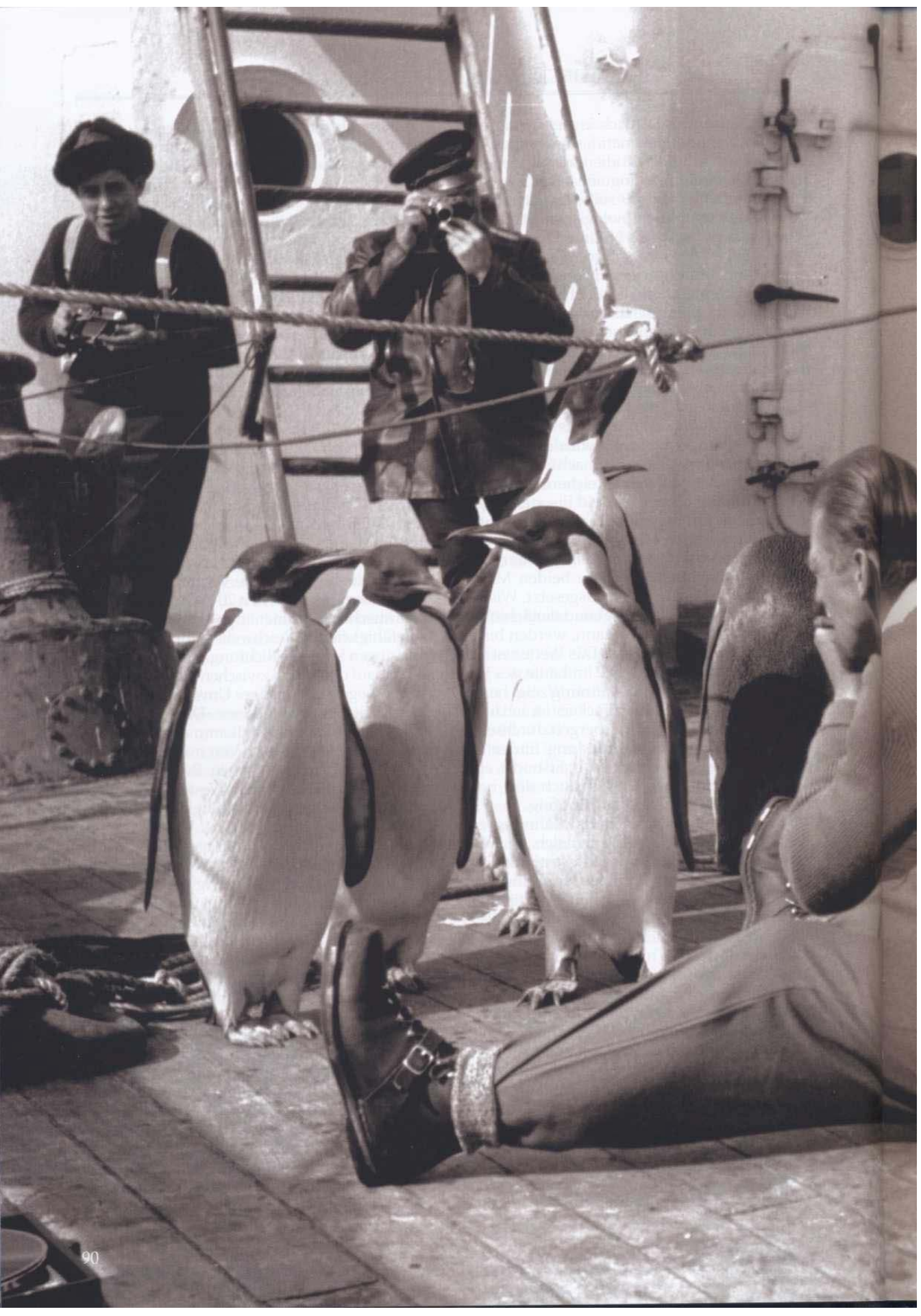
Only then do the engines start up, and three long blasts from the siren fade away as a final farewell to the Schwabenland, the ship's crew and all the expedition members in the endless expanse of Antarctica, which disappears from view under a thickly overcast sky.

New Schwabenland is taken possession of

While the M/S Schwabenland is sailing home at full speed, Alfred Ritscher prepares a final statement to be transmitted by radio the next day to Hermann Göring, the commissioner for the Four-Year Plan.

In his memoirs, the expedition leader sums up: "The main task of the expedition, the aerial photogrammetric survey of the section between 20° W and 20° 0 of the Antarctic continent towards the pole, as far as the aircraft's climbing ability and range allowed them to advance in this direction, was completed except for the area between 11 (1) (/2') W and 20° W, which could not be covered due to unfavourable conditions. The 11,600 photographs from the series measurement cameras cover a closed area of more than 350,000 square kilometres; In addition, a peripheral area of more than 250,000 square kilometres to the west, south and east has been reliably explored by visual observation, so that the [. . .] map covers a total area of over 600,000 square kilometres of land. It has been given the name 'New Swabia'. It has been marked along all flight paths with metal drop arrows with an embossed swastika, those dropped at the turning points of the aircraft bearing a Reich flag. [. ..]

Through exploration and mapping, as well as demarcation and acts of possession in Neuschwabenland, Germany has taken the first step under international law towards taking possession of this territory. It can already be stated that, through the activities of the expedition, the Reich has gained a fully valid right of co-determination in the forthcoming division of Antarctica by the interested powers. This is also of the utmost importance for its right to participate in whaling in Antarctic waters, which is extremely valuable for our fat supply, will be of the utmost importance to the expedition."



Zurück nach Hamburg via Kapstadt

Antarktisexpedition erfolgreich abgeschlossen

M/S „Schwabenland" befindet sich auf der Heimreise, die 65 Tage und Nächte dauern soll. Während des Aufenthalts des Schiffes vor der Schelfeisküste als schwimmender Flugzeugstützpunkt für die Flugboote „Boreas" und „Passat" standen fliegerisch-fotografische Aufgaben im Vordergrund. Auf [illegible] bis nach Kapstadt liegt die wesen[illegible] gabe auf der wissenschaftlichen Untersuchung des See- und Luftraumes längs des Nullmeridians durch einen ozeanographisch-biologisch-meteorologischen Schnitt vom Schelfeis bis 35° Süd. Dazu werden auch die viertel- bis halbstündigen Echolotungen weiter durchgeführt. Dies hat der Expeditionsleiter Alfred Ritscher für die Strecke vom Schelfeis bis Kapstadt den Flugzeugbesatzungen übertragen, die im Gegensatz zu den Wissenschaftlern an Bord jetzt am wenigsten mit Arbeit belastet sind. Außer-

The expedition leader intends to make a detour to South Georgia from Bouvet, for which he has obtained special permission from Hermann Göring by radio.

The period of bad weather that began on 6 February continues in the following days. Increasingly strong easterly winds, heavy swells and considerable northern swells accompany the M/S Schwabenland.

On 7 February, heavy snowfall sets in and significantly disrupts the work begun by the scientists at the stations. Due to high seas and swells threatening to tear the wire of the series machine, the oceanographer is forced to abandon his work at a depth of 3,500 metres.

With no improvement in the weather in sight, it quickly becomes clear that it is impractical for the oceanographer and biologist to work together on the windward side of the foredeck; they inevitably get in each other's way with their wires and fishing gear, which could result in a loss of time and equipment. The problem is solved by the scientists carrying out their work one after the other, which, however, requires shifts of six to eight hours.

Icebergs in the darkness of night

On 2 February, a storm approaches from the north and the swell increases considerably. In the late afternoon, a radio message arrives from Berlin. State Councillor Wohlthat responds to Alfred Ritscher's final telegraphic report of 5 February and wishes the expedition members a safe journey home to Hamburg.

On 9 February, stormy weather prevents further scientific work on the upper deck of M/S Schwabenland. In the darkness of the night, icebergs of various sizes drift past the ship like eerie ghosts, barely visible as shadows. The danger of collision with them can only be avoided by the M/S Schwabenland drifting for several hours with its engines stopped, as visibility is further impaired by snow and hailstorms. The vigilance and seafaring skills of Captain Alfred Kottas and his officers on the bridge are put to the test. Several attempts are made to avoid the danger in time by firing location beacons and searchlights.

As the sky is completely overcast both day and night, it is not possible to determine their exact location. A makeshift solution is to couple the boats together and then, based on estimates, retrace the drift route from time to time in a journey lasting several hours.

In the afternoon of the following day, the American whaling ship "Ulysses", with a Norwegian crew on board, is passed. Its fishing boats soon emerge from the fog.

After a temporary improvement in the weather, scientific work can be resumed on 12 February, but on 14 February it has to be interrupted again due to renewed deterioration in the weather. It ends with the loss of one of the biologist's fishing nets, consisting of 100 metres of wire. The oceanographer manages to retrieve a bottom sample from a depth of 4,200 metres, but on the next attempt, his wire also breaks and the sample, along with the only grab, is left on the seabed.

Wind force 11— danger for aircraft

The weather remains poor. The next day, a dead fin whale drifts close to the ship, a feast for flocks of birds. They come flying in from all directions, black skuas, gannets, cape pigeons and others; they perch close together on the whale's body protruding from the water or fly around it with loud cries, a terrible noise that attracts some of those on deck.

During the last few days, the wind had been force 6 to 8, but then increased to force 10. Icebergs and growlers provided the ship with an unwelcome escort.

On 15 February, the wind grows to storm force 11, and during the night of 16 February, a particularly high sea tears away the two podeste for operating the towing sail at the stern, along with their railings.

The two flying boats on board the "Schwabenland" are in danger. Although the ship had already been rolling and pitching heavily the day before in wind force 10, the aircraft remained in their places, completely unharmed by the waves. However, the constant shaking of the ship's hull causes their wings, tail and control surfaces to vibrate continuously, raising fears that hinges, rivets, control cable guides and

similar components could fail, which would make a catapult launch impossible without a thorough overhaul. However, the feared damage to the flying boats did not occur, and they survived the storm, which severely tested the ship and its crew, the flying boat crews and the scientists.

The penguins survive the stormy sea voyage well. During the special flights and boat excursions, a total of eight emperor penguins and seven Adélie penguins were caught and taken on board; they feel at home in the pen built for them by the two carpenters on Captain Kottas' orders and are often seen frolicking in the swimming pool built especially for them. Now, on their stormy journey home, they stand huddled together in the windbreak of a tarpaulin, head to head, in a circle. They resemble a group of sad councillors in dark raincoats discussing vital measures. Like experienced sailors, they adapt to the movements of the ship, swaying first to one side, then to the other.

They have no idea that in the next few days, the "bread basket" will have to be hung higher. The journey, which is constantly being delayed by the persistent bad weather, The duration of the storm has caused the supply of salted herring to dwindle so much that biologist Barkley, who is also the animals' caretaker and feed master, has to dig deeper into the herring barrel every day to satisfy the penguins' appetite. A check of the remaining herring supply reveals that there are only five herrings left per day for eleven penguins. In order to keep them reasonably fed and fit, it is now necessary to resort to substitute feed. Fresh fish can only be purchased at the next port of call, which is likely to be Cape Town.

The unpleasant stormy weather that has prevailed for days is getting on the nerves of most of the passengers, who often no longer dare to venture onto the upper deck. Many are unable to sleep during the eight hours of darkness. The ship is also still in acute danger. Icebergs of large and medium size keep appearing near the ship, forcing the ship's command to stop sailing until daybreak.

The return journey of the Schwabenland has been so disrupted that the permission granted to make a detour to South Georgia has had to be withdrawn, which Alfred Ritscher particularly regrets. In any case, the expedition leader would like to circumnavigate the island to complete the coastal survey and to sound the bank west of Bouvet, as there was no opportunity to do so on the way here.

Is there a threat of "expedition psychosis"?

At the behest of Alfred Ritscher, the ship's captain, Kottas, sets course for Bouvet. However, between fog and snow squalls, they only manage to get within about two nautical miles of the north coast of the island. Its upper part, 100 to 200 metres high, and the entire east coast are shrouded in thick haze. Ritscher therefore orders the ship to head for the bank 300 nautical miles west of Bouvet's north-eastern tip.

The severe weather has already lasted twelve days. It makes life on board uncomfortable, almost unbearable. Especially for the scientists, who are unaccustomed to life at sea, it is a hellish journey. At every meal, tables, chairs, cups, plates and glasses are thrown about. In the cabins, nautical charts and maps, inkwells, books, magazines, papers and notes fall to the floor. Drawers slide out of chests of drawers day and night, scattering their contents, laundry and other belongings on the floor, water bottles bounce off the shelves and smash on the floor, washbasins spill over and pour their contents into the sea boots prepared for use the next morning. In the tween deck, a porthole opened occasionally for ventilation in the cabins leads to flooding.

The originally planned detour to South Georgia would have provided some variety and relaxation, but even so, our arrival in Cape Town is becoming increasingly distant.

No wonder the mood on board has reached rock bottom. With most of the main tasks completed, some of the crew are experiencing a certain amount of physical and mental tension, which is manifesting itself in mild irritability. There is a growing danger that even minor incidents will lead to arguments, which will be settled according to temperament. Not everyone has a great deal of self-control. This development, which is detrimental to community life on a ship, can lead to dangerous tension, a kind of "expedition psychosis".

The expedition leader Alfred Ritscher, who at almost 60 years of age had a wealth of life experience,

has a solution for this situation too: he encourages the geophysicist Gburek to organise humorous events. Gburek finds willing participants for his community evenings on board the M/S Schwabenland among the crew, the scientists and the flight personnel. He founds a "singing club" that lasts until the end of the voyage, as well as a theatre group, and he also activates the ship's band. Cheerful lecture evenings, music evenings with the ship's band and theatre performances always find an appreciative audience.

One of the highlights was the performance of the drama "The King of Salern". On the morning of the performance, a colourful poster on the notice board announces the show. When the theatre group begins their performance, the common room on the "Schwabenland" is filled to capacity. The ship's band has already set the mood with some music.

After the announcement and introduction by The drama unfolds under the direction of the "Theatre Director". The cast includes Preuschoff as the king, Lange as the courted shepherdess, Hartmann as the initially flattered and hesitant father of the bride, who becomes enraged when the truth is revealed, and Gburek as the slimy director who mediates between the three. The performance, spiced with humour and improvised funny ideas, ends with bursts of laughter from the enthusiastic audience – and, of course, with the murder or suicide of the four actors.

This type of leisure activity, entertainment events, proves to be the best medicine against the impending "expedition psychosis".

Work, wind and icebergs

In the days that follow, both the scientists and the aircraft crews are fully occupied with writing their reports.

Alfred Ritscher intends to submit the "preliminary Send the complete report on the expedition to Germany with the next steamer leaving Cape Town. To be on the safe side, a copy should be sent from Pernambuco to Berlin by Deutsche Lufthansa transoceanic aircraft.

Regardless of this, the scientists' work continues. Dr. Regula a new method of measuring wind strength close to the water's surface by mounting an anemometer on a lifebuoy and attaching this device to a line from the stern. The anemometer is connected to a counter on board.

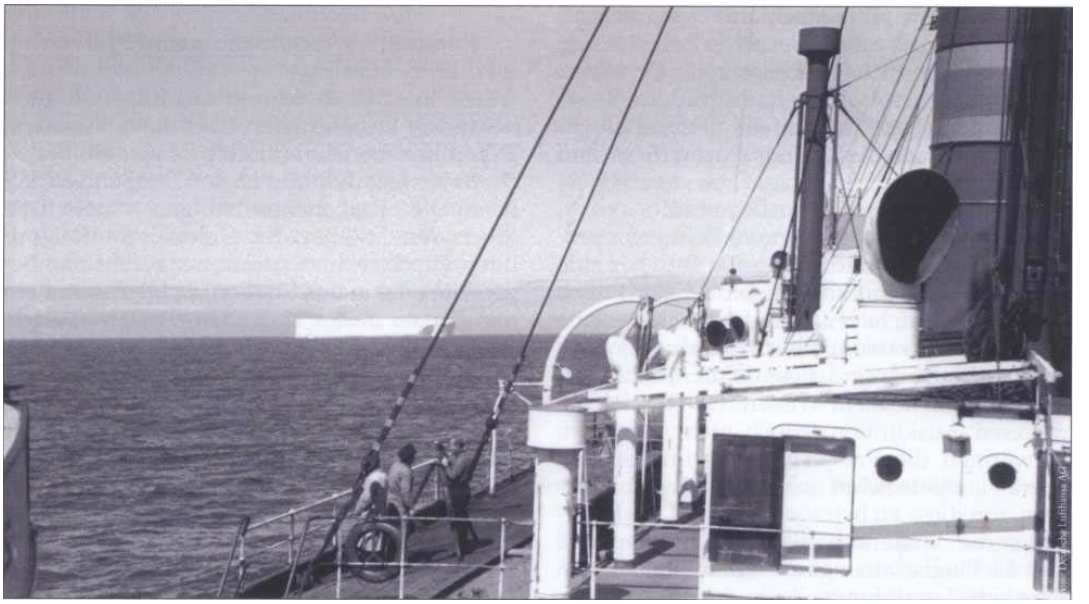
The voyage of the M/S Schwabenland continues to require increased caution at night, especially in poor visibility, such as 100 nautical miles west of Bouvet. There, on *20* February, eight icebergs and growlers suddenly appear in the immediate vicinity of the ship. The danger posed by the ice is not yet over.

Since passing Bouvet Island, there has been no possibility of astronomical positioning ( ). On *21* February, the weather clears up. On *22* February, a few isolated growlers can still be seen on the horizon, and one drifting not far from the ship is already showing signs of decay; it is the last of its kind to be encountered by the Schwanenland.

Although the ship's journey has been delayed by bad weather over the last two weeks, Ritscher and Kottas hope to be able to keep to the latest arrival date in Cape Town, 6 March, unless something unforeseen happens. It is important to meet the arrival date because the courier mail from the "Schwabenland" is to be handed over to the Deutsche Lufthansa aircraft departing from Pernambuco to Bathurst on *24* March.

But the weather is not cooperating. For more than three full days, until *28* February, the ship is accompanied by violent storms, snow and rain. The inclement weather becomes even worse when the "Rough Forties" are reached, which, with true force, wind, swell and sea conditions from the west, toss the ship back and forth like a mad thing. It is as if the god of wind and sea had saved up all the bad weather intended for the "Schwabenland" for this part of the voyage.

When the weather finally calms down, a new leisure activity presents itself: albatross hunting, which was already popular in the days of sailing ships and is a welcome change from life on board. These magnificent birds circle the ship in their admirably elegant flight, but as soon as the "albatross trap"is thrown intothe sea, they easily fall victim to their gluttony. This trap consists of a rhombus-shaped sheet of metal with a recessed centre and sides covered in blubber. The albatross pecks at it with its strongly downward-curved upper beak.



On the voyage to Cape Town, the last icebergs and growlers are sighted between 20 and 22 February 1939.

It fits securely into the recessed centre piece and can be pulled on board effortlessly and without damage.

One of the birds caught in this way has a wingspan of 2.87 metres, while an even larger one has probably had bad experiences and cannot be tempted to bite. In relation to its wingspan, the albatross's body is very light, and its larger bones are hollow, so that they are often used to make mouthpieces for whistles on sailing ships.

In the early afternoon of 28 February, another storm blows up, but the next day the weather improves significantly. The wind and swell subside and the clouds clear, giving way to warmer and sunnier weather.

Cape Town welcomes the "Schwabenland"

The course of the Schwabenland takes it over the Discovery Bank, where the English research vessel of the same name found the shallowest water depth of 670 metres. The sounding crew of the Schwabenland is proud to be able to beat this measurement by 220 metres. Suddenly, at a depth of 4,000 metres, they sound a depth of 450 metres.

The Schwabenland had taken several kilograms of dynamite with it on the expedition in case it was necessary to blow up ice. ; 25 kilograms are still on board. As Alfred Ritscher fears that the ship could encounter difficulties with the port authorities in Cape Town if the explosives are still on board, he orders them to be sunk.

With every nautical mile travelled, the ship approaches the South African coast. This lifts the mood on board, as almost everyone is expecting mail from home, which they hope to find in Cape Town.

At dawn on 2 March, the Twelve Apostles mountain range comes into view, stretching from the western end of Table Mountain southwards to the tip of the Cape Peninsula. As we get closer, Lion's Head, the peak northwest of Table Mountain, and the 1,082-metre-high Table Mountain, which is exceptionally cloud-free, become visible.

A little later, the first steamers appear, entering or leaving the harbour of Cape Town. Then the pilot comes on board to manoeuvre the ship into the inner harbour. Through the mediation of the German consul in Cape Town, the port authority provides the M/S "Schwabenland" with a berth at the passenger ship quay, close to the German express steamer "Pretoria" of the Deutsche Afrika-Linien, which arrived shortly before. This makes it much easier and quicker to complete the port formalities after mooring than would otherwise have been the case.

No sooner has the Schwabenland moored than the first visitors report to Ritscher. First to arrive on board is Legation Secretary Dr Wertz, who conveys the welcome greetings of the German envoy Dr Leitner; he also takes charge of the courier mail to be handed over to the German steamer Ryassa, which is due to depart on the same day.

Several newspaper reporters then report to the expedition leader. As Ritscher seems to be somewhat reluctant to talk to the press, he has prepared a short press statement for the journalists about where they are coming from and where they are going. However, they are not satisfied with this and want to know more. Since Ritscher is not prepared to provide any further information, the press scatters and searches everywhere on the ship for crew members to question. Although the crew, scientists, flight captains and flight crews were instructed not to give any information about the expedition to members of the press before arriving in Cape Town, some of them did not keep their mouths shut, as Ritscher learns from the newspapers appearing the next morning.

However, the reporting is generally favourable – with one exception. The *Cape Times* newspaper expresses the completely unfounded and absurd suspicion that the two aircraft on board the Schwabenland flew over Cape Town at night for espionage purposes. Witnesses are even cited who claim to have positively identified the German aircraft. However, the authorities take no notice of this obvious false report, and Ritscher therefore sees no reason to issue a counterstatement.

After the ship docks, the "Schwabenland" crew is relieved of duty. They immediately disembark to see Cape Town, and the inner circle of expedition members accepts invitations to sightseeing tours and car trips through the beautiful surroundings and to visit Germans living in the city.

The meteorologists and the geophysicist are invited to visit the English observatory, which they gladly accept, while others drive to the seaside resort of Muizenberg or set off for Table Mountain.

Alfred Ritscher first pays a visit to the German consul and the German envoy Dr. Leitner. Dr. Leitner and his staff have moved from Pretoria to Cape Town for the duration of the parliamentary elections currently taking place in the Union of South Africa.

Cape Town – reunion after 38 years

Alfred Ritscher has very special memories of Cape Town, which he wrote about in his expedition report: "It was a glorious sunny day and the streets were full of life. The parliamentary sessions had brought together some of the leading men of the Union, many with their families, so that one encountered many walkers and cyclists in the streets and parks and on the paths in the surrounding area. The city brought back memories of 38 years ago, when, by a stroke of luck that I considered and still consider fortunate, I was able to sign off from the German sailing ship 'Peru' here. At that time, the Boer War was in full swing and the harbour area was closed off from the city due to the prevailing plague. Being able to sign off as a seaman in a foreign port is a rare exception, but I was in this fortunate position and had a few gold coins in my pocket, so I was able to roam the Cape Province on foot, by car, on horseback and by train. The war left its mark on the city at that time. The streets were teeming with soldiers; concentration camps with prisoners had been set up just outside the city [...]. When my money was gone – which happened faster than I had planned – I was tempted by a poster advertising 'Fifty policemen wanted'. I quickly decided to apply for this 'job' and helped guard the city as an auxiliary policeman for four weeks. However, there was nothing going on in my district, a villa district on Lion's Head, so I boarded the English four-masted barque 'Grenada', which was ready to depart for Melbourne, and thus left Cape Town after a six-week stay. "[24]

Ritscher wrote this in memory of his visit to Cape Town in 1901, when he was still a sailor on a sailing ship.

He wrote about his visit with the M/5 "Schwabenland" in March 1939, which he also remembered fondly: "In the meantime, the city has expanded considerably, and the Boer element seems to have gained considerable influence. This is already evident in the signage, which displays the text first in Boer and then in English. At the kind invitation of the agency, Captain Kottas and Dr. Herrmann took me on an hour-long car ride along the northern slope of Table Mountain to the game park created by Cecil Rhodes, where I saw zebras, ibexes, numerous species of wading birds

and peacocks enjoy complete freedom of movement in a wide, tree-lined area, then to the magnificent creation of the Cecil Rhodes Memorial, a tribute to the man whose work gave England the rich possessions of today's South African Union. The view from the top of the monument dominates the wide lowlands surrounding Table Bay to the north and northeast, stretching to the cobalt blue mountain ranges in the distance. We returned past the university, which is idyllically nestled between beautiful, well-tended rock gardens, with the city spreading out at its feet. (25

Hospitality of the German colony

The next invitation was not long in coming, this time from the German envoy. Alfred Ritscher praised the unique hospitality of the Germans living in Cape Town. "At lunch at the German Club, to which the German envoy had invited us, the newly appointed Consul General for German South West Africa, Dr. Lierau, who had just arrived in Cape Town, was joined by a number of expedition members, Professor Ogg from the observatory and several gentlemen from the German colony. Afterwards, I had the pleasure of spending a lovely afternoon with the head of the agency, Mr Spielhaus, on his farm 50 km east of Cape Town. It was followed by cocktails at the model farm of Mr. Wirth, a German who had been living in the Cape Colony for decades and who was a member of the German colony ( ). The farm had previously been the private property of Cecil Rhodes. A special rarity there was the last bell, suspended between two stone pillars, which in ancient times called the Negro slaves to work. The evening concluded with a visit to the families of Mr. Spielhaus and Colonel

. Like me, they had little

The other members of the expedition were in need of diversion; only the geophysicist, who had spent the whole day in the observatory doing his calculations, had not fared so well. Some of his comrades spent stimulating evenings at the monthly German social evening held on one of the German fast steamers, in this case the Pretoria. This time, the Foreign Minister of the Union of South Africa, Mr Pirow, was also in attendance.(") (26)

The next morning, Ritscher received a telegram from Hermann Göring with the following message: "I congratulate you most warmly on the significant success which you and your expedition have achieved in exploring a large area of Antarctica. I am proud of the outstanding commitment of the pilots, the successful work of the scientists and the exemplary attitude of the entire crew. You and your expedition have continued the great tradition of German research and achieved a feat that is worthy of Greater Germany's position in the world. Göring"

Ritscher pins the telegram to the notice board on the Schwabenland, passing on his thanks to all members of the expedition.

The last day in Cape Town

Before the M/S Schwabenland leaves the port of Cape Town, fresh food and supplies of fresh fish for the penguins are taken on board. Alfred Ritscher sets the departure time for 5 p.m.

The off-duty crew and the other expedition members go ashore once more in the morning.

Ritscher, Dr Wertz and Dr Lierau "climb" Table Mountain on the easy route with the cable car, which departs from the car park and transports the three of them to the plateau of the summit in a few minutes. "hikers" to the summit plateau in a few minutes, which is, for once, completely cloudless. However, the fresh south wind suggests that clouds will soon roll in. When clouds appear, the cable car stops operating. Anyone still at the top then has no choice but to make the arduous descent on foot, which takes several hours and is no great pleasure if you don't have time and aren't equipped with climbing gear. Neither Ritscher nor his companions have either.

The Table Mountain offers a unique panoramic view, to the south over the Cape Peninsula with False Bay and the naval base at Simonstown, to the north over Table Bay and, directly at the foot of the mountain, over the city, which extends far to the east and west with its suburbs.

The bare plateau of the mountain is strewn with wildly jumbled, loose and weathered boulders, and drops away to the north and south in steep, vertical walls several hundred metres high.

At 12 noon, Dr Wertz gives the signal to descend. Just one hour later, the summit

of the table mountain has disappeared beneath the cloud cover, the "tablecloth".

At the end of the Cape Town stay, the The German envoy and his wife have invited some of the expedition members to lunch on board the Schwabenland. In addition to expedition leader Ritscher and ice pilot Kraul, biologist Barkley, chief engineer Uhlig, fourth officer Grisar, several members of the German colony and the envoy's two daughters are also attending the meal.

Ritscher then invites this group to afternoon coffee on the M/S Schwabenland, where they sit and chat until departure.

Five minutes before 5 p.m., the guests leave the ship, after which the lines are cast off and a tugboat helps the ship to leave the quay, where the last guests stand and wave goodbye.

Then the relaxing and eventful days in Cape Town, which everyone will remember for a long time to come, are over.

Heading home

The M/S Schwabenland is making its way back across the ocean with a stopover in the Brazilian port city of Pernambuco. There, the courier mail will be loaded onto a Deutsche Lufthansa aircraft scheduled to depart for Bathurst on the African coast on 24 March.

In Cape Town, anxious minds still seem unsettled by the visit of the Schwabenland. On the morning after the ship's departure, the *Cape Times* newspaper once again sends a telegram asking whether one of the two aircraft flew over Cape Town during the night before the ship's arrival. Ritscher replies: "Both aircraft have been out of service for weeks. We are not abusing your hospitality!"

Undeterred, the M/S Schwabenland continues towards its home. But there is still a long way to go. On 18 March, the island of Trinidad, which belongs to Brazil, comes into view. It is of volcanic origin. Enormous volcanic forces must have raged here. Pitch-black lava plugs rise steeply out of the water the air.

"Schwabenland" anchors in the lee of Cochoeiro Bay, Trinidad's famous windbreak.

At the same time, a Norwegian whaling ship is anchored there, whose fishing boats arrived a little later to take on fuel for their journey home from the mother ship.

The ship's stay in Trinidad is necessary to carry out urgent exterior work: to give the "painters" on board the opportunity to repaint the areas that have been damaged during the voyage and the stay in Antarctica. This takes the whole day.

On the north side of the island, you can see dilapidated houses that date back to the early Brazilian occupation. Now, as reported in the nautical guide, only herds of wild goats and remnants from the World War II era, when several dozen people were interned here, remain. While the painters from the ship's crew are at work, many off-duty crew and expedition members take the opportunity to sunbathe. Some enjoy fishing from the quay. It is teeming with fish in wonderful colours, but according to the biologist, they are poisonous and therefore unsuitable either as a change for lunch or for feeding the penguins on board.

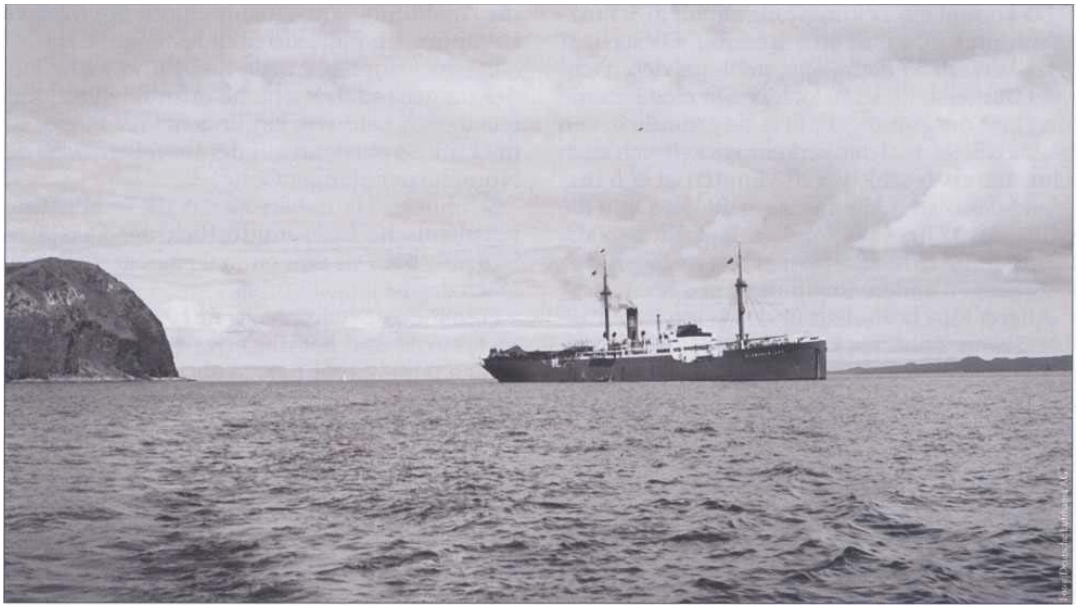
As shore leave is expected in Pernambuco, the next port of call, the ship's barber, Fritz Troe, second cook on the "Schwabenland" and a trained butcher and amateur hairdresser, has set up his barber's chair, where one after the other takes a seat. He has his hands full all day, such is the rush.

Different countries, different customs

It is not difficult to say goodbye to the isolated island in the middle of the ocean, as the next destination, Pernambuco, promises to be a greater experience.

On 19 March, the Schwabenland leaves its anchorage and sets course for Pernambuco. On 22 March, the Brazilian coast comes into view; at 11 a.m., the ship docks and anchors in the outer harbour. After the usual formalities, shore leave is granted at noon. Those who are off duty can set foot on South American soil, most of them for the first time.

Some crew members visit the aircraft carrier "Friesenland" of the



After a stopover in the Brazilian port city of Pernambuco, the ship sets a direct course for Hamburg.

German airline Lufthansa, which is moored in the harbour, while others explore the city.

Among them is geographer Dr Ernst Herrmann. He writes about it in his memoirs: "The city gives the impression of being in southern Italy or southern Spain. The same colourful hustle and bustle, only a little more excited and heated.

We northerners have to relearn everything. When we ride the tram in Berlin or Hamburg, for example, we have the comforting feeling that someone is looking out for us: the driver makes sure we don't go too fast and get dizzy, the conductor makes sure we don't fall off the platform, get off at the wrong stop, leave the tram while it's moving or get on the wrong side, etc. [...] Numerous prohibition signs draw attention to all possible dangers.

Not so in Brazil! The management of the Pernambuco tramway couldn't care less how passengers want to be transported. It runs, that's all. It runs fast, because time is money. It even stops occasionally, which is a lot. And the passengers? They honk their horns up and down as they please. During rush hour, a tram looks like a swarm of bees. You can't see the carriage anymore, but instead countless male beings – only men – are hanging, standing, kneeling, dangling and floating outside the carriage. When one of them lets go and eventually – but always happily – hits the pavement, he has 'got off'. It is beyond me which passengers the conductor actually asks for their fare. [...]

But there is more to see than trams. Above all, people. Countless numbers of them, of all kinds. Apart from men and women, there are white people, black people, brown people, red people, with all shades and mixed colours in between. [...] Brazilians are said to have a sixth sense for finding their way among pure whites, blacks, Indians, mulattos and mestizos, with all the shades in between.

At Potsdamer Platz in Pernambuco, the most important intersection, is the Café Lafayette, with tables and chairs spilling out onto the pavement. I sit down at a table, drink a fantastic coffee, smoke an incredible cigar and marvel at the speed of the traffic.

In the middle of the square stands a traffic policeman [...], a black man who directs traffic with sweeping, almost charming arm movements. That is to say, he only indicates which direction he would like to suggest. If someone is in a hurry, they drive straight across anyway. The main thing is that he then weaves his way through the cars going in the other direction like a man possessed. The traffic cop doesn't care, he's only there to direct traffic, not to look after the welfare of the people.

A newspaper boy comes up to the policeman and gives him a newspaper. The policeman stops directing traffic, walks over to the next pavement, leans against a lamppost and reads the newspaper. He reads it thoroughly, from cover to cover. [...] Traffic continues without him. After about 20 minutes, he finishes, puts the paper in his pocket, goes back to the middle of the square [...] and, with amiable arm and body movements, directs the vehicles in other directions. ([28])

Alfred Ritscher himself does not find time to go ashore. First, the German consul v. d. Steinen arrives on board with a companion to receive the courier mail, which his companion immediately takes ashore so that it can be flown across the Atlantic to Lisbon, Marseille and Stuttgart in three days on a Do 17 the next morning. The "Schwabenland" will need another three weeks for the journey home to Hamburg.

The German consul invites Ritscher and Kottas to join him for a visit to Captain Detmering on the aircraft carrier "Friesenland", which is moored nearby in the harbour. It is a cheerful and entertaining evening that does not end until midnight. Ritscher returns the favour with an invitation to breakfast on the M/S "Schwabenland".

Before the ship leaves the harbour, fresh fish is taken on board for the penguins, which will hopefully last until they arrive in Hamburg. After all, they want to deliver their charges safely to their destination. The more than three-week journey through the tropics has clearly taken its toll on the animals. The biologist's devoted care has not been able to prevent the death of one emperor penguin and two Adelie penguins.

Fernando de Noronha — the "Finger of God"

Now we are heading straight for Cuxhaven and Hamburg. First, the volcanic island of Fernando de Noronha comes into view, a wonderful island with a magnificent lava plug called the "Finger of God".

When the volcano was still active, it looked like a tall cone of ash that occasionally produced lava flows. After the volcanic activity ceased, weathering set in and destroyed the mountain. The soft layers of ash and thin lava flows were quickly washed away by wind and weather. Only the hard, solid lava mass remained. This included, above all, the filling of the volcanic vent, where a huge lava plug had become lodged.

This plug was increasingly moulded out of the surrounding ash and soon stretched into the air like a huge finger: this is how the "Finger of God" came into being on the island of Fernando de Noronha.

Pretty little houses adorn this beautiful Brazilian island northeast of the eastern tip of South America, which was once a penal colony. But that is long gone.

Fernando de Noronha is only 27 square kilometres in size and has only about 1,300 inhabitants. A few years earlier, it had gained great importance as an important port for the catapult ships of the German Lufthansa, including the floating aircraft carrier M/S "Schwabenland".

Residents of the island, who have fond memories of the ship, watched it approach and came out to meet it in boats. The people in the boats shouted and waved to the captain standing on the deck of the "Schwabenland", its officers and the crews of the flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat". The exchange of greetings can only take place from a distance. M/S "Schwabenland" can only respond to the greetings with a horn. Due to time constraints, it is not possible to dock and anchor. The ship still has about 100 nautical miles to cover that day in order not to miss its precisely scheduled arrival time in Cuxhaven.

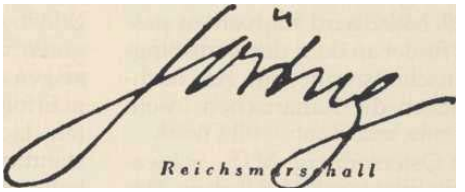
Meanwhile, Ritscher sits in his cabin, busy completing the expedition report. The scientists and pilots have sent him their reports. Ritscher has read them all and has been incorporating them into his overall report for days. The last one he received was the report from the ship's captain, Kottas, the shortest of them all. In addition, the expedition leader asked the ice pilot Kraul to write him an exposé on the importance of whaling for nutrition in Germany. He has also received this and is currently reading it.

At that moment, the radio operator brings him a long telegram. It has been sent from Berlin. He reads it very carefully, as it contains every last detail of the welcome programme for the arrival of the expedition ship M/S Schwabenland in Cuxhaven and then in Hamburg. What he doesn't like about it is the fact that he, as expedition leader, is also expected to give a speech. Now he has to prepare for that as well.

To Captain Ritscher
Head of the "German Antarctic Expedition"
7 March 19

I would like to congratulate you most warmly on the significant success you and your expedition have achieved in exploring a large area of Antarctica. I am proud of the outstanding commitment of the airmen, the successful work of the scientists and the exemplary conduct of the entire crew. You and your expedition have continued the great tradition of German research and achieved a feat worthy of Greater Germany's position in the world.

The book Deutsche Forscher im Südpolarmeer (German Researchers in the Southern Ocean) *by geographer Dr Ernst*



Herrmann includes the text of Hermann Göring's congratulatory telegram as an introductory greeting.

Hamburg casts its shadow ahead

Alfred Ritscher had expected that the welcome the expedition participants on the evening of their arrival at the Nobel Hotel "Vier Jahreszeiten" in Hamburg would be given by Hermann Göring as representative of the Four-Year Plan. Now he learns from a telegram from Berlin that this welcome is to be given by the president of the German Research Community, SS-Standartenführer Prof. Dr. Rudolf Mentzel. Ritscher knows that the Antarctic expedition was commissioned by the German Research Association, which was subordinate to the Reich Ministry of Science, but this news disappoints him and will certainly also disappoint the captain and crews of the "Schwabenland" flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat" will also be disappointed.

