

ANTARCTICA

A WORLD UNTO ITSELF

Webster Russell &
Dee Coffeen



Antarctica

A World Unto Itself

By Webster Russell & Dee Coffeen

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Antarctica

A World Unto Itself

Forward

Antarctica is a stark land with basically three colors, black, white and brown. When the sun was out however it became a real cornucopia of color.

Like all photo books, the picture herein represent only a fraction of what we experienced. There is not enough space or time to graphically perceive the majesties of Antarctica.



Antarctica

According to Wikipedia, Antarctica is 5,500,000 sq miles and is virtually unpopulated. One reason for that is that Antarctica, on average, is the coldest, driest, and windiest continent in the world. Most of Antarctica is a polar desert, with an annual precipitation of about eight inches along the coast and far less inland. Add to that the temperature in Antarctica has reached -128.6 F. Antarctica also has the highest average altitude of any continent with over half of the land 6,500+ feet above sea level. The highest peak on Antarctica is over 11,000 feet.

As to population, anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 people inhabit Antarctica throughout the year. Primarily, they populate research stations scattered across the continent.

There is more to Antarctica than penguins, seals, and whales. Organisms native to Antarctica include many types of algae, bacteria, fungi, and plants. What vegetation that does grow there, grows on the Antarctic tundra.

Again, according to Wikipedia, Antarctica was the last region on Earth to be discovered. For all intents it was unseen until 1820 when the Russian expedition of Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen and Mikhail Lazarev on Vostok and Mirny sighted the Fimbul ice shelf. It wasn't really discovered however until 1895, when the first confirmed landing was conducted by a team of Norwegians.





In the 1960s cruise ships started bringing non scientists to Antarctica. Today tourism is commonplace. Between 2009 and 2010, some 37,000 people went ashore in Antarctica and thousands more sail in Antarctic waters but do not land.

Should you decide to cruise to Antarctica, the international treaty governing Antarctica does not allow any ships carrying over 500 passengers to send passengers ashore. These smaller ships can land only 100 persons or fewer ashore at any one time. Ships with over 500 passengers may sail the waters but may not make any landings.

Before we start this journey, we want to say, Antarctica has a beauty of its own. It is not the beauty you see in Hawaii or Polynesia. It is stark and for most of the year, barren. Given these apparent drawbacks, its beauty is still unexpectedly striking.

The pictures with some exceptions, do not do its beauty justice.

Now that you have a basic understanding of Antarctica let's start our journey





Santiago and Valparaiso Chile

The weather in Santiago is usually beautiful and warm. When we landed it was in their high 70's

Once we landed it was off to customs. I have never seen so many people in an airport before. Add to that they had no sense of where they were going. It was a mess. We did finally find the Seabourn representatives.

It was then off by bus to Valparaiso. According to the guide, Chile is experiencing a water shortage which is negatively impacting their economy.

We got to the ship before noon so we had a wait before we could board.

Once cleared for boarding things went smoothly as usual. About 2:00 PM the rooms were ready. Neither of us had really slept in the last 24 hours so we were exhausted.

We headed out to sea about 6:00 PM. The Captain told us that although the weather was going to be nice we were going to enter rough seas so be prepared when walk-in around the ship.



Café
Specialty Coffee
Tiramisu
Pasta
Vegetarian
Cakes
Pastries
Breads
Desserts
Drinks
Sweets





SEABOURN QUEST

29

...

The first day at sea

As the Captain had informed us the previous night, the day was beautiful, however we were sailing into an headwind of 35 knots. On the decks the wind was about 50 knots. The seas were 5 to 10 meters. The stabilizers kept the roll well under control but you really felt the pitch.





Punta Arenas

Punta Arenas is a city near the tip of Chile's southernmost Patagonia region. Located on the Strait of Magellan, which connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, it's often used as base for excursions to the surrounding wilderness and Antarctica. The Plaza Muñoz Gamero has a memorial to explorer

Ferdinand Magellan, and the Museo Nao Victoria features a replica of one of his galleons.



Ferdinand Magellan



A replica of Ferdinand Magellan's ship







One of Puerto Arenas's
earlier buildings



An abandoned ship grounded on an
Puerto Arenas beach



Birds on an old dock in Puerto Arenas



Puerto Montt

We arrived in Puerto Montt at about 7:00 AM. It was dreary, cloudy, cool and damp. There is virtually no port for a ship of our size, so we anchored off the city.

Puerto Montt isn't a big city. It is tucked along the side of a mountain chain which almost surrounds the city.

