

RAEM/mm Is My Callsign

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Translated by Mike, G4AYO



<http://www.radio.ru/>

On 24 December 1973 Ernst Teodorovich Krenkel would have been 70 years of age. But an untimely death cut short his life at 68 years. The memory of him and his deeds remain with us, his contemporaries and friends, for ever.

One of the first polar expeditions of Ernst Teodorovich was a wintering on Franz Josef Land. Now, the polar geophysical observatory of this archipelago on Heys Island is named after the legendary radio operator.

Great work was accomplished by E.T. Krenkel during a two year wintering on Severnaya Zemlya (North Land). In memory of his stay in this bleak and cold territory, a bay, situated to the north of the archipelago, was named Krenkel Bay.

For many years Krenkel-explorer returned to the hydro meteorological service. A new scientific weather research vessel - the Ernst Krenkel - recently left on a voyage.

This was in recognition of his major contribution to the development of radio communications and amateur radio at the Central Radio Club USSR in Moscow.

The last voyage of E.T. Krenkel - a voyage to the Antarctic Circle, took place in 1968. He headed a voyage of the scientific-research vessel Professor Zubov, which was bound for the shores of Antarctica to relieve its staff of winterers found there, and also for oceanographic research.

Below we publish extracts from the diary of E.T. Krenkel, which he kept during the voyage on the Zubov. He was a gifted narrator, graphic, with apt language in which were no trite sentences or clumsy wording. Ernst Teodorovich appears before us as a very ordinary man who with boyish ardour is concerned with his daily watch on the air for radio amateurs.

14 November. Embarkation on Zubov was set at 8 a.m. The day was grey and dark. It was frosty. In Neva almost solid pancake ice. In my cabin there was a crush. Treshnikov, Korotkevich, Chukhnovsky, Somov, Osterkin and still more familiar and unfamiliar people arrived. A mass-meeting was conducted. Treshnikov (Director of the Arctic and Antarctic Scientific Research Institute) and I paced. Those seeing us off were asked to leave the vessel. On the gangway there was no passing: embraces, kisses, moist eyes... A tug slowly began to pull us. There were collective cries, waving of hands and a dwindling crowd of those seeing us off on the pier.

17 November. In the evening we passed by Cape Skagen. We established radiotelephone communications with the diesel-electric Ob, thanks to which was made our original radio-acquaintance with the future governor of Antarctica, Dmitri Dmitrievich Maksutov. Audibility was excellent. We worked on a transmitter with a power of one kilowatt.

22 November. On the horizon Spain is visible in the haze. The warm weather is wonderful. Towards evening the choppiness intensified to wind force 7-8. Stabilising sails were let out and on a rather stormy sea we tore along almost like Chest pond...

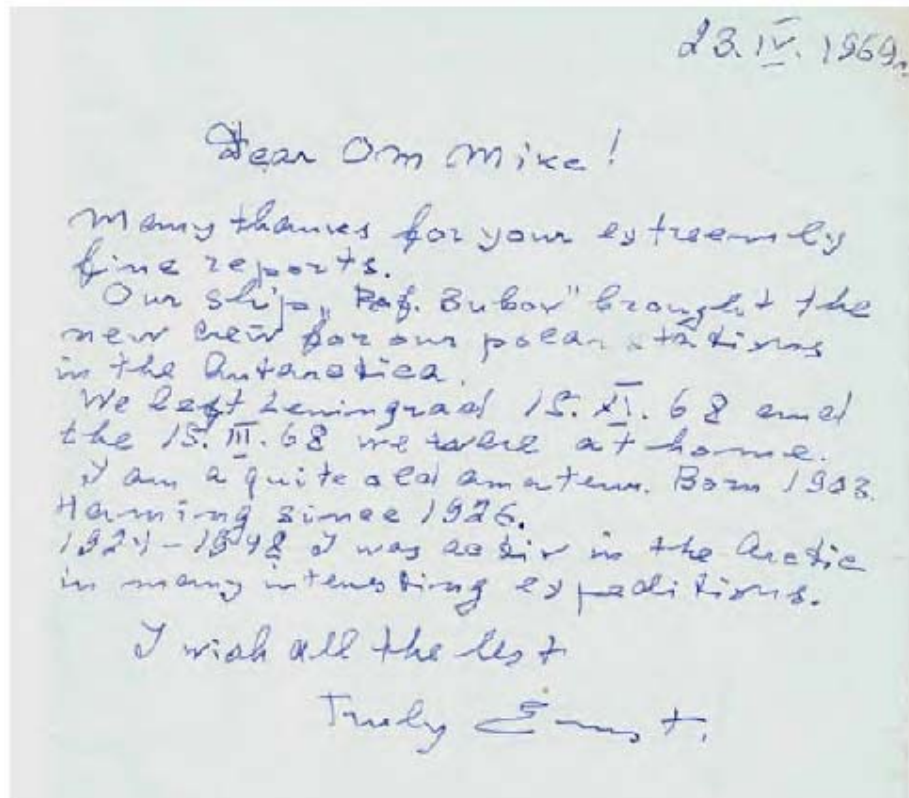
24 November. Warm rain lashes down, all around was a grey hazy mist, through which are visible the mountains of Grand Canary island, on the eastern side of which is located the port of Las Palmas. The island is beautiful, but sombre. A vast high steep stony shore stretches to the sea. In valleys and ravines there are small settlements with tiny white houses. There are no anchorages - the depth is too great. Among our sailors an argument arose, which most resembled Grand Canary: the landscape of Murmansk or the coast of the Crimea?