Ritscher is now unsure whether We can expect no other surprises in Cuxhaven and Hamburg. The special guests of honour are already due to board the Schwabenland in Cuxhaven, and surprises cannot be ruled out there either.

The work that still lies ahead leaves Ritscher no time; completing the expedition report is his most urgent task. He first turns his attention to the topic of "whaling," about which Otto Kraul has provided him with detailed information.

Germany did not begin participating in whaling until 1936/37. The first German whaling ship, the Jan Wellem, was sent to the Arctic under Captain Kraul as hunting master and shot 920 whales. Although this was a modest start, the following year saw a significant increase. Nevertheless, in 1937 Germany still had to buy about half of the world's total supply to meet its own needs.

cover. Whaling had to be significantly expanded. This was to take place in the Southern Ocean. That is why the German Institute for Whale Research, a department of the Reich Fisheries Agency, was very interested in the Antarctic expedition. Blue whales, for example, have a layer of blubber up to more than 20 centimetres thick, which contains up to 80 per cent pure 01. A blue whale 24 metres long yields an average of 13.5 tonnes of whale oil. The best quality oil was used for margarine production, while the rest was used for technical purposes such as soap, lubricating oils, etc. Germany's demand for whale oil was extremely high at around 200,000 tonnes per year. Securing additional fishing grounds in Antarctica for German fishing fleets seemed particularly important given this high demand.

It was long past midnight when Ritscher goes to bed that evening.

Undeterred, the M/S Schwabenland continues its journey that night and the following days. Each day brings the ship closer to home.

The equator has long been crossed, and it has become cooler. On 29 March, Cape Verde is passed. On 1 April, the last sing-along evening takes place in the common room on board. The next morning, the Canary Islands come into view.

9 April is Easter Sunday. The M/S Schwabenland has already left the canal. The weather is magnificent. The Easter sun is shining from a blue sky.

Some of the passengers are already packing their bags and suitcases. Equipment is stowed away in boxes and crates. There is already a mood of departure in the air as the end of the expedition approaches.

Ritscher has supplemented his expedition report with a "The ship's movements during the three-week stay at the ice shelf were determined by the flight activity. For the ship's command, its completion marked the end of a responsible and busy period. While the great successes of the aviators and scientists, whose work has brought much new knowledge to a previously unexplored part of the Arctic continent and its coastal waters, speak for themselves, the work of the ship's command is less apparent at first glance. But the record number of 1,126 manoeuvres in Antarctic waters to avoid imminent collisions with dangerous ice formations and to navigate around pack ice fields for landing and taking off aircraft and boats, as well as for the work of the scientists, clearly demonstrates the extent of their responsible activities. A significant part of the overall success achieved is therefore attributable to the tireless dedication of the captain and his officers and crew on deck and in the engine room, as well as to the equally tireless and valuable advice provided by the ice pilot. " [29]

In glorious weather, on the morning of 10 April, M/S "Schwabenland" reached the lightship "Elbe III" and dropped anchor. Captain Kottas ordered the ship to be prepared for reception in Cuxhaven the next morning.

With drawing pins, expedition leader Alfred Ritscher attaches a note of thanks and farewell to all expedition participants:

"Comrades!

The German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39 has come to an end. A loyal working community that developed over four months of shared experiences has been dissolved. But during its existence, it proved itself in good times and bad. This is demonstrated by the successes of the expedition, which are your successes and could only be achieved because everyone stood up for each other and pulled together.

As head of this loyal working community, it is my great pleasure to thank you all, the pilots and their colleagues, the scientists and the sailors on deck and in the engine room, for your enthusiastic cooperation, and I would like to express my wish that each and every one of you will always look back on the journey that has now come to an end with fond memories and pride.

I wish you all the best for your future endeavours and well-being

! The expedition leader. " [30]

"Welcome home"

Early in the morning of 11 April, M/S The Schwabenland flies its flag at the Steubenhöft Bridge in Cuxhaven. Some relatives of the passengers stand on the quay and wave handkerchiefs; they are not allowed on board, which is reserved for guests of honour.

On 12 April 1939, the guests of honour arrive on the early train from Hamburg.

At 11 a.m., they board the ship under the leadership of State Councillor Wohlthat: the President of the German Research Foundation, SS Standartenführer Prof. Dr. Mentzel representing Hermann Göring, the Commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, Rear Admiral Dr. Conrad representing the High Command of the War Navy, Admiral Dr. Spieß, the President of the German Naval Observatory, as well as representatives of the Reich Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other authorities and scientific institutions.

It is the prerogative of SS Standartenführer Prof. Dr. Mentzel, in his capacity as President of the German Research Foundation, in the presence of all guests of honour, to congratulate the 82 participants of the Antarctic expedition, who have assembled on the forecastle, on their safe return from their successful expedition and to welcome them home.

A festive meal will then be served in the common room. Afterwards, at the request of Prof. Mentzel, expedition leader Alfred Ritscher will give a short report. Finally, after a short tour of the ship, the M/S "Schwabenland" will continue its journey to Hamburg and moor at the Überseebrücke in the port of Hamburg at 7 p.m.

An honor guard from the Navy SA and the Nazi Air Corps is lined up in front of the Überseebrücke. After a short welcome by Senator von Allwörden, the expedition participants and guests of honour are taken to the town hall in buses provided for the occasion.

In the large banquet hall of the town hall, Mayor Vincent Krogmann welcomes the expedition on behalf of Gauleiter and Reich Governor Karl Kaufmann and the people of the Hanseatic city of Hamburg, pointing out that Hamburg, the home of German whaling, is particularly interested in the expedition and its brilliant results.

Ritscher expresses the gratitude of the expedition participants and gives a brief summary of the expedition.

They are followed by researchers, aviators and naval officers of the expedition, who have come to Hamburg to welcome them, along with representatives of the Reich government and officers of the expedition, together with representatives of the Reich government and leading figures from Hamburg's political parties, state and armed forces who have come to Hamburg to welcome them, accept an invitation from Reich Minister Rust to dinner at the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten.

The President of the German Research Community, SS Standartenführer Prof. Dr. Mentzel, welcomed the expedition participants on behalf of the Reich Minister, who was unable to attend, and conveyed his congratulations and thanks to those involved. To general applause, Prof. Mentzel first named Ministerial Director, State Councillor Wohlthat, as the organiser and supervisor of the voyage, followed by Captain Alfred Ritscher as expedition leader, Captain Alfred Kottas as captain of the expedition ship M/S "Schwabenland" and the Hamburg ice pilot for the expedition, Captain Otto Kraul.

During the course of the evening, a telegram arrives from the NSFK Corps Commander, General of the Air Force Christiansen, in which he expresses his congratulations and appreciation to the expedition, especially the pilots and crews of the flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat" for their outstanding achievements.

That same evening, a special vehicle arrives from Berlin to collect the penguins and other birds that the M/S Schwabenland has brought back from its expedition for the Zoological Garden, as agreed. Incidentally, the penguins are the first inhabitants of Antarctica ever to be brought across the equator to the northern hemisphere unharmed and in good health.

Adolf Hitler thanks and honours Alfred Ritscher

The next morning, a telegram arrives from Berlin. It is from the Reich Chancellery and addressed to Captain Ritscher, leader of the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39. It reads:

"Captain Ritscher,

German Antarctic Expedition Hamburg. I would like to thank the participants of the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39 for reporting their return home.

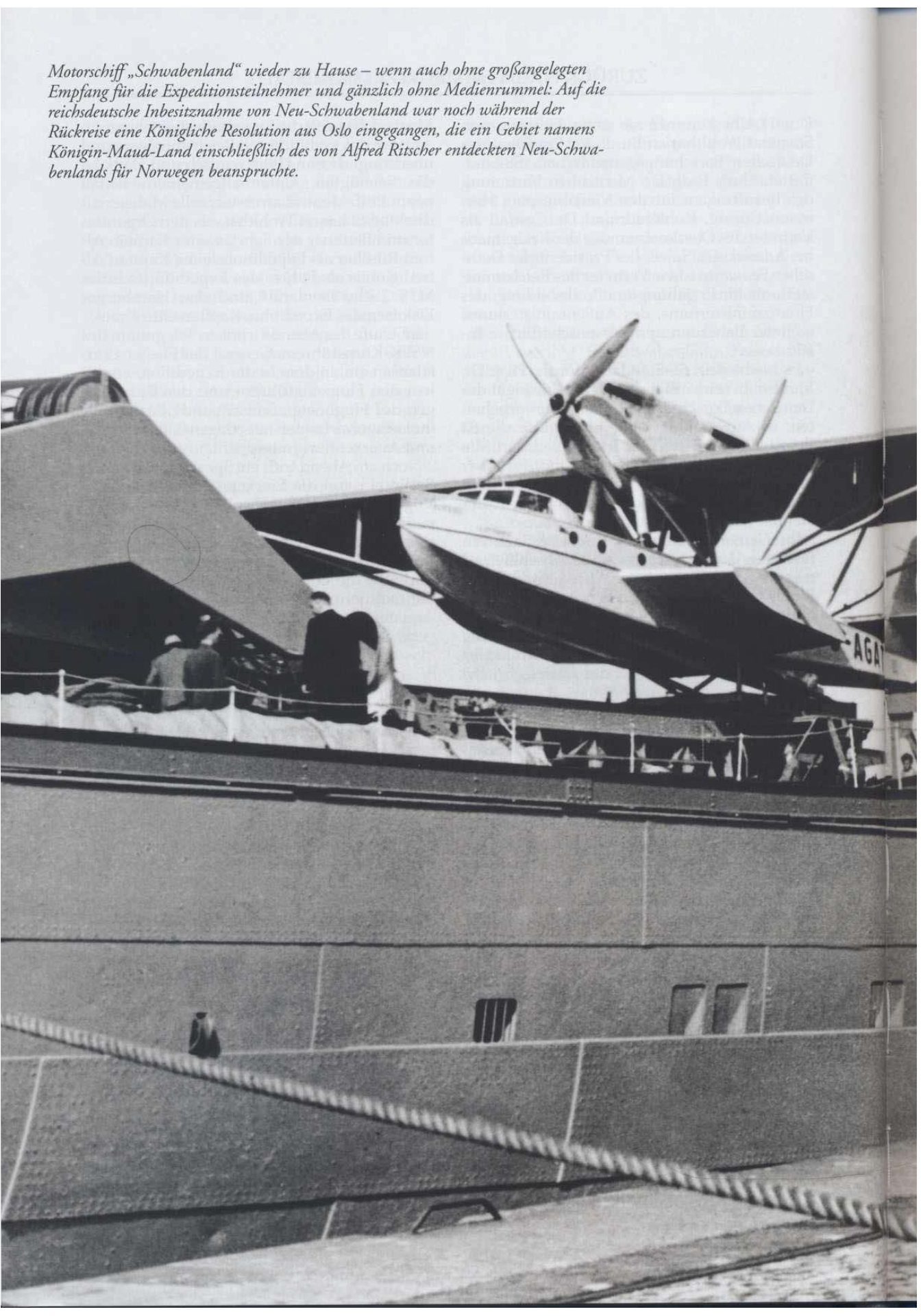
1938/39 for reporting their return home.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere for the successful completion of the tasks entrusted to the expedition.

Adolf Hitler"

In the afternoon of the same day, another telegram from Berlin arrives at M/S "Schwabenland" arrives in Hamburg, addressed to Al-Fred Ritscher, and the sender is once again the Reich Chancellery. The wording: "On the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, Grand Admiral Dr. h. c. Raeder, the Führer has promoted the leader of the returned German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39, Government Councillor Captain Ritscher, to Senior Government Councillor in recognition of his achievements."(32)

Motorschiff „Schwabenland" wieder zu Hause – wenn auch ohne großangelegten Empfang für die Expeditionsteilnehmer und gänzlich ohne Medienrummel: Auf die reichsdeutsche Inbesitznahme von Neu-Schwabenland war noch während der Rückreise eine Königliche Resolution aus Oslo eingegangen, die ein Gebiet namens Königin-Maud-Land einschließlich des von Alfred Ritscher entdeckten Neu-Schwabenlands für Norwegen beanspruchte.



A reception that did not take place

For the 60-year-old Captain Ritscher, the promotion is a special honour. Nevertheless, he is disappointed by the lack of public response to the expedition. The return of the Antarctic expedition, which had achieved a historic feat for Germany with its successes, was downgraded to a local event in Hamburg. There was also no reception for the expedition members in Berlin.

A press conference at which Ritscher could have reported on the expedition does not take place. Only a few, almost exclusively Hamburg local newspapers report briefly on the expedition.
articles about the expedition. No newspaper highlights Germany's seizure of New Swabia. The dropping of the boundary arrows and the German Reich flags is only mentioned in passing.

Ritscher had hoped to explain at a press conference why he considered it appropriate to conduct another Antarctic expedition in the next Antarctic summer or the one after that, using larger aircraft with greater climbing ability and conducting intensive land exploration, which had not been possible during the most recent expedition. All this remains wishful thinking.

Ritscher has no explanation for the reluctance of official bodies regarding the expedition. In the first few days after the expedition's return, he is too busy with follow-up work to take care of public relations, which is not part of his remit.

Gradually, the scientists say their goodbyes. Afterwards, the pilots and flight crews leave the M/S "Schwabenland" after the defects that arose during the expedition have been listed in detail. A general overhaul of the two flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat" seems essential.

The catapult ship M/S "Schwabenland" also...
The "Land" suffered damage during its nearly four-month expedition. Although no serious damage has been identified, the ship will need to be overhauled in Hamburg. In addition, it must be determined whether the ship can still be used as a catapult ship by Deutsche Lufthansa after its conversion to an expedition ship prior to the expedition.

for Deutsche Lufthansa. A general overhaul and further conversion also appear to be impossible because all shipyards in Hamburg, Bremen and Kiel are fully utilised until the end of 1939 and beyond with armament orders – for example, in submarine construction – which have absolute priority.

Under these circumstances, Deutsche Lufthansa must
circumstances, Deutsche Lufthansa has no choice but to wait and see what will happen to its catapult ship M/S "Schwabenland" and the two flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat" in the future.

More than
11,000 aerial photographs taken by the two DLH aerial photographers, Sauter and Bunder-mann, with their multiple-exposure cameras during flights over New Swabia. Packed in steel boxes, the films were flown from Hamburg to Berlin-Tempelhof just one day after the arrival of the
Schwabenland arrived in Hamburg and were flown to Berlin-Tempelhof, where they were stored safely in a Deutsche Lufthansa bunker.

In May 1939, Alfred Ritscher was busy with administrative work at the expedition office in Hamburg; he hoped to return to Berlin at the end of the month to resume his work as senior
office in Hamburg; he hopes to return to Berlin at the end of the month to resume his work, now as a senior government official, in the nautical department of the High Command of the Navy.

On Whit Monday afternoon, 29 May, Ritscher experiences a reception in Hamburg that he would have wished for when the "Schwabelland" returned home from its successful Antarctic expedition. Accompanied by the armoured ship "Graf Spee", the entire
"Kraft durch Freude" fleet sailed, led by the
The Robert Ley and the Wilhelm Gustloff arrive in Hamburg with German volunteers from the Condor Legion who have been fighting in Spain on board. A huge crowd gathers on the Übersee Bridge and cheers the "heroes of Spain". The cheering drowned out the band, which played "In der Heimat gibt's ein Wiedersehen" (There'll be a reunion in the homeland) and then the Prussian Grenadier March.

When the ships have moored side by side, the commander of the "Legion Condor", Major General Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen, reports the return of the expeditionary force from Spain to the head of the German Air Force, Field Marshal Hermann Göring, on the quay. Thunderous applause accompanies the ceremony. Göring is surrounded by high-ranking military officers from all branches of the armed forces and leading representatives of the state, the party and the Hamburg Senate.

Norway declares:
New Swabia belongs to us

After the expedition office is dissolved, Captain Ritscher leaves Hamburg on 2 June to resume his duties in the Nautical Department of the High Command of the Navy in Berlin, now as a senior government official.

A few days later, State Councillor Wohl-that, with whom Ritscher had spoken several times on the phone during his stay in Hamburg, invited him to a meeting. During this meeting, Ritscher received some unexpected news, which also explained why the "Schwabenland" expedition, given its significance, had received such a modest reception and why the national press and radio had not reported on it at all, thus concealing the seizure of New Schwabenland from the general public.

Ritscher is astonished to learn only now in his conversation with State Councillor Wohlthat that on 18 January 1939, i.e. even before the arrival of the M/S "Schwabenland" in the working area of the Antarctic expedition, the Reich Foreign Ministry in Berlin had received a royal resolution from Oslo dated 14 January 1939, stating that Queen Maud Land in Antarctica was to be ceded to Germany.in Berlin, stating that Queen Maud Land in Antarctica was claimed by Norway and that the German Antarctic expedition's intention to explore parts of this area was illegal. The Norwegian objection to the German activities was justified on the grounds that this area had been taken into possession by Norway after several Norwegian expeditions.

The Reich Foreign Ministry reacted immediately. It informed the Norwegian envoy in Berlin that the German Reich government rejected Norway's claim to this territory.

The fact is that Norwegians had never explored or set foot in the part of Queen Maud Land that was named New Swabia after its exploration by Germans. Until its discovery by the Antarctic expedition in 1938/39, this sub-region was "terra nullius".

The Kingdom of Norway did not respond to the rejection of its claim by the German Reich Foreign Ministry, nor did it object to the fact that German Reich flags were raised in the area in question at a later date, namely from 20 January 1939, and boundary posts bearing the German sovereign symbols were erected. Since Norway did not take action against this, it forfeited its rights to New Swabia, insofar as these rights ever existed.

Alfred Ritscher, who first reported on the foreign When informed of the political situation, he is more than astonished. It is clear to him that no other state had explored this area prior to the German expedition he led and therefore no other state can claim ownership. For him, Neu-Schwa-benland is and remains a German discovery that cannot be disputed. Ritscher hopes that this well-founded position will be communicated in no uncertain terms by the German Reich Government to the Norwegian Government, and he asks State Councillor Wohlthat to work towards this end.

Wohlthat raises the question of where Norway could have obtained information about the intentions of the "Schwabenland" expedition. Ritscher can provide a clue: upon arrival in the Antarctic region, Captain Kottas had observed Norwegian whaling boats accompanying the "Schwabenland" for some time. The radio station had also been in contact with the whaling boats, and the exchanges had not been very friendly. The Norwegians had indicated that the Germans had no business there. There had even been some nasty insults. Ritscher, who had heard about this from Captain Kottas during their meal together, did not attach any further significance to these remarks. Now, after talking to Wohlthat, he sees things from a different perspective. It is possible that the Norwegian whalers had radioed the news of the Schwabenland's appearance in the Antarctic region.

Ritscher hopes that the question "Who does New Swabia belong to?"will be resolved unequivocally in Germany's favour between the German and Norwegian governments in the coming months. But in vain. The German government now has immediate problems to deal with due to escalating international tensions.

On 1 September 1939, the Polish campaign begins, which is to escalate into the Second World War. It will also engulf Norway, where it will bring an end to the "Schwabenland" and cause the Antarctic expedition and New Swabia to be forgotten. After the fall of Germany, all that remains for those who took part in the Antarctic expedition, including Alfred Ritscher, are their memories.

But Antarctica lives on and will continue to arouse the desires of many countries.

The "Schwabenland" in wartime

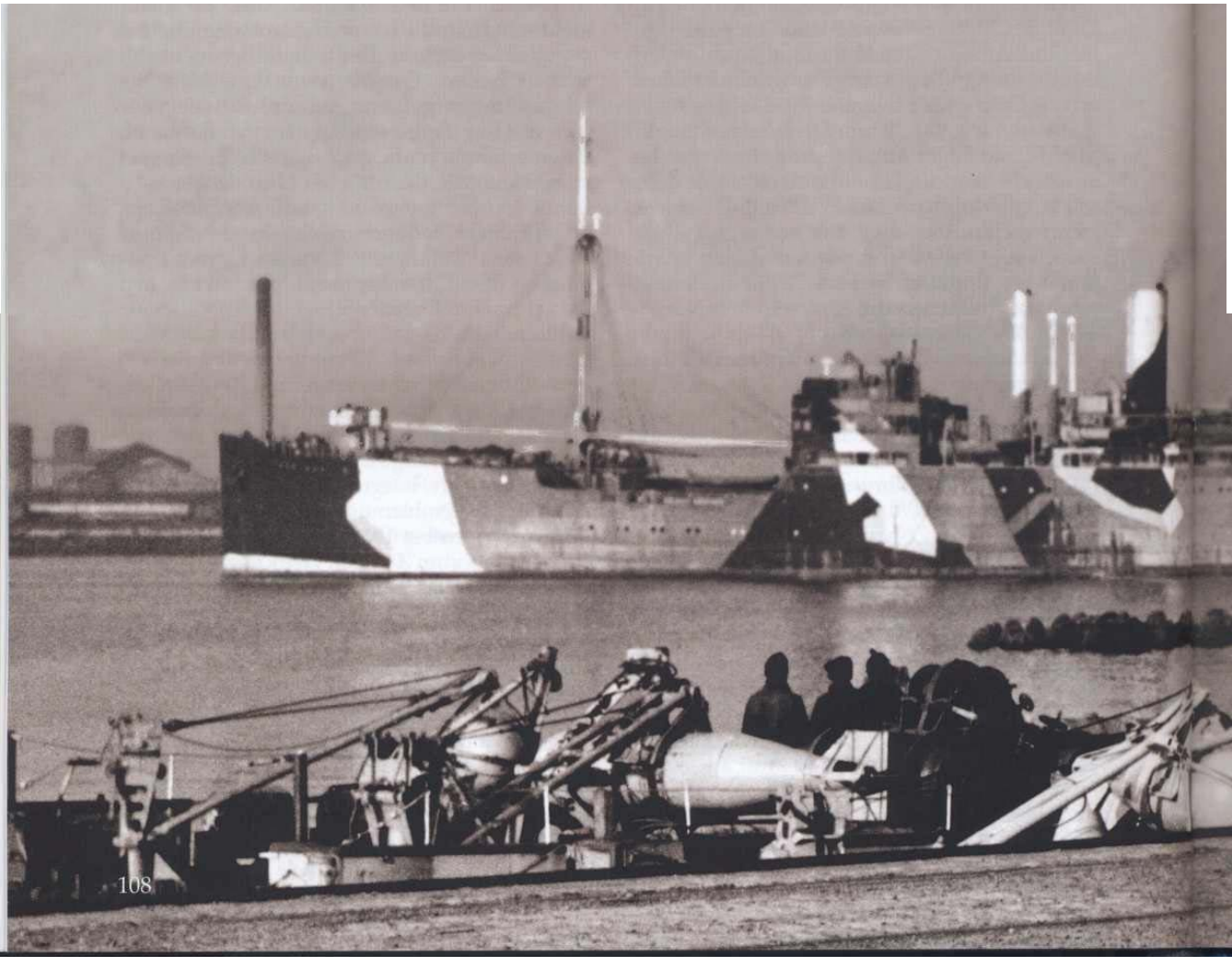
Alfred Kottas remains captain of the "Schwabenland"

The outbreak of the Second World War brought an end to German Antarctic research, which had made a promising new start with the
S c h wabenland expedition in 1938/39.

The valuable motor vessel "Schwabenland", converted into an expedition ship at a cost of one million Reichsmarks and owned by the German Navy, was commissioned on 10 January 1932.

"Schwabenland", owned by Deutsche Lufthansa, underwent a general overhaul in the last months before the outbreak of war and was then assigned on
12 October 1939 to the German Air Force under General Field Marshal Hermann Göring as a launch vessel.

During the first two years of the war, the ship was deployed on the Western Front, serving as a launch vessel for the long-range reconnaissance groups of the Luftwaffe's naval aviators. The
"Schwabenland" was still commanded by Captain Alfred Kottas, and the merchant ship crew of the North German Lloyd was also still on board



. Many crew members still think back fondly on their eventful voyage to the Antarctic.

Alfred Kottas received a special honour during the Christmas holidays of 1940. On board the M/S Schwabenland, he received a letter from Deutsche Lufthansa with the following content: "It is our great pleasure to enclose herewith the letter from the President of the German Seaway Authority dated 17 December 1940, awarding you the bronze Seaway Authority Medal on behalf of the Reich Minister of Aviation.

We congratulate you on this award and send you our best wishes for a Merry Christmas
Christmas and a successful New Year."

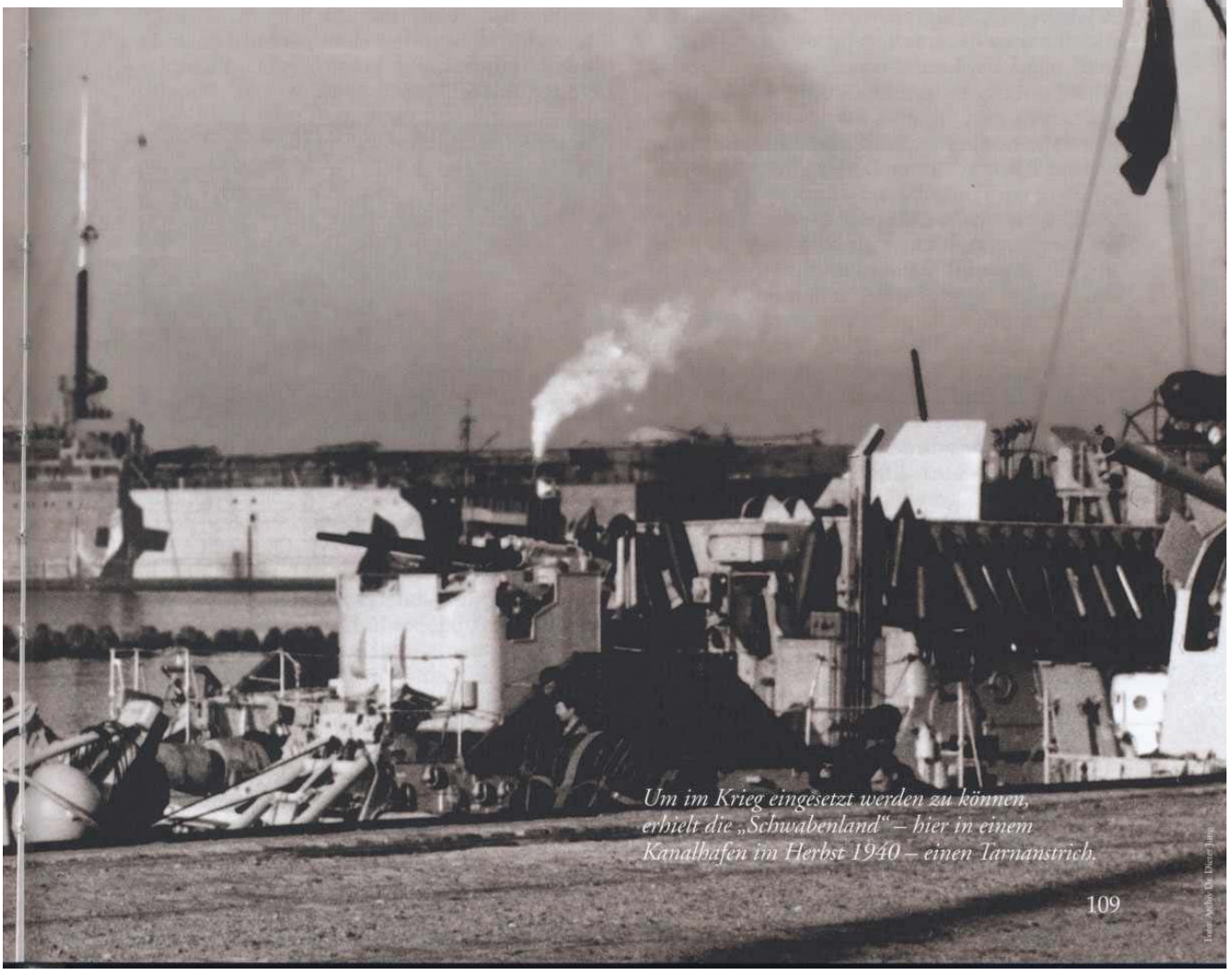
The successful breakthrough of the Channel

In 1942, the Schwabenland was urgently needed in the "Norwegian theatre of war". Here, together with the three other Schleuder-schiffe , the Westfalen, the Friesenland and the Ostmark, which had also been assigned to the Luftwaffe, in combating Allied convoys bound for the Soviet Union.

The planned canal breakthrough is a major risk and raises problems. Danger threatens not only from Allied ships, but also from the British Air Force, which is particularly active over the Channel. War diaries of the escort vessels describing the canal breakthrough have been preserved, detailing the return of the "Schwabenland" from its mission in the west to Norway. Below is an excerpt:

"During the return from the western mission, the Schwabenland' sailed from Le Havre to Boulogne during the night of 5 to 6 August 1942. Here, convoy 2322 was assembled.

It consisted of the 2nd R-Flottille with two minesweepers, the 12th R-Flottille with eight boats, the B. M flotilla with five minesweepers, the 15th V flotilla with three outpost boats, the 18th V flotilla with four outpost boats and the two escort ships Von der Groeben and Brommy.



Um im Krieg eingesetzt werden zu können, erhielt die „Schwabenland" – hier in einem Kanalhafen im Herbst 1940 – einen Tarnanstrich.

On 6 August 1942 at 23:00, this convoy, consisting of a total of 24 ships tasked with escorting the convoy object M/S Schwabenland, left the port of Boulogne.

During the Channel breakthrough on 7 August 1942, three battles developed with smaller British naval units.

After the enemy was located at 11:59 p.m., , the escort ship Von der Groeben fired 01:00. In their light, first three, then six British motor torpedo boats (MTBs) were spotted and fired upon by the convoy's advance guard. At 01:08, the advance guard turned to a course of 73° and opened fire again at 01:10. Of the five British MTBs running to starboard, one boat was set on fire by concentrated fire from the R-boats.

The search group continued to starboard and came under fire from the M and V boats. During this attack, one British MTB was destroyed and another sunk.

The second battle took place between 01:45 and 1:55 a.m. After dark shadows were spotted ahead on the port side, which were identified as British MTBs in the light of flares, a firefight developed with all the rescue boats concentrating on the middle boat of the British group. The enemy initially came under heavy fire, attempted a ramming manoeuvre and passed at a distance of only 5-8 nautical miles under continuous fire from 6-800 2 cm armour-piercing and high-explosive shells. The last three magazines were direct hits on the enemy boat. The M and V boats then also joined the firefight.

An enemy torpedo passing M/S Schwanenland was sighted by M 257, a second torpedo shot passed under M 254. M 27 received 2 cannon and 17 machine gun hits during the battle.

At 03:15, enemy boats were again spotted on the port side at a distance of approximately 2,000 metres. However, there was only a brief attack by the British boats between 03:42 and 03:45. During this third attack, the British boats showed little willingness to attack.

The only casualties on the German side were one seriously injured and five slightly injured. The sinking of five MTBs was reported as a success.

The double success of the successful completion of the escort mission without damage to M/S "Schwabenland" and the successful sinking were achieved with a very high expenditure of ammunition in three night battles. A total of 450 shots were fired from the heavy weapons and 31,000 shots from the light weapons of the escort."

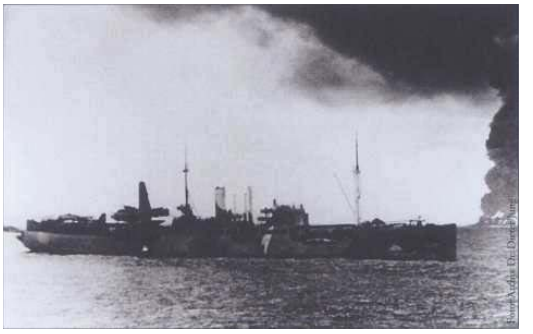
After the "Schwabenland" had been transferred from the western sector to Norway, it was moved to Tromsø on 14 September 1942 to serve as a floating base for long-range reconnaissance aircraft.

Torpedo hit, but not sunk

Apart from the installation of a few light anti-aircraft guns, the ship was not converted any further.

On 24 March 1944, M/S "Schwabenland" off Egersund. Here, the ship was severely damaged by torpedo fire from the British submarine "Terrapin" under the command of Lieutenant Martin. The combat report of the British submarine "Terrapin" notes, among other things: "Terrapin launched a four-pronged attack against a convoy of five ships and five to six escort vessels. The commander assumed that he had sunk one ship with two torpedoes and damaged another."

In fact, the Schwabenland was severely damaged, as was the steamer "Wörth" with 6,256 GRT.



The "Schwabenland" immediately after being torpedoed by the British submarine "Terrapin".

The damage to the Schwabenland caused by the torpedo hits was considerable. Hannes Kempf, initially a crew member of the catapult ship "Friesenland" deployed in Norway, then in October 1943 on the sea tug "Atlas", which was assigned to the "Kommando Schiffe und Boote der Luftwaffe" (Air Force Ships and Boats Command) in Kiel, witnessed the events at that time. He reports: "On 24 March 1944, the tugboat 'Atlas' received orders to immediately sail to Egersund and provide assistance to the severely damaged M/S 'Schwabenland'. We found the catapult ship , Atlas, was ordered to immediately sail to Egersund and provide assistance to the severely damaged M/S Schwabenland. We found the catapult ship in a bay at the entrance to the

Flekkefjord with severe list and leak on the starboard side amidships. All but the ship's officers had already abandoned ship. We attempted to pump the ship empty, which we managed to do with great effort. After that, M/S Schwabenland was afloat again and our mission accomplished. Sealing the leak and towing the ship was taken over by another team.

The damaged ship was successfully beached at Egersund and later towed to Oslo. The ship, which was beyond repair, was used as a residential ship in the Oslofjord from 7 February 1945, and later in Oslo-Sandvik, where it remained until the end of the war.

The end: sunk in the Skagerrak

Like all men in the merchant navy who did not belong to the Kriegsmarine and were not soldiers, the captain of the Schwabenland, Alfred Kottas, was interned. He did not believe he would ever see his ship, which was beyond repair, again. But he was to be proven wrong. In early December 1946, he was suddenly and unexpectedly taken from the internment camp, brought to the Schwabenland, which was loaded to the brim with gas ammunition, and ordered to sink his ship in the Skagerrak.

Captain Kottas described how difficult it was for him to sink the "Schwabenland" on orders and under the supervision of the British with its deadly cargo was described by Captain Kottas in a letter dated 17 December 1952 to the head of Deutsche Lufthansa, which is still preserved today:

Dear Dr. Hädrich,

During my 12 years of service with Deutsche Lufthansa from February 1935 to June 1947, the years of peace were also the most beautiful and unforgettable times for me.

The 'Schwabenland' meant everything to me, a young bachelor. It was not only my ship, no, it was my home, my work, my field of activity, where I could let off steam. And finally, on 31 December 1946, I had to sink 'her' on the orders of the enemy with the most disgusting poison gas, 7,500 tonnes of the most repulsive substance, which we could sometimes smell in our noses, throats and eyes. It was bitter medicine, but it had to be swallowed. be swallowed.

During the sinking of the 'Schwabenland', I stood all alone on the tugboat that had taken us on board, mostly with double glasses over my eyes, perhaps to be somehow closer to 'her'. At first still on an even keel, slowly filling up, the faithful ship quickly sank stern first into the rough sea, into the North Sea, where it is deepest. I stood there for a while with my cap in my hand. Everyone was strangely silent; no one cried, prayed or cursed. Slowly, we put our caps back on and carried on with our lives. Yes, indeed!

A new phase of life had to begin now, that was certain. Gone was life on the beautiful, wide and cruel sea, my home, shipping, the shipping company and the flag were all destroyed.

My transitional jobs in my new life on land included warehouse worker, carpenter's assistant, woodcarver and security guard at the harbour. They weren't always pleasant, but at least they paid the bills.

In 1949, a nasty bout of pleurisy and pneumonia that lasted six months nearly killed me. Severely weakened, I slowly learned to walk again. I had almost no money left, and health insurance companies, etc. were no longer paying anything. Then a coffee company hired me as a sales representative for the sprawling western suburbs of Hamburg, where the air was clean. That was my lucky break. Progress was slow and difficult, but now my work feeds me, and when asked, I paint a rosier picture. I think complaining is stupid, and pity is somehow degrading.

Everything will depend on how long I can keep going and working and maybe save something.

This is the first time I have written about the end of the 'Schwabenland'. But there was nowhere to report it or anywhere to go... " [36]

Since the captain wrote this letter, he lived in complete seclusion in Hamburg-Eppendorf for almost 17 years. He died at the age of 84 and was buried at noon on 13 June 1969 at the Ohlsdorf Cemetery in Hamburg.

The Hamburg-based newspaper *Die Welt* reported his death in its 13 June 1969 edition on the Hamburg local page under the headline "Kapitän Kottas gestorben" (Captain Kottas has died). The single-column, 28-line obituary mentions, among other things, that M/S Schwabenland, captained by Alfred Kottas, had brought emperor penguins back from Antarctica for the Berlin Zoo. However, not a word was said about the magnificent achievement of the researchers, pilots and aerial photographers who had made it possible to take possession of Neu-Schwabenland in Antarctica.

Why? Because the expedition took place during the Third Reich?

„Operation Highjump“ der US-Marine

The legacy of the Second World War

Even before the outbreak of war, the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39 under Alfred Ritscher had not been a major topic of discussion – initially for reasons of secrecy, then for political and diplomatic considerations. after 1945, no one in Germany or many other countries around the world thought about this magnificent undertaking on the sixth continent at the end of the world.

The people in defeated, bombed-out, destroyed, and divided Germany, in the ruined cities and burnt-out houses, lost a lot in the war, some lost everything. Now they face an uncertain future. Most of those who fled from eastern Germany to the west have nothing left but the clothes on their backs. They live in overcrowded refugee camps, in mass quarters or in the cellars of half-destroyed houses. More than a million German soldiers are still in Russian, American and British captivity.

Der Flugzeugträger „Philippine Sea“, das Hauptschiff der „Operation Highjump“, in einer Aufnahme aus dem Jahr 1955

Foto: U.S. Navy/National Archives

captivity. Not to mention the millions of dead German soldiers and civilians mourned by their surviving relatives.

This is the legacy of the Second World War for the German Reich, which emerged as the loser from the gigantic global struggle. Many Germans expect nothing good; they fear the worst — woe to the defeated!

Adolf Hitler and his Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, the two most important men in the Third Reich, had already taken their own lives before the collapse of the regime to escape capture by the Allies. The other leaders of the Third Reich from the party, politics, the Wehrmacht, the SS, police, business and the medical profession were arrested by the occupying powers at the end of the war or shortly afterwards and charged in 13 trials in Nuremberg, the former "city of the NSDAP party rallies", with war crimes, crimes against humanity, planning and waging a war of aggression, and membership of a criminal organisation. The indictment was handed down on 6 October 1945, the trial began on 20 November 1945, and the verdicts were delivered on 1 October 1946: twelve death sentences, three life sentences and three acquittals. Those sentenced to death were executed on 16 October 1946.

America searches for Adolf Hitler

Martin Bormann, who called himself "Hitler's secretary," managed to escape from Berlin after the Reich Chancellor's suicide on 1 May 1945. This allowed him to escape imminent arrest. He was untraceable and considered "missing." Had he perhaps managed to flee Germany after all?

But few people were interested in finding out where Bormann had actually gone.
was of little interest to anyone. And for most Germans, Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler himself was dead.

Not so for the Americans. Both the media and the general public in the United States showed an unusually keen interest in the fate of Adolf Hitler.

Doubts were raised about the statements made by the Russians, who had been in Berlin before the Americans, that they had actually found Adolf Hitler dead, as well as about their claim that they had cremated Hitler's body outside Berlin at an unknown location. Neither of these claims could be verified by the Americans, so doubts seemed justified.

The first major magazine in the United States to question Adolf Hitler's death was *TIME* magazine in New York. In its 7 May 1945 issue, it published a story that fuelled discussion about the question of Hitler's death or life and his possible whereabouts, not only in the United States but worldwide.