Puerto Montt was founded in 1853. Even though Chile is a Spanish speaking country, it was populated by German

immigrants who brought with them their architecture, customs and culture.

.





Puerto Montt seen from a hill top



Escultura Sentados Frente al Mar



Plaza de Armas



Castro Chile

Castro is Chile's third oldest city in continuous existence. The city is located among hills of the island. Vegetation and trees are everywhere. The colorful “palafitos” (houses built on stilts) are found along its promenade, Stilt houses are houses raised on piles over the surface of the soil or a body of water. Stilt houses are built primarily as a protection against flooding, and they also keep

out vermin. The shady space under the house can be used for work or storage.

As you might expect, the city is quiet and laidback. No bustling traffic with honking horns in this city.

Castro is also known for its salmon and shell fish farming. If you are a seafood or shellfish lover, trying it in one of the local restaurants is a must.



Palafitos



The Castro City Plaza



The walkway just off the city Plaza



One of several abandoned fishing boats in Puerto Montt



Salmon and shell fish farms



Harvesting Shellfish



Salmon farm feeding station



**Taking the shellfish harvest
to market**



The Fiords of Chile

We entered the Chilean fiords at about 3:00 AM. I tell you that as a point of reference. At about 7:30 AM the alarm went off and we struggled out of bed, pulled on our warm clothes and headed for the observation lounge.

A little after 8:00 the ship rounded a bend in the fiord to face the San Rafael Glacier. Needless to say it was well worth our early rise. It was foggy when we arrived however right on cue, the fog lifted and exposed the face of the glacier as well as a spot of sun. We spent about an hour there. The clicking of the camera's and whirring of the video recorders could be heard around the deck. Thank goodness we don't use film anymore. I took some 30 to 40 pictures and that is the good news. The bad news is that I put at least a half of them in my electronic trash can.

At the end of our stay the captain did a 180 and we headed back down the fiord toward our next stop.



The San Rafael Glacier before the fog lifted



The San Rafael Glacier after the fog lifted



The San Rafael Glacier



Glacier Alley, Chile



Glacier Alley, Chile



Glacier Alley, Chile



Glacier Alley, Chile



Glacier Alley, Chile



Glacier Alley, Chile



Glacier Alley, Chile



Ushuaia Argentina

Ushuaia is the Capital of Tierra Del Fuego province Argentina. It is commonly regarded as the southern most city in the world. Ushuaia is located on a wide bay off the southern coast of Tierra del Fuego. It is bound on the north by the Marshall mountain range and on the south by the Beagle channel. Despite receiving only 21 inches average precipitation, Ushuaia is very humid.

The city once housed a prison colony for the worst of Argentina's criminals. They worked from dawn to dusk cutting and loading trees.



