

"Bering" overcame ten nautical miles of off-shore ice some one and a half metres thick and approached straight up to the ice barrier at the seasonal geological base Druzhnaya-4 in order to unload.

The ship then continued on toward the eastern coast of the Larsemann oasis. It is there that the new "Progress" permanent station is being set up. The men who will be stationed there were supplied with equipment, preassembled housing, foodstuffs, building elements and fuel for the electric power unit and the caterpillar all-terrain vehicles.

The approaches to Progress Station have not yet been marked on navigational maps. Hydrographers from the Ministry of the Marine Fleet on board the ship continued the research begun in the region by the previous, Thirty First Soviet Antarctic Expedition. Following in the wake of a sounding ship, the "Vitus Bering" reached her destination. When the ship was about two and a half kilometres from the station, the way was blocked by a strip of broken ice and fragments of icebergs.

The ship hove to. They began unloading using an MI-8 helicopter and a small self-propelled barge. The helicopter crew, under V. Sigidinenko, created an air bridge with the mainland. The airmen carried out between forty and fifty flights every twenty four hours. The barge with its cargo literally had to batter its way through the ice.

The operations carried out by the crew of the "Vitus Bering" have once again showed convincing evidence of the valuable qualities offered by this new type of ice-breaking transport ship.