The magazine claimed that the body found by the Russians in Berlin was not that of Adolf Hitler, but of a double named August Wilhelm Bartholdy, a grocer from Plauen in the Vogtland region. This man was said to bear a striking resemblance to Adolf Hitler and had been intensively trained for his role as a double. He was then brought to Berlin in the second half of April 1945 to defend the Reich Chancellery in a heroic mission, while the real Adolf Hitler embarked on his long-planned escape abroad.

New versions of Hitler's survival in Berlin and his escape appeared in American newspapers, always based on the assumption that Hitler had survived the war and succeeded in his long-planned escape from Berlin to a foreign country.

A Chilean newspaper also contributed to this flood of information on the subject of Hitler's escape, claiming that Hitler, Eva Braun and several of the Führer's loyal followers, including Martin Bormann, had flown from Berlin-Tempelhof to Tondern on 30 April 1945. From there, another plane took them to Kristiansund in Norway. A group of German submarines had been waiting there since 24 April, which finally took Hitler and his entourage on board and brought them to South America.

"Commander, you hid Hitler!"

Despite a lack of evidence, German submarines, which were said to have left German ports, mainly from Norway, in large numbers shortly before the end of the war and headed for South America, were the focus of speculation in US, Argentinean and Chilean newspapers about Hitler's escape.

Early in the morning of 17 August 1945, something unexpected happened: after 66 days underwater, the German submarine U 977, equipped with the Walter snorkel, one of the latest snorkelling devices for long-term dives, surfaced off the Argentine coast. While still outside the three-mile zone, Commander Heinz Schaeffer used light signals to contact the "German Submarine" signal station.

A short time later, the minesweeper Py 10 and two submarines arrive at the stationary German U 977. Schaeffer is informed in English that a commando unit is coming aboard. A motorboat is launched and brings the commando unit, consisting of an officer, a non-commissioned officer and several sailors, to the submarine. On the upper deck, the German submarine commander reports to the Argentine officer and escorts him to the conning tower. The Argentine officer explains his mission, which is to bring the boat safely to the port of Mar del Plata. Schaeffer commands his boat, U 977, for the last time.

After arriving in port, Schaeffer and his crew are taken to the cruiser "Belgra-no" as prisoners of war of the Argentine fleet; they are well accommodated and fed, and Schaeffer is given an officer's cabin. In the afternoon, Heinz Schaeffer is introduced to the base commander; it is more of a conversation than an interrogation and is conducted in English.

The Argentine fleet commander agrees to the request made to him.

to pass on the documents and papers handed over by Schaeffer; he assumed that these would be examined by his superiors as quickly as possible, which is indeed the case.

But then something sensational happened that attracted the attention of the world's press. Heinz Schaeff reports on this in his memoirs:

"The Argentine authorities were convinced that my information was correct. But while this investigation was pending, the newspaper El Dia in Montevideo began a disastrous campaign claiming that Hitler had fled to Patagonia and then to Antarctica aboard my submarine. One can imagine the impact this story had around the world. The story from Montevideo was picked up everywhere. Sensational reports flooded the world press. Meanwhile, I was in captivity and condemned to silence.

One day, there was a surprise. I was presented with a group of high-ranking Anglo-American officers were brought before an investigative commission that had travelled to Argentina specifically to shed light on the 'mysterious case of U 977'. These gentlemen were persistent.

'You hid Hitler! Speak up! Where is he?'

Since I could tell them nothing more than I had already told the Argentinians, they grew impatient, for outside, my boat's voyage was still making headlines. No newspaper recognised the great achievement of one of the first long-distance voyages of a submarine in the history of warfare. All the reports, information, articles, speculation and fabricated stories revolved around the same topic: 'Heinz Schaeffer, the man who hid Hitler'.

But he stuck to the truth and infuriated the gentlemen who were determined to use his information to capture the leader who had long been declared dead. In order to put me under greater pressure, they arranged for me to be taken to the USA. My crew and my trusty boat, U 977, followed.

I ended up in a camp for prominent prisoners of war in Washington, where high-ranking German military figures were being held. For weeks, the Americans repeated the same phrase over and over again: 'You hid Hitler!' For weeks, I tried to prove how absurd this whole story was. I was unable to provide any conclusive evidence, just as they were unable to prove anything against me. After my case had been cleared up in Washington, and I had been treated fairly, I was shipped to Germany, but ended up in Antwerp because all German ports were overflowing with confiscated ships.

Here, the British took me into custody and put me in a prison camp for 'difficult cases'. They tried again what the Americans had tried unsuccessfully before. I survived these interrogations as well. After further unsuccessful attempts to get me to talk, they transferred

'difficult cases' and tried once again what the Americans had tried in vain before. I survived these interrogations as well. After further unsuccessful attempts to find out where I had hidden Hitler, I was released."

Heinz Schaeffer was back in Germany. But he did not stay long. In 1950, he turned his back on his homeland and emigrated to Argentina. There, under the title LT

977: " Geheimfahrt nach Südamerika" (977: The Secret Journey to South America), a

book about his experiences.

Top left: Admiral Byrd (right) plans a reconnaissance flight. Behind him are three of his closest advisors (from left to right): Captain G.F. Kosco and Commander C.M. Campbell, with Captain H.R. Horney, Byrd's chief of staff, in the foreground.

Image below: The submarine "Sehnet", which was attached to the convoy of the middle group, proved to be a significant obstacle: in the pack ice of the Ross Sea, it became unable to manoeuvre, which is why it had to be freed from dangerous situations time and again, as shown here.

. Ultimately the Sehnet served as a weather station in the open waters off Scott Island.
Top centre: The aircraft carrier "Phillipine Sea" had six large Douglas R4D aircraft on board.

Top right: A Douglas aircraft takes off for the base station.
"Little America: Below: US Marines test a 16-ton amphibious tracked vehicle in Wal-Bay that can operate in water, on land and on ice.

Hitler in New Swabia?

The American polar explorer Richard Evelyn Byrd, who had given a lecture to the participants of the German Antarctic Expedition in 1938/39, rose to the rank of admiral in the US Navy after the Second World War. He collected everything that was published in the gazettes about Antarctica and, in particular, about Neuschwabenland. However, the subject also interested the highest command of the US Navy. Here, the interrogation records "U 977 - Commander Heinz Schaeffer" had been studied with particular attention. Had Schaeffer really told the truth, the whole truth?

The South American journalist Ladislao Szabo, an Argentine who had also dealt intensively with the subject and conducted thorough research, drew the attention of the public, including that of the USA, to his book *Hitler estd vi-vo* (Hitler Lives) in 1947. In it, the author investigates the question of a "new Berchtesgaden in Antarctica." The book is preceded by a foreword by Clemente Cimorra, who asserts that Szabo's arguments are "truly impressive," because now we know that the
"black bird Hitler" spread its wings over 14 million square kilometres of the white, innocent infinity of the Antarctic continent. Szabo claims that after the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39, the aircraft carrier
"Schwabenland" built the "new Berchtesgaden" in Antarctica on the orders of the later Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz.
"new Berchtesgaden" in Antarctica on the orders of the later Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz. Hitler fled there with his wife, children and his court, who were brought there by a submarine convoy. Finally, the author calls on the "Big Four", the heads of government of the USA, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union, to immediately search for and arrest the hidden German dictator. This is a moral duty to prevent the return of Nazism.

Although Szabo's publication was riddled with half-truths, untruths and speculation, it caused a sensation in South America, the USA and, after press agencies reported on it, around the world. Hitler in New Swabia?! No one could prove it. However, there was also no evidence to the contrary.

However, the Americans had already come across statements through other channels that suggested that the Germans during the war in New Swabia and could have established a military base. Heinz Siewert and Richard Wehrend, participants in the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39, reported that they had continued to serve on the "Schwabenland" after the expedition ended in order to bring various items of equipment to Antarctica. 1939, reported that they continued to serve on the "Schwabenland" after the expedition ended in order to bring various items of equipment to Antarctica. Strangely enough, Siewert and Wehrend are quoted as "soldiers" in this context.

A second reference is allegedly provided by Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz. In 1944, as head of the submarine fleet and commander-in-chief of the German Navy, he is said to have assured submarine crews in a speech:
"The German submarine fleet is proud to have built an earthly paradise for the Führer in another part of the world, an impregnable fortress." The Americans attributed this statement by Hitler's successor to New Swabia. After the war, Dönitz claimed he had never made such a statement.

The quote was passed down by Israeli writer and former secret agent Michael Bar-Zohar. In his book *The Avengers*, he also writes: "In March 1945, a detailed report was submitted to the State Department in Washington, which stated: 'The Nazi regime has precise plans for the pursuit of its doctrine and domination after the war. Some of these plans have already been put into effect.'"

The Americans, at any rate, seem determined to get to the bottom of the matter. Their subsequent steps suggest that they are convinced that a danger is growing in Antarctica that must be eliminated. They may even have actually believed that Hitler was staying in New Swabia. If this was the case, Szabo's publication may have confirmed their assumption in retrospect.

With a US armada to Antarctica

As early as the summer of 1946, preparations were underway in the United States for the largest Antarctic expedition ever undertaken. Under the code name "Operation Highjump," the US Navy officially planned to test crews and equipment under conditions as extreme as those found only in Antarctic regions. The expedition thus had

primarily military in nature. The discoveries and scientific insights that are hoped for are in line with this context.

The importance Americans attach to the upcoming undertaking is already evident from the composition of the planning commission, which includes the highest-ranking officers of the US Navy: the Chief of the US Navy, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Vice Admiral Forrest P. Sherman and Rear Admiral Roscoe F. Good. Rear Admiral H. Cruzen is responsible for the detailed planning, while Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal is in charge.

Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd is, of course, also involved. As the only high-ranking naval officer with polar experience, he will command Operation Highjump on behalf of the US Navy, representing Admiral Nimitz. For Byrd, this is the fifth polar expedition he has personally led, and it is his first expedition that, apart from a few army and civilian observers, involves only Navy personnel.

After thorough consultation, it is decided how the convoy of ships, which are to be sent on their journey to the eternal ice in the Antarctic summer, at the latest in December 1946, will be organised.
the Antarctic summer, by December 1946 at the latest, will be sent on their journey to the eternal ice. The
Operation Highjump is being carried out by the Fleet Association Task Force 68. The flagship and general liaison ship is the Mount Olympus, which is also the
Task Force 68. The flagship and general liaison ship is the Mount Olympus, which also leads the centre group under Rear Admiral Cruzen, one of the three task groups. Admiral Byrd boards this ship on 2 December 1946. They are joined by the icebreakers
Northwind and the newly launched Burton Island, the armed freighters Yancey and Merrick, and the submarine Sennet. This convoy sets off from Norfolk, Virginia, and Port Hueneme and San Diego, California, travelling through the Canal Zone to Scott Island and on to Wal Bay. This is considered one of the most favourable anchorages in Antarctica. From here, flights can be made beyond the South Pole.

The western group, commanded by Captain Charles A. Bond, consists of the destroyer Henderson, the fuel tanker Cacapon and the flying boat mother ship Currituck, which has three flying boats with three flying boat crews on board. These three ships begin their journey in Norfolk and sail through the canal zone to Peter I Island.

The Eastern Group, under Captain George
J. Dufek consists of the Brownson, another destroyer, the fuel tanker Canisteo and the flying boat mother ship Eine Island, also with three flying boats and three flying boat crews. This group begins its voyage in San Diego and San Pedro, California, and sets course for the Balleny Islands via the Marquesas Islands.

They are joined by an aircraft carrier, the Philippine Sea, one of the largest and most modern warships in the US Navy, which only leaves Norfolk on 29 December 1946 and joins the central group about a month later. It has six aircraft, large Douglas R4D monoplanes, and helicopters on board.

A total of 4,000 men will be on board the 13 ships: marines, sailors, crew and a few scientists. The latter are mainly specialists from the army and navy, along with a few civilian researchers, but government agencies such as the Geological Survey, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Coast and Geodetic Survey are also involved. Provisions for eight months will be taken on board for all expedition members. In addition to the aircraft, transport vehicles and long-range reconnaissance aircraft, as well as helicopters, bulldozers, tractors, off-road vehicles and other technical equipment will also be carried.

Initially, the planners of "Operation Highjump" were unclear as to whether this expedition should be presented to the media and thus to the American public as "scientific" or "military". The official line was "both": "testing of equipment and personnel under Antarctic conditions".

Richard Byrd published in October 1947
in the world-renowned *National Geographic Magazine,* he published a report spanning almost 100 pages about the expedition he led. Under the headline "Our Navy Explores Antarctica," he writes that it was intended to demonstrate to the American people that the Navy was not solely a war-fighting force, but also indispensable in times of peace. ([38])The article is illustrated with photos of amphibious tanks, tracked vehicles, bulldozers, soldiers, aircraft and helicopters used in Operation Highjump in Antarctica.

Above: The US flag is raised on "Little America" for "God's own country". It was never taken down again. After the end of "Operation Highjump", it continued to fly over the abandoned base camp. Below: With two of these Douglas Ma-

R4D aircraft, Admiral Richard Byrd flew over the South Pole on 15/16 February 1947. The cause of the engine and heating failure and other problems encountered by the otherwise completely intact aircraft during the flight remained unclear.

Above: Each flying boat mother ship had three flying boats on board for coastal reconnaissance and domestic flights. The picture shows the deck of the "Eine Island", which belonged to the East Group.

Centre: Valuable time was lost because the icebreakers — here the "Northwind" (left in the picture) — had to fight their way through the pack ice of the Ross Sea.

Bottom: It was not until the end of January 1947 that the central group of the convoy participating in Operation Hi(fhiumv reached its destination "Little America", where their base station was to be established. On 23 February, it was finally abandoned.

The implementation plan for the "scientific-military" operation stipulates that the three task forces will be divided as follows: The central group, led by Admiral Byrd, is to head for Scott Island and set up a base camp and airfield at the "Little America" base in McMurdo Sound, which has already been used during previous expeditions, in order to be able to undertake reconnaissance and photographic survey flights into the unknown interior of Antarctica. The western and eastern groups are both tasked with exploring the Antarctic coast in their respective areas and undertaking flights inland from the flying boat mother ships. They are to set up weather stations in the area of the west Antarctic coast and the Antarctic Peninsula and in the area of the east Antarctic coast and monitor flight operations.

Broadly speaking, this was the task facing Operation Highjump, the preparation and organisation of which had to be carried out in great haste, almost frantically, as there was very little time available. For example, no test flights were carried out with the Douglas aircraft, even though they were the largest aircraft ever to take off from an aircraft carrier. This was to cause the technicians on site many headaches later on. Why all this excitement so soon after the victorious end of the Second World War? What new war did the USA have in mind when Byrd said that he saw himself and the Navy "between wars"?

Firstly, it should be noted that New Swabia is not mentioned at all in the admiral's report. This seems only logical, since the land discovered by Alfred Ritscher in 1939 lies directly opposite the islands approached by the three Byrd groups in the Pacific Ocean – Peter I Island, Scott Island and the Balleny Islands – on the opposite side of the Antarctic continent: in the Atlantic-Indian South Polar Basin near the Weddell Sea. The direct distance between Scott Island and New Swabia is a good 4,000 kilometres, the shortest distance is to Peter I Island, but even that is still a distance of more than 3,000 kilometres as the crow flies – distances that could not have been covered by aircraft such as those carried.

However, the operation plan contains the following interesting detail: the two at the edge ope-

During their mission, the three groups are to sail their three ships from 90° west in an easterly direction or from the Balleny Islands in a westerly direction along the coast until they have collectively formed a circle around the continent. The destination and meeting point is the area around the prime meridian, i.e. the area where Queen Maud Land, which includes New Swabia, is located. In short, the goal of this "encirclement of a continent," as Byrd himself puts it, is to "attack it from three fronts."

The three ships of the western group arrive north of the Balleny Islands shortly after Christmas 1946, just before the southern polar circle. A few days before New Year's Eve, the three ships of the eastern group also gather at their destination, Peter I Island. The mission of the central group in Antarctica begins one day before New Year's Day.

Returning to the question of "scientific or military," it is noteworthy that the media are playing a not insignificant role in the planning and implementation of the expedition. Eleven correspondents are travelling to Antarctica: nine newspaper reporters and two broadcasters. The three major international press agencies Reuters, AP and UPO are represented, as are several major newspapers and leading radio stations. This media coverage is completely unusual for a purely scientific expedition and confirms that there is indeed more to this undertaking involving warships, marines and aircraft than meets the eye.

What the Americans actually want to achieve or discover in the Antarctic

Antarctic, or even what they are fighting, can only be speculated upon. Must there be more behind this unusually large deployment of warships, aircraft and soldiers for a supposedly

"scientific expedition" and what was the real goal of the USA in Antarctica?

Unforeseen incidents

While some of the convoys are still on their way to Antarctica, at

On 26 December 1946, the British announced that a British-Norwegian expedition was underway in the southern polar waters of Bahia Marguerite and that Admiral Byrd was available to provide support. Eight other nations, including Russia and Canada, were conducting climate and weather studies in Antarctica at the same time. Were these countries informed in advance by the Americans about the purpose of their "Operation Highjump" and its objectives?

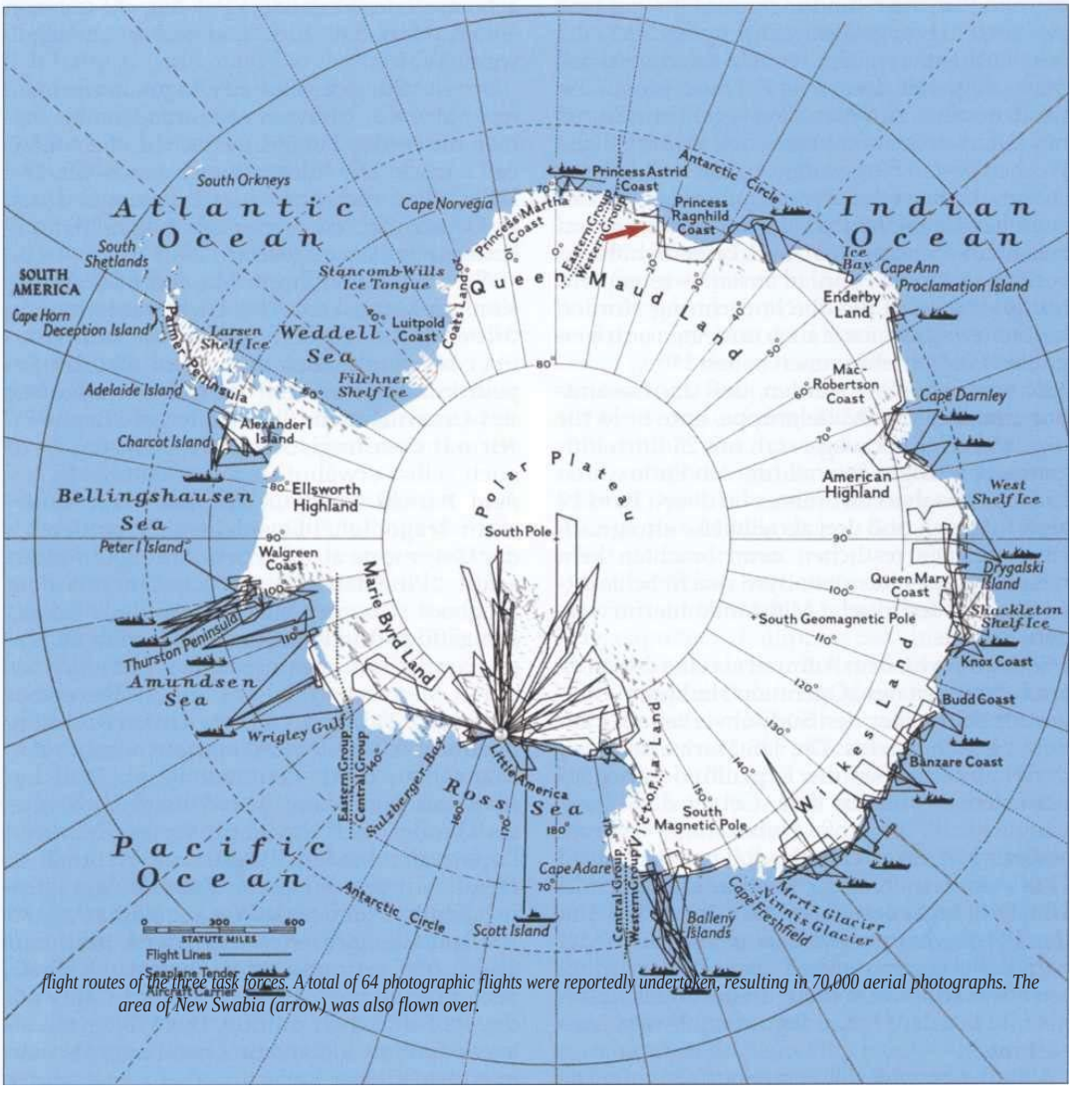
, were also active in the Antarctic at the same time for climate and weather studies. Were these countries informed in advance by the Americans about the reason for their "Operation Highjump" and its objective?

Unofficial accounts of the Byrd expedition usually agree that, just three weeks after arriving in Antarctica, the admiral suddenly ordered the termination of "Operation Highjump" and the immediate return of all ships to the United States. The date generally given is 3 March 1947. The cancellation after such a short time is said to have been almost panic-stricken, so that nine aircraft with their equipment had to be left behind in the eternal ice.

These figures do not correspond to the above-mentioned data for the arrival of the convoys at the end of December 1946.

This information does not correspond to the above data for the arrival of the convoys at the end of December 1946. Take, for example, the entire deployment time of the flagship

"Mount Olympus" was intended to illustrate the actual duration of the stay in Antarctica. The ship had left Norfolk on 2 December 1946. It had passed through the canal zone on 10 December and arrived near Scott Island on 30 December. On 14 January 1947, the Ross Ice Shelf was sighted. Between 22 January and 6 February 1947, the Mount Olympus was moored in Wal Bay, and on 13 February it was



flight routes of the three task forces. A total of 64 photographic flights were reportedly undertaken, resulting in 70,000 aerial photographs. The area of New Swabia (arrow) was also flown over.

near Scott Island. From 7 to 14 March, the ship was in Wellington off the coast of New Zealand, returning to home waters exactly one month later: the east coast of the United States. On 14 April 1947, Admiral Byrd was received in Washington by Secretary of the Navy Forrestal and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Nimitz.

What does Byrd himself have to say about this? Looking back, the leader of Operation Highjump writes of the great difficulties faced by the expedition due to severe weather conditions and extremely unfavourable ice conditions — by far the worst in a century. It takes until the end of January for the icebreaker to make its way through the heavily iced Ross Sea and for the aircraft carrier Philippine Sea to reach the edge of the ice shelf, from where the reconnaissance flights with the six R4Ds are to be undertaken. This means that a good part of the Antarctic summer and thus several weeks of ideal flying weather are lost. The ice conditions also make it necessary to leave the area earlier than planned in order to avoid taking any risks and losing ships. On 6 February, instead of mid-March as planned, the flight north begins, "before we had even made a single major flight(") .[40]

It had been calculated that the entire programme for the central group could be completed with 25 individual flights, assuming good visibility for the aerial photographs. In the end, 29 flights were completed, of which Byrd classified 17 as successful and three as partially successful. The remaining nine did not yield any significant results; Byrd attributed this to bad weather and technical problems.

Even the flight over the South Pole, which the admiral considered one of the greatest achievements of Operation Highjump, was anything but smooth.

achievements of "Operation Highjump", did not go smoothly. The US Navy saw one of the main tasks of the expedition as pushing beyond the pole "into the 'land of inaccessibility', into the great unknown" [41]. Byrd left "Little America" on 15 February shortly after 11 p.m. with two Douglas R4Ds. The aircraft were heavily overloaded. In order to reach the pole at all and return safely to base camp, 40

"Little America" shortly after 11 p.m. on 15 February. The aircraft were heavily overloaded. In order to reach the pole at all and return safely to base camp, 40 per cent more fuel than usual had to be taken on board, not to mention the heavy equipment.

The temperature dropped rapidly during the flight. The heating in one of the aircraft, which had been completely intact at take-off, and the autopilot failed, and fuel vapours filled the cockpit. Then the engine began to sputter, followed by a complete engine failure.

Then the engine began to sputter, followed by a complete engine failure. No one could say why. After switching to another tank, the engine started again. The windows fogged up from the inside and froze over in a matter of moments; the windows had to be scraped continuously with knives or rubbed with alcohol solution.

The aim of the flight was to find out what

was in the area on the South American side of the South Pole. Byrd writes about this: "In total, we had flown over 25,000 square kilometres of the 'land beyond the pole'. As expected, although somewhat disappointing to report, there was nothing noteworthy behind the pole. Only the white desert stretching from one horizon to the other. (") [42]

Around noon the next day, after a flight lasting more than twelve hours, the two aircraft returned to 'Little America'. The pilots were exhausted. The cold, but also the lack of oxygen due to the constant inhalation of alcohol vapours, had taken their toll.

If they had encountered "things worth observing of the third kind" during their advance towards Queen Maud Land, Byrd would hardly have reported it. After all, the expedition leader officially admits that there were deaths during the course of the expedition. Let's start with the most tragic event, which Byrd himself mentions and which is described in his report as a "light phenomenon causes tragedy". [43]It took place in the eastern group. Various reconnaissance flights were carried out from the flying boat mother ship "Eine Island" with the flying boat "George One". From the outset, it was in constant use, each time with a different crew. When it took off at 2:24 a.m. on 30 December 1946 for its third round trip within a very short period of time, there were nine men on board: Lieutenant Ralph Paul Le-Blanc as pilot, Lieutenant William H. Kearns as co-pilot, navigator Ensign Maxwell Lopez, radio operators Wendell K . Hendersin and James H . Robbins, flight engineers Frederick Warren Williams and William George Henry Warr, aerial photographer Owen McCarty and finally the captain of the "Pine Island", Henry Howard Caldwell, who was flying as an observer. The weather looked anything but promising as they flew southwest over rising ice, Kearns later recalled. Visibility was poor and there was no horizon.

It was impossible to tell whether it was fog, haze or snow that they were flying through. The cockpit windows began to freeze over. The de-icer on board had no effect. Suddenly, a bright light flashed, as if the aircraft had flown into a hole in the clouds and the sun had suddenly broken through. The fine ice crystals on the windscreen turned into thousands of glittering points. What made orientation even more difficult was the fact that the on-board instruments were giving conflicting readings. It was high time to turn back. After Kearns had relieved the somewhat tired LeBlanc at the controls, the plane turned around. Suddenly there was a jolt that shook the entire aircraft. It had probably made contact with the side of a mountain. Kearns pulled up immediately. What followed was an explosion. "George One" was torn into four pieces.

Three men, Hendersin, Williams and Lo-
Pez, did not survive the crash. McCarty, Warr, Robbins and Caldwell crawled out of the wreckage with more or less minor injuries after regaining consciousness some time later. Kearns, who had not fastened his seatbelt for the first time in his flying career, had been thrown from his seat and landed in the snow. Only LeBlanc was still trapped in the burning wreckage; he was freed by his comrades and also survived.

With the help of food scraps and survival kits that were pulled out of the wreckage over the next few days, they set up camp at the crash site. LeBlanc's burns were so severe that he fell into delirium, but the biggest problem was the lack of drinking water.

Due to poor weather conditions, the search for the missing persons could only begin after several days. There were also problems getting the two other flying boats,
"George Two" and "George Three", airworthy. Finally, they were able to take off, but various test flights and search operations between 5 and 9 January had to be aborted prematurely due to various adversities. Two days later, the completely exhausted men were finally found about 20 kilometres from an ice-free water source, from where they were eventually rescued. However, snowfall and fog delayed the rescue operation considerably.

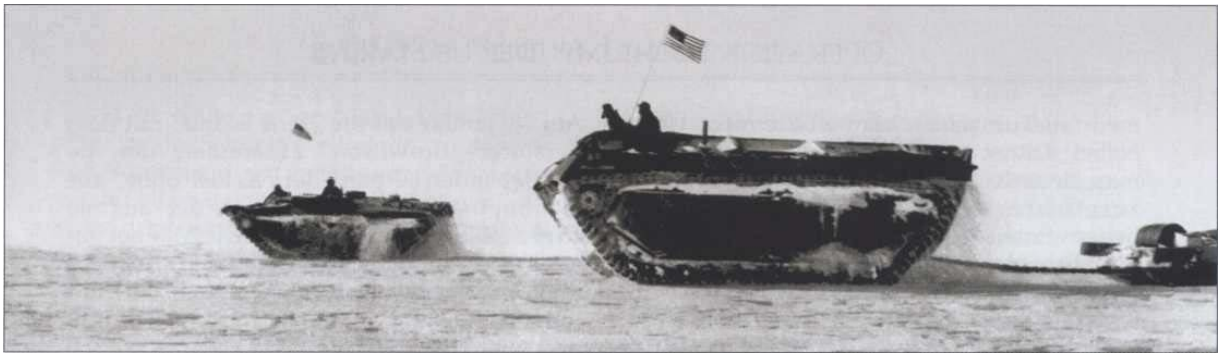
On 18 January, the "Eine Island" met up with the destroyer "Brownson", which took the survivors of the disaster to the
the Philippine Sea, from where they were returned to the United States. The men were rescued, but LeBlanc had to have both legs amputated on the aircraft carrier two weeks after the rescue due to frostbite.

There had never been a single comparable incident on Byrd's numerous previous expeditions. As already mentioned, he mentions the tragedy in his report, but does not go into it in this detail. All he has to say about unforeseen incidents is that biologist Jack Perkins broke his leg and that technical problems repeatedly caused difficulties during flights. For example: "Soon we ran into bad weather with zero visibility, and ten minutes later we had a leak in the fuel line."

Another accident occurred on 21 January shortly after the arrival of the cargo ship Yan-cey at the Ross Ice Shelf. A tugboat was transporting a load on the ice, which proved difficult due to the
the condition of the ground, so that some men had to lend a hand. In the process, Vance Woodall, who had only been serving in the navy for seven months, got his right arm and head caught in the transport device, which severed his spine and killed him instantly. Byrd makes no mention of this incident, which occurred in the central group, where he himself was stationed.

Nor does he mention that just one day later, a helicopter prepared for take-off fell from the aircraft carrier "Philippine Sea" into the icy water.
Immediately after the aircraft took off, the pilot lost control of it – the cause is said to be a sudden gust of wind
– and the helicopter was swept overboard. However, the pilot was rescued by a lifeboat.

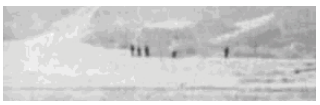
Is there anything else Byrd is concealing? Occasionally, one reads that four aircraft and their crews disappeared without a trace in the first few days after arriving in Antarctica. Attempts to find out where they had gone were unsuccessful. And what about the nine aircraft that were supposedly left behind in the eternal ice at the end of the US Antarctic mission, together with their crews?

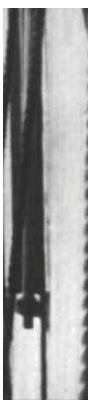


Amphibious vehicles were used for a six-day expedition inland. Byrd was convinced that one day it would be possible to travel overland to the pole by motor power.

A crevasse is bridged with the help of steel and snow. "Little America"is given an airfield made of compacted snow, from where 29 reconnaissance flights are undertaken far into the interior of the continent.

The commander-in-chief of Operation Highjump, Admiral Byrd, was aboard the flagship Mount Olympus (above). Here, it is being secured by marines with the stern line. Right: The armed freighters Merrick (in the background) and Yancey have moored in Whale Bay not far from the base station and are being unloaded.





A "highly successful expedition"

In fact, "Little America" was abandoned on *23* February 1947, and the ships of all three task forces left Antarctic waters in early March. The polar winter had begun.

"The expedition was highly successful overall," Admiral Richard Byrd summed up. [45] What were the scientific achievements he had to report following his mission commissioned by the US Navy?

A total of 64 research flights were carried out, during which 70,000 aerial photographs of the Antarctic coast and individual inland regions of the continent were taken. This result is considered the greatest achievement of the expedition. Byrd proudly states that during the flights, an area half the size of the United States was explored. The list of achievements reads like a chapter from the *Guinness Book of Records:* thousands of kilometres of coastline mapped; new archipelagos, peninsulas, islands and lakes discovered; some of the largest glaciers on Earth found and photographed; ten new mountain ranges discovered, including some of the highest on Earth; the Whale Bay area mapped; hundreds of previously unknown mountains and peaks sighted; more than 500,000 square kilometres of the polar ice cap explored; a series of "oases", ice-free valleys with lakes, discovered; and so on and so forth.

One of the discoveries deserves special mention, as it was also reported by Byrd – but again not in the detail presented here. One of the pilots, Lieutenant David E. Bunger, came across a huge ice-free area in the middle of the ice during one of the last reconnaissance flights carried out by the West Group in Antarctica in early February 1947. This area, which was later named Bunger Oasis after its discoverer and measures about 750 square kilometres, is difficult to access by polar standards, although it is not very far from the coast. It is surprising that, given its size, it was not discovered during earlier Antarctic expeditions.

The Bunger Oasis is considered one of the most peculiar and beautiful landscapes in Antarctica. It is completely ice-free and has a relatively mild microclimate due to the increased radiation balance of the exposed rock compared to the surrounding area. Bunger later described it later as "a land of blue and green lakes and brown hills in an otherwise endless expanse of ice."[46]

On another flight a few days after the discovery, the oasis, which Byrd considered by far the most important geographical discovery of the expedition, was finally examined in more detail. Three large lakes and 20 smaller bodies of water were counted. The flying boat was able to land on one of the large lakes without any problems. By Antarctic standards, the water was relatively warm, as could be determined by dipping a hand in it. Underground thermal activity was suspected, but this could not be proven. The lake was full of red, blue and green algae, which gave the lake landscape its characteristic appearance. However, when the water was to be examined more closely on site, it turned out that no technical equipment was available for this purpose. Even the temperature had to be estimated, as no one had thought to bring a thermometer. However, an empty bottle was finally found on board the seaplane, so that a sample could at least be taken. As it turned out later, it was brackish water with a relatively high salt content of two-thirds of that of the ocean. Did the lake have access to the open sea?

The following embarrassing incident has also been recorded: During attempt to evaluate the 70,000 aerial photographs taken during "Operation Highjump" for mapping purposes, it turned out that a high percentage were completely worthless because ground control points had been forgotten. This shortcoming was to be made up for a year later, in the southern summer *of 1947/48,* during a much more modest expedition called "Operation Windmill". Was this why the 70,000 photos, taken at great technical expense, were not trumpeted from the rooftops? Byrd, at any rate, does not mention them. And why was there no official press conference or interviews with Admiral Byrd or other expedition members after the return of the 4,000 marines, some of whom had been killed? The press coverage of the largest Antarctic expedition of all time, the "Operation Highjump" in 1946/47.

Incidentally, the West Group did in fact advance as planned to the zero meridian during its reconnaissance missions had indeed advanced to the prime meridian as planned, as the map of the

Antarctica showing the flight routes (see map on p. 123). In the area of the East Group, only one short flight is recorded in this area – i.e. off Queen Maud Land and New Shastenland – far away from the other reconnaissance flights undertaken by the East Group in the coastal area, which were limited to areas near the Central Group and off the Antarctic Peninsula. Apparently, they had not managed to meet up with the West Group as planned. Was this also due to freak weather conditions?

In addition to geographical discoveries, Byrd discusses research in the fields of physics, chemistry, geology and biology. Unfortunately, he says, the scientists' work on the Earth's magnetism, cosmic radiation and various phenomena related to sunlight was very limited. He cites lack of time and transport difficulties as the reasons for this.

What is said about testing crews and equipment? Here, technical
New equipment and instruments that had been tested under extreme conditions came to the fore: from icebreakers with a gross tonnage of 6,600 and an output of 10,000 hp, which proved their manoeuvrability even in relatively heavy pack ice, to helicopters that proved their worth in advance reconnaissance of ice conditions, and ice-water-proof life jackets, some of which were used during the war to rescue merchant ship crews or were developed in a different version specifically for an invasion of Japan planned for autumn 1945. In addition, marines tested amphibious tracked vehicles that could operate on normal ground as well as on ice and in water. These 16-tonne vehicles were used to undertake a six-day journey covering a total of 450 kilometres. Byrd, who considers this one of the most important experiments of the expedition, is convinced in his report that sooner or later it will be possible to travel overland to the Pole using motor power. (47)

Apart from the concrete, very detailed list of discoveries and other achievements, there are signs of caution: "There are many secrets behind the glittering protective walls of ice and the whitewashed backdrop of fog and storm-lashed snow." [48] Or:

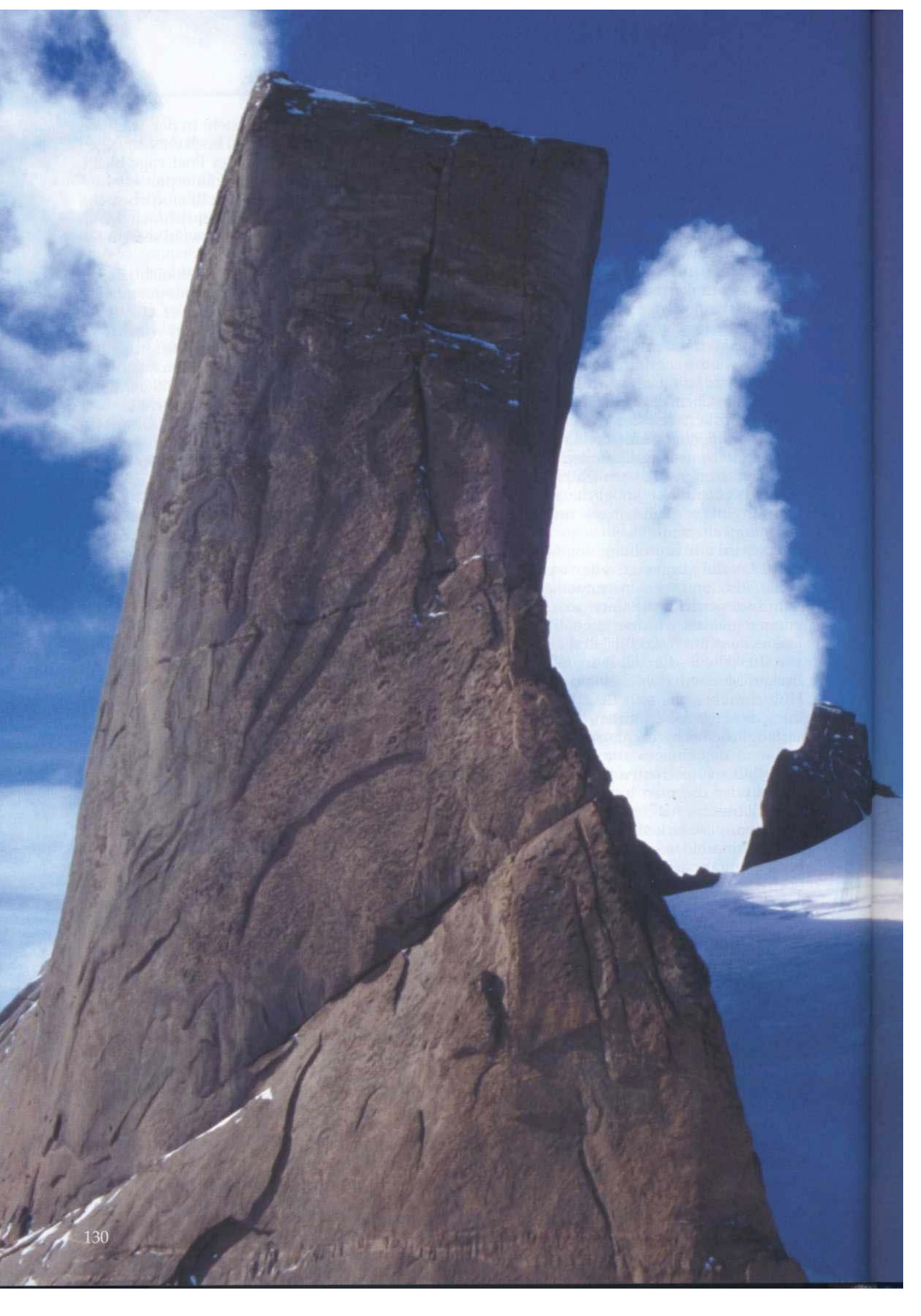
"The struggle against storm, distance, cold,
loneliness and hunger is almost as important in the tradition of the navy as the fight against enemy fleets." [49] Where the poet remains vague, no arbitrary interpretations should be made. And the fact that Byrd uses rhetoric enriched with metaphors borrowed from military language is probably due to his profession.