The Seabourn Quest



**Ushuaia from our
balcony**



Ushuaia from a hilltop



Monumento Antiguos
Pobladores de Ushuai



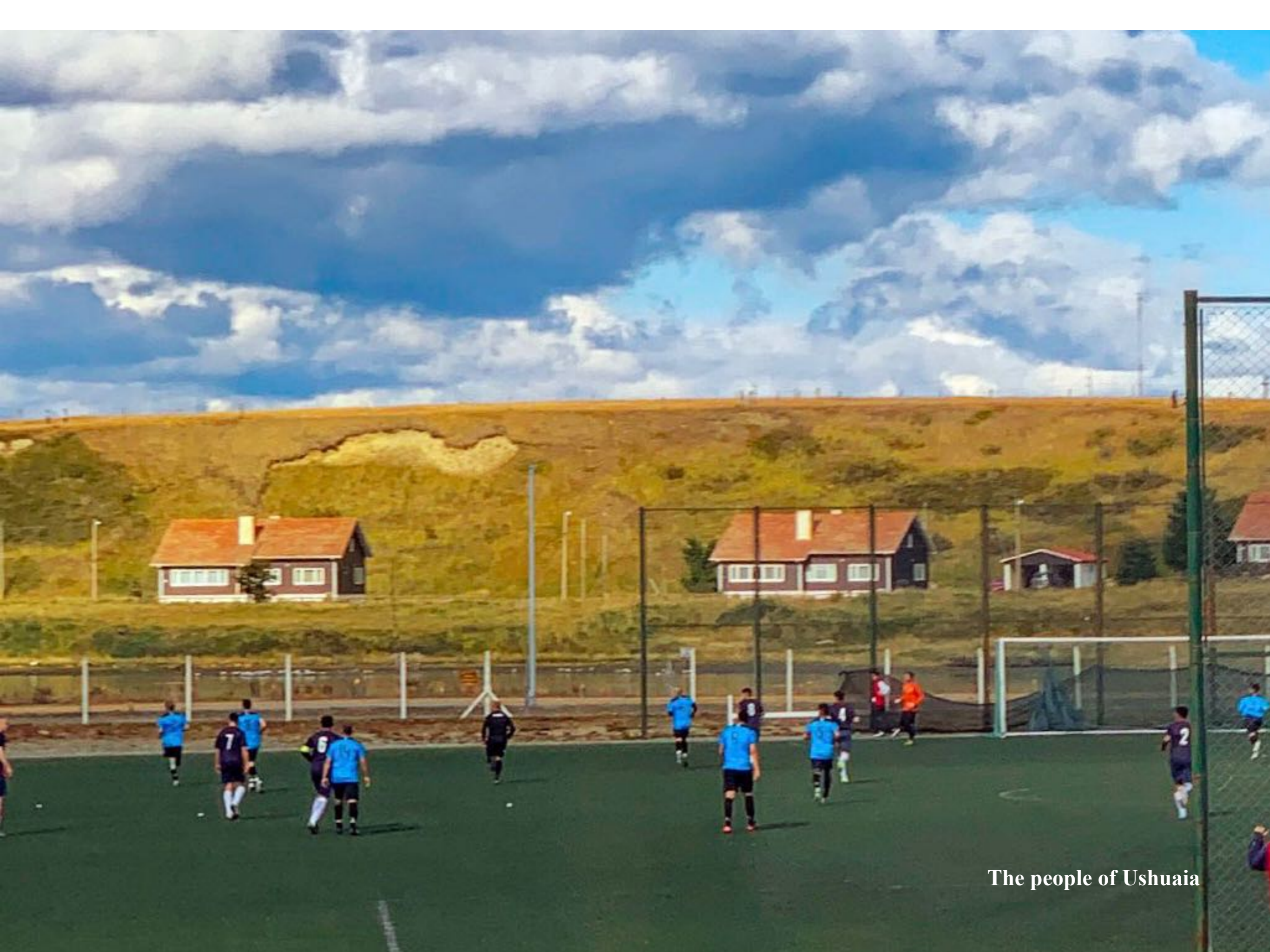
**Monumento Antiguos
Pobladores de Ushuai**



The people of Ushuaia



The people of Ushuaia



The people of Ushuaia



**Argentina's former prison
for their worst prisoners.**



Ushuaia's prison museum



Ushuaia's prison museum



Ushuaia's prison museum



Tierra del Fuego



The narrow gauge train taking us into Tierra del Fuego





Tierra Del Fuego



Tierra Del Fuego



Tierra Del Fuego



Tierra Del Fuego



The Beagle channel area had been inhabited for some 6000 years by tribes of natives. They traveled by canoes as their food sources were coastal in origin. What was interesting was for the most part they were naked and seldom wore cover. Swimming in the cold waters of the fiord was commonplace. Imagine if you will walking around without clothes in the

summers at 50 degrees and winters with near and below freezing weather.

The majority of their diets were seals and occasionally whales. Fish did not have the fat and calories necessary to sustain their lives.







At the end of the world



The Drake Passage

The Drake Passage or Mar de Hoces—Sea of Hoces—is the body of water between South America's Cape Horn and the South Shetland Islands of Antarctica. It connects the southwestern part of the Atlantic Ocean with the southeastern part of the Pacific Ocean and extends into the Southern Ocean.



The Drake Passage that we expected



We encountered the Drake Lake instead.



Half Moon Island

It was 31 degrees on the afternoon we arrived on Half Moon Island. There was no wind and it was foggy.

Half Moon Island is considered one of the most beautiful sites in South Shetlands. Sharp slabs of rock covered with brilliant orange, yellow and black lichen provide nesting sites for chinstrap penguins. A large active chinstrap penguin colony is the main attraction here as is Arctic Cormorant colony on the southern tip of

the island. There are usually a few Waddell seals are found on the shore as well.

Around this time of year Arctic fur seals and the southern elephant seals haul them selves out and rest on the beaches.



The Seabourn Quest



Off on our first Zodiac excursion



Half Moon Island



Half Moon Island



Half Moon Island



Half Moon Island



Half Moon Island



Half Moon Island



Half Moon Island



Fur Seals



Arctic Cormorants



Half Moon Island



Look off to the right of the boat



Half Moon Island



Deception Island

Deception Island is an island in the south Shetland Islands Archipelago with one of the safest harbors in at Arctic. This island is a caldera of an active volcano which seriously damaged local scientific stations in 1967 and 1969. The island previously held the Weale station, which is now a tourist destination along with the scientific outpost of the Argentine and Spanish research bases. While various countries have a certain sovereignty, it is still administered under the Antarctic treaty system.

