

## ICE

When I was in the Arctic in the mid-50s we had delivered our cargo to Shepherds Bay, Canada and were on our way out of the Arctic. The wind shifted and the polar ice pack came down onto Pt. Barrow, Alaska blocking our route around the point. Eighteen ships (MSTS and Navy) were stuck at Pt. Barrow.

One of the MSTS ships had not unloaded all of its 55 gallon drums of fuel and the residents of Pt. Barrow wanted it for the upcoming winter. The C.O. of the LST I was assigned to volunteered me to handling the unloading of the oil and delivering it to the northern beach at Pt. Barrow. I was the only person with a merchant marine background and presently assigned to the Navy. So my chief bos'n "Sandy" and I jumped into two contractor's "Mike" boats and started the unloading. We would load the oil drums from the MSTS ship onto the "Mike" boats, work our way through the ice fields to the beach, drop the ramp and the eskimoes would roll the drums up the beach above the high water mark. Their chief we named "Chief Burning Nose". All went well for a few days until the ice got to be too much and we had to stop the unloading.

Now it looked like 18 ships were going to winter over just north of Pt. Barrow. And while I was unloading the oil the C.O., again volunteered me to be the leader of the wintering over party, due to my background and I was single. WHOPEEE!! But the Navy managed to send up two ice breakers. They broke us out of the ice and we went around Pt. Barrow on 18 Sept. 1955; the latest in the year of any ship in history.

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