The admiral, however, makes no secret of the fact that he sees at least the Arctic (North Pole) as a potential battlefield. He argues very clearly: "It has been discussed whether the aircraft carrier, which has played such an extraordinarily important role in our war in the Pacific, has not become an obsolete weapon with the development of larger aircraft and their ability to cover greater distances.

Why, one might ask, use a carrier instead of a bomber that can fly 8,000 miles
in one piece? There are probably few destinations that are more than 4,000 miles away. But as a general rule, it is important to bear in mind that the shorter the distance to be flown, the greater the destructive cargo. And he concludes: "The shortest distance between the New and Old Worlds runs across the Arctic Ocean and the North Polar region. It is foreseeable that one of the great battlefields of future wars will be found here. ("50) And in this respect, the success of "Operation Highjump" should not least be understood in the sense that "the knowledge gained here in Antarctica would also be of great use for military conflicts in the Arctic.

Richard Byrd is somewhat more cautious about Antarctica itself, referring to the natural resources believed to exist there – coal, oil and non-ferrous metals: "One day it will probably be possible to turn the bottom of the globe into money." And elsewhere he writes:
"I strongly recommend that the next major polar expedition should be a joint project of the Army and Navy."

These statements once again unequivocally underscore the military nature of the "Operation Highjump" commanded by Byrd. For a long time, essentially until his death, the admiral hoped that an even larger, combined navy/army expedition would be sent to Antarctica. But Byrd's vision never became reality. Another American Antarctic expedition of comparable magnitude never took place, neither during the admiral's lifetime nor after his death.



The Federal Republic Oeutschfond and the *AnzorMis*

deme inscbo9sprojeăt:
Rorwegen — Grow brit annieri — Schweäe n

After careful preparation, the Norwegian-British-Swedish joint venture set sail for Antarctica at the end of 1949 with the Norwegian seal hunting vessel "Norsel". The Royal Air Force provided two Auster aircraft and the necessary crew on loan. Southwest of Cape Norway, on the Riiser-Larsen ice shelf, which appeared to be solid, the expedition set up its main camp, Maudheim. Here, the group of 15 spent six months in relative safety. After some time, however, the scientists discovered that the entire area, including their camp, was constantly rising and falling by one metre due to the tides. This realisation forced them to set up a second station, which was built 300 kilometres inland with the help of three motorised sledges. - Starting point for various sled trips undertaken for geological and glaciological investigations.

Ice cover measurements along a profile from the main camp at Maudheim to the second camp and further south showed that beneath the ice surface lay a heavily fragmented mountainous landscape with numerous fjords. Work at the main camp focused mainly on meteorology. Weather maps were drawn and 650 radiosonde ascents were carried out throughout the expedition.

Compared to pre-war expeditions, the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic expedition was better and more modern, and also had a larger "fleet" of motorised sledges. However, this mechanised transport system also harboured dangers. In February 1951, a motorised sledge fell over an ice cliff, taking three expedition members with it; they drowned.

In December 1951, the expedition ship "Norsel" arrived with two aircraft on board to pick up the expedition members. Before the ship set sail for home in January 1952, the area where the expedition participants had been working was photographed from the two aircraft using photogrammetry.

At almost the same time, France also attempted to send an expedition to Antarctica. However, the first attempt in 1949 failed. Heavy drift ice prevented the landing in Adelie Land. It was not until a year later, in February 1950, that the renewed attempt was successful. In 1953, the last French expedition members returned from Antarctica, having mainly carried out geophysical and meteorological work.

Both the "Norsel" expedition with Norwegian, Swedish and British scientists (1949-52) and the French Antarctic enterprise (1950-53) believed they could claim the first post-war expedition to Antarctica. But they were mistaken: it was Russian scientists.

The peaceful occupation of New Swabia

After the end of the war, the Soviet Union sent a large-scale scientific expedition to Antarctica with a specific goal on the sixth continent: New Swabia, discovered by Alfred Ritscher in 1938/39. Russian whaling ships had already been in the Southern Ocean during the third German Antarctic expedition and had observed the German activities with interest. They were also present in 1946/47 when the USA, led by Admiral Richard Byrd and equipped with an aircraft carrier, several other ships and an army of marines, demonstrated its strength in the Antarctic region. This may have prompted the Soviet Union, which felt itself in a cold war with the Americans, to establish a presence in Antarctica as well, so as not to leave the sixth continent to the United States alone. Perhaps the Russians had actually captured photos taken during the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39 when they conquered the Reich capital Berlin, which would explain their particular interest in New Swabia.

With professional activities and considerable

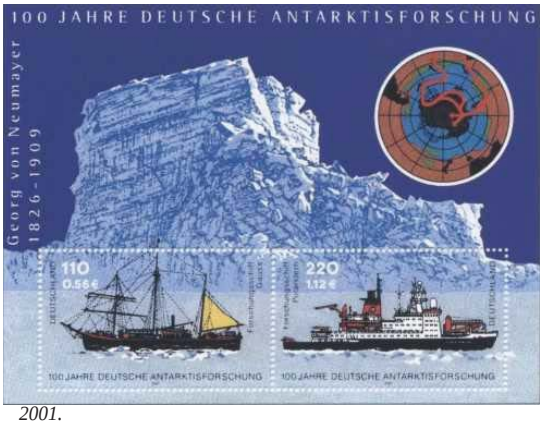
In 1961, the Soviet Union established the Lazarev research station in the Schirmacher Oasis region on the ice shelf, investing considerable human and material resources. It was later moved to the Schirmacher Oasis itself and renamed "Novolasarevskaya". The station was expanded almost continuously, and later the German Democratic Republic was also given the opportunity to set up the "Georg Forster" station in the immediate vicinity, which was supplied by the Soviet station "Novolasarevskaya". From 1976 onwards, "Georg Forster" served as a base for extensive geophysical, glaciological, meteorological and geodetic research in the Schirmacher Oasis itself and in the southern mountain ranges of the Wohlthat Massif. The station was closed in 1996 for financial reasons and completely dismantled.

Among the peaceful occupiers of New Swabia, especially the Schirma-

chero oasis included, after the Russians, the South African Union with the "Sanae" station and India with the "Dakshin Gangotri" station. The Japanese also set up a temporary camp in the Schirmachero oasis area, which
"Azuka Camp".

The first arms limitation treaty after the Second World War

As interest in the still unclaimed sixth continent grew year by year among countries on all continents
and more and more countries were establishing research stations in Antarctica, twelve states signed the
1 December 1959, one year after the International Geophysical Year 1957/58, twelve countries, namely Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States and the United Kingdom,
France, Great Britain, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Soviet Union, South Africa and the United States.
Norway, the Soviet Union, South Africa and the
USA, the Antarctic Treaty. After the ratification documents were deposited, 13 more countries joined: Brazil, Bulgaria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, the German Democratic Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Uruguay.



2001.

The purpose and objective of the Antarctic Treaty, which entered into force on
The Antarctic Treaty, which came into force on 23 June 1961 and is valid until at least 2041 under the 1991 Protocol on Environmental Protection, officially aims to preserve the integrity of the area south of 60° south latitude and to use it exclusively for peaceful purposes. The treaty guarantees freedom of research in the area for the benefit of all and prohibits military activities of any kind, nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive waste in Antarctica.

The Antarctic Treaty is thus the first non-armament treaty since the Second World War. In this sense, it also created the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The responsible design of the Antarctic regime is the responsibility of the consultative states,
refers to the original twelve signatory states or those treaty states that have been granted consultative status on the basis of significant scientific research work in Antarctica. The Federal Republic of Germany has also been a member since March 1981. With their admission to the Consultative Group, the long-standing achievements of German Antarctic research, in particular the establishment of the permanent research station "Georg von Neumayer" in February 1981 in Atka Bay in the Atlantic sector of Antarctica, were recognised.

The Consultative Group assume their special responsibility for promoting the principles and objectives of the Antarctic Treaty, primarily by initiating measures in the following areas: use of Antarctica for peaceful purposes, promotion of scientific research, facilitation of scientific
e cooperation between the parties to the Antarctic Treaty
and between these and other states
such as preserving the ecosystem of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.

No German claims to Neuschwabenland?

Forty years after the third German Antarctic expedition, the Federal Republic of Germany was unable to resume its Antarctic research where it had provisionally ended in 1939. Too much time had passed and the Neuschwabenland region was now occupied by research stations from other countries. In addition, Norway still had claims to the area, believing that New Swabia was part of Queen Maud Land, which Norway had already laid claim to. These claims had not been resolved in the final months of 1939 before the war broke out.

However, the occupation of New Swabia during the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39 can be clearly proven.

Erscheint fünfmal wöchentlich: Dienstag bis Sonnabend in zwei Ausgaben mit und ohne Zentralhandelsregisterbeilage. Bestellungen nur durch die Post. Bezugspreis der Ausgabe ohne Beilage monatlich 4,00 DM, der Ausgabe mit Beilage 5,30 DM einschließl. Zeitungsgebühr, aber ohne Zustellgeld. Einzelne Nummern werden zum Preise von 1,55 DM zuzügl. Postgebühr gegen Voreinsendung abgegeben. Postscheckkonto: Bundesanzeiger Köln 83400. Postanschrift für Verlag und Redaktion: Köln 1, Postfach — Telefon 73348/49 — Fernschreiber: Anzeiger Bonn 088 395 Erfüllungsort u. Gerichtsstand Köln a. Rh.

BUNDES ANZEIGER

HERAUSGEGEBEN VOM BUNDESMINISTER DER JUSTIZ

Anzeigenpreis für den Raum einer viergespaltenen 67 mm breiten Petitzeile 1,60 DM, einer dreigespaltenen 90 mm breiten Petitzeile für Textanzeigen 2,- DM, für Bilanzanzeigen 2,40 DM. Bilanzanzeigen werden nur in einer Zeilenbreite von 90 mm angenommen. Alle Anzeigenaufträge sind auf einseitig beschriebenem Papier völlig druckreif einzusenden, insbesondere ist darin auch anzugeben, welche Worte etwa durch Fettdruck (einmal unterstrichen) oder durch Sperrdruck (besonderer Vermerk am Rande) hervorgehoben werden sollen. — Befristete Anzeigen müssen drei Tage vor dem Erscheinungstermin beim Verlag eingegangen sein.

Nummer 149 — Ausgegeben am Dienstag, dem 5. August 1952 — Jahrgang 4

Amtlicher Teil

Inhalt

Bekanntmachungen.

Nichtamtlicher Teil

Inhalt

Bekanntmachungen

Bundespräsidialamt

Verleihung des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.

Vom 26. Juli 1952.

Der Bundespräsident hat den Verdienstorden der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Monat Juli an folgende besonders verdiente Männer und Frauen verliehen:

Das Großkreuz:

Heitor? de Pimentel Brandão, Botschafter und Generalsekretär im Brasilianischen Außenministerium, Rio de Janeiro.

Das Große Verdienstkreuz mit Stern:

Dr. h. c. Georg Karo, Universitätsprofessor, ehemaliger Leiter des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts in Athen, Freiburg/Breisgau,
Dr.-Ing. h. c. Dr. rer. nat. h. c. Paul Reusch, Kommerzienrat, Oppenweiler Kreis Backnang, Katharinenhof.

Das Große Verdienstkreuz:

...as Bechly, ehemaliger Verbandsvorsteher des Deutschnationalen Handlungsgehilfenverbandes, Hamburg,
...nz Bornefeld-Ettmann, Präsident des Verbandes ländlicher Genossenschaften Westfalens, Wadersloh/Kreis Beckum/Westfalen,
Emmerich David, Generalvikar, Prälat und Apostolischer Protonotar, Köln,
...lhelm Heusel, Generaldirektor, Wasseralfingen,
...rmann Honnef, Bauingenieur und Konstrukteur, Rheinbrohl,
...of. Dr. Hans Meyer, Honorarprofessor, Marburg/Lahn,
Franz Miltenberger, Dompropst, Würzburg,
Franz Xaver Monse, erzbischöflicher Generalvikar, Listrup/Ems über Salzbergen,
...lius Moser, Dipl. Ing., Pforzheim,
...of. Dr. phil. Dr. Ing. e. h. Matthias Pier, Industriechemiker, Heidelberg,
Dr. Gustav Pistor, Direktor a. D. der IG Farben AG., Tegernsee,
Theodor Willemsen, Studienrat i. R., Düsseldorf.

Das Verdienstkreuz:

Karl Ahl, Ministerialrat a. D., Karlsruhe,
...lther Brüggemann, Fabrikant, Heilbronn,
...ter Buchholz, Domkapitular und Strafanstaltsoberpfarrer, Düsseldorf,
...edrich Deppisch, Präsident a. D., Ludwigsburg,
...rl Erb, Kammersänger, Ravensburg,
...x Fritzsche, Sparkassendirektor, Hamburg-Volksdorf,
Bernhard Guttmann, Schriftsteller, Buchenbach bei Freiburg,
...ttfried Haaß-Berkow, Intendant, Eßlingen,
...rl Hägel, Ministerialrat a. D. Stuttgart,
...iannes Herter, Ministerialrat a. D., Stuttgart,
...gust Hölscher, Brennerei- und Mühlenbesitzer, Münster/Westfalen,
Prof. Dr. med. Franz Klose, Direktor des Hygienischen Instituts der Universität Kiel, Kiel,
Hans Karl Alfred Knoerzer, Ministerialrat a. D., Stuttgart,
Reinhold Letschert, Bankdirektor, Kassel,
Heinrich A. Maus, Generalkonsul a. D., Köln-Lindenthal,
Dr. Eugen Möhler, Ministerialdirektor a. D., Stuttgart,
Adalbert Sailer, Oberregierungsrat a. D., Stuttgart,
Dr. med. Franz Schede, Professor, Leiter der Orthopädischen Klinik im Oldenburger Landeskrankenhaus Sanderbusch,
Christian Wilhelm Schneider, Fabrikdirektor, Bad Hönningen/Rhein,
Dr. Hans Schwenkel, Direktor a. D., Landesbeauftragter für Naturschutz und Leiter der Landesstelle für Naturschutz und Landschaftspflege, Stuttgart,
Elisabeth Staengel, Fabrikantin, Stuttgart,
Dr. med. Fritz Tölle, Landarzt, Flieden Krs. Fulda,
Carl Wendling, Professor a. D., Stuttgart.

Das Verdienstkreuz am Bande:

Julius Beltz, Verlagsbuchhändler, Weinheim,
Engelbert Bohn, Oberstudiendirektor, Karlsruhe,
August Dörsam, Oberregierungs- und Baurat a. D., Karlsruhe,
Wilhelm Eckert, Kreisbrandinspektor, Tauberbischofsheim,
Gustav Egler, Bürgermeister, Musberg Krs. Böblingen,
Alexander Eisenmann, Professor a. D., Stuttgart,
Edmund Falk, Regierungsvermessungsrat a. D., Karlsruhe,
Fritz Freytag, Oberschulrat a. D., Göppingen,
Valentin Gernert, Regierungsvermessungsrat, Heidelberg,
Dr. Herbert Graner, Obermedizinalrat, Heilbronn,
Eugen Harrer, Kreisamtmann a. D., Ludwigsburg,
John Heggblum, Rentner, Itzehoe,
Friedrich Hettler, Oberregierungs- und Vermessungsrat a. D., Karlsruhe,
Jeremias Hettler, Spinner und Nachtwächter, Pfullingen,
Franz Hinger, Pflastermeister, Winnenden,
Jakob Hoffmann, Oberleiter der staatlichen Reblausbekämpfung a. D., Winkel/Rheingau,
Paul Keller, Kaufmann, Stuttgart,
Erhard Kley, Sparkassendirektor a. D., Ludwigsburg,
Christian Knapp, Schulrat a. D., Heilbronn,
Gottlieb Körber, Schlossermeister, Sindelfingen,
Karl Lässing, Regierungsdirektor a. D., Stuttgart,
Anna May, Hausgehilfin, Bonn,
Oscar Merz, Packmeister, Eßlingen,
Heinrich Mosbacher, Rektor i. R., Schwetzingen,
Eugen Rieger, Direktor der allgemeinen Rentenanstalt, Stuttgart,
Paul Röhrle, Bürgermeister, Rosenberg/Krs. Aalen,
Theodor Scheufele, Hochschuloberinspektor a. D., Stuttgart Bad Cannstatt,
Elisabeth Stolte, Ordensschwester, Essen-Heidhausen,
Friedrich Strein, Staatl. Forstwart, Schwanheim,
Karl Stroheker, Regierungsdirektor a. D., Stuttgart,
Helene Tamm, Rentnerin, Krempe/Holstein,
Erwin Wohlgemuth, Oberregierungs- und Baurat a. D., Karlsruhe.

Bonn, den 26. Juli 1952.

Der Chef des Bundespräsidialamtes
Dr. Klaiber

Auswärtiges Amt

Bekanntmachung über die Bestätigung der bei der Entdeckung von „Neu-Schwabenland" im Atlantischen Sektor der Antarktis durch die Deutsche Antarktische Expedition 1938/39 erfolgten Benennungen geographischer Begriffe.

Vom 12. Juli 1952.

Die von dem derzeitigen Leiter der Deutschen Antarktischen Expedition 1938/39 vorgeschlagenen geographischen Benennungen werden wie folgt amtlich bestätigt:

Lfd. Nr.:	Namensträger:	Beziehung zur Expedition:
1	Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge	Berühmter Geograph; Begründer erdmagnetischer Forschung in den Polargebieten,
2	Humboldt-Graben	wie vorher,
3	Altar	Berg im Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge,
4	Amelang-Platte	Herbert Amelang, I. Offizier des Expeditionsschiffes, Nordd. Lloyd; führte u. a. persönlich alle Motorboot- u. Schleppbootfahrten zwischen Schiff, Packeis und Schelfeisenküste durch,
5	Am Überlauf	im nördl. Teil des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges,
6	Barkley-Berge	Studienreferendar Erich Barkley (gefallen 1945), Reichsstelle für Fischerei (Institut für Walforschung, Hamburg),
7	Bastei	Berg im zentralen Wohltat-Massiv,
8	Bludau-Berge	Dr. med. Josef Bludau, Schiffsarzt,
9	Bolle-Berg	Herbert Bolle, Werkmeister der Flugzeugmonteurgruppe, D. L. H.; die von ihm betreuten beiden Flugboote konnten ohne Unfall oder Versager in 16 Fernflügen mit 87 Flugstunden 13 050 Flugkilometer zurücklegen,
10	Boreas (D-Agat)	eins der beiden Flugboote vom Dornier 10 t Wal-Typ,
11	Brandt-Berg	Emil Brandt, Matrose, Nordd. Lloyd, rettete einem zwischen das Packeis ins Wasser gefallenen Kameraden das Leben,
12	Bruns-Berge	Elektro-Ingenieur Herbert Bruns, Spezialist für nautische und aeronautische Meßgeräte; mittels eines erstmalig zur Verwendung kommenden Unterwasser-Peilgerätes konnte er die Nordküste der Insel Bouvet horizontal unter der Wasserlinie abloten,
13	Buddenbrook-Kette	Freiherr v. Buddenbrook, Atlantik-Flugbetriebsleiter der D.L.H., stellte Expedition Schiff und Flugpersonal zur Verfügung und betreute die aeronautische Ausrüstung der Expedition,
14	Bundermann-Ketten	Max Bundermann, Luftbildner, verfertigte die Hälfte der 11 600 Vermessungs-Luftbilder, Hansa-Luftbild-G.m.b.H.,
15	Conrad-Gebirge	Konteradmiral Dr. phil. Conrad († 1943), Leiter des Amtes für Marine-Wetterdienst, beriet die teilnehmenden Wissenschaftler im Einvernehmen mit den wissenschaftlichen Instituten,
16	Dallmann-Berge	Kapitän der Handelsmarine, erforschte 1873/74 die Westküste von Graham-Land,
17	Drygalski-Berge	Geh. Rat. Prof. Dr. E. v. Drygalski († 1950), berühmter Polarforscher, Leiter der Deutschen Antarktis-Expedition 1903/04,
18	Eckhörner	Gipfel im nördl. Teil des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges,
19	Filchner-Berge	Dr. Wilhelm Filchner, berühmter Tibet- u. Antarktisforscher, Leiter der Deutschen Antarktisexpedition 1911/13,
20	Gablenz-Rücken	Freiherr v. Gablenz (gef. 1944), Direktor der Deutschen Luft-Hansa,
21	Gburek-Spitzen	Cand. geophys. Leo Gburek (gef. 1941), Erdmagnetiker der Expedition,
22	Geßner-Spitze	Wilhelm Geßner (gef. 1944), Direktor der Hansa-Luftbild-G.m.b.H., rüstete die Expedition mit den erstmalig zur Verwendung kommenden Reihenmeßbild-Kammern RMK, Zeiss-Aerotopograph aus, stellte die beiden erfahrensten deutschen Luftbildner Bundermann und Sauter zur Verfügung, sorgte für die erste Luftbild-Auswertung und stellte die erste „Vorläufige Übersichtskarte vom Arbeitsgebiet der Expedition" her,
23	Gneis-Kopf	Berggipfel im südl. Teil der östlichen Petermann-Kette,
24	Gockel-Kamm	Wilhelm Gockel, Meteorologischer Assistent vom Marine-Observatorium Wilhelmshaven, startete zusammen mit seinem Kameraden Krüger (s. dies.) an 106 Tagen 184 Sonden des Reichsamtes Wetterdienst und des Marine-Wetterdienstes,
25	Graue Hörner	Huken am Südende des nördl. Teils der Petermann-Ketten,
26	Gruber-Berge	Erich Gruber (gef. 1940), Flugfunker von „Boreas",

Lfd. Nr.:	Namensträger:	Beziehung zur Expedition:
27	Habermehl-Gipfel	Habermehl, Präsident des ehemaligen Reichswetterdienstes, sorgte für den reibungslosen Funkverkehr zwischen Schiff und Heimat.
28	Hädrich-Berg	Hädrich, Prokurist der D.L.H., besorgte das gesamte Rechnungswesen der Expedition.
29	Hedden-Berg	Karl Hedden, Matrose, rettete einen Kameraden vom Tode des Ertrinkens.
30	Herrmann-Berge	Dr. Ernst Herrmann, Geograph der Expedition,
31	In der Schüssel	nach Westen offene breite Einbuchtung im nördl. Teil des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges.
32	Johannes-Müller-Kamm	Johannes Müller († 1944), Leiter der Abt. Nautik des Nordd. Lloyd, Teilnehmer der Filchner-Expedition 1911/13,
33	Kaye-Kamm	Baurat b. German Lloyd, Betreuer der Luft-Hansa-Schiffsparks, zur Untersuchung des anfänglich zugewiesenen Katapult-Trägers „Westfalen" als Expeditions-Schiff nach Rio de Janeiro entsandt, verhinderte durch sein Urteil über die Unbrauchbarkeit des Schiffes für den gedachten Zweck eine sonst unvermeidliche Katastrophe,
34	Kleinschmidt-Gipfel	Reg.-Dir. Kleinschmidt, Hauptabteilungsleiter der ehemaligen deutschen Seewarte,
35	Kottas-Berge	Alfred Kottas, Kapitän des Expeditionsschiffes,
36	Kraul-Berge	Kapitän der Handelsmarine († 1948), Eislotse der Expedition,
37	Krüger-Berg	Walter Krüger († 1948), Meteorologischer Assistent beim Reichsamt für Wetterdienst, zusammen mit seinem Kameraden Gockel (s. d.) startete er an 106 Tagen 184 Sonden des Reichswetterdienstes und des Marinewetterdienstes,
38	Kubus	auffälliger, gewaltiger, vierkantiger Bergklotz an der Südostecke des Mühlig-Hofmann-Gebirges,
39	Kurze-Gebirge	Vize-Admiral, Leiter der Nautischen Abt. des ehem. Marine-Oberkommandos, stellte die neuzeitlichste nautische Schiffsausrüstung zur Verfügung.
40	Lange-Platte	Studienassessor Dr. phil. Heinz Lange (gef. 1941), vom Reichsamt für Wetterdienst, II. Meteorologe der Expedition,
41	Loesener-Platte	Kurt Loesener, Flugzeugmechaniker von „Boreas", Deutsche Luft-Hansa,
42	Lose Platte	Platte an der Westseite, südl. Teil des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges,
43	Luz-Rücken	Martin Luz, Kaufmännischer Direktor der Deutschen Luft-Hansa,
44	Mayr-Kette	Rudolf Mayr, Flugzeugführer von „Passat", Deutsche Luft-Hansa,
44a	Matterhorn	dem in Form und Höhe (über 4000 m ü. M.) in den Walliser Alpen ähnlicher, gewaltiger Felsenzacken in den Drygalski-Bergen,
45	Mentzel-Berg	Prof. Rudolf Mentzel, Präsident der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft,
46	Mühlig-Hofmann-Gebirge	Mühlig-Hofmann, Min.-Dirigent im ehemaligen RLM, setzte die Zur-Verfügung-Stellung der „Schwabenland" als Expeditionsschiff durch,
47	Neumayer-Steilwand	v. Neumayer, Gründer und Direktor der Deutschen Seewarte, Organisator mehrerer Polarexpeditionen,
47a	Neu-Schwabenland	Expeditionsschiff „Schwabenland",
48	Nordwest-Insel	dem Nordende des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges vorgelagert,
49	Ostliches Hochfeld	zwischen den Südenden der östlichen und westlichen Petermann-Ketten,
50	Ober-See	am Nordostende des Zentralen Wohltat-Massivs,
51	Passat (D-Alox)	eins der beiden Flugboote vom Dornier-10 t, Wal-Typ,
52	Paulsen-Berge	Cand. phil. Karl-Heinz Paulsen (gef. 1941), Ozeanograph der Expedition,
53	Payer-Gruppe	Julius v. Payer, österr. Polarforscher.
54	Penck-Mulde	Geh. Rat Prof. Dr. Albrecht Penck († 1947), berühmter Geograph, Verfasser von „Geologie der Antarktis" u.a.W.,
55	Petermann-Ketten	August Petermann, berühmter Geograph und Förderer der deutschen Polarforschung,
56	Preuschoff-Rücken	Franz Preuschoff, Flugzeugmechaniker von „Passat".
57	Regula-Kette	Dr. Herbert Regula, I. Meteorologe der Expedition, Deutsche Seewarte,
58	Ritscher-Gipfel	Kapitän der Handelsmarine, Oberreg.-Rat, Expeditionsleiter.
59	Röbke-Berg	Karl-Heinz Röbke, II. Offizier des Expeditionsschiffes, Nordd. Lloyd,
60	Ruhnke-Berg	Herbert Ruhnke, Flugfunker von „Passat",
61	Sauter-Riegel	Siegfried Sauter, Luftbildner, fertigte die Hälfte der 11 600 Vermessungs-Luftbilder, Hansa Luftbild G.m.b.H.,
62	Schirmacher-Seenplatte	Richardheinrich Schirmacher, Flugzeugführer von „Boreas", Deutsche Luft-Hansa,
63	Schneider-Riegel	Hans Schneider, Leiter der Abt. Ausrüstung (Besatzung und Proviant) des Nordd. Lloyd,
64	Schubert-Gipfel	v. Schubert, Reg.-Direktor, Hauptabtlg.-Leiter „Nautik" der Deutschen Seewarte,
65	Schulz-Höhen	Robert Schulz, II. Ing. d. Expeditions-Schiffes,
66	Schichtberge	Südwest-Ausläufer d. Zentr. Wohltat-Massivs
67	Schwarze Hörner	am Südende des nördl. Teils der mittleren Petermann-Kette,
68	See-Kopf	Kap am Nordostende des Zentralen Wohltat-Massivs,
69	Seilkopf-Berge	Prof. Dr. Heinrich Seilkopf, aus der Luftschiffahrt bekannter Meteorologe, Leiter der Abt. See-Flug der ehemaligen Deutschen Seewarte,
70	Sphinx-Kopf	Nordende eines einzelnen Bergrückens im Wohltat-Massiv (71° 22' S, 12° 00' O)
71	Spieß-Gipfel	Admiral, Präsident der Deutschen Seewarte, Kommandant des Expeditionsschiffes „Meteor" u. Leiter der Meteor-Expedition 1925/27,
72	Stein-Kuppen	Willy Stein, Bootsmann auf „Schwabenland", erfolgreicher Motorboots- und Bootsfahrer im Treib- und Packeis, Nordd. Lloyd,
73	Todt-Riegel	Dr. rer. pol. Herbert Todt, Assistent des Expeditionsleiters,
74	Uhlig-Gipfel	Karl Uhlig, Leitender Ingenieur des Expeditionsschiffes Nordd. Lloyd,
75	Unter-See	an der Nordseite des Zentralen Teiles des Wohltat-Massivs,
76	Vorposten	Nunataker im östlichen Grenzgebiet von Neu-Schwabenland,
77	Westliches Hochfeld	zwischen den beiden südl. Ausläufern des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges,
78	Weyprecht-Berge	Weyprecht, berühmter Polarforscher, Entdecker von Franz Joseph-Land 1872/73, gab die Anregung für das Erste Internationale Polarjahr.
79	Wegener-Inländeis	Dr. Alfred Wegener († 1930), berühmter Grönlandforscher,
80	Witte-Spitzen	Dietrich Witte, Motortenwart des Expeditionsschiffes,
81	Wohltat-Massiv	Min.-Direktor Helmuth Wohltat, Initiant, Organisator der Expedition und ihr Betreuer während der Durchführung,
82	Zimmermann-Berg	Carl Zimmermann, Oberreg.-Rat i. R., Vizepräsident der Deutschen Forschungs-Gemeinschaft,
83	Zuckerhut	Gipfel im Zentralen Wohltat-Massiv,
84	Zwiesel	höchster Gipfel in der Mitte der westlichen Petermann-Kette.

Die geographischen Positionen der genannten Gebiete sind wie folgt:

A. Das Wohltat-Massiv, ein ausgedehntes Berggebiet mit Gipfeln bis 3010 m ü. M. und Hochgebirgsformen im Zentralen Teil, umfaßt den Raum zwischen 70,5° S und 72,2° S, 16° O und 11° O. Rings um den Zentralen Teil gruppieren sich:

a) die „Schirmacher-Seenplatte" im Nordwesten,
b) die Nunataker „Vorposten" im Osten,
c) die Payer-Gruppe im Südosten,
d) die Weyprecht-Berge im Süden und
e) das Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge im Südwesten

Den Raum zwischen letzterem und dem Zentralen Teil füllen

f) die Petermann-Ketten aus, vom Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge getrennt durch den Humboldt-Graben.

Ober- und Unter-See liegen am Fuße des Massivs an seiner Nordseite. Höchste Erhebungen und besonders auffällige Punkte sind im Zentralen Teil des Massivs:

Die Schicht-Berge,	N-L Nr. 66,	Höhe 2600 m, Lage: 71,4° S, 12,2° O
Zimmermann-Berg,	Nr. 82,	Höhe 2530 m, Lage: 71,3° S, 13,4° O
Ritscher-Gipfel,	Nr. 58,	Höhe 3010 m, Lage: 71,4° S, 13,4° O
Zuckerhut,	Nr. 83,	Höhe 2700 m, Lage: 71,4° S, 13,5° O
Unter-See,	Nr. 75,	Höhe 655 m, Lage: 71,3° S, 13,5° O
Baster,	Nr. 7,	Höhe 2640 m, Lage: 71,3° S, 13,6° O
Mentzel-Berg,	Nr. 45,	Höhe 2520 m, Lage: 71,3° S, 13,7° O
Ober-See,	Nr. 50,	Höhe 820 m, Lage: 71,2° S, 13,7° O
See-Kopf,	Nr. 68,	Höhe 1340 m, Lage: 71,2° S, 13,8° O
Todt-Riegel,	Nr. 73,	Höhe 1900 m, Lage: 71,3° S, 14,3° O
Vorposten,	Nr. 76,	Höhe 2200 m, Lage: 71,4° S, 15,8° O

a) Die **Schirmacher-Seenplatte**, N-L Nr. 60, ist eine etwa 15 km lange, höchstens 3 km breite Felsplatte auf 70° 40' S, 11° 40' O. Die höchste Erhebung der Felsplatte mit 210 m ü. M. liegt südlich westlich von ihrer Mitte, eine 145 m hohe an ihrem Ostende.

b) Die Nunataker **„Vorposten"** liegen auf einer südsüdwestwärts ansteigenden Schwelle auf 71,4° S, 15,8 O, sind 2200 m ü. M. hoch und überragen das Inlandeis der Umgebung um etwa 300 m.

c) Die **„Payer-Gruppe"**, N-L Nr. 56, liegt mit ihrer Mitte auf 72,6° S, 14,7° O; sie hat etwa Kreisform. Von ihrer Mitte läuft eine Schelle mit einigen Nunatakern südwärts, deren höchster 3180 m ü. M. erreicht.

d) Die **„Weyprecht-Berge"**, N-L Nr. 78, bilden eine Berggruppe, deren Mitte auf 72,0° S, 12,5° O liegt; von den Gipfeln sind fünf über 2900 m ü. M. hoch und überragen damit das Inlandeis der Umgebung um etwa 300 m; der höchste Gipfel mit 2980 m ü. M. liegt am Südwestende der Gruppe.

e) Das **„Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge"**, N-L Nr. 1, erstreckt sich, reich zergliedert, von 71,6° S zwischen 11° und 12° O. Am Nordende liegt die Nordwest-Insel, N-L Nr. 48; weiter südlich liegen am Nordrand der halbkreisförmigen, nach Westen offenen, breiten Bucht „In der Schüssel", N-L Nr. 31, die 2370 und 2390 m hohen „Eckhörner", N-L Nr. 18, und östlich von dem östlichsten von beiden ist die Lücke im halbkreisförmigen Bergkranz „Am Überlauf", N-L Nr. 5, mit ihren 1500 m hohen Gefälle zwischen dem Inlandeisrand innen und außen südwestlich von „In der Schüssel" liegt auf 71,6° S, 11,3° O der 2360 m hohe Gipfel „Altar", N-L Nr. 3. Zwischen den beiden südlichen Ausläufern des Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirges erstreckt sich in 2600 bis 2700 m ü. M. das „Westliche Hochfeld", N-L Nr. 78, in nord-südlicher Richtung.

Der **„Humboldt-Graben"**, N-L Nr. 2, begrenzt das Alexander-v.-Humblodt-Gebirge im Osten und trennt es von der westlichen Petermann-Kette. In seinem Nord-Ausgang liegt eine Felsinsel mit dem „Sphinx-Kopf", N-L Nr. 70, an ihrem Nordende.

Die **„Petermann-Ketten"** bestehen aus einem südlichen, mittleren und nördlichen Teil; mittlerer und nördlicher Teil zerfallen wiederum je in drei größere und einige kleinere Bestandteile. Alle erstrecken sich in Nord-Süd-Richtung, N-L Nr. 53, von 71,3° S bis 72,15° S, zwischen dem Zentralen Wohltat-Massiv und dem Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge. Zwischen dem südlichen und dem mittleren Teil liegt mit etwa 2800 m ü. M. die Inlandeiszunge „Östliches Hochfeld", N-L Nr. 49, und an den Südecken des nördlichen Teils der Petermann-Ketten sind die „Schwarzen" und die „Grauen Hörner", N-L Nr. 67 und 25. Von den Gipfeln ist der **„Gneis-Kopf"**, N-L Nr. 23, auf 71,5° S, 12,2° O der höchste im gesamten Wohltat-Massiv mit 3240 m ü. M. Ein anderer markanter Berg ist der „Zwiesel", N-L Nr. 84, am Südende der östlichen Kette mit 3180 m ü. M. Die zwei unbenannten Nordenden der nördlichen Petermann-Ketten zwischen Sphinx-Kopf und dem Zentralen Wohltat-Massiv erreichen 2170 und 2140 m Höhe ü. M.

Die **„Dallmann-Berge"**, N-L Nr. 16, zwischen dem Alexander-v.-Humboldt-Gebirge und dem Conrad-Gebirge, bestehen aus einem Massiv, einem inselartigen 3000 m hohen Berg westlich von seinem nördlichen Teil, und einigen Nunatakern. Der Kamm des Massivs läuft dicht westlich von 11° O etwa 35 km südwärts von 71,7° S bis fast 72° S.

B. Das **Conrad-Gebirge**, N-L Nr. 15, und das Kurze-Gebirge, N-L Nr. 39, sind zwei ihrer Form und Ausdehnung nach ziemlich ähnliche Gebirgszüge, die durch eine 15 bis 20 km breite Inlandeisfläche getrennt sind. Sie erstrecken sich nord-südwärts, erstere mit 55 km Länge auf 10,5° O zwischen 71,7° S und 72,3° S, letzteres auf 9,5 bis 10,5° O zwischen 72,1 bis 72,5° S mit 45 km Länge, und erreichen ihre größten Höhen von über 3000 m ü. M. in Gipfeln, von denen der höchste im südlichen Teil des Conrad-Gebirges, zwei andere im nördlichen Teil des Kurze-Gebirges liegen. Große Aufschüttungen finden sich an der Westseite beider Gebirgszüge.

Die **Drygalski-Berge**, N-L Nr. 17, und die Filchner-Gruppe, N-L Nr. 39, sind in ihren niedrigeren Teilen firnbedeckte, breit gelagerte und, besonders die erstgenannten, spitze auffallend zackige Felsmassen im Raum zwischen 9,5 und 7,1° O und 71,8 und 72,1° S. Der auffallendste Gipfel ist das „Matterhorn", N-L Nr. 44 a, ein gewaltiger, dem Matterhorn in den Walliser Alpen sehr ähnlicher und schätzungsweise annähernd 4000 m hoher einzelner Felszacken. Am Südwestende der Filchner-Gruppe liegt der „Kubus", N-L Nr. 38, ein mächtiger, viereckiger Bergklotz auf 72,4° S, 7,5° O.

C. Das Mühlig-Hofmann-Gebirge, N-L Nr. 46, zwischen 71,8 und 72,6° S und 3° O, eine geringere Mannigfaltigkeit der Bergformen als die Gebirge im östlichen Teil von Neu-Schwabenland, befehlen ähnlich exzessive Hochgebirgsformen wie dort. Bedeutende Erhöhungen über 3000 m ü. M., jedoch nur rund 1000 m über dem Inlandeis sind nur im Nordosten in der „Gebirgs-Spitze", N-L Nr. 22 auf 71,9° S, 6,9° O und im Habermehl-Gipfel, N-L Nr. 27, dicht westlich davon. Zwischen Geißner-Spitze und „Bolie-Berg", N-L Nr. 9, auf 72,3° S, 6,5° O, weist das Gebirge hohe, in stumpfe Gipfel gegliederte Kämme auf. Diesem Bild passen sich an:

Buddenbrook-Kette,	N-L Nr. 13,	71,7° S, 6° O
Luz-Rücken,	N-L Nr. 43,	72° S bis 72,3° S, 5,5° O
Hädrich-Berg,	N-L Nr. 28,	72,4° S, 5,2° O
Kaye-Kamm,	N-L Nr. 33,	72,5° S, 4,8° O
Gablenz-Rücken,	N-L Nr. 20,	72° bis 72,3° S, 5° O
Preuschoff-Rücken,	N-L Nr. 56,	72,3° bis 72,5° S, 4,5° O
Gruber-Berge,	N-L Nr. 26,	72° S, 4° O
Loesener-Platte,	N-L Nr. 41,	72° S, 4,3° O
Rühnke-Berg,	N-L Nr. 60,	72,5° S, 4° O
Bundermann-Ketten,	N-L Nr. 14,	71,3° S bis 72° S, 3,4° O
Mayr-Kette,	N-L Nr. 44,	72° bis 72,2° S, 3,4° O
Sauter-Riegel,	N-L Nr. 61,	72,6° S, 3,3° O

D. Das Ritscher-Land, N-L Nr. 58, wird von Süden nach Norden von der „Penck-Mulde", N-L Nr. 54, durchzogen. In ihre südliche Mündung stürzt das „Wegener-Inlandeis", N-L Nr. 79, das das Gesamtgebiet von Neu-Schwabenland polwärts begrenzt, das nördlich von 74° S steil um gut 1000 m ab, um sich dann in geringerem Gefälle nordwärts zum Schelfeis abzusenken. Osten und Westen wird die Penck-Mulde von firnbedeckten Bergzügen flankiert, deren höchste Erhebungen bis in über 3000 m ü. M. hinaufragen und sich um 1000 bis 1500 m über das Inlandeis der Mulde erheben.