The first authenticated sightings of deception Island was by British sailors William Smith at Edward Bransfield in January 1820. The island was first visited and explored by the American sealer Nathaniel Palmer on the sloop Hero the following summer on 15 November 1820. Palmer named it Deception Island on account of its outward deceptive appearance as a normal island. With the discovery of the normal entrance of Neptune's Bellows it was revealed it was rather a ring around a flooded caldera.



**Whalers Bay is inside the
caldera of Deception
Island**



Whalers Bay

Deception Island



Neptune's Hollow

Deception Island



Whalers Bay

Deception Island



**An abandoned whaling station
on Deception Island**



An abandoned whaling station

Whalers Bay



**An abandoned whaling station on
Deception Island**



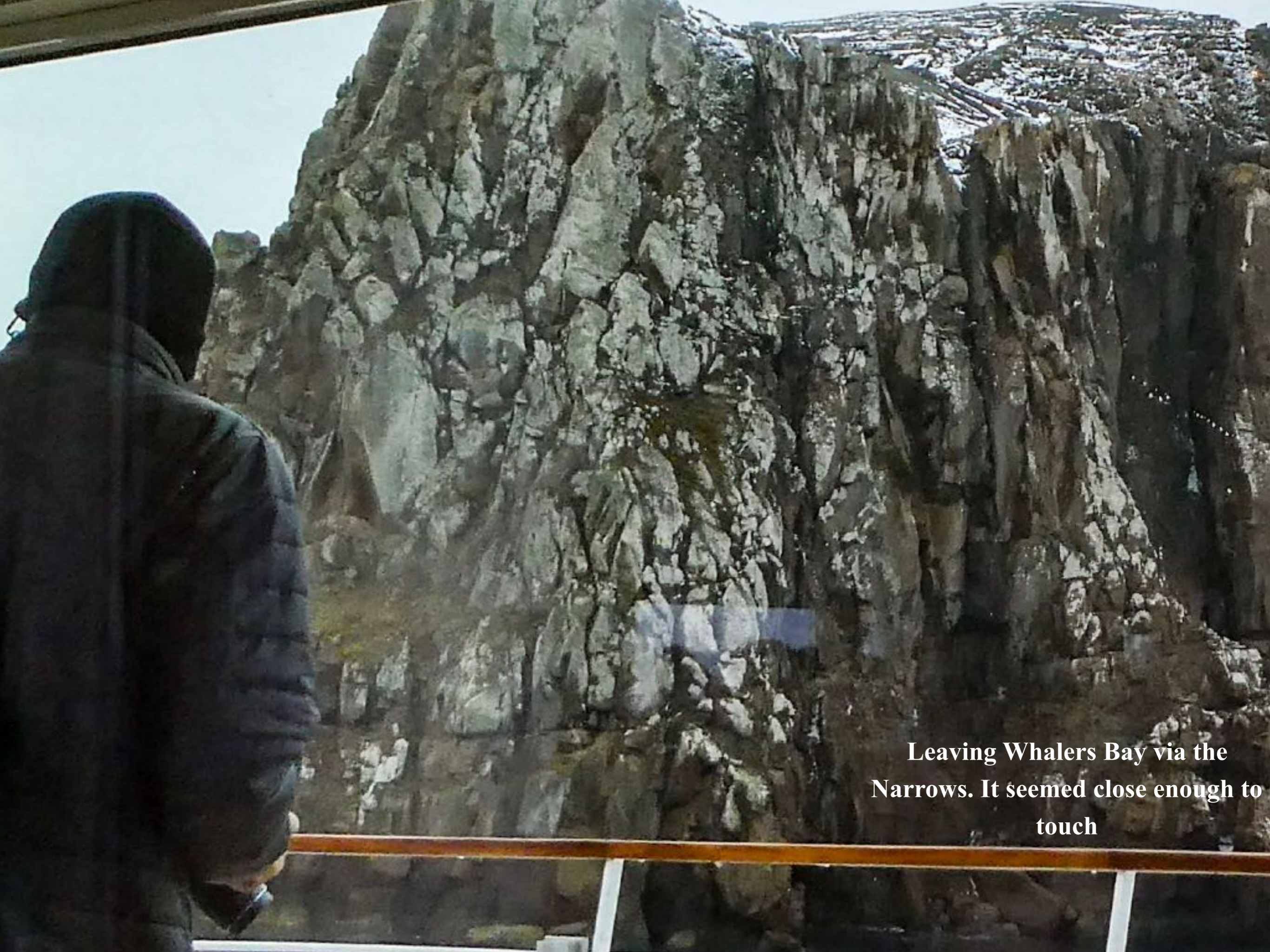
Deception Island



One of several burial sites on Deception Island



Whalers Bay
Deception Island



**Leaving Whalers Bay via the
Narrows. It seemed close enough to
touch**



Leaving Whalers Bay via
the Narrows



Leaving Whalers Bay just
outside the Narrows



Cuverville Island

Cuverville Island

Cuverville Island is a dark, rocky island lying in the Errera channel. This island was discovered by an Belgian Antarctic expedition.

The island is it important bird area because it supports a breeding colony of about 6,500 pairs of Gentoo penguins the largest for this species on the Antarctic peninsula. As I looked

off my balcony the morning we arrived I saw groups of gentoo penguins going through the bay hunting for food.

What a day. The view is breathtaking. While out on the observation deck this morning, a curious humpback whale came alongside the ship. What a photographic opportunity.



