

The Antarctic Fox

Leon Neville Eugene Jennings-Fox PM

Born: 12 February, 1929 - Died: 22 February, 2011

The life of 'The Antarctic Fox' was celebrated in the beautiful garden of St Michael's Aged Care, Murrumbena on Tuesday, March 1st, 2011. Five of Leon's ANARE colleagues were able to attend



Leon grew up and was educated in Adelaide. With a bright enquiring mind and being highly intelligent, he topped his classes each year. The family bred German shepherds and Leon was, very much 'hands on', involved. He loved his dogs. It was not surprising then, that in the early fifties with his expertise with dogs, Leon was, on the recommendation of Sir Douglas Mawson, I believe, invited to join a group to winter at Heard Island in 1953.

In all Leon wintered seven times with ANARE: Heard Island in 1953; Mawson in 1955; Macquarie Island in 1958 & 1966; Davis in 1960; and Wilkes in 1962 and 1964.

It was during his year at Mawson, that John Béchervaise took that famous photograph of Leon and his dogs in front of an Iceberg, near Mawson. The photo that immortalized Leon and his team was depicted on the special issue, green one-shilling Antarctic stamp. Also in this year, Leon was in charge of the dogs, during the winter journey to Britangen rookery. (It was discovered by Bob Dovers the previous year, and later renamed Taylor rookery after the glacier it nestles beside.) Leon and his dogs accompanied Béchervaise on the southern journey to lay down the '90 Mile Depot'. They only had one operating Weasel (tracked amphibious vehicle) left at Mawson at the time.

In his spare time Leon was also a Met man (a Bureau of Meteorology weather observer) of great diligence and expertise. After his Antarctic experiences he went on to serve at many Bureau of Meteorology stations throughout Australia and its territories.

As a single man, he volunteered and enjoyed many remote postings including Marble Bar, the Solomons and New Guinea.

Leon, a graduate of the Burnley Agricultural College, was well read and interested in Conservation issues, Horticulture and Photography.

After bypass Surgery some years ago, Leon quit smoking—Cold Turkey. It must have worked as he carried on to enjoy many more years.

Much later, as Health issues caught up with, him Leon moved into St Michael's Aged Care, where he, the Staff and other guests enjoyed a wonderful rapport and many great friendships.

This is but 'the tip of the Iceberg' of a great and proud achiever, indomitable to the very end.

I sincerely thank: Leon's sister, Astrid; his nephew David; Brenda and Gavin from St Michael's; and ANARE men Richard McNair and Frederick Elliott who were with Leon for those early expeditions, for their input to this valediction.



— By Mark Forecast.