Von den Bergen, Spitzen und Kämmen an der Ostseite der Penck-Mulde sind, von Süden nach Norden, folgende benannt:

Gockel-Kamm,	N-L Nr. 24, auf	73,2° S, 0,2° W
Herrmann-Berge,	N-L Nr. 30,	73° S, von 1° O bis 0°
Krüger-Berg,	N-L Nr. 37,	73,1° S, 1,3° O
Barkley-Berge,	N-L Nr. 6,	72,8° S, von 1,5° bis 0,8°
Gburek-Spitzen,	N-L Nr. 21,	72,7° S, von 1,5° bis 0,8°
Paulsen-Berge,	N-L Nr. 52,	72,4° S, 1,5° O
Brandt-Berg,	N-L Nr. 11,	72,1° S, von 1° bis 1,5°
Hedden-Berg,	N-L Nr. 29,	74° S, 6,2 bis 6,5° W

Von den bemerkenswerten geographischen Objekten an der Ostseite der Penck-Mulde sind benannt, von Süden nach Norden:

Kottas-Berge,	N-L Nr. 35, auf	74,1 bis 74,3° S, 8,2—8° W
Amelang-Platte,	N-L Nr. 4,	74° S, 6,2 bis 6,5° W
(Felsplatte mit 2 Gipfeln)		
Schulz-Höhen,	N-L Nr. 65,	73,2° S, 7,6° W
Schneider-Riegel,	N-L Nr. 63,	73,7° S, 3,3° W
Kleinschmidt-Gipfel	N-L Nr. 34,	Berge u. Gipfel auf einer 150 km langen, firnbedeckten
Uhlig-Gipfel,	N-L Nr. 74,	Bludau-Berge, N-L Nr. 8, ten fast geradlinig
Spieß-Gipfel,	N-L Nr. 71,	72,7° S, 3,5° W bis 74°
Schubert-Gipfel,	N-L Nr. 64,	5° W laufenden Berg-
Seilkopf-Berge,	N-L Nr. 69,	rücken.

Weitere Einzelheiten und Kartenmaterial, sowie eine eingehende Beschreibung des Gebietes von Neu-Schwabenland enthalten das Werk „Deutsche Antarktische Expedition 1938/39" von Alfred Ritscher, Verlag Koehler & Amelang, Leipzig, 1942.

Bonn, den 12. Juli 1952.

Der Bundesminister des Auswärtigen
In Vertretung
Hallstein

Der Bundesminister für Wirtschaft

Runderlaß Außenwirtschaft Nr. 88/52
betreffend: Tschechoslowakei; Handelsverkehr zwischen der Bundesrepublik und der Tschechoslowakei für die Zeit vom 1. Januar bis 31. Dezember 1952
Vom 25. Juli 1952.

In dem Runderlaß Außenwirtschaft Nr. 63/52 vom 6. Mai (Bundesanzeiger Nr. 95 vom 17. Mai 1952) wurden die Protokolls bekanntgegeben.

Nachdem inzwischen die Alliierte Hohe Kommission Einwendungen nicht erhoben hat, ist das Warenprotokoll vom 15. Juli 1952 gezeichnet worden.

Nachstehend werden das Protokoll und der geführte Schriftwechsel im Wortlaut wiedergegeben.

Dieser Runderlaß findet im Lande Berlin Anwendung und soweit er in Berlin [illegible]

Bonn, den 25. Juli 1952.
V B 6 — 48027/52.

Der Bundesminister für Wirtsch
Im Auftrag
Dr. Reinhardt

Am 5. August 1952 bekräftigte das Auswärtige Amt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland die völkerrechtlichen Namensansprüche aus der Entdeckergroßtat der dritten deutschen Antarktisexpedition 1938/39 unter Alfred Ritscher. Im amtlichen Bundesanzeiger, *herausgegeben vom Bundesminister der Justiz, bestätigte es regierungsamtlich 84 der deutschen geographischen Namen, die Anfang 1939 im Gebiet von Neu-Schwabenland für Ebenen sowie Berge, Höhenzüge und Gebirge vergeben worden waren.*

and undisputed. Nevertheless, official bodies in the Federal Republic of Germany today declare that the German Reich did not claim any territory in Antarctica. In response to a corresponding enquiry, the Foreign Office stated in a letter dated 20 January 2004 to the author: "The former German Reich did *not* claim any territory in Antarctica, not even the area discovered by the German Antarctic expedition in 1938/39, known as New Swabia. A Norwegian declaration dated 14 January 1939 claiming a larger area in Antarctica including New Swabia, and reserved the right to act freely with regard to the territory of New Swabia in accordance with the principles of international law.

However, the German Reich did not assert any specific claims to the territory in question, either at that time or later. In 1952, the Federal Government merely exercised its right to assign a geographical name to New Schwabenland on the basis of the fact of its discovery.

This statement by the Federal Foreign Office is countered by the following legal opinion:
"At the same time as the German expedition group was in New Swabia, Norway claimed Queen Maud Land, i.e. the part of Antarctica in which New Swabia is located, for itself by a royal resolution of 14 January 1939. The Reich Foreign Ministry then informed the Norwegian envoy in Berlin on 23 January 1939 that the German government could not recognise this seizure of property and reserved 'full freedom of action with regard to the territory, as derived from the principles of international law'.

Norway presented as evidence of its rights to the Queen Maud Land was its discovery and exploration. However, the discovery and exploration of an area do not grant the discovering state acquisition rights forever, but only for a short period of time. A state can therefore repel any attempt by another state to claim discovered land. If it does not do so, the discovering state's claim to the territory lapses.

Since Norway did not intervene against the display of German national symbols on the territory it claimed, it forfeited the rights derived from the discoveries and explorations for Neuschwabenland under international law."

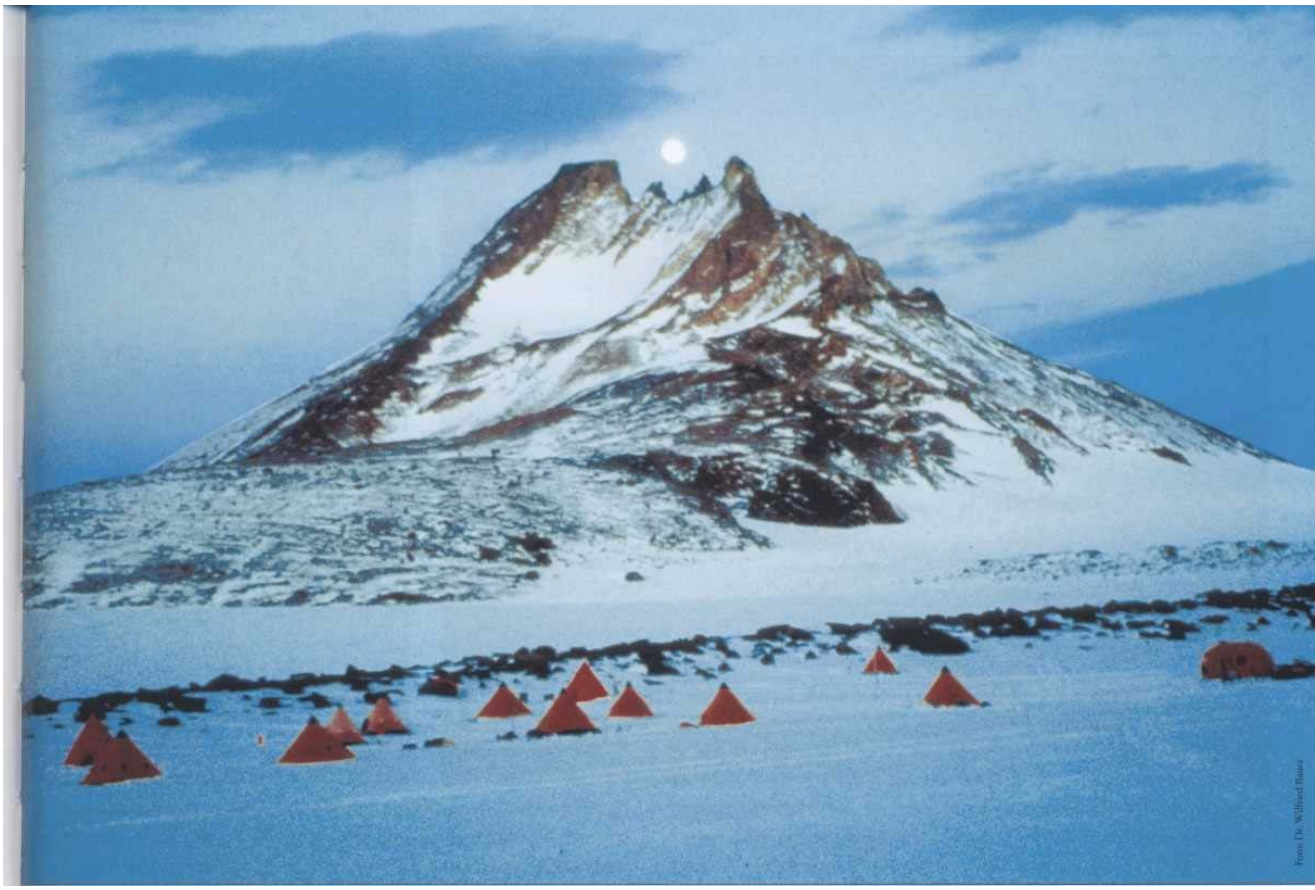
In its letter of 20 January 2004, the Federal Foreign Office reiterated its statement:
"The German Empire never made any concrete territorial claims German Reich never made any concrete territorial claims" and adds:
"The Antarctic Treaty of 1959, which was ratified by Germany in 1979,[55] has rendered the question of territorial claims obsolete."

Although basically ignored in post-war German literature, interestingly enough, a publication from the GDR in 1957 refers to the discovery and occupation of what is referred to here as "Schwabenland" by the Ritscher expedition in 1938/39. The book, published under the title *Schwingen über Nacht und Eis (Flying Over Night and Ice)*, deals with the history of the exploration of the two poles and presents the individual expeditions in separate chapters. It also devotes no less than 16 pages to the third German Antarctic expedition. In addition, three photos document the events of that time.

The tenor of the chapter entitled "Flying boat over the ice shelf" is noteworthy. As expected, any reference to Hitler's Germany is completely omitted, while at the same time there is not a single mention of the fact that any country other than Germany had even laid claim to the 600,000 square kilometres of Antarctic ice explored just 20 years earlier. Reading the text, there is no reason to doubt Germany's ownership of the territory when it says, for example: "There they stand on a part of the sixth continent that no human being has ever set foot on before."([56])Or: "On seven photo flights covering a total distance of ten thousand kilometres, no less than 350,000 square kilometres of unknown territory around the Greenwich Meridian between Queen Maud Land and Princess Astrid Land were mapped and surveyed over more than 600,000 square kilometres [. . ., the coastal strip between 11° 30' west and 20° east longitude."[57]The caption accompanying the photo showing the flying boat "Boreas" is the most telling: "The Dornier whale of the Ritscher expedition lands on the edge of the Antarctic ice and takes off."
'Schwabenland' in possession (1939)."[58]

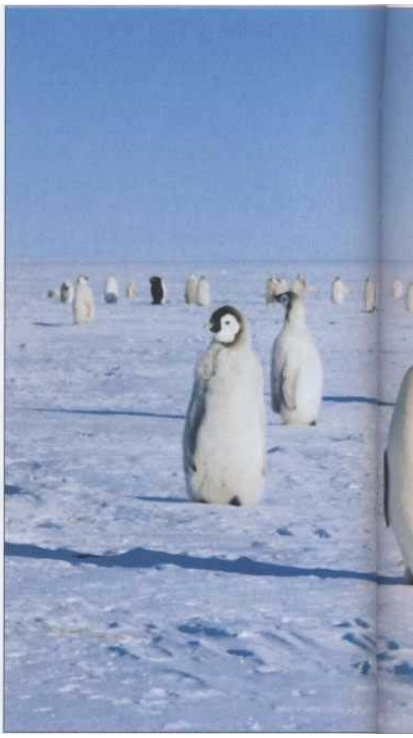
German names in Antarctica

Several years later, in 1986, a German publication by the Institute for Applied Geodesy in Frankfurt am Main also addressed the topic in a sober and factual manner. In the GeoMaud expedition organised specifically for the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39



In 1995/96, the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources in Hanover organised the GeoMaud expedition for geoscientific research in the area between 6° and 8° east. This included the mountain ranges of the Wohlthat massif, the easternmost foothills of the Mühlig-Hofmann Ge-

Birges, part of the southernly adjacent Wegenerinland ice and the Schirmacher Oasis. Top: Tent camp north of the Pe-termannketten in the light of the full moon. Bottom: Base camp of the expedition in the Schirmacher Oasis not far from the Russian station "Nowolasarewskaja".



Top left: The Georg Forster station in the Schirmacher Oasis was operated by the GDR from 1976. It was dismantled by the FRG in 1996. Top centre: A majestic sight: emperor penguins with chicks. Top right: During a German expedition expedition in 1993 in the Schirmacher Oasis. Such large container sledges are pulled by caterpillar tractors. Bottom left: With the German icebreaker Polarstern, here in front of the Georg von Neumayer station, numerous expeditions were made to the Po

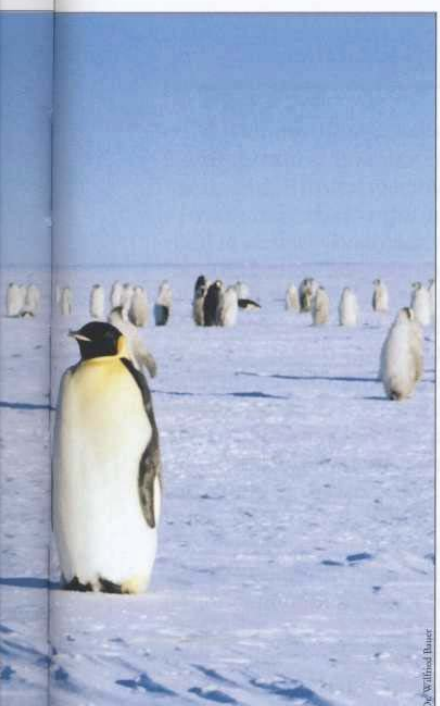


Foto: Dr. Wilfried Bauer

Foto: Frank Laji

larzones. Bottom right: In 1981, the Federal Republic of Germany built the Georg von Neumayer research station, thereby fulfilling the requirements for admission to the Consultative Meeting of Antarctic Treaty Signatories. The photo shows the station in 1989.

In the early 1990s, it had to be abandoned due to ice movement and snow load. Ten kilometres from its original location, it was rebuilt in March 1992.

Foto: Frank Laji

In his book *Kartographische Arbeiten und deutsche Namengebung in Neuschwabenland, Ant-arktis* (Cartographic work and German naming in New Swabia, Antarctica), Karsten Brunk first provides an overview of the cartographic work carried out to date and the German and foreign names given to places in New Swabia. He then goes on to describe the cartographic recording of the area first explored by Alfred Ritscher and the reconstruction of his expedition's flight paths. Finally, the German names in New Swabia are revised.

The text is accompanied by a photo section in which a total of 100 oblique aerial photographs are printed for the first time, taken between 21 and 31 January 1939 by the two flying boats "Passat" and

"Boreas" from the western and central

New Swabia. Finally, a detailed appendix provides a list of name versions, which gives a historical overview of the development of the German-language name inventory. Information is provided on altitude, second names, reasons for the name and date of discovery or naming.

The work is based on an inventory of German names in Antarctica, which primarily focused on names assigned before 1945. A total of 427 names given between 1873/74 and 1938/39 were identified from the original sources, i.e. expedition reports and maps. Of these, 96 names were given during the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39 under Alfred Ritscher.

It is said that, due to the poor quality of older Antarctic maps, location shifts and, in some cases, considerable difficulties in identifying named objects have been recorded over the decades. As a result, names that were still included in older maps are missing from the new editions. Such identification problems also arise in the central and western regions of New Swabia, as evidenced by the attempts to correct the 1939 and 1942 expedition maps. Due to a lack of identification aids, these attempts have been rather unsatisfactory, which has ultimately led to the almost complete absence of German names in the current Norwegian overview maps of these areas.

This also applies to the expedition map created by evaluating the photogrammetric survey flights – "Neu-Schwabenland 1 : 1,500,000" – the Ritscher expedition was fraught with errors. This was due to navigation difficulties, the failure of radio direction finding at greater distances from the aircraft base ship "Schwabenland" and the frequent failure of speed and altitude meters, but also to the fact that wind drift could only be estimated. It should also be noted that the cartographers had only six weeks in May/June 1939 to evaluate the aerial photographs and produce a multicoloured expedition map. In order to uncover the errors, it was now essential to reconstruct the flight paths and also to have access to the relevant aerial photographic material.

In December 1982, over 600 paper contact prints of the 11,600 oblique aerial photographs that had been missing since the end of the war turned up. With the help of these photographs, which showed almost all ice-free areas and large sections of the ice shelf front, work could begin. Not least thanks to the inscriptions on some of the aerial photographs, it was possible to retrace the flight paths and establish the correct relationships between the flight polygons and the objects recorded in the old and new maps. This made it possible to identify most of the objects with German names in the newer Norwegian overview maps and to determine their current coordinates.

What does this mean for the naming situation in the New Swabia region today? The "Overview map of the working area of the German Antarctic Expedition 1938-39. Neu Schwabenland 1 : 5,000,000" was also the first publication of 66 German names for geographical objects shown on the map. These had already been listed by Alfred Ritscher on the expedition's return journey. With a view to their use in the overview table, the suggestions were submitted to the representative for the Antarctic expedition, State Councillor Helmut Wohlthat, for approval and were confirmed by him. The second edition of the map from 1942 contains a few changed elevation values and two additional names. In addition, Ritscher, as publisher, points out possible changes in location in the "eastern part of the mountain range," which was later confirmed by photogrammetric evaluation of the series of photographs taken on the seventh photo flight. These findings were initially disregarded in subsequent publications, as they were always based on the uncorrected first edition.

Post-war corrections made by the German side, which were edited by Ritscher among others, were limited to certain areas due to the lack of available aerial photographs. In August 1950, the then expedition leader was able to present a revised version at the Geodetic Week in Cologne and in June 1951 at the anniversary conference of the Archive for Polar Research in Kiel. This revision was significant in that it formed the basis for the geographical positions compiled by Ritscher in 1952, a list that was finally "officially confirmed" in *the Federal Gazette* on 5 August 1952. In this announcement, which had already been made on 12 July
"Announcement on the confirmation of the geographical names given during the discovery of 'Neu-Schwabenland' in the Atlantic sector of Antarctica by the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39" also contains explanations for the 84 names that were assigned.

The following years brought constant revisions, including of individual regions such as the Wohlthat Massif and the coastal areas, and the inclusion of Neuschwabenland in a working map of the entire Antarctic; the German templates were essentially adopted unchanged. From time to time, slight shifts, reductions in scale and rotations were made in line with new findings. Due to various uncertainties that still existed regarding identification, the assignment of some German names remained uncertain.

From 1954 onwards, the "Map of Antarctica, 1:4,000,000" edited by H. P. Kosack was published in four sheets, reflecting the status of 1953. This version also included changes in the assignment of German names to the geographical features shown, especially in the area between the Ritscher Highlands and the Wohlthat Massif, although the errors contained in the overview maps of the 1938/39 expedition were not corrected here either.

This Antarctic map is the last German edition of a map of the Neuschwabenland area with almost all German names. Only in 1957 was a smaller edition published on a scale of 1:7,500,000, based on the May 1956 edition, but no further changes were made in the Neuschwabenland area.

This is the cartographic situation of German geographical names in the area of New Swabia in Antarctica, which has not yet been revised by the German side. But also in Other nations later gave names to geographical features in this area explored by the Germans. Of some significance in this context is the fact that, until its second revised edition in January 1956, the American gazetteer for Antarctica took the geographical names for New Swabia from German maps published up to that time. Compared to the first edition of May 1947, however, several German names in western New Swabia had been deleted because they did not correspond to the newer maps of the Norwegian-British-Swedish Antarctic expedition of 1949-52. From the third edition (June 1969) onwards, almost exclusively Norwegian names are listed.

These naming decisions were reflected in the various editions of the American Geographical Society (AGS) Antarctic maps "Antarctica 1: 5,000,000". While the *1962* map still shows the same situation as Kosack's 1954 overview, i.e. it also adopts the corresponding German names in this area, these names are missing in another AGS map from 1962 on a scale of 1:
3,000,000 and in the next edition of
"Antarctica" from 1965 in the western part of New Swabia. Instead, the Norwegian names were used. The situation was similar in the following period with regard to the area of the Mühlig-Hofmann Mountains and the mountains extending eastwards to the Wohlthat Massif, which was recorded by the Norwegians in aerial photographs in 1958/59.

The omission of the German names
into the Norwegian map series "Dronning Maud Land" is related to the identification difficulties already mentioned. However, the names of the Wohlthat massif and the area up to the eastern edge of the Mühlig-Hofmann mountains have been adopted almost without exception. In this mountain range itself, as well as in the western part of New Swabia, German names have hardly been used. However, translations do occur. For example, part of the Seilkopf mountains is referred to as "Seilkopffjella" on Norwegian maps.

Interestingly, greater efforts to use German names in New Swabia can be seen in Soviet maps. Several maps were created based on aerial photographs of the Wohlthat massif and surrounding area in the late summer of 1959/60 and a year later in eastern and central New Swabia.

Das Mühlig-Hofmann-Gebirge mit seinen bizarren Felsformationen bietet lohnende Gelegenheiten für geologische Untersuchungen. Hier treffen deutsche und südafrikanische Geologen im Januar 2000 zu gemeinsamen Forschungen zusammen.

In some Russian maps published between 1966 and 1972, the German names have been almost completely retained. However, in some cases, the correct assignment appears questionable.

Other maps that largely include the German names in New Swabia were the map "Antarctica 1:7,000,000" published in 1957 by *National Geographic Magazine* and the map "Antarctique 1:5,000,000" published in 1969 by the Institut Géographique National.

With the publication of Soviet and Norwegian maps in the late 1960s, the map of New Swabia that is valid today was almost complete. However, some differences in names between Russian and Norwegian maps could not be ruled out. The Norwegian names have now become the most widely accepted, largely due to the orientation towards the third edition of the American name book for Antarctica from *1969*. The fourth edition from 1981 confirmed these name decisions once again, and they were ultimately retained.

New German Antarctic research

Late, but not too late, the German government recognised the importance of actively participating in Antarctic research and joining the Antarctic Treaty partners in order to have a decisive say in the future use of raw materials in Antarctica. Germany's re-entry into Antarctic research took place in several stages.

As early as 1975, the Federal Republic of Germany sent its first krill research expedition to Antarctica with the participation of the Federal Research Centre for Fisheries and the Institute of Oceanography at the University of Kiel. The second krill expedition followed in the winter of 1977/78, while the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) carried out marine geophysical research in the southern Weddell Sea.

Meanwhile, on 18 January 1978, the Federal Government decided that Germany would accede to the Antarctic Treaty. In May 1978, the German Research Foundation (DFG), which had formed a commission for polar research, was admitted to the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR, International Committee on Antarctic Research), a body of scientific advisors to the treaty community. In October 1978, the Federal Republic of Germany sought consultative status, which regulates international cooperation in the South Polar region. With these decisions, the Federal Government set the course for new German Antarctic research so that it could play an active role in the exploration of the sixth continent.

Finally, on 5 February 1979, the Federal Republic of Germany became a full member of the Antarctic Treaty, and the decision to admit Germany to the Consultative Round of Antarctic Treaty States was taken unanimously on 3 March 1981.

The German government was aware from the outset that Antarctic research would be an expensive undertaking, not only because of the enormous distance of 14,000 kilometres. There are several good reasons why the German government decided to launch Antarctic research despite tight public finances. Firstly, Germany is a country with few natural resources and is therefore dependent on participating in any Antarctic resources that may be found. Secondly, Germany is a nation with a long tradition of science and culture and naturally has a keen interest in exploring a continent or ocean that is still largely unexplored. Last but not least, Germany has its own tradition of Antarctic research, so it also has a historically based interest and therefore wants to build on its own experience.

With its admission to the Consultative Group, the Federal Republic of Germany is one of the states that, unlike the "simple" member countries, can play a responsible role in shaping the Antarctic regime. In return, the Federal Republic of Germany has undertaken to conduct continuous research in Antarctica, in particular to establish and operate its own year-round research station as a base for scientific work.

On 12 December 1979, the German Federal Government adopted an Antarctic programme that complied with the obligations of the Antarctic Treaty. In addition to establishing a winter and summer station and building a polar research and supply vessel, the programme provided for the establishment of a polar research institute in the Federal Republic of Germany. Around DM 300 million was made available for the implementation of the programme by 1983. Not only the relevant federal ministries were involved in developing the programme, but also federal research institutes, university institutes, institutes of the Max Planck Society

and industry were involved in developing the programme, and more than 200 German scientists expressed their interest in Antarctic research.

From the "Eiswarte" company to the research vessel "Polarstern"

The plans for the new German Antarctic research programme progressed rapidly. In the Antarctic summer of 1979/80, under the command of geophysicist Heinz Kohnen, the ship Polarsirkel sailed to Antarctica with the mission of finding a suitable location for the first German Antarctic station, the construction of which was one of the conditions for signing the Antarctic Treaty. Initially, a location on the Filchner Ice Shelf was chosen. However, when the construction team of the Eiswarte company, also led by Heinz Kohnen, was unable to reach this location in 1980/81 due to unfavourable ice conditions, they switched to an alternative location on the Ekström Ice Shelf. Here, on 3 March 1981, the German Georg von Neumayer Station was inaugurated as a scientific observatory for geophysics, meteorology and air chemistry, as well as a logistical base for summer expeditions. The station was named after Georg von Neumayer (1826-1909), a significant promoter of polar research.

In July 1980, the German government awarded the contract for the construction of the ice-breaking polar research vessel Polarstern, which was built at the Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft shipyard in Kiel and the Nobiskrug shipyard in Rendsburg and handed over to its intended purpose in Bremerhaven on 9 December 1982 by the then Minister of Research, Dr Heinz Riesenhuber. Designed after trials in the ice tanks of the Hamburg Shipbuilding Research Centre, built at the Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft shipyard and equipped at the Nobiskrug shipyard, it was considered the most modern polar research vessel in the world when it entered service. The ship has lost none of its reputation today, even after undergoing extensive refurbishment in recent years. Since entering service, the Polarstern has completed a total of 37 expeditions, 19 to the Antarctic and 18 to the Arctic, by December 2002. By 7 September 2002, the research vessel had covered one million nautical miles.

The construction of the 118-metre-long and 25-metre-wide ship, which has a draught of 11.21 metres and

wide ship, which has a draught of 11.21 metres and a maximum speed of 16 knots, cost €100 million, with operating costs of €33,500 per day. The ship has a maximum crew of 44 and can take up to 70 scientists on board. Since it entered service, 6,700 scientists from 35 nations have taken part in expeditions with the Polarstern.

One of the outstanding events of 1980 was undoubtedly the establishment of the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), which sees itself as the "national contact point for enquiries about activities, scientific observations and results in the Antarctic". It is a foundation under public law and was named after the geophysicist and polar explorer Alfred Wegener (1880-1930). In 1998, the AWI foundation had a budget of more than 135 million German marks and employed 680 people.

In the early 1990s, ice movement and snow load forced the Georg von Neumayer research station to be rebuilt. In March 1992, the new station was completed about ten kilometres from its original location. The station's research and measurement programme has been continuously expanded since then and now also includes the measurement of atmospheric ozone.

On 9 January 1999, the Polarstern set sail with 43 crew members and 43 scientists from Cape Town on the 16th Antarctic expedition. In addition to various research programmes, the aim of this voyage was to salvage the German Filchner station, which was drifting on an iceberg. In October 1998, the ice island A-38 broke off from the Filchner Ice Shelf and quickly broke into several pieces, including the icebergs A-38A and A-38B. The Alfred Wegener Institute's Filchner summer station was located on the 2,980 square kilometre iceberg A-38B and had to be dismantled and transported away by the Polarstern.

The work proved difficult. It was not until 7 February 1999 that the first 20 tonnes of material could be transferred from the Polarstern. On 11 February, the Polarstern was fully loaded with 120 tonnes of station equipment and 50 tonnes of transport equipment. All that remained of the Filchner station was the steel substructure, which was buried in the snow.

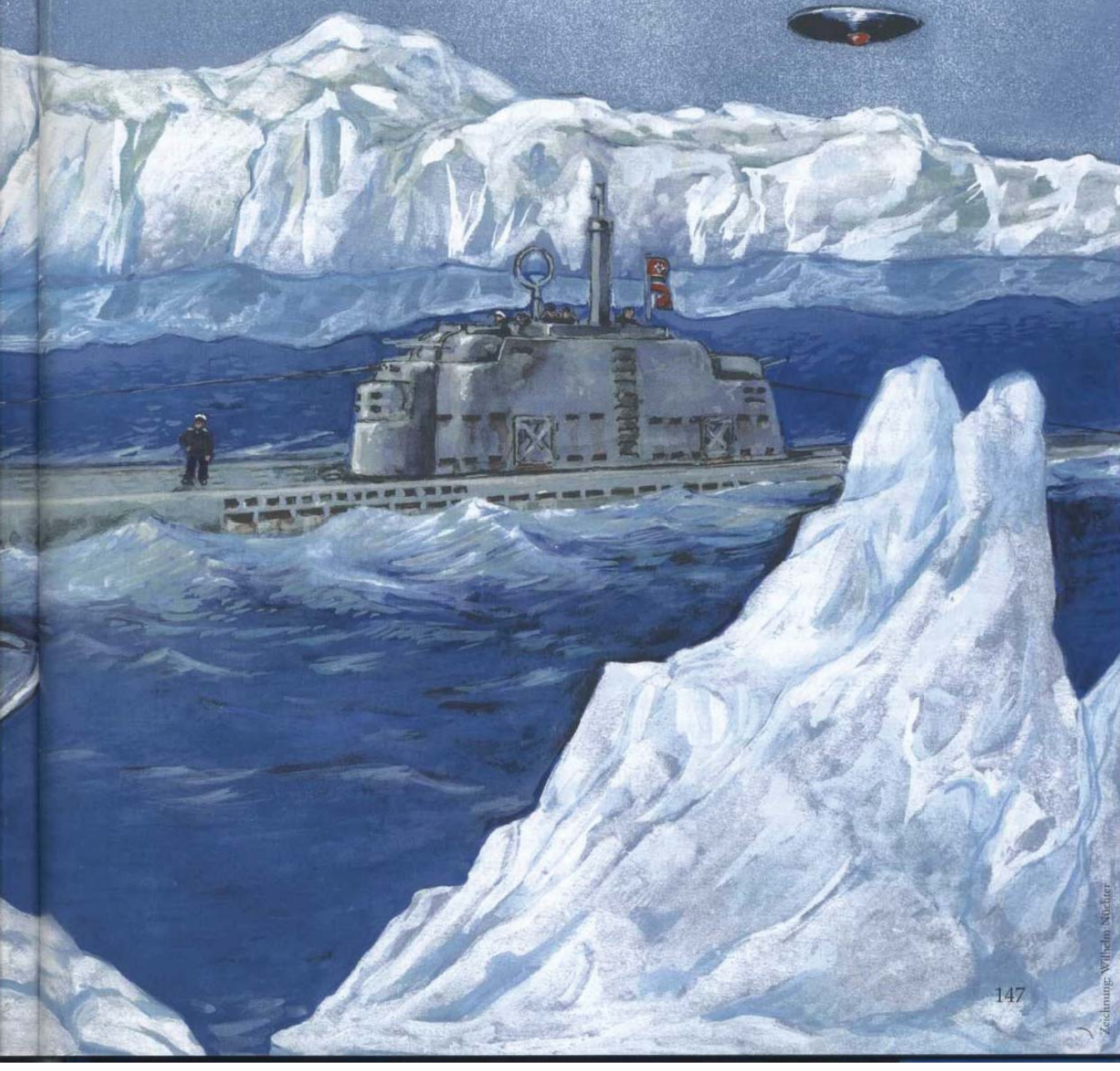
The Federal Republic of Germany's Antarctic research enjoys a high international reputation today, but this has not been achieved without effort. According to the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the total cost between 1994 and 2003 alone amounted to 590 million euros.

Hitler am Südpol – „surfen“ in Neu-Schwabenland

Baumaterial in die Antarktis

Während des Dritten Reiches wurde – vor allem bedingt durch die Wirren des Zweiten Weltkrieges – über die Deutsche Antarktische Expedition 1938/39 unter Alfred Ritscher kaum etwas bekannt. Nur wenige Bürger des Großdeutschen Reiches erfuhren von der Entdeckung und Besitzergreifung Neu-Schwabenlands. Im Nachkriegsdeutschland versank die dritte deutsche Antarktisexpedition mit dem Katapultschiff M/S „Schwabenland" schließlich völlig im Meer der Vergessenheit. Dies geschah offenbar bewußt und war politisch gewollt. Denn selbst in deutschen Atlanten und Lexika wurde auf Antarktiskarten die in den 50er Jahren noch eingetragene Bezeichnung „Neu-Schwabenland" nach und nach getilgt und ausschließlich durch „Königin-Maud-Land", das Norwegen inklusive Neu-Schwabenland beansprucht, ersetzt.

Dieses Verdrängen der Erinnerung an eine gelungene wissenschaftliche Expedition in das Südpolarmeer offenbar nur deshalb, weil sie zur Zeit des Dritten Reiches erfolgte, mag schließlich ein Grund dafür sein, daß im Laufe der letzten sechs Jahrzehnte diverse Vermutungen laut wurden, die sich rasch zu Gerüchten auswuchsen, was schließlich der Legendenbildung Tür und Tor öffnete. Dieser Entwicklung leistet besonders die Möglichkeit der Informa-



Zeichnung: Wilhelm Nüchter

The dissemination of information via the Internet has given rise to a flood of information. However, everything published on these websites has so far remained unchallenged. The scientific institutes responsible for Antarctic research today, as well as the ministries responsible for financing polar research, have not yet seen fit to comment on the information disseminated on the Internet. The reasons for this are unclear.

But what stories, which were never officially disclosed, gradually made the rounds behind closed doors over the last few decades? One of the legends surrounding the German territory in Antarctica touches on the question of whether M/S "Schwabenland" could have brought building materials to New Schwabenland. As already mentioned elsewhere, the two "soldiers" Heinz Siewert and Richard Wehrend, both participants in the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39, are said to have reported that they continued to serve on the "Schwabenland" even after the expedition ended, namely from spring 1939 onwards. Their ship is said to have shuttled back and forth between its home port of Hamburg and New Swabia every three months without interruption to transport equipment and entire mining facilities to Antarctica. This included railway tracks, mine cars and even a huge milling machine for drilling tunnel systems into the ice.

Heinz Siewert – a soldier? Contemporary publications describe him as an assistant engineer on the Schwabenland. He was a member of the merchant navy crew and was employed by Norddeutscher Lloyd in Bremen. And Richard Wehrend? Basically, the same applies to him. He also belonged to the NDL merchant navy crew and was working on board as first carpenter.

According to both the ship's owner, Deutsche Lufthansa, and the shipping company responsible for staffing, Norddeutscher Lloyd Bremen, the M/S "Schwabenland" was in urgent need of overhaul after its return from the Antarctic expedition and did not make any more voyages until the outbreak of war.

Could the Schwabenland have been used as a transport ship for building materials? Expedition participant Siegfried Sauter explains: „The M/S Schwabenland was an old tub and, after being converted into a catapult ship for Lufthansa for transporting materials, was completely unsuitable. The catapult system took up more than two-thirds of the deck at the stern. of the deck. There was no storage space on the upper deck, nor below deck. The journey time from Hamburg to Neu-Schwabenland was about five to six weeks in the Antarctic winter (March to October), and it was completely impossible for the ship to dock at the edge of the ice and unload its cargo. To my knowledge, the 'Schwabenland' did not leave Hamburg again after returning from the Antarctic expedition until the start of the war! " [60]

And during the war? What tasks was the ship actually assigned after the expedition?

It can be assumed that Alfred Kottas, who continued to serve as captain on the Schwabenland, would have refused additional voyages to New Swabia, especially during the Antarctic winter (April to October) and with a ship in need of overhaul. Deutsche Lufthansa, which still owned the ship, would have agreed with these objections. And finally, hadn't the previous expedition shown that there was no way to dock a large ship in New Schwabenland and bring equipment, mining facilities or even a "huge milling machine" ashore?

But Kottas did not need to make such a fictitious rejection, because the further use of the "Schwabenland" has been completely clarified, as we have seen in the chapter "The ‚Schwabenland in wartime service".

Antarctic base 211

Various sources claim that Germany undertook further secret expeditions to Antarctica in 1940/41. It is believed that two or three marked bays northwest of the Mühlig-Hofmann Mountains on the northern edge of New Swabia may have served as landing sites. These were marked as landing sites by expedition leader Alfred Ritscher in 1939. In 1942/43, construction of the German Antarctic base 211 under the ice began. The facilities for the base were brought in with the help of transport submarines. German submarine commanders who had gained valuable experience supplying the northern bases during the war were deployed for this purpose. This was demonstrated in over 20 documented operations along the Arctic, with German submarines transporting personnel and equipment along the northern coast of Antarctica, sometimes under extreme conditions.

most northern research stations.

As confirmation of the construction of Antarctic base 211, the statement attributed to Grand Admiral Dönitz, already quoted above, is cited: "The German submarine fleet is proud that it has built an earthly paradise for the Führer in another part of the world, an impregnable fortress."

Did the German submarine force even have special transport submarines at its disposal? Or were the German submarines used in the Second World War themselves suitable for transporting building materials for bunker construction? The official sources say no! Which is probably why not a single German submarine brought building materials to Antarctica and landed in New Swabia.

When asked whether it would have been theoretically possible to build submarine bunkers under the ice in New Swabia, expedition member Siegfried Sauter replied: "It is impossible to build bunkers under the ice, not even submarine bunkers. The material would have had to be brought to New Swabia by ship. This would have been completely impossible with normal cargo ships without special equipment; icebreakers would have been necessary. The ships would first encounter shelf ice, then edge ice, which is up to 100 metres high, often even higher. During the Antarctic winter, the ice pushes outwards and then breaks off after a while. Building a bunker in the ice or under the ice is technically impossible because the ice moves and drifts outwards. Submarines would not be able to enter at all! "[61] The facts therefore seem clear here too.

Furthermore, it seems questionable whether a human being would be capable, purely psychologically, of surviving permanently without his natural environment, for example without sunlight, not to mention the question of food supply. So what about the leading National Socialists, politicians, military personnel and scientists who, along with their families, are said to have been transported in large numbers to various retreat areas in excellently organised evacuation operations during and after the war? A telegram from Martin Bormann dated 22 April 1945, found in his office in the Führer's bunker and bearing his signature, " " (Bormann's office, Berlin), may provide some insight. It read:

"Agree to the proposal for a transfer to the the southern zone across the ocean." This could have referred to both New Swabia and South America. Allegedly, the Reich government had succeeded in securing to acquire significant tracts of land in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, and to this day, areas the size of Bavaria are said to be under German ownership in Argentina. During the war, Argentine President Juan Domingo Peron also expressed interest in acquiring German technology.

So how likely is an underground base in Antarctica? Interestingly, a corresponding hypothesis was first put forward and circulated by the Chilean writer and philosopher Miguel Serrano, who is considered the founder of "esoteric Hitlerism". His main aim was to mystify the person of Adolf Hitler, whom he saw as the incarnation of fateful powers. But perhaps Serrano, who himself travelled to Antarctica in 1947/48, deliberately diverted attention from the real location of the "impregnable fortress" with his thesis about the removal of prominent figures from the German Reich? In that case, "Antarctic Base 211" would be nothing more than a fairy tale.

