

TO ALL HANDS:


This book commemorates a very special voyage indeed. Arctic East Summer 1988 was not only NORTHWIND's final deployment, it was the final deployment of the Winds, a fabled class of seven polar icebreakers which served our country and mankind superbly for 45 years. It was also the longest arctic deployment and the seventh longest polar deployment ever made by a U. S. surface vessel.

Because NORTHWIND experienced some mechanical reliability problems in recent years, many individuals outside NORTHWIND doubted the ship's ability to accomplish such an ambitious and challenging voyage. They didn't know you.

Due to your superb competence, high motivation and insatiable capacity for hard work, NORTHWIND performed magnificently throughout the nearly seven months we were underway. She far surpassed everyone's expectations, steaming over 25,000 trouble-free miles and, in September, successfully performing one of the toughest icebreaking assignments of her career: the escort of the Norwegian research vessel POLARBJORN to 82-43.6N 031-591E, the northernmost penetration of the polar pack ever by a U. S. icebreaker while escorting another ship. Take great pride in your prodigious accomplishments.

Soon NORTHWIND will be no more. On 20 January 1989 she will be decommissioned at her moorings in Wilmington. Her spirit, though, will always be alive in those who sailed in her, particularly in those of us who were fortunate enough to comprise her last crew and to experience her final epic voyage. To us there will always be magic in our memories of the Grand Old Lady of the North.

God bless you all...and thanks.


KENNETH J. MORRIS
CAPTAIN, U. S. COAST GUARD
COMMANDING OFFICER