Cuverville Island



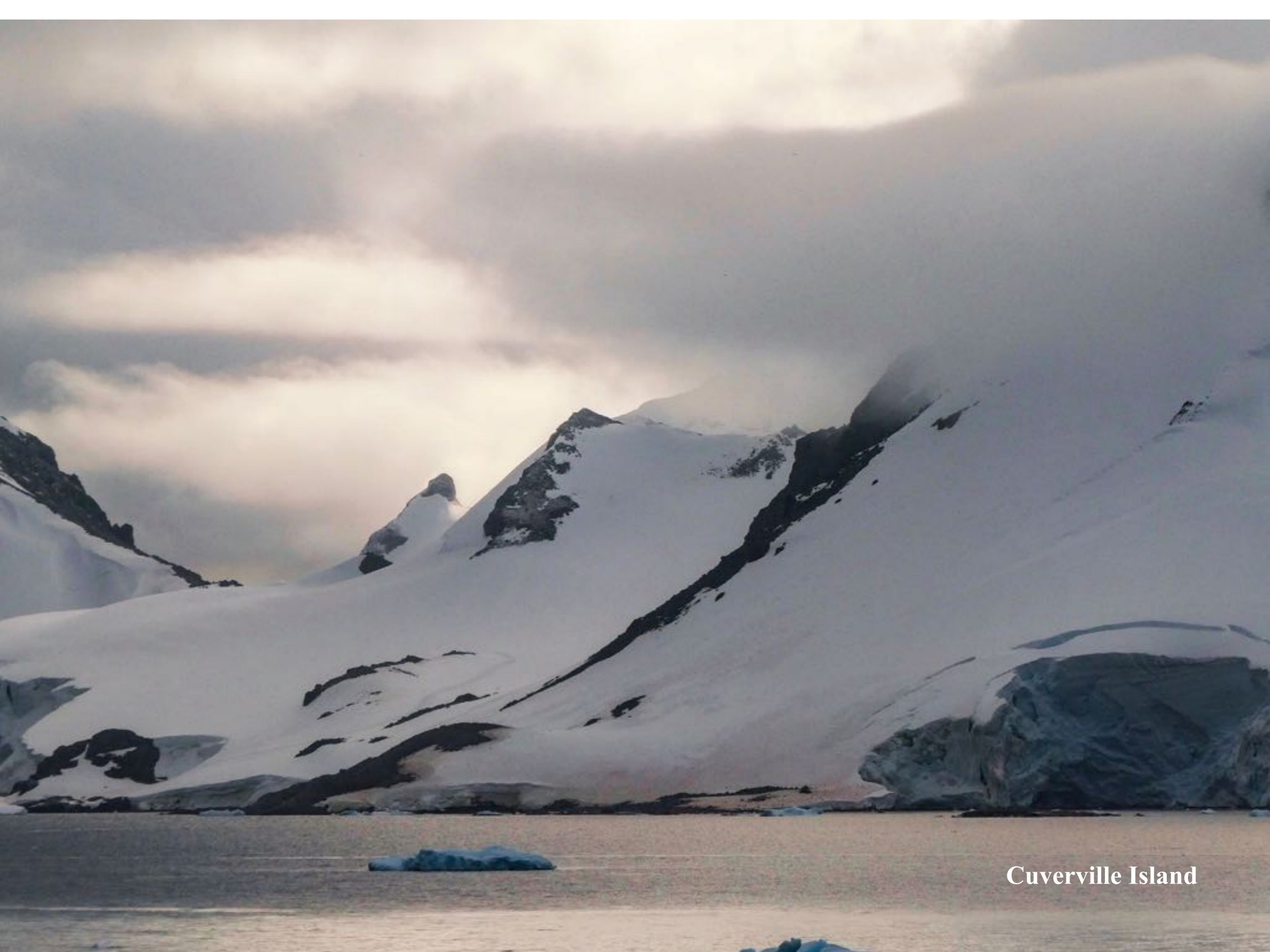
Cuverville Island



Cuverville Island



**Look closely at the base of
the rock and see a rookery**



Cuverville Island



Cuverville Island



One of our excursion
zodiacs



Cuverville Island



Cuverville Island