Warm water deep sea route

According to various sources, echo soundings taken by the M/S Schwabenland during the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39, as well as extensive research with submarines, revealed that an undersea trench runs from New Schwabia to the opposite edge of the continent. It was discovered at the time that the trench was of volcanic origin. When German researchers followed it, they reportedly discovered warm lakes, caves, crevasses and ice tunnels. Elsewhere, it is said that during the transport of materials to New Swabia, a submarine-accessible warm water deep-sea route was discovered that was ideal for use.

In this context, it is interesting to note that in 1911, German researcher Wilhelm Filchner was faced with the question of whether the Weddell Sea was a bay like the Ross Sea, also known as Ross Bay, or whether both bays were nothing more than the ends of a huge canal, an arm of the sea that divides Antarctica in two. Could this ice-covered sea arm perhaps even be navigable in favourable months?

This was a problem that Admiral Richard Byrd also encountered during the

"Operation Highjump" in 1946/47, but

could not solve in the short time available. Numerous flights from the base station "Little America" attempted to uncover the secret of the large mountain range that runs between the Ross and Weddell Seas and has a significant recess – a kind of "saddle" : a plain that Byrd wondered whether it was an ice shelf or a snow-covered land mass. Based on his observations, Byrd did not rule out the possibility that there could be two continents at the foot of the Wel(6) ,(2) instead of one.

So what is the truth behind the assumption that a warm deep-sea channel runs beneath the Antarctic continent? How often in life do incredible stories sometimes have a grain of truth? And so there are indeed warm springs in Antarctica, albeit on the side opposite New Swabia, several thousand kilometres away.

German submarines disappeared

There is occasional talk of German submarines disappearing at the end of the war in 1945: over 100 Reich German U-boats are still missing today – towards the end of the war, they are said to have fled to South America, Antarctica, but also to North America and the Arctic. They were equipped with the so-called Walter snorkel, a high-performance snorkel for submarine voyages, which made it technically possible for them to remain submerged for practically the entire journey and thus remain undetected.

Statistical data on the deployment of German submarines during the Second World War suggest that a large number may have escaped before the surrender. It is thanks to Karl Dönitz that the history of the German Navy during the Second World War is now one of the best documented areas of military history. At the end of the Second World War, the Grand Admiral, firmly convinced that the German Navy had fought honourably and had nothing to hide, gave the order not to destroy any war diaries, either those of the naval command or those of the submarine command. It is only thanks to this order that all the diaries of the Navy are now available for historical research.

The fact that not much is known in this country about heard of an escape of Reich German submarine crews during and after the war could in turn be related to the fact that almost all documents from all command authorities, staffs, flotillas and submarines fell into the hands of the Allies, mainly Great Britain, after the Second World War and are still largely located there.

But even without knowledge of these documents, it seems certain that more than 100 German submarines officially left port but never arrived anywhere. They were neither reported as sunk nor as having fallen into enemy hands. They do not appear in any statistics on the subject; they remain as if swallowed by the ocean. The same applies to a large number of recognised engineers, scientists, doctors and technicians of the Third Reich, hardly any of whom fell into the hands of the Allies and were never seen again.

never to be seen again.

Is the content of the following Internet report pure fantasy? According to the report, a final convoy of submarines carrying equipment and blueprints left German ports at the end of April 1945 bound for Antarctica and/or a base in the Andes. Among them were the submarines U 530 and U 977, which left the Kiel Fjord fully loaded on 26 April 1945. This was the last attempt to escape the Allies. The convoy is said to have achieved a naval victory over Allied forces in the Atlantic with its large submarines, which remains a secret to this day.

It goes on to say that individual submarine crew members that did not want to remain at "Antarctic Base 211" or could not be accepted for various reasons moved on to South America (Argentina) after completing their mission and handed over their completely emptied boats to the Argentine authorities, including U 977 under the command of Heinz Schaeffer. In addition, an overview is published listing the numbers of the more than 100 v(63) disappeared German submarines.

The fact is that at the beginning of the war in 1939, the German Navy did not have any transport submarines. Nor were there any submarines that could have reached Antarctica without refuelling. The largest submarines available were of the Type IX class, of which a total of five (U 37-U 41) were operational on 1 September 1939. They set out on 20 August 1939 from positions west of the Iberian Peninsula and returned between 15 and 18 September 1939, with the exception of U 39, which was sunk.

But what was the situation at the end of the war? According to official information, only two U-boats returned after the surrender, contrary to the orders given.

official information, only two U-boats surrendered after the surrender, contrary to the orders given

LUFTFAHRT

UNTERTASSEN

Sie fliegen aber doch

Es handelt sich lediglich um Fehldeutungen gewöhnlicher Luftfahrzeuge, kombiniert mit einer milden Form der Massenhysterie und verfrühten Aprilscherzen." Das routinemäßige Beruhigungs-Dementi des US-Verteidigungsministeriums konnte jedoch nicht verhindern, daß die Meldungen über das Auftauchen der „Fliegenden Untertassen" Ende März zur Lawine schwollen. Von Uruguay bis zur Türkei, von Mexiko bis Oesterreich herrschte die Epidemie der fliegenden Scheiben.

Als die Kurve des fast dreijährigen Untertassen-Fiebers ihren Höhepunkt erreichte, meldeten sich die ersten „Erfinder". So der italienische Wissenschaftler Prof. Giuseppe Belluzzo, Turbinen-Ingenieur, Fachmann für Raketen- und Geschützbau und Wirtschaftsminister unter Mussolini.

„Ich selbst habe die Pläne entworfen", ließ er sich vernehmen. „Der Durchmesser der rotierenden Leichtmetallscheibe betrug zehn Meter. Als Treibstoff wurde eine Mischung von komprimierter Luft und Naphta verwendet, wie bei den Düsenflugzeugen. Das komprimierte Gas strömte aus zwei entgegengesetzt an der Scheibe angebrachten Strahlrohren, der Apparat wurde in rotierende Bewegung versetzt und bewegte sich in der Luft weiter."

Bereits 1942 hätten Hitler und Mussolini Versuche mit „Fliegenden Untertassen" durchführen lassen, die Ferngeschosse tragen sollten. „Leider", bedauerte Belluzzo „sind die Pläne auf der Flucht Mussolinis nach Norditalien verlorengegangen." Gegenwärtig würden sie wahrscheinlich von „irgendeiner Großmacht zu Studienzwecken" abgeschossen.

In Norddeutschland meldete sich Hans-Joachim Brux, ein 27jähriger Bastler, der gegen Kriegsende im Junkers-Ausweichwerk Brandis bei Leipzig Versuchsflugzeuge in Tellerform gesehen haben will, die „Fliegende Bierdeckel" oder „Blattlaus" genannt wurden. Für den Photoreporter des „Weserkurier" warf Brux sogar sein neuestes Kleinmodell im Kuhstall in die Luft.

In Phillipeville, Algerien, kündigte der französische Regierungsangestellte Francois Martial das Modell einer „Super-Untertasse" an. „Meine Super-Untertasse hat einen Durchmesser von 70 Metern und kann 35 Passagiere befördern. Als Antrieb sind fünf Motoren vorgesehen." Damit will Martial den Gegenbeweis zu allen Untertassen-Dementis führen.

Die mußte das amerikanische Verteidigungsministerium seit dem 24. Juni 1947 in regelmäßigen Abständen veröffentlichen. An jenem Tag hatte Geschäftsmann Kenneth Arnold aus Boise, Idaho, auf einem Flug über den Mount Rainier in Washington zum ersten Male neun Untertassen-ähnliche Objekte beobachtet. „Sie flogen vollkommen geräuschlos, in Formation, so ähnlich wie der Schwanz eines Drachens. Ihre Geschwindigkeit betrug ungefähr 2000 Stundenkilometer, gab Arnold an. „Ich kann es kaum glauben, aber ich sah sie."

Die Zeitungen trugen die Geschichte in die Runde. Wissenschaftler nahmen Stellung: „Unsinn, das sind Flecke vor den Augen." Kurze Zeit später meldeten sich in Seattle fünfzehn Personen, die „Fliegende Untertassen" gesehen haben wollten. Zwei Sheriffs in Portland beobachteten 20 „Flying Saucers", die in Kiellinie „wie der Teufel" westwärts flogen. Aehnliche Beobachtungen wurden aus fast allen Staaten der USA und Kanada gemeldet. Luftfahrtsachverständige registrierten die Untertassen-Saison als „Massenhysterie", und die englische Presse stellte Vergleiche mit der Seeschlange von Loch Ness an.

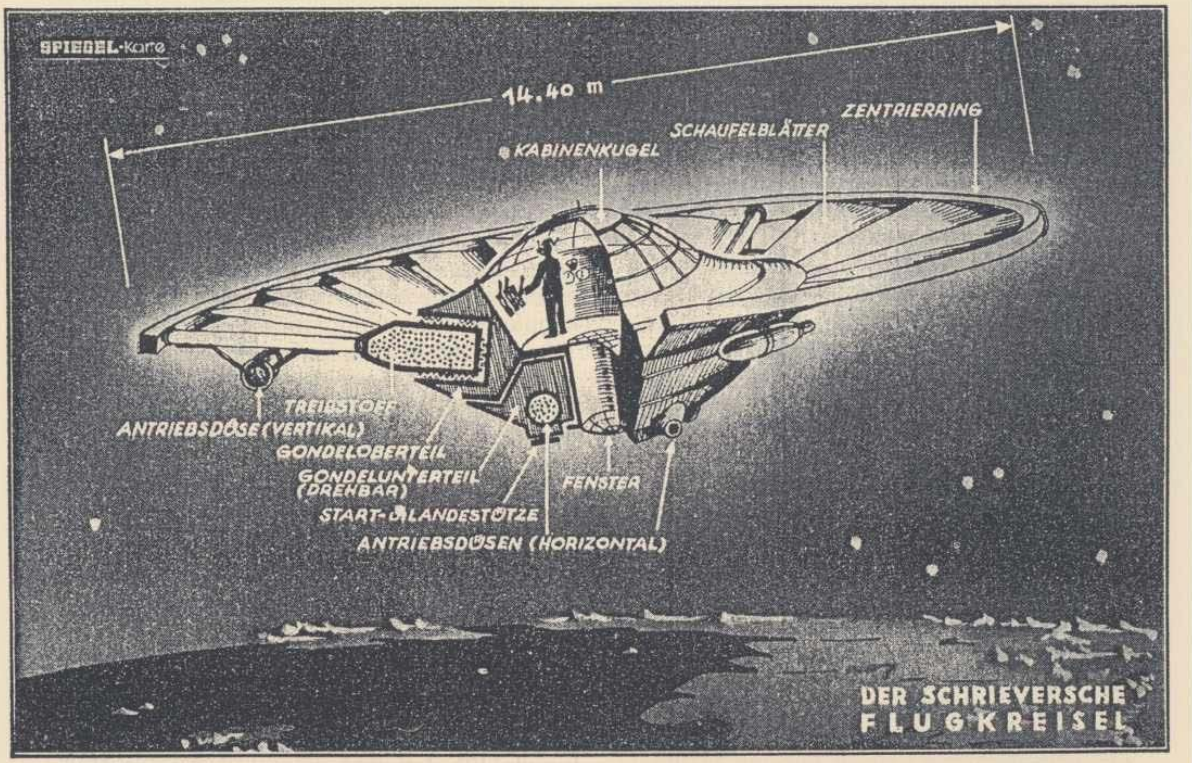
Einige Wochen vergingen, dann gaben E. J. Smith und Ralph Stevens, zwei erfahrene Flugkapitäne der United Air Lines, eidesstattliche Erklärungen ab: Auf dem fahrplanmäßigen Flug Nr. 105 von Boise nach Portland hatten sie fünf „merkwürdige Objekte" gesichtet. „Sie flogen mit großer Geschwindigkeit. Ihre Oberseite schien gewellt, ihre Unterseite glatt zu sein."

Die Wissenschaftler zogen andere Täuschungsmöglichkeiten in Betracht: Reflektion des Sonnenlichtes, Meteorkristalle, Eiskristalle, Hagelkörner. Denn die Sternwarten konnten keine ungewöhnlichen Himmelserscheinungen verzeichnen. Auch auf den Radarschirmen des US-Verteidigungsgürtels waren keine fremden Objekte gesichtet worden.

Die Wochen vergingen, neue Untertassen kamen. Kleine Kinder sahen kleine Untertassen. Ein Goldsucher in den Cascade Mountains beobachtete sechs fliegende Scheiben. „Daraufhin tanzte die Nadel meines Kompasses wie wild."

Das Untertassen-Delirium schlug sich in den Washingtoner Regierungsstuben nieder. Die US-Luftwaffe stellte „Project Saucer (Untertasse)" auf. Air Force-Spezialisten sollten alle Einzelheiten über die Beobachtung „unbekannter Luft-Phänomene" sammeln. Sie waren vollbeschäftigt. Die Untertassen flogen ohne Unterlaß.

Im Januar 1948 wurde über dem amerikanischen Luftwaffenstützpunkt Godman, bei Fort Knox, Kentucky, ein Objekt gesichtet. „das wie ein Trichter aussah, aus



In its report on UFOs, Der Spiegel *No.* 13/1950 *quotes the Spanish newspaper* Madrid *as saying: „Hitler has escaped to the Himalayan mountains with a group of scientists, from where he is launching the flying saucers."*

." The most adventurous versions of the whereabouts of the German Reich Chancellor and his „last battalion" are still circulating on the Internet today and also fuel fantasies about New Swabia.

went to Argentina: The first was U 530 under Lieutenant Werwuth. It arrived in Mar del Plata on 10 July 1945, was captured by the US, transferred to the US, used for testing and sunk by torpedo on 20 November 1947 by the US submarine "Toro" about 40 nautical miles northeast of Cape Cod. The second was U 977 under Lieutenant Commander Schaeffer, which entered Mar del Plata on 17 August 1945, left on 25 August 1945 for transfer to the USA, became US war booty and was sunk on 13 November 1946 by a torpedo from the US submarine

"Atule" was sunk off Cape Cod.

The aforementioned published list of missing submarines only includes two-man submarines (U 2111 to U 2113 and U 2251 to U 2294). These are two-man submarines of the "Hecht" type, which had a range of 45 to 78 nautical miles at a speed of three knots. The boats U 5034 to U 5037, U 5051 and U 5052 to U 6300 all belonged to the "Seehund" type, also a two-man submarine type, which had a range of 300 nautical miles at seven knots.

There can be no doubt that these boats could never have reached the Antarctic. Nor could they have been used to establish German submarine bases or other support bases in the Antarctic, either during the war or at the end of the war.

Post-war literature provides contradictory information regarding the number of German submarines in existence at the end of the Second World War. In his three-volume work *Die deutsche Seekriegsleitung 1935–1945 (The German Naval Command 1935–1945)*, Michael Salewski cites a figure of 551 operational submarines for February 1945. French naval historian Leonce Peillard, on the other hand, puts the total number of U-boats still operational in the spring of 1945 at 404 in his book *Geschichte des U-Boot-Krieges 1939 bis 1945* (History of the U-boat War 1939 to 1945). In his memoirs, *Dön*itz himself mentions a total of 595 newly produced U-boats for the period from 1943 to 1945. According to his information, the German navy had a total of 1,170 boats between 1939 and 10 May 1945, of which 863 were deployed at the front and undertook one or more combat missions. Of these, 630 boats were lost. In home waters, losses due to enemy action amounted to 81 boats. A further 42 boats were lost in accidents. During the evacuation of bases and at the end of the war, 251 boats were blown up or sunk by their own crews. A further 38 submarines were decommissioned during the war due to obsolescence or more repairable damage and taken out of service. A total of eleven submarines served in the armed forces of foreign countries or were interned in foreign ports during the war. After the surrender, 153 boats were transferred to British or other Allied ports.

From these various, sometimes contradictory statements, it can at least be deduced that it would indeed have been possible to list submarines on secret missions as lost, scuttled or wrecked. However, Dönitz does not give a single indication in his own books that German submarines were decommissioned. It should be noted, however, that he wrote his books after ten years of imprisonment under completely changed political and social conditions.

The question therefore remains whether a German submarine ever visited Antarctica. Since the information about existing and missing German submarines is contradictory, this question will probably remain unanswered. The documented problems that Admiral Byrd had with the only American submarine accompanying Operation Highjump tend to suggest that this was not the case.

Hitler's escape into the eternal ice

One of the German U-boats that set sail but never reached their destination, neither sinking nor falling prey to the Allies, is said to have enabled German Chancellor Adolf Hitler to escape in time. This story, of which there are two main versions, sounds too fantastic to be believed without further investigation. Let's take a look at how historical facts are interwoven with myths here.

The first version focuses on the alleged Antarctic base 211: Adolf Hitler, who is generally believed to have who took his own life on 30 April 1945 in the Führer's bunker in the Reich Chancellery in Berlin together with his wife, Eva Braun, is said to have actually fled Germany via Italy and then lived until his death in New Swabia, an underground city in Antarctic base 211. In addition to his recently married wife, other high-ranking National Socialists accompanied him on his escape.

However, it is astonishing that preparations for the construction of this final hideout are said to have begun as early as 1938/39 with the help of the German Antarctic expedition.

At that time, Hitler was at the height of his power in domestic politics.

at the height of his power. Shortly afterwards, he also dominated almost the entire European continent militarily in terms of foreign policy. Why would he have thought of creating a final escape route in such a situation?

The second version refers to the aforementioned mysterious long-distance voyage of U 977 under the command of Heinz Schaeffer to Argentina. As a reminder, here is a brief summary of the most important facts: On 17 August 1945, after 66 days at sea, U 977 entered the Argentine port of Mar del Plata.

The commander and crew were taken prisoner by the Argentine navy and the submarine was thoroughly searched. What were they looking for? Evidence to support the suspicion that Hitler had fled to Argentina with his wife, Martin Bormann and other Nazi leaders and had settled in Neu-Schwabenland.

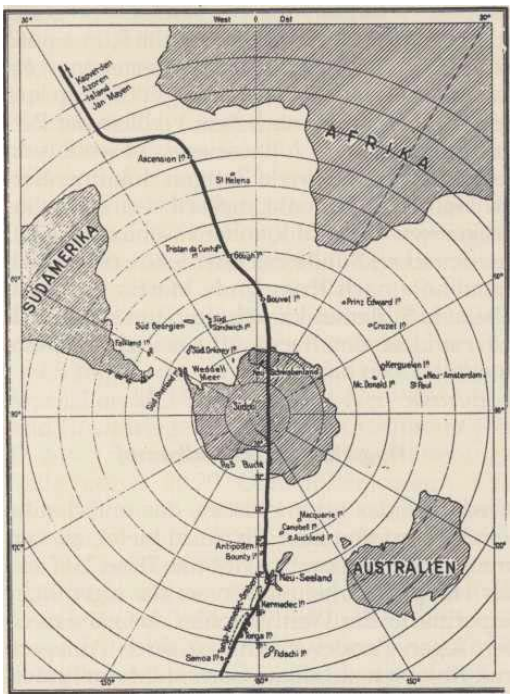
Sensational press reports actually claim that U 977 had Hitler on board and took him to Patagonia, from where he fled to New Swabia. The next day, an Anglo-American delegation of officers arrives hastily from the United States, an investigative commission that interrogates Schaeffer in a highly coercive manner. They begin their interrogation with the words: "You hid Hitler! Talk! Where is he?"

Schaeffer, who speaks fluent English and French, tried to convince the commission that no one other than the crew had been on board his submarine. The crew members, who were interrogated individually, confirmed this.

The commission members do not believe Schaeffer or his submarine crew and have all the men brought to the United States. Schaeffer ends up in a camp for prominent prisoners of war in Washington, where the interrogations continue. When this also fails to produce any results, the commander of U 977 is deported to Germany, where the British take him into custody and continue interrogating him

— with the same result. After his release, the "Hitler hider" finally turns his back on Germany — disappointed in his homeland, as it is said — and emigrates to Argentina.

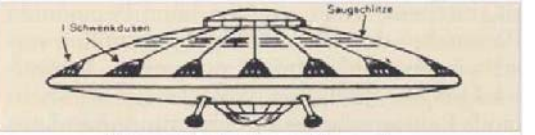
Why return to Argentina, where he, his crew and his submarine had surrendered to the enemy? Had Hitler and Bormann perhaps made it to South America after all? Had Schaeffer simply misinterpreted...



Example from the Internet: Alleged underwater warm water trench under the Antarctic continent that can be used as a submarine route.

Neu-Schwabenland-Schlagzeilen im Internet

Angebliches Seismogramm einer amerikanischen Atombombenzündung am 20. März 2003 in Neu-Schwabenland



Schematische Darstellung einer „Deutschen Fliegenden Untertasse"

remain steadfast? Or did Schaeffer simply enjoy the Argentine climate? In any case, the question remains as to why, even long after the end of the war, those on the winning side were still so interested in the whereabouts of Adolf Hitler, even though his suicide had been documented by many witnesses. Considering that even a figure such as General Reinhard Gehlen, head of the German Federal Intelligence Service, still believed Martin Bormann to be alive in South America decades after the end of the war, then everyone else should also have the right to speculate without restriction.

speculation.

Flying saucers in the final battle

Once again, it is the internet that provides a platform for US authors, among others, to spread the theory that the "Antarctica German Base 211" with its capital Neu-Berlin is the real superpower of the world. From here, there is said to be frequent shuttle traffic to their offshoots and colonies on the "German Moon" and other planets and planetoids – by means of flying saucers, the so-called UFOs.

Here, too, it can be assumed that the taboo surrounding all inventions and discoveries in Germany during the Third Reich is the cause of speculation of this kind. Who can understand why the German Antarctic Expedition of 1938/39 is missing from almost every popular account of Antarctic exploration? In response, suspicious contemporaries are ready to believe any theory, no matter how adventurous, about the reasons for the silence surrounding the expedition and the discovery of Neuschwabenland. The same applies to the subject of flying saucers. There is much to suggest that flying saucers were among the wide range of flying machines invented and tested during the Third Reich, including jet planes, helicopters, flying wings and rockets. Contemporary witnesses claim to have seen several test flights in the Reich Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Various German newspapers and magazines reported on this in the 1950s.

And just as at the beginning of the American and Soviet manned space programmes, the public was kept in the dark about the fact that these were developments of German

American and Soviet manned space travel, the public was kept in the dark about the fact that these were developments of German projects from Germany's rocket forge in Peenemünde, so it can be assumed that German research on flying gyroscopes also fell into the hands of the Allies in 1945 also fell into the hands of the Allies. Is it any wonder that this has given rise to unbridled speculation: Did the Allies use this invention themselves? Are the UFOs that are allegedly sighted time and again actually terrestrial aircraft from this source?

Such theories are further fuelled by the connection to New Swabia: if Hitler survived in New Swabia, why not take German flying saucers with him – dramatically called "Reichsflugscheiben" (Reich flying discs)? And anyone who likes the idea of Hitler's survival in 1945 will also readily believe that UFOs are
"Hitler's last battalion," waiting at his base in New Swabia for the order to launch the final offensive...

And let's not forget those who believe that the interior of the Earth is the home port of the "flying saucers" that have been observed worldwide since around 1953: the "hollow Earth". According to this theory, New Swabia would not matter at all. For New Swabia, according to former SS member Wilhelm Landig in an interview shortly before his death in 1961, is
"closed." (According to other interpretations, this information can be seen as a mere diversionary tactic.) One must, so to speak, look beyond the horizon, because the South Pole is the gateway to the "inner continent of Agarthi," where the Reich Germans or their "last battalion" have built a completely new German Reich. Such theories are strikingly reminiscent of old legends, such as the myth of the sleeping Emperor Barbarossa, who is waiting for his return in Kyffhäuser.

In modified versions, it is said that huge thermal caves under thick glacier shells, the largest of which is 30 miles long, are home to the gigantic New Berlin. This is said to be located in a green zone in the middle of a large thermal lake plateau, where even moose live. And here, too, there are huge factories for the production of "wonder weapons".

A final moment in connection with this
with the question of the (earthly) existence of UFOs: There is a widespread belief that the crop circles, which are being observed more and more everywhere, are directly related to them. They are said to be messages from the "last battalion" to all of humanity, preparing them for their intervention to halt the ever-accelerating spiral of materialism and violence. Are the inhabitants of New Swabia and its offshoots, as ethically and morally enlightened

knights of peace? Are they the "heavenly hosts" of the apocalypse that, according to ancient prophecies of human cultures, is now imminent?

Atomic bombs over New Swabia

In the year before the Antarctic Treaty was signed, the United States of America is said to have detonated three nuclear weapons in Antarctica: on 27 and 30 August and on September 8, 1958. But not just anywhere in Antarctica, but remarkably right above the area of New Swabia, the second half of the German Reich.

According to an unverifiable account, the following had preceded this: In 1947, Richard Byrd, together with his flight engineer and co-pilot, was forced to land by flying saucers (UFOs) while flying in a DC 3. This could have been the flight that led the admiral to suddenly call off the "Operation Highjump". During his stay with the "tall, blond beings with blue eyes", he was warned by them of the consequences of the use of above-ground atomic bombs.

After his return, he was questioned by a reporter about Byrd's statement regarding the imminent threat to the United States posed by high-speed aircraft capable of flying from one pole to the other in a short period of time. The US would have to protect itself against this type of threat from the polar region, the admiral allegedly added. Finally, Byrd had to undergo a sharp cross-examination by the US Navy. During this, he is said to have expressed his opinion that Antarctica should be turned into a nuclear test site, referring to the enemy stationed there.

According to further theories, the USA also carried out nuclear tests in Antarctica in September 1979 and on 5 March 1986, again in New Swabia, which according to official sources is the Norwegian sector of the sixth continent, without any Norwegian protests being reported. And this was above the heads of the Soviet research station in the Schirmacher Islands – in the middle of the Cold War. How is that possible? This would have been a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Antarctic Treaty, which stipulate, among other things, that the establishment of military bases and the use of weapons, such as nuclear weapons tests, as well as the storage of nuclear waste, are prohibited. Article V, paragraph 1 states clearly states: "Nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive waste are prohibited in Antarctica." As stated in the version valid as of 5 August 2003.

At that time, the third Iraq war was already raging, at the beginning of which the USA is said to have detonated another atomic bomb in New Swabia, this time underground. The seismogram of the American South Pole station allegedly shows a narrowly confined intense deflection at 5:15 p.m. on 20 March 2003. The intensity indicates the detonation of a 20 to 50 kiloton nuclear bunker buster. One day later, the USA attempted to invade New Schwabenland with its arsenal of MOAB bombs, which was recorded by the seismogram from 21 March, with a significant shock wave documented at around 8:20 p.m. A MOAB bomb contains over nine tonnes of explosives and is capable of destroying everything within a radius of more than 1,500 metres.

But what is the connection between Antarctica and the Iraq War? In politics, and therefore in world history, there are no coincidences. That is why it is claimed that the Iraq War was staged, among other things, to carry out the final invasion of New Swabia, the complete destruction of the old enemy, the German Reich, in the shadow of media-effective events! After all, on the same day, three US bombers are said to have disappeared without a trace while entering Iraqi airspace. These were a two-billion-dollar B2 "Spirit" stealth bomber and two F117 A "Nighthawk" stealth bombers, each costing 250 million dollars. A revenge attack by the "Reich flying saucers"?

Incidentally, as regards the so-called ozone hole over Antarctica, which in 2003 reached almost three times the size of Europe and is the largest in the Earth's atmosphere, various sources speculate that it could have been caused by the nuclear explosions described above. A diametrically opposed approach assumes that the ozone hole theory is also an invention for diversionary purposes. The mantra-like invocation of a danger allegedly emanating from a hole in the ozone layer above the South Pole is said to serve in reality to raise funds for completely different purposes. For example, for military surveillance of certain areas in Antarctica?

Anyone who wants to treat themselves to a few hours of great entertainment and get a little creeped out at the same time should definitely not miss out on "surfing" through New Swabia on the Internet.

Nachwort

Time bornbe An t arlxtls

In der Antarktis tickt eine Zeitbombe. Die Zeitbombe ist der vielgepriesene Antarktisvertrag. Dieser Vertrag hat die Frage ausgeklammert, wem was in der Antarktis gehört. Er läßt damit alle Gebietsansprüche in der Schwebe und bestimmt, daß nichts unternommen werden darf, was „die Geltendmachung, Unterstützung oder Ablehnung eines Anspruchs auf Gebietshoheit in der Antarktis" begründet.

Jedes Land der Erde, das bereit ist, die 14 Artikel des Antarktisvertrags vorbehaltlos anzuerkennen und den Vertrag rechtsverbindlich zu unterzeichnen, kann diesem beitreten. Seit Inkrafttreten des Vertrags haben sich zwei Mitgliedergruppen gebildet, obwohl dies der Vertrag nicht vorsah.

Die Gruppe 1 sind diejenigen Mitglieder, die sich als Konsultativmitglieder qualifiziert haben. Voraussetzung für die Qualifikation ist es, die Verpflichtung zu übernehmen, eine kontinuierliche Forschungsarbeit in der Antarktis zu betreiben und eine eigene, ganzjährig besetzte Forschungsstation als Basis wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten aufzubauen. Zu dieser Gruppe gehörten zunächst die ursprünglichen zwölf Unterzeichnerstaaten, später schafften 13 weitere Länder die Qualifikation, darunter die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und die Deutsche Demokratische Republik. Den Konsultativstaaten obliegt die verantwortliche Gestaltung des Antarktisregimes.

Die Gruppe 2 sind die sogenannten „einfachen" Mitglieder, zumeist solche Länder, die sich ganzjährige Forschungsstationen finanziell nicht leisten können. Auch Länder, die bereits den Konsultativstatus innehaben und denen zu Beginn ihrer Mitgliedschaft das Geld für optimale Forschungsarbeit fehlt, entwickeln inzwischen immer neue Aktivitäten.

Argentinien und Chile haben Siedlungen gebaut. Chile hat das erste Hotel für Antarktisbesucher errichtet und strebt an, für eine kommende Touristik-Ära eine Stadt als „Tor zum Südpol" zu errichten. Argentinien begeht mit großem Pomp Hochzeiten, feiert Geburten und andere Feste, auch wenn nur eine Handvoll Familien auf kleinen, fast verlassenen Stützpunkten betroffen sind.

Dollar eine 21 Mann starke Expedition in die Antarktis, die ein Lager in der Schirmacheroase in Neu-Schwabenland errichtete. Brasilien schaffte ähnliches mit einem Jahresbudget unter zwei Millionen Dollar. 1984/85 errichtete eine Expedition aus der Volksrepublik China ihre erste Station mit dem Namen „Große Mauer" in der Antarktis.

Außenstehende Länder, die eine abwartende Haltung eingenommen haben und dem Antarktisvertrag noch nicht beigetreten sind, vor allem solche aus der Dritten Welt, verfolgen die Entwicklung in der Antarktis mit Argwohn und Mißtrauen. Sie haben den Verdacht, ausgespielt und übergangen zu werden, wenn es eines Tages

Satellitenaufnahme der Antarktis

zu einer Aufteilung des sechsten Kontinents, der bisher noch herrenlosen Antarktis, kommt.

Welche Gründe gibt es für das große und ständig wachsende Interesse der investierenden Länder und ihrer Wissenschaftler an der Antarktis? Die Antarktis ist eine glitzernde Eiswüste am Ende der Welt, kalt, trocken, stürmisch, kurz: lebensfeindlich. Hier wächst nichts, kein Baum, kein Strauch, kein Gras und keine Blume. Hier gibt es keine Stadt, kein Dorf, keine Straßen, keinen Verkehr – und einsame Stille, wenn nicht ein eisiger Sturm Eiskristalle in die Luft schleudert und einen Aufenthalt im Freien unmöglich macht. Was also treibt Wissenschaftler aus vielen Ländern der Erde in diese öde Eiswüste?

Es sind verborgene Schätze, die man unter dem unendlich dicken Eis vermutet. Es sind vorrangig materialistische Überlegungen und Erwartungen, die die Antarktis so anziehend machen.

Viele Staaten, auch solche, die glauben, sich einen Beitritt zum Antarktisvertrag finanziell nicht leisten zu können, oder tatsächlich dazu nicht imstande sind, glauben den Vermutungen, daß in nicht allzu ferner Zukunft Riesengewinne zu machen sein werden mit märchenhaften Bodenschätzen, die sich heute noch unter der antarktischen Eiskappe verbergen und nur auf ihre Entdeckung warten, vielleicht so große Ölfelder wie im Iran oder so reiche Edelmetallvorkommen wie in Südafrika.

Obwohl noch keine Gewißheit darüber besteht, ob überhaupt und wenn ja, welche Bodenschätze die Antarktis birgt, sitzen einige Staaten bereits in den Startlöchern zum Wettlauf um die Antarktis. Die Frage, was unter dem Eis zu finden ist, was herausgeholt werden kann und wer sich daran bereichern darf, wird von Jahr zu Jahr drängender. Das Nachrichtenmagazin *Der Spiegel* äußerte in seiner Ausgabe 4/2003 die Ansicht, daß sich unter dem Eis der Antarktis Eisen, Buntmetalle, Edelmetalle, Steinkohle, Uran, Öl und Erdgas verbergen könnten. Diese Vermutung deckt sich mit der Meinung von Wissenschaftlern. An verschiedenen Stellen sind bereits Spuren von Kupfer, Schwefelkies, Mangan und radioaktiven Metallen wie Uran, entdeckt worden. Die Franzosen suchten bereits vor Jahren auf den Kerguelen nach Öl und seltenen Metallen, die Engländer haben an der Küste der Falkland-Inseln Untersuchungen durchgeführt, deren Ergebnisse auf Erdölvorkommen schließen lassen.

Es ist sicher nur eine Frage der Zeit, wann die technischen und finanziellen Voraussetzungen für Maßnahmen vorhanden sein werden, um zu klären, was sich tatsächlich unter dem Eis verbirgt.

Am aktuellsten wäre in absehbarer Zeit die Suche und die Gewinnung von Öl an der antarktischen Küste. Die erhöhten Preise und der zunehmende Mangel an Rohstoffen werden die Suche nach Öl im Meeresboden und sogar unter der dicken Eiskruste, wenn nicht schon jetzt, so doch in einigen Jahren, als rentabel erscheinen lassen.

Doch ist die entscheidende Frage der Hoheitsrechte, der Gebietsansprüche der einzelnen Antarktisvertragsstaaten noch nicht geklärt. Diese Frage ist allerdings langfristig aufschiebbar. Denn eine einigermaßen zufriedenstellende Regelung kann nur erreicht werden, solange der Handelswert der Antarktis nicht bekannt ist. Wird mit der „Schatzsuche unter dem Eis" und vor der Küste begonnen, ohne daß vorher die Gebietsansprüche geklärt wurden, sind Auseinandersetzungen vorpro-

Programmed. If only because different sections of the territory have been claimed by different countries for years.

Even during the Second World War, seven countries claimed wedge-shaped pieces of Antarctica that extended to the South Pole. Norway was the exception, limiting itself to Queen Maud Land, but including New Swabia, which was discovered by the Germans in 1938/39.

Australia claimed almost half of the entire continent. In the middle lies Adelie Land, claimed by France. The main research station of the USA is located in the area claimed by New Zealand, and the territorial claims of Great Britain, Chile and Argentina overlap on the Antarctic Peninsula. The peninsula is so important because it extends into the ice-free waters near the tip of South America. On King George Island, off the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, there are seven research stations, including one of the former Soviet Union.

Resolving these claims amicably will be one of the most difficult tasks facing the Antarctic Treaty states. If this fails, peace on the sixth continent will be in jeopardy.

The continent is no longer safe. There have been lesser causes for war in the world. Just think of the Falklands War in 1982.

The fact that Antarctica is the only continent on which no war has ever been fought is due to the fact that it has no permanent inhabitants. Only the oceans surrounding Antarctica and a few islands have played a certain role in the two world wars.

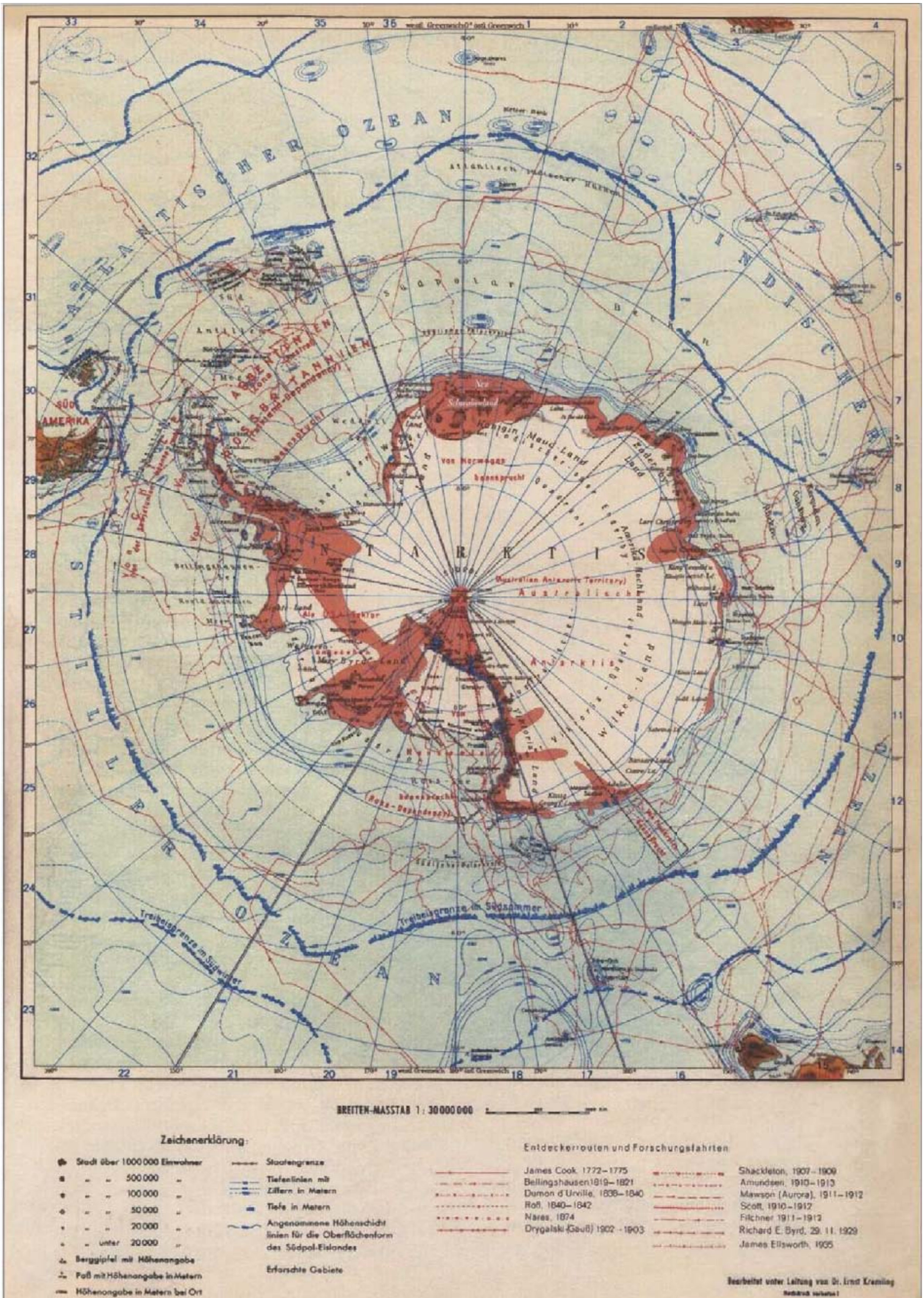
One of the most important Antarctic experts, polar explorer and aviator, the American admiral Richard Byrd, repeatedly pointed out the strategic importance of Antarctica, Graham Land and its surrounding island groups. He was the first to realise that if the Panama Canal were to be rendered unnavigable by acts of sabotage, the USA would be forced to take the sea route around Cape Horn. However, this would pose a great danger, as this sea route lies within the firing range of the Antarctic Peninsula and the offshore islands. From here, all ships would be exposed to artillery or missile fire.

