

Technician Makes Unusual Trip to Diomede to Repair Phone

From Rural Communications
By MARY PAT MURPHY

Since many of RCA Alascom's bush telephones are located in villages which can be reached only by airplane, charter flights for telephone maintenance and repair are commonplace for bush technicians.

The village of Diomede, however, poses problems unusual even for technicians who are used to the remoteness of Alaskan villages.

LEGAL NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
Notice of
SEALED BID SALE
92-1-76-6

Under authority contained in section 6331 of the Internal Revenue Code, the property described below has been seized for non-payment of delinquent internal revenue taxes due from Donald J. Ferguson, Don's Safair Flying Service, Kotzebue, Alaska. The property will be sold at public auction under sealed bids in accordance with the provisions of section 6335 of the Internal Revenue Code and pertinent regulations.

Date bids will be opened: January 9, 1976. Time bids will be opened: 2:00 P.M.

Place of sale: Internal Revenue Service, 504 Third Ave., Fairbanks, Alaska.

Property may be inspected at: Items 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9 at the Ralph Wien Memorial Airport, Kotzebue, Alaska. Item 3 at the overflow parking lot, Merrill Field, Anchorage, Alaska. Item 4 at Lake Hood Seaplane Base, Anchorage, Alaska. Item 5 at Alaska Towing and Wrecking, Anchorage, Alaska. Item 8 at Internal Revenue Service, 504 Third Ave., Fairbanks, Alaska.

Submission of bids: All bids must be submitted on Internal Revenue Service Form 2222, Sealed Bid for Purchase of Seized Property. Contact office below for Forms 2222 and information concerning the property. Submit bids to the Revenue official named below prior to the opening of the bids.

Payment terms: Bids must be accompanied by the full amount of the bid if it totals \$200 or less. If the total bid is more than \$200, submit 20 percent of the bid or \$200, whichever is greater. Upon acceptance of the highest bid, the balance due, if any, will be deferred as follows: Paid within 30 days of acceptance of bid.

Type of payment: All payments must be in cash, certified check, cashier's or treasurer's check or by a United States postal, express or telegraph money order. Make checks and money orders payable to "Internal Revenue Service."

Title offered: Only the right, title, and interest of Donald J. Ferguson in and to the property will be offered for sale.

Alan C. Jones
Revenue Officer
Date: 11-24-75
Internal Revenue Service
Box 1009
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707
Phone 452-1951 ext. 168

Description

Item 1. 1961 Cessna 172 N1393Y, s/n 17249093

Item 2. 1967 Cessna 206 N3838G, s/n 2060338

Item 3. 1960 Aero Commander 680F N2998C, s/n 680F-987-34

Item 4. 1961 Piper Commanche PA-24 N7761P, s/n 24-2978

Item 5. 1969 IHC pickup LT18390, s/n 313108H881597

Item 6. 1963 Dodge pickup LT51646, s/n 2261277165

Item 7. Leased lots E, F and G (lease number ADA 00566), one airplane hangar and one outbuilding containing boiler (hangar and outbuilding are situated on above lots) located at the Ralph Wien Memorial Airport, Kotzebue, Alaska. The foregoing leased lots, hangar and outbuilding will be offered as one item. The successful bidder for this item must also have the approval of the Alaska Division of Aviation, 4111 Aviation Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska—Attn.: Patrick Ryan.

Item 8. Air Commerce Certificate number 277. The successful bidder for this item must also have the approval of the Alaska Transportation Commission, 338 Denali, 1000 McKay Building, Anchorage, Alaska—Attn.: Jake Johnson.

Item 9. Midland Radio model 13891, s/n 20100854; Narco Radio Telephone model VGR-3A; Northern Radio Co. model N750, s/n 139; four drawer file cabinet; desk; and one small J.C. Penney refrigerator.

The above nine items will be offered as separate items and in the aggregate. In the event, the property is sold as separate items and the successful bidder for either items 7 or 8 is unable to obtain the approval of the respective State of Alaska Agency, the full bid price for these items will be refunded. In the event the property is sold in the aggregate to one bidder and that bidder is unable to qualify as per items 7 &/or 8, then the full bid price for the aggregate will be refunded and a new sale will be scheduled.

Diomede, a rocky island in the Bering Strait just three miles from the Soviet territory, is cut off completely from the outside world during parts of the year and getting there is tricky, the year around.

Diomede has had an RCA Alascom bush telephone since July of 1973 and for the past year and a half the job of keeping it in working order has gone primarily to Karl Welm, technician in charge of RCA Alascom's Nome office.