Cuverville Island



Cuverville Island



A rookery on Cuverville Island



penguins “dolphining”



Cuverville Island



Penguins heading back to
Cuverville Island



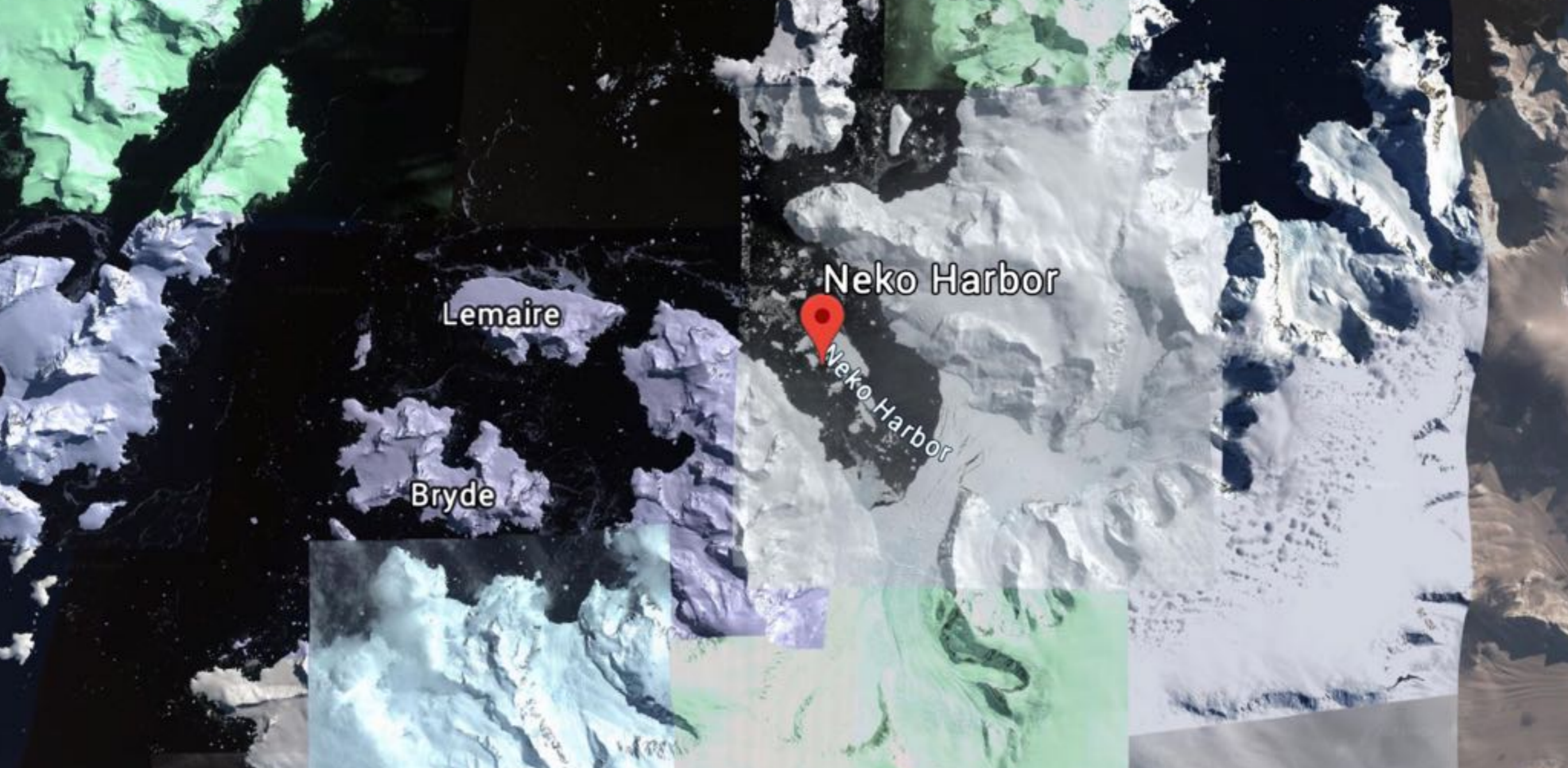
**This humpback whale came
right up to the side of the ship**