However, there are also other strategic aspects, as pointed out by Alphonse Max in his publication *The Antarctic: A Geostrategic Study*. He writes: "Another strategic aspect of Antarctica is that its coastline and offshore island fortresses are ideal hiding places for submarines and that secret Antarctic air bases could be used to control the entire southern hemisphere. Cooperation between aircraft and submarines, both with Antarctic supply bases, could create an unimaginable military situation. Even more so, a launch pad for intercontinental missile weapons on the edge of Antarctica or on one of the outlying islands, difficult for the enemy to reach and destroy, could mean world domination. All this does not refer to an undefined future, but could perhaps happen tomorrow. (63) (64)

Comments

' Quoted from Dyson, p. 223

2 Ritscher, text section, p. 3 f.
3 Ibid., p. 4 f.
4 Ibid., p. 13 ff.
5 Quoted from ibid., p. 249
6 Ibid., p. 49 f.
7 Ibid., p. 54 ff.
8 Quoted from ibid., p. 252
9 Ibid., p. 59 f.
10 Herrmann, p. 77
11 Ritscher, text section, p. 64
12 Quoted from ibid., p. 255 f.
13 Quoted from ibid., p. 256
14 Herrmann, p. 78 ff.
15 Ibid., p. 81 f.
16 Ritscher, text section, p. 69 f.
17 Quoted from ibid., p. 261
18 Ibid., p. 70
19 Ibid., p. 75
20 Quoted from ibid., p. 264
21 Quoted from ibid., p. 265
22 Ibid., p. 78 f.
23 Ibid., p. 80 f.
24 Ibid., p. 108 ff.
25 Ibid., p. 109
26 Ibid., p. 109 f.
27 Quoted from ibid., p. 110
28 Herrmann, p. 152 f.
29 Ritscher, text section, p. 84, 86
30 Quoted from Herrmann, p. 180
31 Quoted from *Frankfurter Zei-*, 28 April 1939
32 Quoted from *Hamburger Frem - denblatt*, 29 April 1939
33 Letter from DLH to Kottas, December 1940
34 Jung / Wenzel / Abendroth, p. 80 ff.
35 Letter from Prof. Dr. Jürgen Rohwer, historian, to the author, 2 December 2003
36 Letter from Kottas to Hädrich, DLH, 17 December 1940
37 Schaeffer, p. 258
38 Cf. Byrd, p. 430
39 Cf. ibid., p. 431
40 Ibid., p. 455
41 Ibid., p. 463
42 Ibid., p. 466
43 Ibid., p. 501
44 Ibid., p. 456
45 Ibid., p. 517
46 Ibid., p. 498
47 Cf. ibid., p. 513
48 Ibid., p. 517
49 Ibid., p. 429
50 Ibid., p. 453
51 Ibid., p. 517
52 Ibid., p. 434
53 Letter from the Foreign Office to the author, 20 January 2004
54 www.volksmacht.de/schwab.htm
55 Letter from the Foreign Office Letter to the author, 20 January 2004
56 Tilgenkamp, p. 274
57 Ibid., p. 278
58 Ibid., image section after p. 304
59 Cf. Brunk, p. 7 ff.
60 Statement by Sauter to dem Autoren
61 Statement by Sauter to the author
62 See Byrd, p. 487
63 See www.mental-ray.de / Mental-Ray / ge-home / timeline.htm
64 Max, p. 20



The area of Antarctica explored by Alfred Ritscher in 1939 is still shown in German maps in the 1950s.
JRO World Atlas *as "Neu-Schwabenland (New Swabia)" even includes additional information on individual areas.*

In conversation with Siegfried Sauter

Schön: Mr Sauter, you took part in the German Antarctic expedition in 1938/39 as an aerial photographer. How did you come to have this honour and your profession?

Sauter: I was trained as an aerial photographer in the Luftwaffe and then, in 1937, I was hired by Hansa-Luftbild GmbH as an aerial photographer.

Schön: When did you find out that you had been selected to take part in the German Antarctic expedition in 1938/39?

Sauter: About two months beforehand. I was asked and said yes immediately.

Schön: Had you seen the flying boat "Boreas", on which you were to be deployed in Antarctica, before or only on board the Deutsche Lufthansa catapult ship "Schwabenland"?

Sauter: I had seen it before and took part in test flights in Travemünde with my colleague Bundermann. It became apparent that the portholes of the flying boat had to be cut out so that the large cameras could be installed at the rear. The flying boat was therefore open at the rear, exposing us aerial photographers to the merciless cold.

Schön: What cameras were the two flying boats, "Boreas" and "Passat," equipped with?

Sauter: The aerial survey cameras were the old size of 18 by 18 centimetres. We used aerial Aqua-Topograph films. They had to be changed by hand. At temperatures of 20 to 30 degrees below zero, a piece of skin always stuck to them.

Schön: When did you board the catapult ship M/S "Schwabenland"?

Sauter: Shortly before the ship set sail in December 1938. I was assigned a double cabin at water level, which I shared with my colleague Bundermann.

Schön: When did you first come into contact with flight captain Schirmacher?

Sauter: I got to know the captain of the Boreas, Schirma-cher, and the captain of the Passat, Mayr, during the test flights in Travemünde.

Schön: How did you survive the weeks-long sea voyage from Hamburg to Antarctica?

Sauter: It was my first voyage on the high seas, and the sea was often stormy.

often stormy seas. The Schwabenland was not a modern, comfortable passenger ship, but a converted freighter. Everything was very cramped, and we ate in three messes.

Schön: What was the relationship like between the groups on board, the captains and officers, the scientists, the aircraft crews, the catapult personnel and the merchant ship crew? Sauter: There wasn't enough space on board for all 83 people to eat together, which is why we divided into several messes. The relationship between the different groups was very friendly.

Schön: Was Alfred Ritscher, merchant ship captain, flight captain and polar explorer, who was already 60 years old at the time and working as a government councillor in the High Command of the Navy, a good expedition leader and superior?

Sauter: I can answer that with an unqualified yes. . Ritscher had polar experience, shipping and aviation experience; he was the most important man on the expedition.

That's wonderful: not only did you experience Christmas and New Year's Eve on board, but also the Aqua-torta christening. Were you one of the christened?

Sauter: Yes. But I was only briefly "treated" because I was supposed to photograph the spectacle. All those christened received a certificate, which I still have today.

Schön: Did you and many of the expedition members get seasick during the voyage to Antarctica?

Sauter: The movement of the ship, even in storms, didn't bother me at all. I was completely sea-worthy. I know from the Lufthansa staff that no one got seasick.

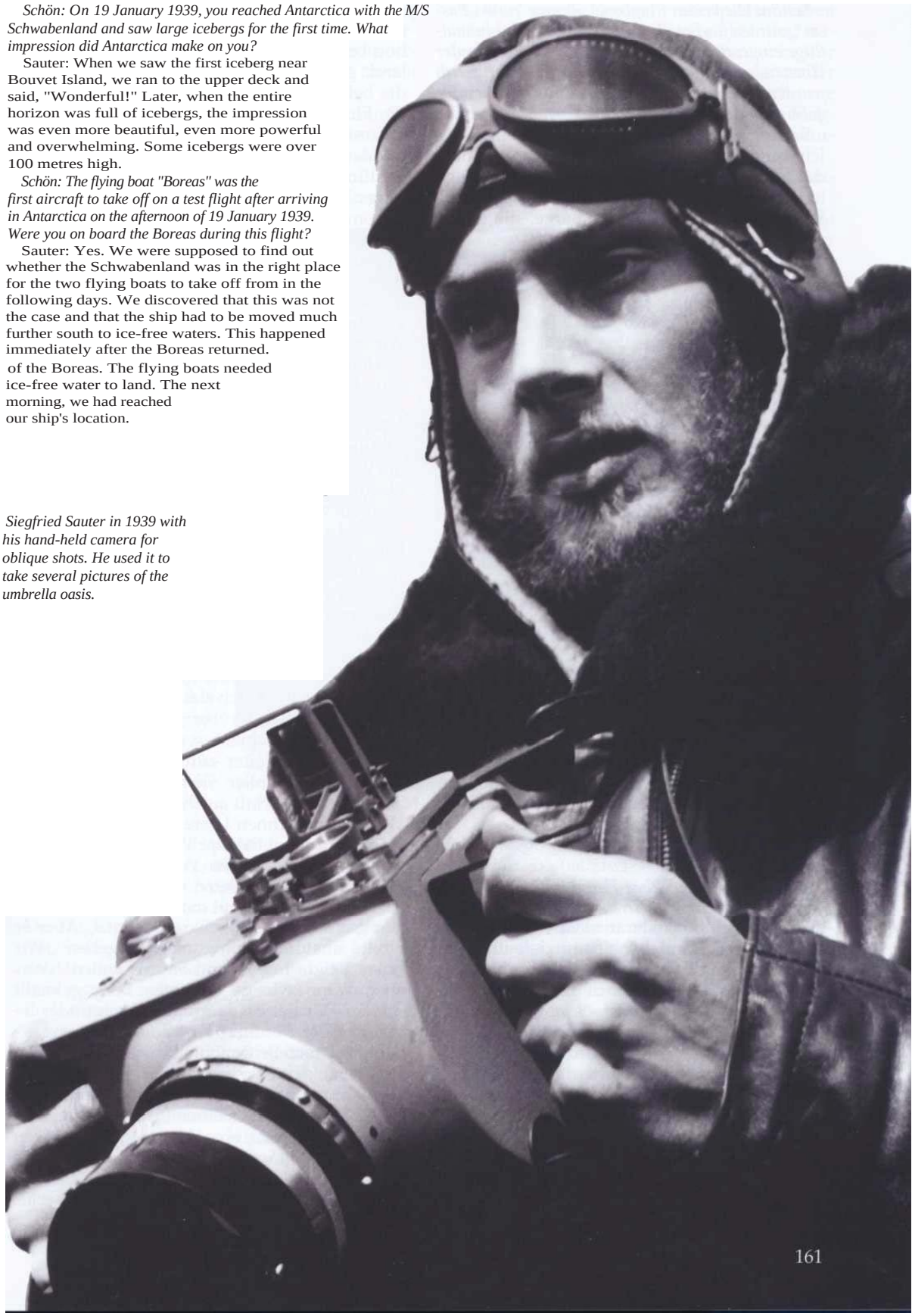
Schön: On 19 January 1939, you reached Antarctica with the M/S Schwabenland and saw large icebergs for the first time. What impression did Antarctica make on you?

Sauter: When we saw the first iceberg near Bouvet Island, we ran to the upper deck and said, "Wonderful!" Later, when the entire horizon was full of icebergs, the impression was even more beautiful, even more powerful and overwhelming. Some icebergs were over 100 metres high.

Schön: The flying boat "Boreas" was the first aircraft to take off on a test flight after arriving in Antarctica on the afternoon of 19 January 1939. Were you on board the Boreas during this flight?

Sauter: Yes. We were supposed to find out whether the Schwabenland was in the right place for the two flying boats to take off from in the following days. We discovered that this was not the case and that the ship had to be moved much further south to ice-free waters. This happened immediately after the Boreas returned.

of the Boreas. The flying boats needed ice-free water to land. The next morning, we had reached our ship's location.



Siegfried Sauter in 1939 with his hand-held camera for oblique shots. He used it to take several pictures of the umbrella oasis.

Nice: The two flying boats "Boreas" and "Pas-sat" were used for photo flights, special flights and domestic flights. The domestic flights, which sometimes required emergency landings on the ice, were the most dangerous flights. Were you afraid?

Sauter: Fear? We didn't have time for that. I had so many things to do and see that I didn't have time to be afraid. I just felt like enjoying the magnificent beauty of the ice fields and mountains that no human being had ever seen before. It was an overwhelmingly positive experience.

Schön: You saw many mountains that were over 4,000 metres high. However, the heavily overloaded flying boats couldn't reach that altitude. Was that a disadvantage?

Sauter: No. We were able to fly past the mountain peaks. That meant we always had to fly visually. Until the third or fourth flight, we flew exactly according to plan. Then, following intervention by the two flight captains, the flight plan was changed.

Schön: Did you witness a German Reich flag being hoisted on the ice?

Sauter: Flight Captain Mayr anchored the Passat on the flat ice. He was then able to walk onto the ice, ram a swastika flag into it and have his photo taken with two of his crew members.

Schön: On 30 January 1939, it was a "national holiday" on the "Schwabenland", just like in Germany, commemorating the day Adolf Hitler seized power on
30 January 1933. Adolf Hitler's speech was broadcast. Do you remember that?

Sauter: No, only vaguely. That was a distant world for us. We had our heads full of preparing for the next flight.

Schön: Do you remember the speech that the local NSDAP leader on the Schwabenland, Second Officer Karl-Heinz Röbke, had read out by his deputy on that day?

Sauter: No, not that either. Röbke was one of the merchant navy officers to us, not a party man. He didn't walk around the ship in a party uniform with a swastika armband.

Schön: Was there any political indoctrination on board the Schwabenland?

Sauter: No. There were only factual presentations, which were important and very informative for all expedition members.

Schön: What was the atmosphere like on board in view of the events of the time? Was it a purely scientific expedition? What role did the fact that this expedition took place during the Third Reich play?

Sauter: It was a scientific expedition. It could also be described as a Lufthansa expedition, because the ship "Schwabenland" belonged to Deutsche Lufthansa, as did the two flying boats "Boreas" and "Passat", and the pilots and mechanics were Lufthansa employees. The aerial photographers were employees of Hansa-Luftbild, which was also owned by Lufthansa. However, the expedition was financed by the German Reich, which also covered the costs of converting the M/S Schwabenland into an expedition ship. Our mission was to survey part of Antarctica. My job and that of my colleague Bundermann was to survey the land. We were surveyors.

Schön: During your entire stay in Antarctica, who did you consider to be the most important expedition members of the two flying boats, the Boreas and the Passat?
most important members of the expedition?

Sauter: That's right. Of course, the scientists were also important, but we were the most important. I'll tell you why. If one of us had failed, the entire expedition would have collapsed and had to be abandoned. Besides, we were the only ones on board who risked their lives on every flight; no scientist was expected to do that.

Schön: What danger to your life did you see during the flights?

Sauter: The emergency landing in the ice desert during a domestic flight. I talked to Captain Ritscher about it at the time and asked him what would happen if we had to make an emergency landing six hours or more away from the South Pole. "How would you help and rescue us from the ship in such a situation?"

"We would drop you cargo parachutes with provisions for four weeks!" he replied. "And the weeks after that?" I asked.

"Should we spend it praying?" I put Captain Ritscher under a lot of pressure with my probing questions. But he wanted to reassure us: "We'll get you out of there if you make an emergency landing!" But what if we had crashed into a mountain? We would have been stuck there, dead or alive. The flight doctor, Dr Bludau, told us how to tie off or saw off legs. The topic of sawing was discussed in great detail, because it was assumed that if we made an emergency landing, there would be a terrible crash and we would be lying there, trapped, and would then have to be sawn free with the hand saw that was part of our emergency equipment, and that without anaesthetic.

Nice: Imagine, at the end of January/beginning of February 1939, when the weather was getting worse, you had to make an emergency landing. You would not have been able to be rescued in the Arctic summer.

Sauter: In that case, we would have been lost, because we would not have been rescued until autumn, and by then no one would have survived.

Schön: Were there any particularly critical situations during the long-haul flights?

Sauter: I remember of two. On the first flight, we were still inexperienced and didn't know what a "whiteout" looks like. But it came suddenly. We were flying towards the South Pole when it hit us, and suddenly everything was white. The pilot said, "I can't see anything, only white!" At the same moment, I said, "The antenna is hitting something." That meant extreme danger. The captain mastered it: a steep turn out and back again. That was one of the worst situations. The plane would probably have crashed into the ice. and all four of us would have been gone. That would have meant the end of the entire expedition. With the second flying boat alone would have made it i expedition.

The second dangerous situatio flight number 7, when the engi Wohlthat massif. Despite strenuous efforts, the captain and mechanic were unable to keep the aircraft in the air. Only after I had moved all the ballast to the front did we succeed. That was also the end of our long-haul flight. "Now let's get down to warmer climes," said the captain. Warmer, my foot! Instead of minus 30 degrees, it was minus 20, and later minus 10. At this temperature, the propulsion system started working again and we flew home obediently — "home" meaning our aircraft carrier, the Schwabenland.

Nice: The Schirmacher Lake District was only discovered during one of the last flights. How did that happen?

Sauter: We only discovered the Schirmacher Lakes Plateau on our seventh and final long-distance flight. I saw it clearly. It was probably one of the most important discoveries of the expedition. It was later named the Schirmacher Oasis, after our flight captain, who was credited with the discovery.

Schön: From your personal point of view, was the Antarctic expedition a success?

Sauter: From the perspective of the two aerial photographers, it was a great success with 11,600 aerial photographs. No one expected this result; it was sensational. We later completed a map of New Swabia in six weeks.

Schön: Who did you deliver the 11,600 aerial photographs to after the expedition?

Sauter: The photos were brought to Berlin immediately after the return of the M/S " " "Schwabenland" to Berlin, delivered to Hansa-Luftbild in Berlin-Tempelhof and stored in the bunker located beneath the building.

Preserved.

Nice: There are reports that all the expedition photos were destroyed during the Second World War at alone d have been destroyed.

The photographs were never

of these photographs? Were they possibly burned in the Hansa-Luftbild bunker in Berlin?

Sauter: The fact is that the films were stored in the Hansa-Luftbild bunker in Berlin-Tempelhof. The entrance to the bunkers was later bricked up in the hope that no one would know about the films. However, the Russians who occupied the site at the end of the war found out and opened the bunker, which had been damaged in an air raid. Since they found cameras, it can be assumed that the bunker was not completely burned out. But that is what the Russians claimed, stating that all the films had been burned.

GERMAN ANTARCTIC
EXPEDITION 1938/39

BERLIN W 35, 14
MATTHÄUFKIRCHENPLATZ 0
TELEPHONE: 22 26 10

14 July 1939

Mr
Siegfried Sauter

Bundesring 30

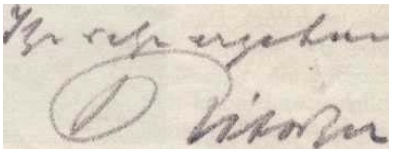
Dear Mr Sauter

The preliminary map of "New Swabia" has now been completed. When naming the individual mountain ranges, mountains, ridges, peaks, etc., consideration was given to those expedition participants whose cooperation was of particular importance to the expedition.

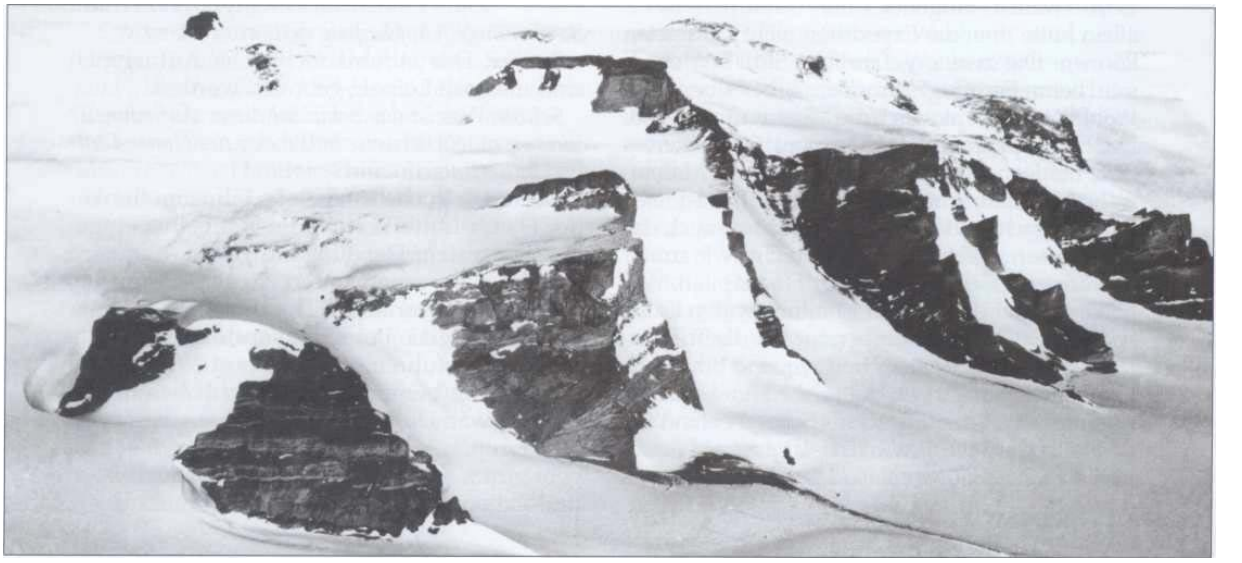
The area between 3 °and 3 2/3 °east and 72 1/2 ° south was given the name

==========

Best regards and Heil Hitler!



To this day, Siegfried Sauter has kept the letter informing him that a mountain range in New Swabia had been named after him. Right: The "certificate" of his equator baptism, signed by expedition leader Ritscher and Captain Kottas, is still in his possession.



The Sauter Ridge (according to today's measurements 72° 10' south, 2 ' 45' east) was named after its photographer.

Taufschein

Für

Herrn Siegfried SAUTER

ANTARKTIS-EXPEDITION

Hiermit tun wir kund, dass der Täufling am 31. Dezember 1938 die Aequatorlinie auf 0.00 Breite und 0.15 .. Länge passiert hat.

Der Täufling wurde nach altem Brauch vom Staube der nördlichen Halbkugel gereinigt und auf den Namen

DORNAI

getauft

Kapitän

MS-Schwabenland

Kottas

Pastor

Wilhelm Filchner

Zeugen

Expeditionsleiter

Deutsche Antarktische Expedition

1938/39

However, after the war, images copied from the films appeared in Berlin. In addition, long after the end of the war, Captain Ritscher's widow handed over around 600 photos to the Institute for Applied Geodesy in Frankfurt. I doubt that all the films were burned in Berlin, as they were all well encapsulated and sealed. It is conceivable that some films were taken as spoils, as the Russians were very interested in the results of the German Antarctic expedition of 1938/39; they always spoke of it with the greatest respect, including at the Antarctic Conference in New Zealand. But they never admitted to taking any films.

So you think it's possible that films still exist somewhere, perhaps as "booty"? But what interest could the Russians have had in this film material?

Sauter: Immediately after the war, the Russians set up a research station in the Antarctic region of Neuschwabenland. Why there of all places? They were the first to arrive and pushed ahead with their station, extending it as far as the Schirmacher Oasis. That was the most important thing for them. Did the Russians perhaps have aerial photographs and other detailed information about New Swabia? The Russians allowed the GDR to build a station not far from theirs, and the two sides worked very closely together.

Nice: Could military strategy have played a role?

Sauter: Definitely not. There is no grass, no blade of grass, no trees, no bushes. Nothing, just penguins and seals at the edge. Even supplying the research stations is no easy task. After the war, all the leading nations set up stations in Antarctica, which are manned by researchers all year round. The Americans and Russians have particularly large stations. But China, Japan, India, some African countries and, above all, the countries of South America have also built stations and operate them, some only during the Antarctic summer, others all year round. But it is impossible to build military stations.

Schön: Then you probably also consider it impossible that building materials were transported to New Swabia shortly before the start of the war and during the war to build bunkers in the ice, bunkers for accommodation and submarine bunkers?

Sauter: All the rumours and speculation that circulated after the war are utter nonsense. Ships could not land because of the pack ice belt surrounding New Swabia. Only icebreakers or specially armoured ships would have been able to do so. Every station where researchers spend the winter must be supplied with food for a year. That is only enough for a small number of people. The claim that a bunker was built for Hitler in New Swabia is complete nonsense, as is the claim that submarine bunkers were built there. Anyone who spreads such rumours has no idea what Antarctica is like; it is the most desolate continent in existence. Storms race across it at speeds of 200 kilometres per hour or more, and for half the year it is night, complete night.

Nice: The Schirmacher Oasis, also known as the Schirmacher Lake Plateau, discovered during the Antarctic expedition of 1938/39, seems to have been particularly favoured by many countries for the establishment of research stations. Why is that? Is the term "oasis" actually correct, or is it just a larger ice-free area with a few smaller lakes?

Sauter: "Oasis" is a somewhat misleading term for the Schirmacher Lakes Plateau. The term "oasis" normally conjures up images of a place with palm trees. There is no vegetation whatsoever in Antarctica. The Schirmacher Oasis is an ice-free zone with a blue lake in the middle.

Schön: Where is this oasis located, and how can it be reached? Sauter: The Schirmacher Oasis is located in a very flat area with a few small mountains whose walls heat up.

The flat area extends to a mountain range with peaks reaching heights of around 3,000 metres. The oasis is about an hour's flight from the ice shelf and is ice-free during the Antarctic summer, which begins in January. Only this time can be used for the construction and setting up of research stations.

research stations.

Schön: Which countries currently operate research stations in the Schirmacher Oasis, which was discovered by Lufthansa captain Schirmacher during the Antarctic expedition of 1938/39 and belongs to the area of New Swabia surveyed by the German expedition?

Sauter: The largest research station, "Novolazarevskaya," was built here by the Soviet Union in the early post-war years. It was expanded and developed almost continuously, and later part of it was handed over to the GDR, which built its own station here, which has since been dismantled. Both stations worked very closely together. In addition, South Africa, the People's Republic of China, Japan and India have stations in the area.

Heinz Schön (left) in conversation with the only surviving expedition member, Siegfried Sauter.

the Schirmacher Oasis was built. On my last trip to Antarctica with Franz Lazi in 1989, I was told that during the Antarctic summer, 200 Indians sit in the Indian station, which consists of tents, playing cards, and then leave again at the end of the summer.

Interesting: How do you explain that when the Germans resumed Antarctic research with great effort in the 1970s, they did not start again in New Swabia? Why was the German Neumeyer station not built in New Swabia?

Sauter: When the Federal Republic of Germany resumed Antarctic research, the Russians had already set up their station in New Swabia and given part of it to the GDR as a souvenir. This meant that it was not possible to build another station for the Federal Republic here. So they looked for another location for the Federal Republic's station and found it at Cape Norway, where the Neumeyer Station was built. The Federal Republic wanted to have a say in polar research and be part of it. We already had considerable success in Antarctic research. During the Cold War, we could hardly put ourselves in the same position as the Russians and the GDR. The Neumeyer Station is far away; it is not located in the Neuschwabenland area.

Nice: Didn't the Norwegians protest when the West German station was built at Cape Norway?

Sauter: I am not aware of any protests, although the Norwegians are not on good terms with us when it comes to Antarctica. Norwegian whalers constantly pursued us during the 1938/39 expedition; they had radio and visual contact with us. They wanted to know exactly how many aircraft we had and what we were doing in Antarctica. I suspect that the Norwegian whalers reported their observations to the Norwegian government, as the Norwegians considered the area of New Swabia, which belongs to Queen Maud Land, to be their property.

Interesting: were the Norwegians actually in New Swabia before the Germans?

Sauter: When we reached Antarctica in January 1939 with the M/S Schwabenland, Norwegian whaling boats sailed alongside us like escort dogs. Our ice pilot, Captain Kraul, who spoke fluent Norwegian, overheard the whaling captains talking among themselves. The Norwegian captains were instructed to name the coastal strip and the inland ice behind it. They had only seen the area with the naked eye or through binoculars; they had not set foot on it, but christened it König-Haa-kon-Land, for example. The Norwegians made it that easy for themselves to take possession of Queen Maud Land, which, according to Norwegian opinion, also includes New Swabia. Based on this naming, the Norwegian government had already declared to the German government in mid-January 1939:

"New Swabia belongs to us." The German government immediately rejected Norway's claim to the territory.

Schön: What economic interests could the Third Reich have had in taking possession of New Swabia in 1938?

Sauter: Securing a large whaling area in the Antarctic was certainly at the top of Germany's economic agenda. Furthermore, by taking possession of New Swabia, Germany wanted to secure a say in the later distribution of this unclaimed continent, especially since mineral resources were suspected to lie beneath the ice and oil deposits off the Antarctic coast.

Schön: What do you know about the American expeditions with Admiral Byrd before 1938/39? *Were the Americans also in New Swabia at that time?* Sauter: The Americans flew good reconnaissance missions, but they only surveyed individual strips, not contiguous areas. They undertook long, extensive flights and took good photographs with excellent aerial cameras. However, the Americans did not carry out proper surveys like we did on the Antarctic expedition in 1938/39. They saw their task as reconnaissance; they wanted to know more precisely which areas were ice-free and how high the Mountains are and how the terrain of other Antarctic regions looks from the air. However, given the total size of Antarctica, the Americans were only able to explore a small part of it. They certainly did an excellent job with their reconnaissance flights. However, the Americans did not fly over New Swabia, which remained "undiscovered land" until we Germans arrived in 1938/39.

It's nice that the Americans carried out another large-scale Antarctic expedition in 1946/47 under Admiral Byrd, involving enormous military effort. What do you personally see as the point of this action?

Sauter: For me, this undertaking was purely a matter of prestige. The Americans felt it was necessary because immediately after the end of the war, the Russians began to establish a presence in Antarctica. The Americans wanted to show that they were present in Antarctica. That is why they stated that the reason for their expedition was to test how people and equipment would react to Antarctic conditions and the Antarctic cold. While we launched our aircraft using a catapult during our expedition, the American aircraft took off from an aircraft carrier. The helicopters were also launched from the carrier. took off from these carriers. They tried out everything possible on this expedition and demonstrated their superiority.

That's great: with your keen interest in Neuschwabenland and Antarctica, it would be no surprise if you had returned to the icy continent after the war.

Sauter: That was me: in 1989. I realised that a lot had changed in Antarctica in the 50 years between 1939 and 1989. The Americans and Russians had gained the strongest foothold. I have to say with great respect that the Russians have set up some extremely cold stations there, at temperatures of nearly minus 90 degrees, which have to be restocked every year. The Americans maintain a permanent station that is almost a real town. It already had an airfield in 1989. It wasn't a scientific expedition, but a so-called "society expedition" with a Lazi sightseeing ship, which gave me the opportunity to see and experience Antarctica once again. The occasion was a film shoot in which I was given a special role as a member of the German Antarctic expedition of 1938/39.

In the film, Captain Lampe from Oldenburg comes out and greets me: "Ah, good day, Mr Sauter, how was it in Antarctica?"
"How were you there back then, in 1939?" And then I told them: "There are no more big whales, unlike back then when we discovered New Schwabenland. Neu-Schwabenland isn't photogenic. All you see is a high ice edge, and then you have to drive for several hours on a tractor to get to the Schirmacher Oasis. But that's not possible in the Antarctic winter. The German Neumayer Station can only be reached in summer, and it's not very photogenic either, but they do some very good scientific work there."

Schön: Did you still have contact with participants of the 1938/39 Antarctic expedition after the war?

Sauter: Yes, with one, with pilot Mayr. He took his flight captain's exam for the new Lufthansa in Frankfurt and then became flight captain for Adenauer, the Federal Chancellor. wanted to fly with him. Mayr was tall and broad like a double locker, he radiated calm and confidence. I didn't meet anyone else who was on the 1938/39 Antarctic expedition with the "Schwabenland". Unfortunately, neither the Third Reich nor the German media in the nearly 60 years since the war have reported on this great and significant Antarctic expedition — it would have deserved it.

Appendix

The Antarctic Treaty

(as of 5 August 2003)

The Governments of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, the French Republic, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Union of South Africa, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America,

Recognising that it is in the interest of all mankind to preserve the Antarctic for the exclusive use of peaceful purposes and to prevent it from becoming a place or object of international dispute;

Recognising the significant scientific progress resulting from international cooperation in Antarctic scientific research;

Convinced that the establishment of a firm foundation for the continuation and expansion of this cooperation on the basis of freedom of scientific research in Antarctica, as practised during the International Geophysical Year, is in the interests of science and the progress of all mankind;

Convinced also that a treaty ensuring the use of Antarctica for exclusively peaceful purposes and the maintenance of international harmony in Antarctica will promote the objectives and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, Have agreed as follows:

Art. I: (1) Antarctica shall be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. Among other things, all measures of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the conduct of military manoeuvres and the testing of weapons of any kind, shall be prohibited.

(2) This Treaty shall not preclude the use of military personnel or equipment for scientific research or other peaceful purposes.

Art. II: The freedom of scientific research in Antarctica and cooperation for this purpose, as practised during the International Geophysical Year, shall continue in accordance with this Treaty.

Art. III: (1) In order to promote the international cooperation in Antarctic scientific research provided for in Article II, the Contracting Parties agree that, as far as possible and practicable

a) information on plans for scientific programmes in Antarctica shall be exchanged in order to enable the undertakings to be carried out with maximum economy and efficiency;

b) scientific personnel in Antarctica shall be exchanged between expeditions and stations;

c) scientific observations and results from Antarctica shall be exchanged and made available without hindrance.

(2) In implementing this Article, the establishment of working relationships on the basis of cooperation with those specialised agencies of the United Nations and other international organisations having a scientific or technical interest in Antarctica shall be encouraged in every way.

Art. IV: (1) This Treaty shall not be interpreted

a) as constituting a waiver by any Contracting Party of previously asserted rights and claims to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica;

b) as a complete or partial waiver by any Contracting Party of the basis of a claim to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica which may arise from its activities or those of its nationals in Antarctica or otherwise;

c) as if it were prejudging the position of a Contracting Party regarding its recognition or non-recognition of the right or claim or the basis of the claim of another State to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica.

(2) Acts or activities undertaken during the period of validity of this Treaty shall not constitute a basis for the assertion, support or rejection of a claim to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica and shall not establish sovereign rights there. While this Treaty is in force, no new claims or extensions of existing claims to territorial sovereignty in Antarctica shall be made.

Art. V: (1) Nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive waste are prohibited in Antarctica.

(2) If international agreements on the use of nuclear energy, including nuclear explosions and the disposal of radioactive waste, are concluded to which all Contracting Parties whose representatives are entitled to participate in the meetings provided for in Article IX are parties, the provisions of such agreements shall apply in Antarctica.

Art. VI: This Treaty shall apply to the area south of 60° south latitude, including all ice shelves; however, this Treaty shall not affect the rights or the exercise of the rights of any State under international law in relation to the high seas in that area.

Article VII: (1) In order to achieve the objectives of this Treaty and to ensure compliance with its provisions, each Party whose representatives are entitled to participate in the meetings provided for in Article IX shall have the right to appoint observers to carry out the inspections referred to in this Article. Observers shall be nationals of the Party which appoints them. The names of the observers shall be communicated to each other Contracting Party entitled to appoint observers; their withdrawal shall also be communicated.

(2) Each observer appointed in accordance with paragraph 1 shall have at all times free access to all areas of Antarctica.

(3) All areas of Antarctica, including all stations, facilities and equipment in those areas, as well as all ships and aircraft at points for setting down or picking up cargo or personnel in Antarctica, shall be available to any observer designated in accordance with paragraph 1.

at any time for

(5) Individual or all rights provided for in this Agreement may be exercised from

(4) Each of the Contracting Parties entitled to appoint observers may at any time conduct aerial observations over any or all areas of the Antarctic.

(5) Each Contracting Party shall, at the time this Treaty enters into force for it and thereafter in advance, inform the other Contracting Parties

a) of all expeditions to Antarctica carried out by its ships or nationals, and of all expeditions to Antarctica organised in its territory or carried out from its territory;

b) over all stations occupied by their nationals in Antarctica and

c) of all military personnel or equipment which it intends to place in Antarctica under the conditions provided for in Article I, paragraph 2.

Art. VIII: (1) In order to facilitate the performance of their duties under this Treaty, the observers designated in accordance with Article 7, paragraph 1, and the scientific personnel exchanged in accordance with Article III, paragraph 1 (b), as well as the personnel accompanying them, shall, without prejudice to the attitude of the Contracting Parties regarding jurisdiction over all other persons in Antarctica - with regard to all acts or omissions committed by them during their stay in Antarctica in the performance of their duties, solely to the jurisdiction of the Contracting Party of which they are nationals.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph 1, pending the adoption of measures under Article IX, paragraph 1(e), the Contracting Parties involved in a dispute concerning the exercise of jurisdiction in Antarctica shall consult each other promptly with a view to reaching solutions acceptable to all parties.

Art. IX: (1) Representatives of the Contracting Parties referred to in the preamble shall, within two months of the entry into force of this Treaty, hold meetings in Canberra and thereafter atat appropriate intervals and in appropriate locations to exchange information, consult on matters of mutual interest relating to Antarctica, and develop, discuss and recommend to their governments measures to promote the principles and objectives of this Treaty, including measures

a) for the use of Antarctica for exclusively peaceful purposes;

b) to facilitate scientific research in Antarctica;

c) to facilitate international scientific cooperation in Antarctica;

d) to facilitate the exercise of inspection rights under Article VII;

e) in connection with questions relating to the exercise of jurisdiction in Antarctica;

f) for the conservation and protection of the living resources in

the Antarctic.

(2) Each Contracting Party that has become a Contracting Party by accession in accordance with Article XIII shall be entitled to appoint representatives to participate in the meetings referred to in paragraph 1 for as long as that Contracting Party demonstrates its interest in Antarctica through the conduct of significant scientific research in Antarctica, such as the establishment of a scientific station or the dispatch of a scientific expedition.

3) Reports of the observers referred to in Article VII shall be transmitted to the representatives of the Contracting Parties participating in the meetings referred to in paragraph 1.

(4) The measures referred to in paragraph 1 shall take effect as soon as they have been approved by all Contracting Parties.

whose representatives were entitled to participate in the discussions held to consider these measures.

(5) Individual or all rights provided for in this Agreement may be exercised from the date of entry into force of the Agreement, regardless of whether measures to facilitate the exercise of such rights under this Agreement have been taken.

Article

Art. X: Each Contracting Party undertakes to make appropriate efforts, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, to prevent any activity in Antarctica that is inconsistent with the principles or objectives of this Treaty.

Art. XI: (1) If a dispute arises between two or more Contracting Parties concerning the interpretation or application of this Treaty, the Contracting Parties concerned shall consult each other with a view to resolving the dispute by negotiation, investigation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or other peaceful means of their choice.

(2) Any such dispute which cannot be settled in this manner shall, with the consent of all parties to the dispute, be submitted to the International Court of Justice for settlement; if no agreement is reached on referral to the International Court of Justice, the disputing parties shall not be released from their obligation to continue to seek to settle the dispute by one of the peaceful means referred to in paragraph 1.

Art. XII: (1) a) This Treaty may be amended or supplemented at any time by unanimous agreement of the Contracting Parties whose representatives are entitled to participate in the meetings provided for in Article IX. Such amendment or supplement shall enter into force when the depositary government has received notification from all Contracting Parties that they have ratified it.

(b) Thereafter, such amendment or addition shall enter into force for each other Contracting Party upon receipt of its notification of ratification by the depositary government. Any Contracting Party which has not notified its ratification within two years of the entry into force of the amendment or addition in accordance with subparagraph (a) shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the Treaty upon the expiry of that period.

(2) a) A conference of all Contracting Parties shall be held as soon as possible to review the operation of this Treaty if, after the expiry of thirty years from the entry into force of the Treaty, any of the Contracting Parties whose representatives are entitled to participate in the meetings provided for in Article IX so requests by notification to the Depositary Government.

b) Any amendment or addition to this Agreement approved at such a conference by a majority of the Contracting Parties represented there, including a majority of those whose representatives are entitled to participate in the meetings provided for in Article IX, shall be notified by the Depositary Government to all Contracting Parties immediately after the conclusion of the conference and shall enter into force in accordance with paragraph 1.

c) If such an amendment or addition is not approved by all Contracting Parties within two years of notification to all Contracting Parties

in accordance with paragraph 1, letter a, any Contracting Party may, at any time after the expiry of this period, denounce this Agreement

notify the depositary government of their withdrawal from this Treaty; withdrawal shall take effect two years after the date of receipt of the notification by the depositary government.

Art. XIII: (1) This Treaty shall be subject to ratification by the signatory States. It shall be open for accession by any State which is a member of the United Nations and by any other State which is invited to accede to it with the consent of all Contracting Parties whose representatives are entitled to participate in the meetings provided for in Article IX.