"I've been to Diomede just about every way you can get there," says Karl, who made his latest trip to the village aboard the Bureau of Indian Affairs supply ship North Star III late in October: Karl has traveled to Diomede by skinboat, by helicopter, by float plane and by ski plane; and twice he's been stranded, once by weather and once when the helicopter broke down.

In the fall, the North Star is the only sure means of reaching Diomede before the Bering Strait freezes enough for a ski plane to land on the ice. Each fall, the North Star delivers winter supplies to Alaskan villages before the winter ice closes in.

Karl and several other passengers boarded the North Star at Shishmaref to make the trip to Diomede. The telephone on Diomede was working, but needed some adjustment and the North Star visit afforded a good opportunity for a technician to reach the island to do the necessary work.

The North Star was three weeks behind schedule because of bad weather and ice at Barrow and Point Hope, and time was running short for reaching Diomede before ice closed in there.

The ice at Shishmaref was hampering unloading efforts, further delaying the ship's progress. Passengers bound for Diomede—including about 10 villagers returning home for the winter—boarded a landing craft late in the afternoon of Oct. 29 and started out to the ship. The trip which would have taken only a few minutes in clear water took an hour and a half because of the ice.

The North Star remained anchored about a mile offshore from Shishmaref after the passengers boarded. The ship's crew was prepared to leave the area in case the ice made further unloading impossible,

but most of the supplies bound for Shishmaref were unloaded before the North Star had to sail for Diomede.

The village of Diomede was running out of supplies by the time the North Star arrived. On Oct. 18, the BIA had chartered a helicopter leased by RCA Alascom in Nome to airlift supplies to the village, but those supplies were nearly gone.

The North Star reached Diomede early in the morning on Oct. 31. Unloading began at daybreak and the passengers were taken ashore to do their work.

Other passengers included Father S.J. Greif, a Catholic priest whose parish includes Diomede; several social workers, a nurse and a legal services attorney. Everyone was cautioned to watch the beach and be ready to go back to the ship. If the ice at Wales became too thick, the captain had said, the North Star might make the short trip to unload there, then return to Diomede to complete the unloading.

If the wind picked up, the landing craft would return to the ship and the passengers could run the risk of being stranded on the island if they

weren't aboard.

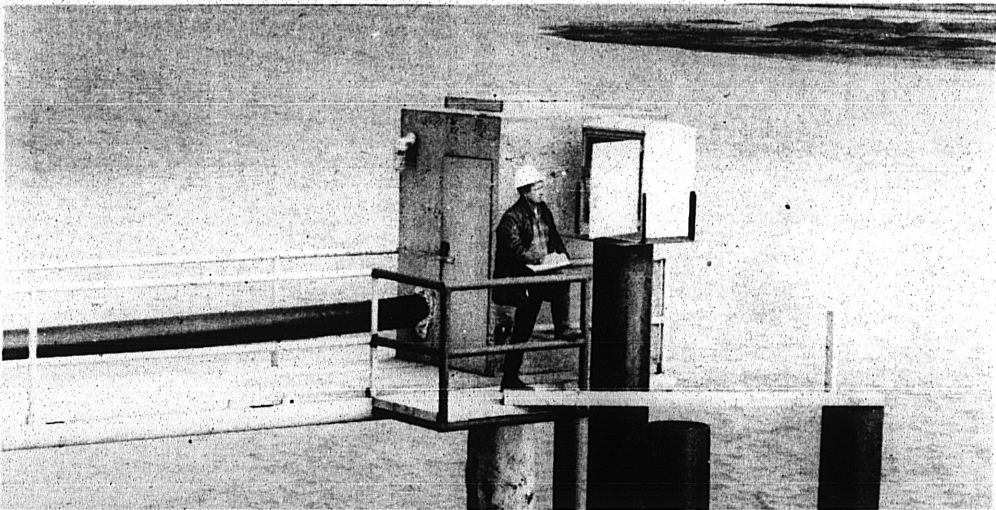
But the seas remained calm and the unloading continued. Karl replaced the dial on the village telephone and made the necessary adjustments to the radio equipment. He also checked the "telephone pole" he had rigged from whale bone during one of his previous visits.

Since the only wood on Diomede is the driftwood which sometimes washes up onto its rocky shores, the whale bone was used to run wires from the power plant in the school to the telephone in the armory.

The North Star headed toward Wales after the unloading at Diomede was completed, but ice made it impossible to unload supplies, including a store building for the village. The ship also had to bypass Brevig Mission because of ice and it appeared the passengers would have to remain on board until the ship reached Dutch Harbor, some 1,000 miles to the south.

But the passengers were able to get off the ship in Nome before the North Star headed back to the Wales area to see if

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