

On retirement Oudet went to live in Burgundy, and he wrote some excellent papers from there, generally generated by some marine disaster; but I don't think retirement suited him. We would correspond and occasionally meet, generally in Paris or Dieppe; sometimes I would go and stay with him in Burgundy where, his large number of children having now fled the nest, he lived quietly. His work for safety at sea had been accomplished.

Oudet was a devout Catholic, his fashion of thinking profoundly influenced by scholastic philosophy. He was also a romantic with a marked affection for England and it gave him great satisfaction that the routeing plan finally adopted by the Dover Strait working group should have been proposed by Captain Lynes, Master of the British Rail cross-channel ferry *Maid of Orleans*.

M.W.R.

### Rear Admiral Thomas D. Davies USN (Ret.)

Rear Admiral Thomas D. Davies USN (Ret.) died in January of this year at the age of 76. He was a decorated Navy pilot who held several aviation records and also an expert and an innovator in the field of navigation. Most recently he received international attention for his investigation of Admiral Robert E. Peary's claim to have reached the North Pole in 1909.

Admiral Davies was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on 3 November 1914. After two years at the Case Institute of Technology, he entered the US Naval Academy and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1937. He also held the degree of Master of Science from George Washington University and was a distinguished graduate of the National War College. In 1942 he was designated a naval aviator, and during World War II he served in the Atlantic Theatre with the anti-submarine patrol forces. He is credited with sinking the German submarine U-604, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. He was also assigned to instruct pilots of the Brazilian Air Force in operational flying, for which Brazil awarded him the Order of the Southern Cross.

After the war he was assigned as Project Officer for development of the Neptune (P2V) aircraft. In this capacity, he organized and directed a long-range flight from Perth, Australia to Columbus, Ohio. In 1946 he was pilot and commander of the *Truculent Turtle*, which established a new world distance record (11,236 miles) – an aviation mark which stood for over 16 years. For this achievement he was awarded a second Distinguished Flying Cross by President Truman and the 'Comte de la Vaulx' medal by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale. After this epic flight he joined the staff of Rear Admiral Richard Byrd for the Antarctic operation 'Highjump.' For this project he designed and tested the first skis for tricycle-gear aircraft. He also equipped two aircraft with special navigation and photographic equipment for use in mapping the Antarctic continent and invented and built a special 'Sky Compass' for flight operations near the magnetic poles, where conventional instruments were unreliable. This new compass was later incorporated into celestial navigation equipment used by commercial airlines for the early trans-polar flights to Europe. For his invention, he was awarded the Thurlow Award for the outstanding contribution to the science of navigation for 1949.

Admiral Davies' later naval duties included tours in Europe and in the Orient. During the Cuban Missile Crisis he commanded Fleet Airwing 3 based in Brunswick, Maine, which was an important part of US aerial surveillance forces. As a Flag Officer he served as a special assistant to the Secretary of the Navy, was Commander of Carrier Division

20 and also Chief of Naval Development. He retired from the Navy in 1973 to accept a presidential appointment as Assistant Director of the Arms Control Agency. He held this position for 7 years under three different presidents and led two US delegations on negotiations with the Soviet Union. After his service with the State Department he continued to lecture and work actively for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

His lifetime avocation for celestial navigation began as a midshipman in Annapolis, where he studied under Arthur Ageton and published his first article in *Naval Institute Proceedings* in 1937. During his lengthy naval career he had occasion to address navigation problems both at sea and in the air. Based on his experience, he developed two new methods for celestial sight reduction. His Method of Assumed Altitude performs star identification and sight reduction in a single step. This unique system has been published as tables for stars, planets, the Sun and Moon. His *Concise Tables for Sight Reduction*, developed in conjunction with the Naval Observatory, have now been incorporated into the US and British Nautical Almanac. In addition to the Sky Compass, he invented the 'Prism Level', a device to improve the accuracy of the sextant when used in celestial navigation. He also held patents for several types of aircraft equipment, an energy-saving heating/cooling device and an early method for inputting data into computers.

In 1981 his keen interest in the field led him to establish the Navigation Foundation to advance the art of navigation. The Foundation now has a worldwide membership and conducts an active programme in both theoretical analysis and the development of practical sea-going experience. In addition to a quarterly newsletter, the Foundation also publishes a condensed *Navigator's Almanac*.

In 1988 Admiral Davies and the Navigation Foundation were invited by the National Geographic Society to objectively examine the 80-year-old controversy over Admiral Robert Peary's claim to have reached the North Pole on 6 April, 1909. After a year of extensive research and thorough analysis, his final report considered all relevant factors including time and distance, navigation, and depth soundings of the ocean bottom. In addition Davies, for the first time, applied modern photographic analysis techniques to the Sun's shadows that were evident in Peary's photographs taken in the vicinity of the Pole. Using spherical trigonometry, this new shadow evidence proved to substantiate Peary's claim. This innovative work was further reinforced after the original report had been published when new photographs that included the Sun itself were discovered. As a result of his exhaustive studies, Admiral Davies concluded that Peary was probably within 5 to 10 miles of the North Pole. He consistently indicated, however, that his conclusion was not based on any single source of information, but rather on the broad framework of data that was completely consistent with this finding. Though sceptics will persist, Admiral Davies himself was confident that Peary had succeeded.

He married the former Eloise English in 1945. He is survived by four children who now reside in various parts of the United States.

T. D. Davies and D. Davies