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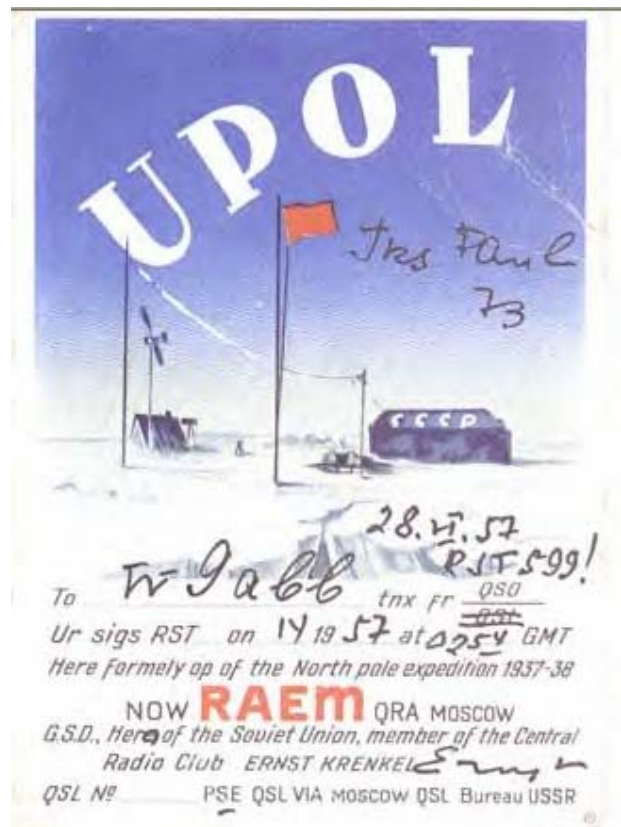


Letter from RAEM to G4AYO

26 November. Our vessel slowly, without the help of the tug, went into the rather small port of Las Palmas. It astonished the Spaniards with its ability to move sideways - we worked with a special reactive rudder. First trouble after putting into port - restocking of diesel fuel. It is unlike being in a queue at a Moscow petrol pump, but is in essence the same.

28 November. We took on supplies, fully loaded the refrigerators with vegetables and fruits for our "polyarniks", polar explorers in the Antarctic. After a four day stop we left Las Palmas. Then our route is without a stop to Mirny, where we met up with the Ob.

In the morning I received the good news that I had been authorised to work on the air from the Zubov with my amateur radio callsign RAEM/mm. This is great! In the evening at 2100 hours (midnight Moscow time) I went to the radio cabin to listen around?. I tuned the transmitter power up to one kilowatt in the middle of the twenty metre band. My first CQ went unanswered. After a minute on this frequency I heard a call from a Swiss - HB9AMF. I called him, he answered. Geneva was hearing us at RST 599! Then contacts were made one after another: with Italians, four Americans, a Spaniard, a Frenchman, with radio amateurs from the islands of Guadeloupe and Curacao. Most of them wished me happy sailing. One American demanded whether or not I am president of our amateur radio society.



QSL from RAEM



Printed on back: "Krenkel standing next the sleigh with the radio station before the going to Tayimir (February 19, 1938)." Photo by Chalip. Arctic exploration, Soviet, revolution, socialist, transportation. Grade II

29 November. Every evening I would work right in the middle of the band. Amateurs knew what frequency I was always on.

A.A. Losev - radio manager of the Zubov tunes up the transmitter, Karassev (watch radio operator) is on one side of me with a parallel link and safeguards me, since there is such a din on the air from radio amateurs, that one can sometimes miss callsigns. I got to know Karassev in his absence. He was a keen radio ham and sent me long lists of his QSOs from Franz Josef Land while I filled in QSL-cards* for him in Moscow.

The airwaves rang out, it was necessary to turn down the receiver. The first contact was with a German from the FRG, then five Americans. One of them, K9CLO, said that he had already worked me several years ago. A YL called me - WA3HUP**. I said that she was my first contact with a YL from the Zubov. The last contact was with an Italian from the island of Sicily.

3 December. At eleven o'clock a ceremony was announced, that Neptune, the ruler of all the seas, had come on board. Having been installed on the throne, Neptune asked of Captain Petr Ivanovich Tairov in a loud voice, with an amplifying megaphone: "Who is there, where are you going?" The captain according to form reported and held out a large scroll with the surnames of everyone on the ship.