**It swam around for nearly
10 minutes**



Offering the shots of a
lifetime



Neko Harbor

After encountering a blocked passage, we had to sail North into the open sea. It was a rough sea so we were rocked to sleep. In the morning we arrived in Neko Harbor

Neko Harbor is an inlet on the Antarctic peninsula on Andvord Bay situated on the West Coast of Graham land. There is a very active glacier here as well as the remains of an old Argentinian refuge.

Neko Harbor was discovered by a Belgian explorer in the early 20th century and was named for a Norwegian whaling boat the Meiko which operated in the area between 1911 and 1924.

Along with Paradise Bay Neko Harbor is the hub for Antarctic tourism and offers stunning views of the Antarctic landscape including icebergs, glaciers and the proverbial penguin.



The view of Neko Harbor
from the observation deck



**The view of Neko Harbor
from the observation deck**



The view off the observation deck



**It was 27 degrees Fahrenheit
but a beautiful morning**



Neko Harbor



An Avalanche



Just to the left of our landing site -Neko Harbor



Walking up to an outcrop overlooking Neko Harbor



Neko Harbor



Heading out on a kayak excursion in Neko Harbor



Neko Harbor



Neko Harbor



Neko Harbor



Neko Harbor



Torgersen Island

We arrived at Torgersen Island in the morning. Out of all the days that we have been in Antarctica this was the most miserable. Not only was it cold, the seas were up and it was wet with occasional snow. I'd never expected it to be like Miami but the days preceding this one were terrific.

Torgersen island is a small rocky island just east of Litchfield Island in the entrance to the Arthur Harbor. It was surveyed by the Falkland islands dependency survey in 1955 and named for Torsten Torgersen the first mate of the ship Harbor in late February 1955.

Torgersen island is the site of a study on the impacts of tourism. The island has been divided into two areas one open to visitors and the other closed as a site for scientific reference. This site, together with other nearby islands that are not visited by tourists, provides a unique experimental setting. The researcher's goal is to look at the relative affects of the human induced changes verses the effects of the natural environment on the Adelie penguin population



The start of ice flows at the entrance of Torgersen Island



Off on a zodiac excursion



Palmer Station



Palmer Station



Palmer Station



An icebreaker and research vessel



Torgersen Island



Torgersen Island



Torgersen Island



Paradise Bay

Paradise Harbor, also known as Paradise Bay, is a wide embayment behind Lemaire and Bryde Islands in Antarctica, indenting the west coast of Graham Land between Duthiers and Leniz Points. The name was first

applied by whalers operating in the vicinity and was in use by 1920.



Paradise Bay



Paradise Bay



Dee and Andy toughing it out in the observation lounge.



Paradise Bay



Paradise Bay



Paradise Bay



Paradise Bay



Paradise Bay



Argentina's Brown Station at Paradise Bay



A fairly long distant shot of a seal resting on an iceberg



Paradise Bay



Imagine crossing Drakes Passage on this



The Drake Passage and the Scotia Sea sailing north

We were headed back to South America via the Drake passage. Unlike like our first passage the seas met our expectations. They were rough and it was windy. We took some pretty good rolls even with the stabilizers to the point where glasses and plates flew off the table in the dining room and we all had to hang on the rails when we walked.

The Scotia sea is is located in both the southern ocean and the south Atlantic Ocean. Normally it is stormy and cold, a miserable

sail. This sea is the area of water between Tierra del Fuego, South Georgia, the South Sandwich islands, the South Orkney Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. It is bordered on the west by the Drake passage. What this translates to is a sea that covers an area of about 348,000 sq. miles.

