

Lifetime Successes - Monte Poindexter

We have many Poindexter descendants that have accomplished great things in their lives. It's always interesting to learn more about our cousins. This article takes us from Texas to the frozen Arctic as well as the Antarctic. The following article and letters were provided by Monte Poindexter after we asked for his story on how Poindexter Peak in Antarctica came to be named. Monte said, "Perhaps others will take something from this honor that unknowingly came to me from such distinguished gentleman and a newspaper man that I never met". One thing is for sure, Monte has engraved our surname onto solid rock in a place most of us will never see. Here is just a peak at his life.

Amarillo Globe-Times Wednesday, March 18, 1964 Page 6

Desire and Effort Marked Rise of Native of Amarillo

Recently awarded the Department of Commerce's Silver Medal was Monte F. Poindexter, son of Mrs. Clyde E. Griffith, 735 N. Cleveland. The medal is for "outstanding resourcefulness and initiative in assisting with the operation of an important meteorological program at Byrd Station, Antarctica, under extremely adverse conditions."

Behind the award, handed to Poindexter by Secretary of Commerce Luther H Hodges in the 16th annual awards program of the department, stands a story of success through personal effort and a strong desire to accomplish the utmost possible under limited resources. Poindexter, now 29, married, and with a small child, lives with his wife Carolyn in Hyattsville, Md. He was born in Amarillo in 1934 and attended Amarillo High School after completing study at Horace Mann Junior High.

He began his government service with the U.S. Army's Rocky Mount Arsenal in Denver as a civilian employee working in a warehouse. But, he wasn't thinking of staying there long.

In 1954 the ambitious young man joined the Army and through perseverance landed at Ft. Bliss Tex. where he maneuvered his way into meteorological training. The records show that he absorbed his training well and became a valuable military weatherman.



Poindexter, however, had his sights on higher things. After going to every allied service school the Army would allow, he received his discharge and started working for the U.S. Weather Bureau, accepting a number of contract jobs. These assignments took him to the Northwest Territory in Canada, where he worked at Mound Bay, Alert and Isachsen.

From 1961 to 1963 he served at Byrd Station, where his outstanding service won him the Silver Medal and in 1963 gave him permanent status with the Department of Commerce.

Robert M. White, chief of the U.S. Weather Bureau, commenting On Poindexter's work al Byrd Station, said, "The high degree of ingenuity and courage which he displayed in the difficult installation, operation and maintenance of equipment at the station and his dedicated devotion to duty in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles are indeed commendable."

As a meteorological technician Poindexter worked with other experts at Byrd Station and with the U.S. Navy Sea bees to move the installation several times. A veteran of five polar tours, he used his experience to perform exacting duties in equipment calibration and instrument operation to correctly record weather data at the frigid installation.

Byrd Station personnel were engaged in extremely arduous tasks requiring much physical exertion out of doors and many on-the-spot decisions concerning exposure sites for instruments, power lines and other operational-level problems.

Since no materials were furnished for interior completion of the Byrd Station meteorological building, it fell to Poindexter to find available coarse construction materials which he laboriously hand-finished and installed. As an example of his ingenuity, the building was the only one to pass inspection by the U.S. Navy in October, 1962.

Throughout his stay in the frozen wastes, Poindexter worked at least 10 hours a day, including Sunday and holidays.

When depletion of meteorological chemical supplies threatened the weather program at Byrd Station, he worked around the clock in temperatures 80 degrees below zero, man-hauling sleds loaded with supplies from an old site six miles away.

All the while, Poindexter also performed his duties in routine weather observation as supervisory technician.

Giving Poindexter his award, Secretary Hodges said. "Amarillo, Tex. can well be proud of you. You are a great credit to Texas, your home community and the U.S. Department of Commerce. "

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
WEATHER BUREAU
WASHINGTON

28 FEB 1964

IN REPLY, PLEASE ADDRESS
CHIEF, U. S. WEATHER BUREAU
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
AND REFER TO

Mr. Monte F. Poindexter
U. S. Weather Bureau
Washington, D. C.
(Through: Chief, Instrumental Engineering Div.)

Dear Mr. Poindexter:

HPM 28 Feb 64

I am very pleased that the Department of Commerce approved our recommendation that you be awarded the Meritorious Service Silver Medal in recognition of the outstanding resourcefulness and initiative you demonstrated in assisting with the operation of the important meteorological program at Byrd Station, Antarctica, during the period November 1961 to November 1962.

The high degree of ingenuity and courage which you displayed in the difficult installation, operation, and maintenance of equipment at the station and the dedicated devotion to duty you displayed in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles are indeed commendable. Your important contributions to the operation of a highly successful meteorological program at Byrd Station render you most deserving of this honor award for outstanding service.

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on your accomplishment.

Sincerely yours,



Robert M. White
Chief of Bureau

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20550

APR 27 1967

Mr. Monte F. Poindexter
Environmental Science Services
Administration
Room 526, Gramax Building
8060 13th Street
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Mr. Poindexter:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to inform you that the U.S. Board on Geographic Names has named in your honor the geographical feature Poindexter Peak located at 75°11' S. latitude, 134°30' W. longitude in Byrd Land, Antarctica.

Sincerely yours,



T. O. Jones
Division Director
Environmental Sciences

Link to the USGS map showing Poindexter Peak:

<http://littleurl.info/peak>