

FRANK P. HUNT (1921–1999)

The Arctic science community has lost one of its best, and we have all lost a true friend. Frank Hunt was born in Argentia, Newfoundland on 10 August 1921. His father, a blacksmith, died when Frank was three years old, and his mother Mary raised the family of three boys and four girls. At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Frank decided to join the Royal Canadian Navy, although most Newfoundland boys chose the Royal Navy for their future service. After being suitably feted in the local community, he went to Halifax to enlist. Immediately, he ran into a major problem: how could a foreigner join the Canadian Navy? Newfoundland was not yet a part of Canada. The naval enlisting officer insisted that a recruit must be a Canadian citizen and sent him to the Citizenship office. The Citizenship officer said that he could become a citizen of Canada if he were a member of the Navy. Frank handled the problem in his own quiet way and got into the Canadian Navy. Assigned to Corvette duty on convoy patrols against enemy submarines, he spent the war bobbing across the Atlantic—a total of 17 times. That was Frank's first major contribution as a good Canadian.

After discharge, Frank studied surveying at the Technical University of Nova Scotia in Halifax. He received his Nova Scotia Land Surveyor Certificate in 1947. After working in the Maritimes for several seasons, he was hired by the Surveys and Mapping Branch of the Topographic Survey of Canada in Ottawa.

From 1953 to 1957, Frank helped to survey the 60th parallel, the line that separates the four western provinces from the Yukon, Northwest, and now Nunavut Territories. Much of this 60th parallel work was done in the winter months, when the muskeg and the lakes were frozen. Frank enjoyed the cold weather: it gave him a certain exhilaration. Some of the work could be done in the summer, and Frank "endured" that phase of the work for the sake of doing a good job as assigned.

The Polar Continental Shelf Project (PCSP) was created by Cabinet memorandum on 5 April 1958. In March 1959, a group of nine individuals went to Isachsen on Ellef Ringnes Island to determine how to conduct such a project in the Arctic. Frank Hunt was the surveyor with that group. Fred Roots, the first coordinator of PCSP, is quoted as stating: "We knew that we had to have a strong survey-control team. Everything would be focused towards supporting the field parties. When I was choosing whom to take, it took me about six seconds to suggest the one I wanted first—and I wanted Frank Hunt. He was far and away the most experienced winter topographical surveyor we had at that time. He had run the 60th parallel survey in wintertime. He had already shown that just because it is cold and the wind is blowing, there is no reason to be less accurate with a theodolite than when it is nice and sunny" (Foster and Marino, 1986:25).

Frank used a theodolite to run the first survey control lines for the new Polar Shelf navigation system from the



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geodetic control point near Isachsen. In later years, a tellurometer would be used for such control. The first lines were run from Isachsen to Borden Island to the west and then to Meighen Island to the northeast. Those first lines of control had to be accurate! The last change to the map of Canada before the addition of Nunavut was not made when Newfoundland joined Confederation in 1949: Frank made it in 1959, while running the survey control to Meighen Island. Meighen Island had been mislocated on Canadian maps for some 40 years until Frank moved it into its correct geographical location, about 13 km to the east. It was with the new tellurometer, the instrument that replaced the old tripod and transit triangulation techniques by providing distance at the time of observation, that Frank Hunt mapped the Canadian Arctic Archipelago in greater detail.

That first exploratory season of Polar Shelf at Isachsen was devoted to learning how and when to conduct science in that Arctic environment. The team had to determine what was required of a navigation system that would serve several parties at one time and give reliable, repeatable locations during all seasons. Frank continued as surveyor while the navigation system was moved along the coast,

from Isachsen to Mould Bay, to Tuktoyaktuk, and into Amundsen Gulf. In 1972, when I took over the director's job from Fred Roots, Frank became my field operations manager. He retired officially in 1986, but continued to work part-time (more like full-time) until 1993.

It may have been all the winter survey work, or being brought up on the coast of Newfoundland, but Frank had an uncanny intuition about ice in the Arctic. Fred Roots told me that one of Frank's gifts was his ability to judge whether floating sea ice was safe enough to land on: "He was never wrong!" (pers. comm. ca. 1972). Frank could tell by the colour of the exposed ice, and he would never land on snow-covered ice. When we were setting up the Ice Island stations or ice camps such as the Arctic Ice Dynamics Joint Experiment (AIDJEX), Lomonosov Ridge Experiment (LOREX), or Canadian Expedition to Study the Alpha Ridge (CESAR), Frank was always in the scouting aircraft. Some pilots requested (strongly suggested) that Frank be in the right-hand seat up front to approve a landing site.

Although Frank Hunt began his career as a topographical surveyor, he went on to become an expert in logistics. As field operations manager, he used his expertise to help others get out there and do their Arctic science. He was part of a small and dedicated group, working quietly and effectively in the background to ensure the safety and comfort of many Arctic scientists.

Frank was a quiet and private man. He was proud of his family: Phyllis Haggerty, whom he married in 1955; their son Shawn, an accountant in Toronto; and their daughter Patricia, a geologist with the Geological Survey of Canada. He wasn't one who spoke much about life outside the office, but I do know that he enjoyed gardening and that he devoted much time to his church. Personally, I learned a lot about his church affiliation and loyalty whenever Father Mary from Pond Inlet came to Ottawa during the winter months to discuss his archaeological discoveries with his

colleagues at the Museum of Civilization. During these visits, Frank revealed how much he and Father Mary enjoyed their shared interests—the Church, northern people, and science. Frank will be missed in his local church, where he and Phyllis could always be seen in the first or second row of the congregation.

Frank was elected an Honourary Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America in 1975. He certainly contributed immensely to the knowledge of the Arctic by mapping the geography and by helping many of us do our science in the Arctic. He was awarded the Centennial Medal in 1967 and the Canada 125 Medal in 1992, both for service to his country.

Frank died suddenly on 18 March 1999. He was and will be respected for his Arctic experience, which he shared so freely, and for his knowledge and ability as a scientist to set out the control and to "read the ice." At all times, he was concerned about Arctic scientists. He was mindful of the details, in a flying contract, in a camp or field situation, in the management of the office—all matters directed at the successful conduct of science in the Arctic. Quietly, he "just got the job done." He was very respected within and beyond the borders of Canada—his reputation was international. We have all, indeed, lost a true friend.

The community of Arctic scientists and all Frank's friends extend our sympathy to Phyllis, Shawn, and Patricia.

REFERENCE

FOSTER, M., and MARINO, C. 1986. *The Polar Shelf: The Saga of Canada's Arctic Scientists*. Toronto: NC Press Limited.

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