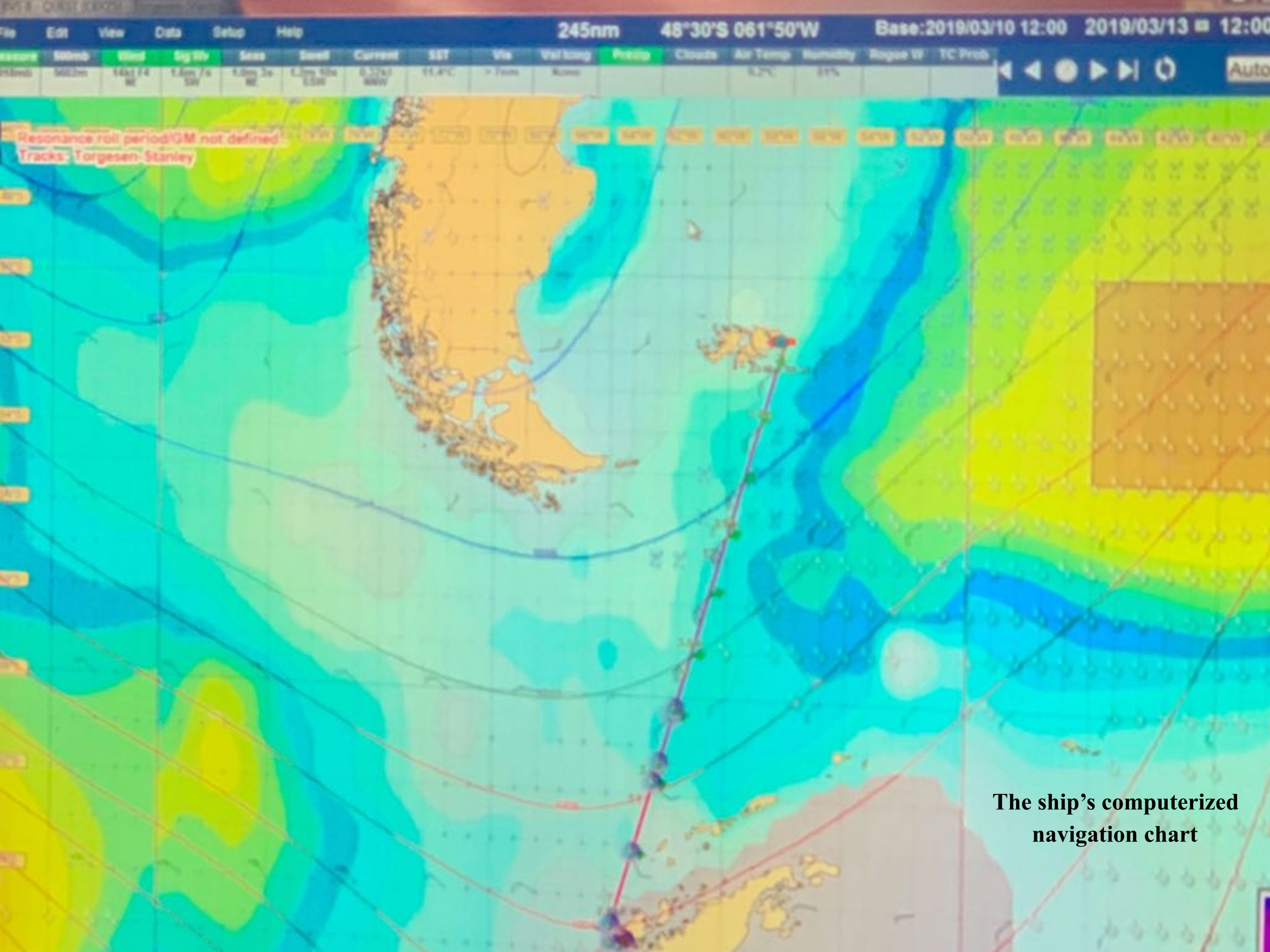
Our roller coaster ride continued and ended when we landed in the Falkland Islands. As usual the weather was overcast to sunny however it was a bit warmer.

As we were leaving Antarctica we were allowed to visit the ship's bridge.





It looks a lot smoother than it really was



The ship's computerized navigation chart

ANTARCTICA

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Thanks for taking the time to look through the pictures of our Antarctica adventure.

Go to <https://russanddee.weebly.com>

to find travel videos and our journal.

Webster Russell &
Dee Coffeen



About the Authors

Webster Russell started his 47 year healthcare career as a hospital orderly while attending the University of Oregon. At the beginning of his junior year he joined the US Navy and served as a Navy Corpsman both stateside and in Vietnam.

After his discharge he completed his Bachelors and Master's Degrees in Business Administration and worked his way up to CEO and finally Board of Trustee's member of a Kansas Medical Center..

“Russ” has authored two books and has written three more with Dee,

Dee Coffeen is a Texas girl by birth. Her family moved to Kansas where she received her Bachelors and Master's Degrees from the University of Kansas.

She taught school, and worked as an Interior Designer for a well known furniture store. She also worked as a academic advisor for a small Catholic and a prominent Texas University

Both Dee and “Russ” make their home in Central Texas.

Russ and Dee can be reached at candrpublications@gmail.com