And although he was the only man not subject to 'baptism', our dear Petr Ivanovich, himself jumped into the salt font in order to inspire good spirits.

A 'baptism' conveyor-belt quickly started up. Devils picked up the next in turn and they were thrown into the pool. The faint-hearted tried to hide in their cabins, but the ubiquitous devils dragged them out. The orchestra served its full repertoire on the mass.

And so, our ship crossed the equator. Neptune admitted us into the Southern hemisphere.

6 December. About three o'clock in the morning I went to the radio cabin. I made a successful catch of our amateurs. At first I only answered Americans but then came calls from Krasnovodsk, Novosibirsk, Perm, Chardzhou, Sverdovsk (here worked my old friend Portnyagin - UA9CC), Zaporozh, Rostov, Kharkov, Erevan and Crimea. All had good audibility. A pile of amateurs called me, two - three people simultaneously. It is a pity that there was insufficient time to contact them all.

8 December. At three o'clock at night, as a rule, radio amateurs come on the air on my watch. Today conditions are such that nothing is heard of our hams. Though, all the same, towards the very end I picked up two home DX stations from Blagoveshensk and Magadan. Those are perhaps the most distant contacts for the present.



RAEM was the call of S/S Cheluskin smashed by ice in the Polar sea in 1934. I was there the chief operator. Since then RAEM is my personal amateur call. Mail address: Ernst Krenkel, Chaplign street, 1/A, Moscow, USSR.

Г 313460 5/VI 1960 г. Типография ГЭИ. Москва, Школьная наб., 10. Зак. 237.

Back Side of QSL RAEM

10 December. I missed some of my watch, but all the same the catch was quite good. A regular DX-contact with Petropavlovsk-on-Kamchatka, and what is more a meeting with A.F. Kamalyagin from Kuibyshev. N.N. Stromilov replied as arranged, but he was heard so weak that nothing was understood.

13 December. Yesterday at 1600 we passed Cape of Good Hope. On the horizon, barely glimpsed and discerned, was a large flat mountain in cloud.

In the morning I was on short-wave. One American paid me a splendid compliment, with which I could by rights be proud of: "For us Americans, RAEM signifies Russia!"

23 December. In the morning I worked on short-wave. As always it was brim-full of Americans. Then Uruguayan CX4CO called me at great strength. He also heard me at maximum strength. We talked very nicely for half an hour. He reported, that he had my QSL card, we had worked each other in 1947! I well remember this contact since it was big DX for me. This radio amateur sometimes worked with the callsign CX1CX.

26 December. From morning we began to enter already very solid ice.

In two hours they announced on the speaker - Ob was on the horizon, but she only approached us by eight in the evening. Ob forced a channel, and we slowly crept through it. On the horizon was an entire barrier of icebergs. We counted 20 pieces, but there were most likely more of them. Here there was no tired sun. It was not up. This was mighty white grandeur - unforgettable.

1 January 1969. So then, Antarctica appeared before us as a white dome. Below, a barely visible black spot, Mirny was revealed. Both ships cut into the fast shore ice. Two Landrovers hastily came running. Penguins also hastily approached to make everything out. A ladder was lowered. On the ice the first messages are transmitted - greetings from the Big Land.

6 January. Karassev arrived and said that band conditions for our radio amateurs were tremendous and that ten men were already lined up in turn. The air really teemed. I made communications with Rekach and Stromilov.

12 January. Ob set about unloading. For four days the flagship punched a channel in the huge field of fast shore ice up to the safe ice, where we could work the tractors.



UPOL-1: Ice Polar Station, 1937

Zubov stands aside, waiting its turn to enter the four-kilometre channel. Seventy men are already on the shore. On shoulders, on buck-rakes, very delicate instruments are dragged four kilometres, since even light Landrovers are hindered in snow saturated with water. Further from the Ob it is a difficult journey: twenty kilometres more with zigzags, with evasion, eight bridges.

Relief arrives on the Zubov for the old winterers. There are sunburnt faces with white circles from dark goggles around the eyes. The weather allowed two aircraft trips to take out seven polyarniks from the very arduous Vostok station.

The eighth was a ceremonial day - the lowering of the flag of the thirteenth and the raising of the flag of the fourteenth Soviet Antarctic Expedition. The two heads, Shamontev and Maksutov, conducted a solemn ceremony in the presence of personnel from both expeditions.

The roof of the radio centre served as a rostrum adorned with flags of the States with polar stations in Antarctica.

Radio centre, diesel, and some office buildings are well positioned and not covered with snow. Others have less luck: hopelessly concealed by a snow covering four-five metres thick.

In the centre of the large settlement is the famous post with indicators - how many kilometres to the base capitals of the world. Yes, they are a long way off! A second post confirms that Mirny is right on the antarctic circle.

Forcibly puffing, clambering along an ice ravine created by human hand, is the next tractor. Flocks of penguins rushed to its noise, seals just lazily raised their heads. The Zubov took on board nearly all the old relief polyarniks.