(2) Ratification of this Treaty or accession thereto shall be effected by each State in accordance with its constitutional procedures.

(3) Instruments of ratification and accession shall be deposited with the Government of the United States of America, which is hereby designated as the depositary government.

(4) The depositary government shall notify all signatory and acceding States of the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification or accession and of the date of entry into force of this Treaty.

and acceding States of the date of deposit of each instrument of ratification or accession and of the date of entry into force of this Treaty.

the entry into force of the Treaty and any amendments or

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of its signature by the signatory governments.

(5) Upon deposit of the instruments of ratification by

For all signatory states, this treaty shall enter into force for those states and for states that have deposited instruments of accession. Thereafter, the treaty shall enter into force for each acceding state upon deposit of its instrument of accession.

(6) The depositary government shall register this Treaty in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Art. XIV: This agreement, which is written in English, French, Russian and Spanish, with each version being equally binding, shall be filed in the archives of

United States of America United States of America;

which shall transmit them to the governments of the signatory states and acceding States, the relevant copies.

copies shall be

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised, have signed this Treaty.

Done at Washington on 1 December 1959. (Signatures)

German Antarctic expeditions until 1939

1. 1873—1874
Eduard Dallmann, captain, seal hunter and whaler Ship: "Grönland"
First use of a (sailing) steamship in the South Polar region
region
Exploration of the Bismarck Strait, the Kaiser Wilhelm Islands, etc.
Client: Polar Fishing Company in Hamburg

2. 1874
von Reibnitz, Captain Ship:
"Arkona"
Exploration of a suitable location for observing a transit of Venus on 9 December 1874. This was then carried out by Ladislaus Weineck on
the Kerguelen Islands.

3. 1874–1876
Georg Emil Gustav Freiherr von Schleinitz, captain (later admiral)
Ship: "Gazelle"
Oceanographic explorations and surveys in the Kerguelen area
Map 1:175,000: "Kerguelen Island, from Howe Island to
Accessible Bay "

4. 1882—1883
Dr. Kurt Schrader

Ships: "Moltke " and "Marie "
Participation in the 1st International Polar Year Geographical and meteorological measurements Wintering on South Georgia

5. 1893—1894
Carl Anton Larsen, captain, Norwegian whaler Ships: "Jarson", together with "Hertha" under Captain Evensen
Explorations on the east coast of the Antarctic Peninsula
island
Map 1 : 7,500,000: "Dirck Gherritz Archipelago " (1895)
Client: Steamship company "Oceana" Hamburg

6. 1898
Prof. Dr. Carl Chun, zoologist
Ship: "Valdivia" under Captain Sachse and Captain

Krech
Oceanographic and biological explorations between the Kerguelen Islands and Enderby Land. During this expedition, Bouvet Island was rediscovered. Measurements of the crater rim revealed that Kaiser Wilhelm Peak was the highest point.
Client: Reich Government

7. 1901—1903
First official German Antarctic expedition Prof. Dr. Erich von Drygalski, geographer, geophysicist Ship: "Gauss I" under Captain Hans Ruser
Exploration of Kaiser Wilhelm II Land and surveying of Gaussberg with the first use of terrestrial photogrammetry on a German expedition. First aerial photographs of Antarctica taken from a tethered balloon at an altitude of 500 metres on 29 March 1903.
Map 1:7,500: "The Gaussberg"
Map 1:15,000: "The inland ice at Gaussberg "
"
Map 1:250,000: "The ice shelf of Posadowsky Bay
Map sketch: "Posadowsky Bay with the winter camp of the Gauss"
Commissioned by: Emperor Wilhelm II, Imperial Government, Count
Baudissin, Count Posadowsky

8. 1911—1912
Second official German Antarctic expedition Dr Wilhelm Filchner, scientist
Ship: "Deutschland"under Captain Richard Vahsel and
Captain Alfred Kling
Exploration of the Prinzregent-Luitpold Land and the Filchner Ice Shelf. The ship was trapped in ice and drifted through the Weddell Sea for nine months.
Sea for nine months.
Map 1 : 450,000: "Prinzregent-Luitpold Land "
Commissioned by: Imperial Government, Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria, among others

9.
Prof. Dr. Alfred Merz
Ship: "Meteor" under Captain (later Admiral) Dr. h. c. Spiess
Oceanographic exploration around Bouvet Island Client: German Research Foundation under President Dr F. Schmitt-Otto

10. 1928—1929
Dr Ludwig Kohl-Lars„ en
Ship: Thorhammer
Glacier measurement on South Georgia

11. 1938
Third official German Antarctic expedition
Alfred Ritscher, Captain„ , Expedition Leader
Ship: "Schwabenland" under Captain Alfred Kottas [2]).
Exploration of New Swabia (approx. 600,000 km Between 20 January and 4 February 1939, 11,600 aerial photographs were taken (oblique aerial photographs with Zeiss RMK 21/18).
Maps 1:500,000, 1:50,000
Client: Reich Government, German Research Community under President Prof. Dr. Rudolf Mentzel

German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39

Expedition participants

Expedition leader:	Captain Alfred Ritscher, Government Councillor in the High Command of the Navy, Nautical Department
	Captain Alfred Kottas, merchant navy captain, DLH
Captain of the ship: Ice pilot:	Captain Otto Kraul, merchant navy captain, High Command of the Navy
	Dr Josef Bludau, NDL
Ship's doctor: Flight captain:	Rudolf Mayr, Commander of the Dornier Wal flying boat "Passat", DLH
- Aircraft mechanic:	Franz Preuschoff, DLH
- Flight radio operator: Aerial photographer:	Herbert Ruhnke, DLH Max Bundermann, Hansa Luftbild GmbH
	Richardheinrich Schirmacher, pilot of the Dornier Wal flying boat "Boreas", DLH
Flight captain:	Kurt Loesener, DLH Erich Gruber, DLH Siegfried Sauter, Hansa Luftbild GmbH Dr
- Aircraft mechanic:	Herbert Regula, German Naval Observatory,
- Radio operator:	Hamburg Heinz Lange, Study Assessor, Reich Office for
- Aerial photographer:	Weather Services Berlin Walter Krüger, Reich Office for Weather Services, Berlin
1. Meteorologist:	Wilhelm Gockel, Wilhelmshaven Naval Observatory
2. Meteorologist:	Erich Barkley, Study Assessor, Reich Office for Fisheries, Institute for Whale Research Hamburg
- Technical assistant:	cand. geophys. Leo Gburek, Geomagnetic Institute Leipzig
- Technical assistant:	Dr Ernst Herrmann, Teacher, Berlin cand. rer. nat. Karl-Heinz Paulsen, Hamburg Herbert Amelang,
Biologist:	NDL Karl-Heinz Röbke, NDL Hans Werner Viereck, NDL Vincenz Grisar, NDL
Geophysicist:	
Geographer:	
Oceanographer:	
1. Officer:	
2. Officer:	
3. Officer:	
4. Officer:	
Ship radio operator:	Erich Harmsen, DLH
Ship radio officer: Ship radio officer: Chief engineer:	Kurt Bojahr, DLH Ludwig Müllmerstadt, DLH Karl Uhlig, NDL
2. Engineer:	Robert Schulz, NDL
3. Engineer:	Henry Maas, NDL Edgar
4. Engineer:	Gäng, NDL Hans Nielsen,
4th engineer: Assistant engineer:	NDL Johann Frey, NDL
Assistant engineer:	Georg Jelschen, NDL Heinz
Assistant engineer:	Siewert, NDL Electrical engineer
Electrician:	Herbert Bruns, Atlas-Werke Bremen Karl-Heinz Bode, NDL Herbert Bolle,
Electrician: Foreman:	DLH Wilhelm Hartmann, DLH
- Catapult operator:	Alfred Rücker, DLH
- Warehouse keeper:	Franz Weiland, DLH Axel
- Flight mechanic:	Mylius, DLH Wilhelm
- Flight mechanic:	Lender, DLH Willy Stein,
- Flight mechanic:	NDL Richard Wehrend, NDL
Boatswain:	Alfons Schäfer, NDL Heinz
1. Carpenter:	Hoek, NDL Jürgen Ulpts,
2. Carpenter: Sailor:	NDL Albert Weber, NDL
Sailor: Sailor: Sailor:	Adolf Kunze, NDL Karl
Sailor: Sailor: Sailor:	Hedden, NDL Eugen Klenck,
Sailor: Sailor: Light	NDL Fritz Jedamezyk, NDL
sailor: Deckhand:	Emil Brandt, NDL
Cabin boy:	Kurt Ohnemüller, NDL Alfred
Warehouse keeper:	Peters, NDL Alex Burtscheid,
Engine room attendant: Engine	NDL Karl-Heinz Meyer, NDL
room attendant:	Walter Brinkmann, NDL
Engine room attendant:	Dietrich Witte, NDL Erich
Assistant boiler keeper:	Kubacki, NDL Walter Dräger,
Assistant boiler keeper:	NDL Karl 0lbrich, NDL Georg
Cleaner:	Niemüller, NDL
Cleaner: Cleaner:	Friedrich Mathwig, NDL Ferdinand
Cleaner: Baker:	Dunekamp, NDL Erwin Steinmetz,
1. Cook:	NDL Herbert Callis, NDL Helmut
2. Cook:	Dukatschow, NDL Otto Sieland, NDL
Cook's assistant and baker:	Fritz Troe, NDL Gottfried
Cook's assistant and butcher: Cook's assistant:	Thole, NDL
1. Steward:	Ferdinand Wolf, NDL Hans
Steward: Steward:	Büttner, NDL Willi Reeps,
Trade fair steward:	NDL Wilhelm Malyska, NDL
Trade fair steward:	Rudolf Stawicki, NDL Willi
Trade fair steward:	Fröhling, NDL
Trade fair boy:	Johann von de Logt, NDL Rudolf
Trade fair boy:	Burghard, NDL Rolf Oswald, NDL Johann Bates, NDL

Total number of expedition participants:	82
Composition of expedition participants:	
Norddeutscher Lloyd	53
German Lufthansa	16
Hansa Luftbild GmbH	2
Scientists, specialists	9
High Command of the Navy	2

Bibliography

Archives and offices

Federal Foreign Office, Berlin Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research (AWI) in the Heimholz Community — Institute for Polar and Marine Research
Library for Contemporary History, Stuttgart Federal
Archives — Berlin Branch Federal Archives — Naval
Department, Koblenz Federal Archives — Military
Archives, Freiburg i.Br.
Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Bonn / Bad Godesberg
Federal Ministry of Justice, Berlin German Lufthansa AH
— Archive Cologne German Submarine Archive,
Cuxhaven
Hamburg Institute for Economic Research (HWA) — Archive Hamburg
Military History Research Office, Potsdam
Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, Berlin Maritime Professional Association, Hamburg

Monographs

Amundsen, Roald. *The Conquest of the South Pole: The Norwegian South Pole Expedition with the Fram 1910— 1912.* Munich: Lehmann, 1912.

Bar-Zohar, Michael. *The Avengers.* London: Barker, 1968.

Bezemer, K. W. L. and Herbert Lewandowski. *The Battle for the South Pole: The Fates of the Great South Pole Expeditions.* Zurich: Orell Füssli, 1952.

Bock, Bruno. *Built at HDW: Howaldtswerke — Deutsche Werft AG; 150 Years.* Herford: Koehler, 1988.

Bond, Creina, Roy Siegfried and Peter Johnson. *Antarctica: A Continent Closes In.* Hanover: Landbuch, 1980.

Braunburg, Rudolf. *The History of Lufthansa: From the Biplane to the Airbus.* Hamburg: Rasch und Röhring, 1991.

Brunk, Karsten. *Cartographic work and German naming in Neuschwabenland, Antarctica: Previous work, reconstruction of the flight paths of the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39 and revision of German place names in Neuschwabenland.* Frankfurt am Main: Verlag of the Institute for Applied Geodesy, 1986.

Cook, James. *Voyages of Discovery in the Pacific: The Logbooks of the Voyages from 1768 to 1779.* Edited by Archibald Grenfell Price. Tübingen, Germany, among other places: Erdmann, 1971.

Demand, Carlo. *The Great Atlantic Flights: 1919 to Today.* With the collaboration of Peter Pletschacher. Stuttgart: Motorbuch, 1983.

Dönitz, Karl. *Ten Years and Twenty Days: Memoirs 1935–1945.* Bonn: Bernard & Graefe, 1991.

Drygalski, Erich von. *To the Continent of the Icy South: German South Pole Expedition. Voyages and Research of the the "Gauss" 1901–1903.* Berlin: Reimer, 1904.

Filchner, Wilhelm. *To the Sixth Continent: The Second German South Pole Expedition.* Berlin: Ullstein, 1923.

Fuchs, Vivian. *Across the South Pole: Conquering the Sixth Continent.* Berlin et al.: Ullstein, 1960.

Gronau, Wolfgang von. *Pioneer flights with the Dornier "Wal".* Steinebach-Wörthsee: Zuerl, 1974.

Gröner, Erich. *German Warships 1815–1945. Vol. 7.* Koblenz: Bernard & Graefe, 1990.

Gütschow, Fred. *German Flying Boats: Flying Boats, Amphibious Flying Boats and Projects from 1909 to the Present.* Stuttgart: Motor-buch, 1978.

Hassert, Kurt. *Polar Research: History of the Voyages of Discovery to the North and South Poles.* Munich: Goldmann, 1956.

Heinkel, Ernst. *Catapults and Catapulting Aircraft.* Munich: Weiss [1931].

Herrmann, Ernst. *German Researchers in the South Polar Sea: Report from the German Antarctic Expedition 1938–1939 with Foreword by Reich Marshal Hermann Göring and an introduction by the expedition leader Captain Ritscher.* Berlin: Safari, 1941.

Hillary, Edmund. *The Race to the South Pole.* Düsseldorf et al.: Econ, 1961.

Hümmelchen, Gerhard. *The German Sea Pilots 1935–1945.* Munich: Lehmann, 1976

Huntford, Roland. Scott and Amundsen: *Dramatic Battle for the South Pole.*

Königstein/ Ts.: Athenäum, 1980. Irving, David. *The Tragedy of the German Air Force: From the Files and Memoirs of Field Marshal Milch.* Frankfurt a. M. et al.: Ullstein, 1970.

Jung, Dieter, Berndt Wenzel and Arno Abendroth. *The Ships and Boats of the German Naval Air Force 1912–1976.* Stuttgart: Motorbuch, 1977.

Klausbruckner, Bruno. *Starting Point Antarctica: A Year in the Ice.* Vienna: J und V, 1991.

Kohnen, Heinz. *Antarctic Expedition: Germany's Advance into the Eternal Ice.* Bergisch Gladbach: Lübbe, 1981.

Küppers, Wilhelm. *Ready, Set, Go — Atlantic: Longing, Conquest, Domination.* Edited by Günter Brinkmann. Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1955.

Kurowski, Franz. *Sea War from the Air: The German Naval Air Force in the Second World War.* Herford: Mittler, 1979.

Lazi, Franz. *Antarctica.* Künzelsau et al.: Sigloch-Edition, 1980.

Mandelsloh, Klaus von. *Antarctica. Voyages of discovery into the future.* With text by Jörn Freyenhagen. Munich: List, 1982.

Mawson, Douglas. *Life and Death at the South Pole.* 2 vols. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1922.

Max, Alphonse. *Antarctica: A Geostrategic Study. Tübingen:* Grabert, 1980.

May, John. *The Greenpeace Book of Antarctica.* Ravensburg: Maier, 1988.

Mickleburgh, Edwin. *Adventure Antarctica: Threatened Continent in Perpetual Ice.* Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe, 1980.

Mitterhuber, Simon. *German Catapult Aircraft and Catapult Ships: Development, Use and Technology.* Bonn: Bernard & Graefe, 2004.

Naveen, Ron, Colin Monteath, Tui de Roy and Mark Jones (eds.). *The Antarctic Lives: A Fascinating Journey into the Eternal Ice.* Vienna: Buchgemeinschaft Donauland, 1991.

Nicolaou, Stephane. *The History of Seaplanes: [from 1905 to the present day].* Königswinter: Heel, 1997.

Peillard, Leonce. *History of Submarine Warfare 1939 to 1945.* Vienna, Berlin: Neff, 1970.

Porter, Eliot. *Antarctica: A Journey to the Southern Continent.* Munich: Christian, 1979.

Poturzyn, Fischer von, Friedrich Andreas and Heinz Orlovi-us. *South Atlantic Flight: Air Journey to the Floating Island "Westphalia" via Spanish, French and British Africa.* Munich: Eher, 1934.

Reinke-Kunze, Christine. *Voyages of Discovery to the Polar Regions: Antarctica.* Hamburg: Koehler, 1996.

Ritscher, Alfred (ed.). *Scientific and Aeronautical Results of the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39.* German Research Vol. 3. On behalf of the German Research Association. Vol. 1, Part 1 [Text section] Leipzig: Koehler Amelan, 1942.

Ritscher, Alfred (ed.). *German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39: Scientific and Aeronautical Results.* German Research Vol. 3. On behalf of the German Research Association. Vol. 1, Part 2. [Illustrations and maps] Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1942.

Rosenstock, Jürgen. *Flying Boats over the Atlantic: The Adventurous Expeditions of Lufthansa 1934–1939.* Munich: GeraMond, 2001.

Salewski, Michael. *The German Naval Command 1935–1945.* 3 vols. Frankfurt am Main (3: Munich): Bernhard & Graefe, 1970–75.

Schaeffer, Heinz. *U 977: Secret Mission to South America.* Munich: Heyne, 1976.

Schmelzkopf, Reinhart. *German Merchant Shipping 1919–1939.* Vol. 2. Oldenburg, Hamburg: Stalling, [1974]. Schwadtke, Karl-Heinz. *German Merchant Ships 1939 1945.* Oldenburg, Hamburg: Stalling, 1974.

Serrano, Miguel. *The Golden Ribbon: Esoteric Hitlerism.* Wetter: Teut, 1987.

Shackleton, Ernest Henry. 21 *Miles from the South Pole: The History of the British South Pole Expedition 1907–09.* Berlin: Süsserott, [1909].

Sobiesiak, Monika and Susanne Korhammer (eds.). *Nine Women Researchers in the Eternal Ice. The First Antarctic Wintering Season*

Sullivan, Walter. *Men and Power at the South Pole: The Conquest of the South Pole.*

The birth of a new continent. Vienna, Frankfurt am Main: Forum, [1958].

Szabo, Ladislao. *Hitler está vivo.* Barcelona, 1947. Tilgenkamp, Erich. *Schwingen über Nacht und Eis.* in Zu- Collaboration with C. H. Pollog. Berlin (East): Neues Leben, 1957.

Preliminary report on the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39. Annals of Hydrography and Maritime Meteorological Research. gie. B. Supplement. Published by the German Seaworthy. Berlin: Mittler, 1939.

Vorfelder, Jochen. *Ice Patrol: Greenpeace in Antarctica.* Reinbek near Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987.

Wächter, Ernst. *Heroes of the Ice Sea: North and South Polar Expeditions. Described for Young People.* Stuttgart et al.: Union, [1911].

Witthöft, Hans Jürgen. *The German Merchant Fleet 1939–1945: With Special Consideration of the Blockade Breakers.* Vol. 2. Göttingen [et al.]: Musterschmidt, 1971.

Zuerl, Walter. *Floating Islands, Flying Ships, Twin-Engine Aircraft, Catapults, Towing Sails, Aircraft Cranes.* Munich: Pechstein, [1938].

Dependent contributions

"Alfred Ritscher was an important polar explorer: On the death of the sailor and aviator." In *Die Welt.* Hamburg, 3 April 1963.

Alphonse, Max. "Antarctica: A Geostrategic Project." In *Germany in History and the Present.* No. 4. Tübingen, 1979.

"Argentina courts Antarctica." In *Swiss Political Correspondence.* Bern, 14 August 1973.

"From Antarctica to (back to) Germany: The German research expedition. Returned home. In *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung.* Berlin, 12 April 1939.

Blankenburg, Joachim. "Atlantic flight and its execution." In *Nautikus. No location,* 1939. pp. 299–312.

Byrd, Richard Evelyn. "Our Navy Ex Lores Antarctica." In *National Geographic Magazine.* Vol. 92. No. 4. October, 1947. pp. 429–522.

"Chile becomes Antarctic-conscious. In *Swiss Political Correspondence.* Bern, 20 January 1977.

Denisov, Ivanov. "Antarctic Expedition of the USSR." In *Neue Zeit.* No. 11, 13 and 16. Moscow, 1956.

"The Chilean President Visits Antarctica." In *Der Rote Brief* Cologne, 10 February 1977.

Dyson, John. "Tug of war over Antarctica. In *Das Beste from Reader's Digest.* German edition, November 1987.

"The Westfalen Air Base and the Air Force connection between Germany and America. In *VDI.* 14th year, no. 22. No place, 1934.

"The Führer honours Antarctic explorers: Captain Ritscher is promoted to senior government official. In *Hamburg Foreign denblatt.* Hamburg, 29 April 1939.

"The Führer honours Captain Ritscher: Recognition for the German Antarctic Expedition. In *Frankfurter Zeitung.* Frankfurt a.M., 28 April 1939.

"Antarctica. In *La Plata-Ruf* Buenos Aires, March 1969.

"Antarctica — A possible future casus belli?" In *Wehrpolitische Informationen.* Cologne, 28 January 1978.

"The map of Spitsbergen is still close at hand: on the 80th birthday of Captain Ritscher." In *Die Welt.* Hamburg, 22 May 1959.

"A fulfilled life: Captain Ritscher celebrates his 80th birthday." In *Hamburger Abendblatt.* Hamburg, 23 May 1959.

"Ice-breaking cargo ships." In *Neue Zürcher Zeitung.* Zurich, 27 February 1979.

Feßler, Othmar. "Aviation and Seafaring in the Overseas Weather." traffic." In *Nautikus. No place,* 1939, pp. 293–298. Fischer, E. H. "Air traffic control ship, Friesenland `." In *VDI.* 17th year, no. 26. No place, 1937. p. 3.

Forster, Ernst. "The South Atlantic aircraft base Schwabenland of Deutsche Lufthansa." In *Shipyard, Shipping Company, Port — Journal for Shipbuilding and Shipping.* 15th Jg., No. 22. n.p., 1934.

Georgi, J. "Polar explorer Captain Alfred Ritscher. " In *Polar-Research.* Vol. 5. No. 32. No place, 1962 and No. 1 and 2. No place, Oct. October 1963.

Griehl, Manfred. "Dornier Flying Boats in World War II." In *Waffen-Arsenal.* No. 171. Wölfersheim-Berstadt, 1998. Hauptmeier, Ariel. "Antarctica — The unknown 'land of the South'." land'." In *GEO Special. Arctic and Antarctic.* No. 1. February 2003.

"Hot love for the cold continent." In *La Plata-Ruf* Buenos Aires, April 1975.

"Hot topics surrounding Antarctica. " In *Schweizerische Politi- Correspondence.* Bern, 16 April 1979.

Herner, Heinrich. "The air traffic control ships 'Ostmark' and 'Friesenland'." In *Shipbuilding. No location,* 1938. pp. 273–285.

Höpker, Wolfgang. "Neutralisation and Demilitarisation run„ of Antarctica." In *Foreign Policy.* Apr, 1960. Kuhn, M. "Antarctica — The largest desert in the world." In *Um- Exhibition in Natural Science and Technology.* No. 22. No place, 1990. pp. 675–681.

Ott, Ursula. "Horror at the South Pole." In *GEO Special. Arctic and Antarctic.* No. 1. February 2003.

Rainer Lagoni. "The „Federal Republic of Germany and the Antarctic Treaty. In *Europa-Archiv.* No. 13. No location, 1979.

Rosenbladt, Sabine. "Politics at the Poles: The Antarctic World Community." In *GEO Special. Arctic and Antarctic.* No. 1. February 2003.

Sanders, Andreas. "Convoy to the Pole of Cold." In *GEO Special. Arctic and Antarctic.* No. 1. February 2003.

Schmidt-Falkenberg, H. "German contributions to the cartography of Antarctica using photogrammetry and remote sensing." _<undung." In *Journal of Surveying. Geodetic Contributions to Antarctic Research.* Vol. 109. Vol. 4. Stuttgart: Wittwer, 1984.5.141 ff.

Traufetter, Gerald. "Messages from the ice hell." In *Der Spiegel.* No. 4.20.1.2003.5.118—132.

"Wintering with provisions delivered by parachute: the heart-warming story of the 'parachute men' in the Arctic"

Official reception yesterday at City Hall " Captain Ritscher In about new Antarctic expeditions. *Hamburger Tage-Blatt.* Hamburg, 13 April 1939.

Zuerl, Walter. "Floating Airports: 'Westfalen ‚Schwabenland` — ‚Ostmark`." In *Deutsche Flughäfen — Journal for the Promotion of Air Transport.* 5th year, issue 4/5. April/May 1936.

Documentary films

Lazi, Franz (director). *Antarctica: The Oasis of Blue Lakes.* Commentary by Heinz Kohnen. VHS video, 1993. 43:28 min.

Lazi, Franz (director). *Antarctica: The Dry Valleys of Victoria Country.* Commentary by Heinz Kohnen. VHS video, 1993. 43:00 min.

Lazi, Franz (director). *Expedition "Neuschwabenland : German researchers in Antarctica in 1939 and 1989.* VHS video, 1989. 39:00 min.

Lazi, Franz (director). *World Park Antarctica: Continent of the Super- lative.* Commentary by Widmar Puhl. VHS video, 1993. 43:00 min.

Other

Sauter, Siegfried, participant in the German Antarctic Expedition 1938/39. Interview by the author, 2004.

Table of contents

The cover photo shows a mountain in the Wohlthat Massif (photo: Franz Lazi) Page 1: A granite pillar in the western Mühlig-Hofmann Mountains
Page 2 / 3: The central Drygalski Mountains, with the Matterhorn on the right
Page 6 / 7: The "Teeth of Fenriswolf" in the western mountain range of the Drygalski Mountains The photos by Franz Lazi and Dr. Wilfried Bauer in this book were taken over the last twenty years. The black-and-white photographs were taken in the winter of 1938/39.
The photographs without source references were kindly provided by Mr Siegfried Sauter.

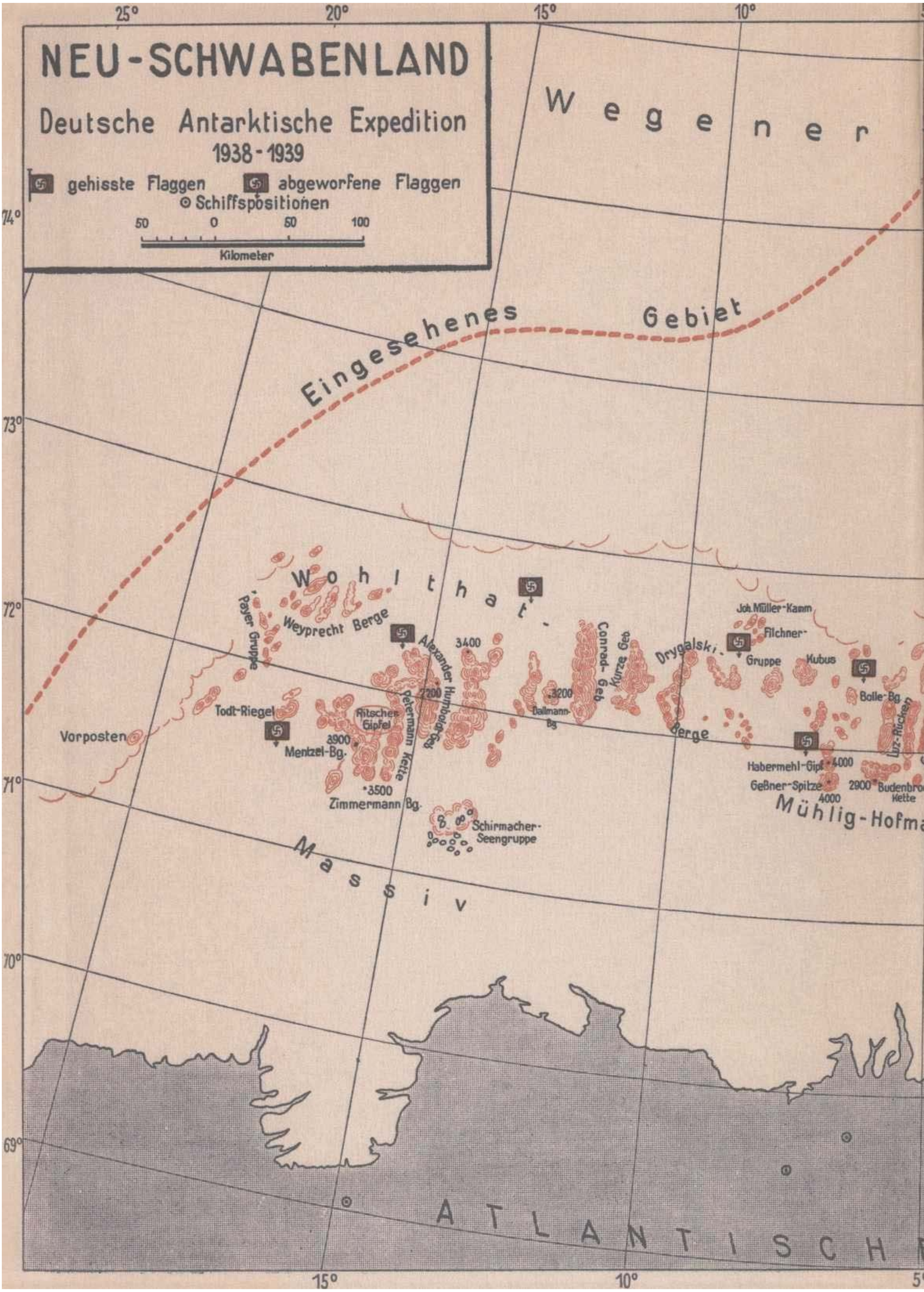
Please send any additional, critical or approving comments to:

Heinz Schön • Auf dem Sepp 19 • D-32107 Bad Salzuflen Telephone: (05222) 74 24 • Fax: (05222) 7 39 20

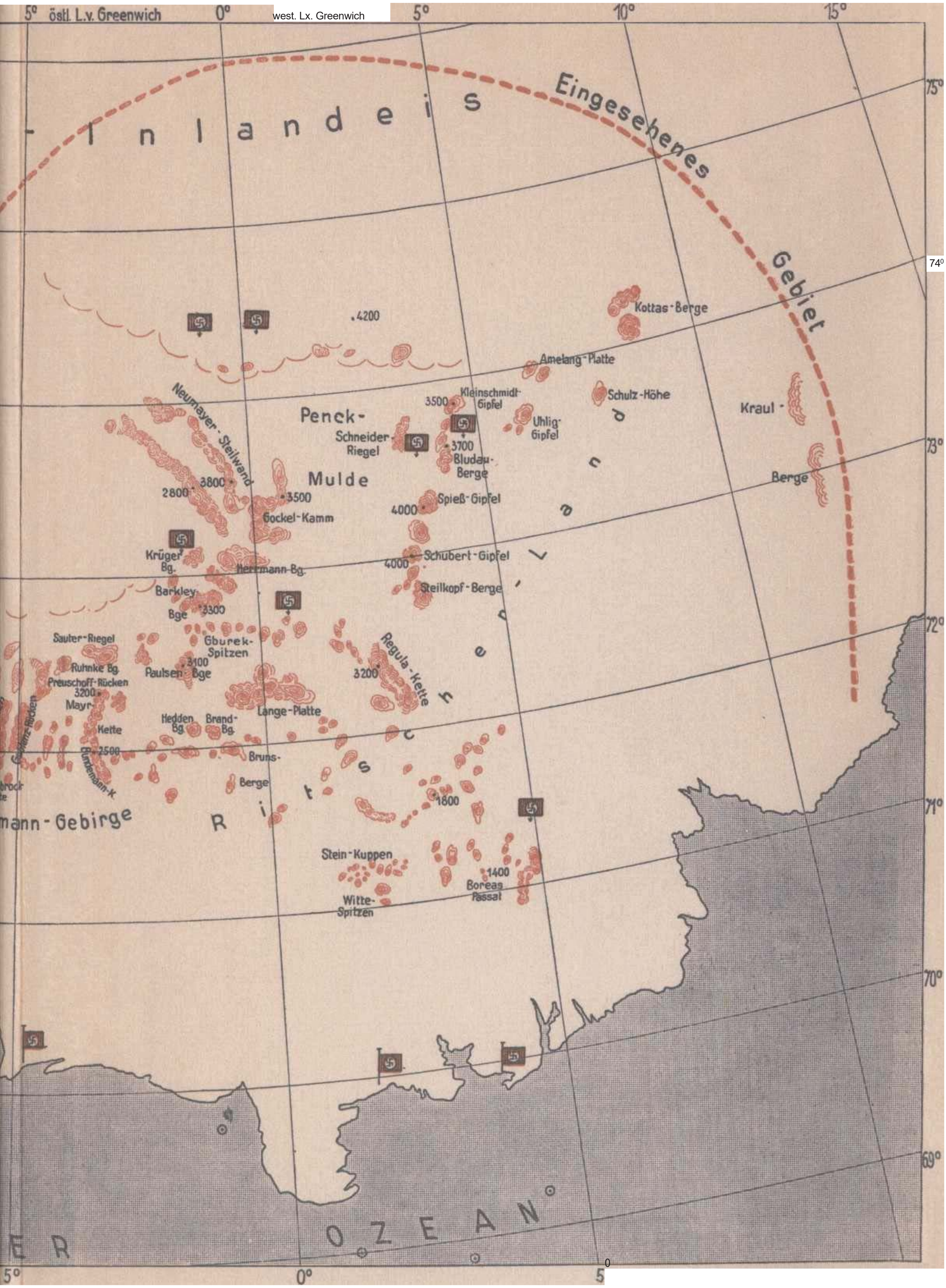
Bibliographic information from the German National Library
The German Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data is available online at http://dnb.ddb.de.

ISBN 3-935962-05-3

Verlag, Postfach 10, D-24236 Selent Printed in Austria

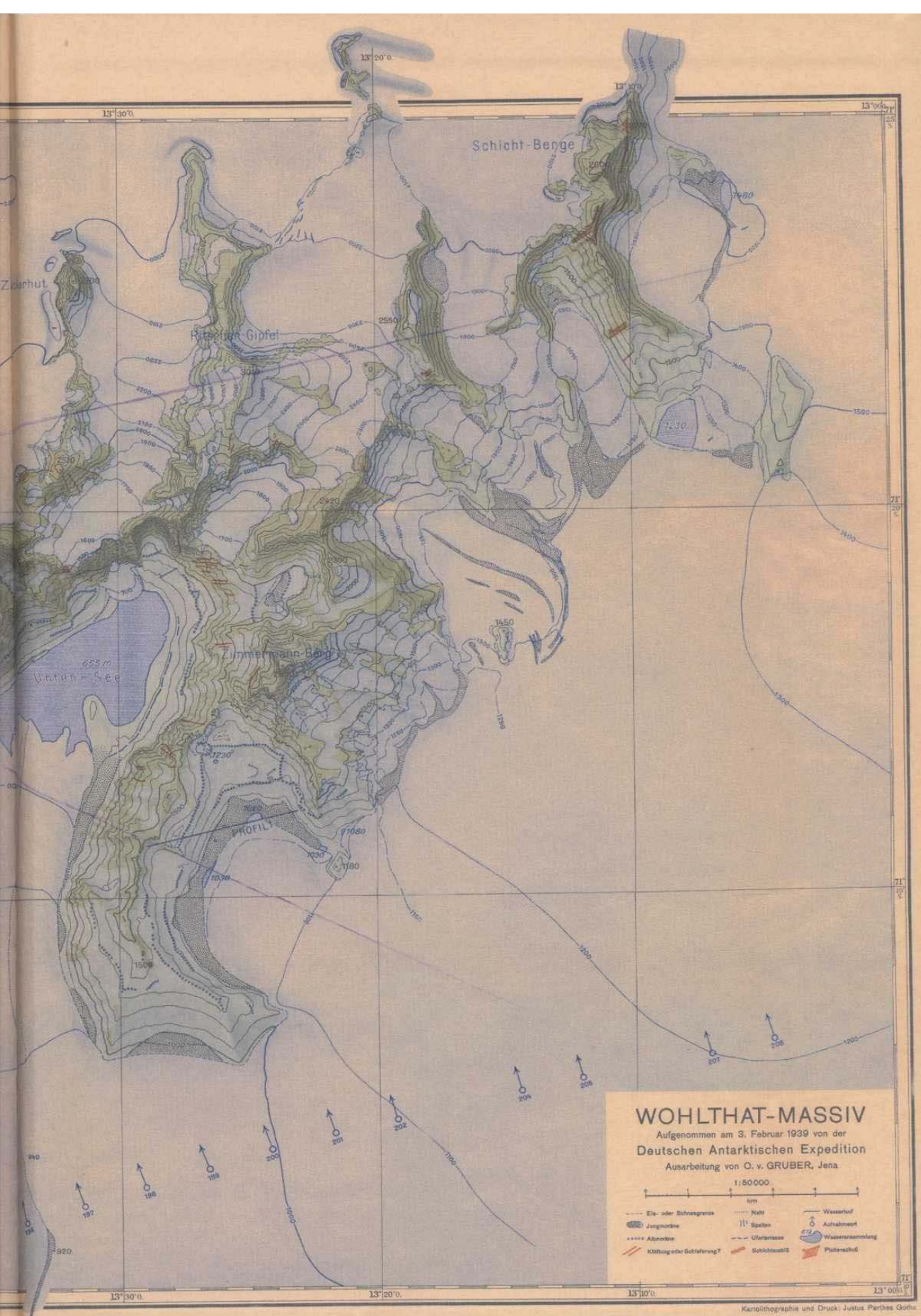


NEU-SCHWABENLAND
Deutsche Antarktische Expedition
1938-1939
gehisste Flaggen
abgeworfene Flaggen
Schiffspositionen
50
0
50
100
Kilometer
25°
20°
15°
10°
5°
74°
73°
72°
71°
70°
69°
Wegener
Eingesehenes Gebiet
Wohlthat-
Payer Gruppe
Weyprecht Berge
Alexander Humboldt Geb.
3400
Conrad-Geb.
Kurze Geb.
Drygalski-Berge
Joh. Müller-Kamm
Filchner-Gruppe
Kubus
Bolle-Bg.
Luz-Rücken
Todt-Riegel
Ritscher-Gipfel
Petermann Kette
2200
3200
Dallmann-Bg.
Vorposten
3900
Mentzel-Bg.
3500
Zimmermann Bg.
Schirmacher-Seengruppe
Habermehl-Gipf.
4000
Geßner-Spitze
4000
2900
Budenbro
Kette
Mühlig-Hofma
Massiv
ATLANTISCHE



5° östl. L.v. Greenwich
0°
west. Lx. Greenwich
5°
10°
15°
75°
74°
73°
72°
71°
70°
69°
Inlandeis
Eingesehenes Gebiet
Kottas-Berge
.4200
Amelang-Platte
Kleinschmidt-Gipfel
3500
Schulz-Höhe
Kraul
Berge
Penck-Mulde
Schneider-Riegel
3700
Bludau-Berge
Uhlig-Gipfel
Neumayer-Steilwand
3800
2800
3500
Gockel-Kamm
Spieß-Gipfel
4000
Krüger Bg.
Herrmann Bg.
Schubert-Gipfel
4000
Steilkopf-Berge
Barkley Bge
3300
Sauter-Riegel
Gburek-Spitzen
Ruhnke Bg.
Preuschoff-Rücken
3200
Mayr-Kette
Paulsen Bge
3100
Regula-Kette
3200
Lange-Platte
Hedden Bg.
Brand-Bg.
2500
Bruns-Berge
mann-Gebirge
Ritscherland
1800
Stein-Kuppen
1400
Boreas
Passat
Witte-Spitzen
OZEAN
ER
5°
0°
5
0

Karte I Beilage zum Bericht der Deutschen Antarktischen Expedition 1938/39



Kartolithographie und Druck: Justus Perthes Gotha

BERSERKER

BOOKS