

# Station TANGO TANGO 82

## Introduction

WINTER 1982, ANTARCTICA

NATIONAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE STATION “TANGO TANGO 82”

Six weeks into the six month scientific tour, and the winter is beginning to close in. Radio communications with McMurdo base, 600 miles away, are intermittent and will only get worse before they get better, but the base is well set for the winter.

The station crew is a mix of old and new hands: the commander, GARNER, is an old, old hand, but a bit world-weary and not well-respected; Doc STEELE is likeable, but seems to be running from his own personal demons, and doesn't sleep too well most nights; the Chief Scientist, PUGH, obviously comes from “*money*” but tries to hide the fact; and his deputy, BRADSHAW, doesn't like it or the fact that PUGH's the senior; the Chief Mechanic, CARPENTER, is an easy-going but work-shy guy, who's good at his job when he tries but smokes too much shit; SANDERS, the electrician, is the rookie of the crew on his first tour – he seems like a good guy, but might want to hang around less with CARPENTER if he wants to do well; McHANON is the helicopter pilot, a taciturn Vietnam vet who never seems fazed by anything; the last two crew members are the station chef, CAMPBELL, who glides around the base on his roller skates and is an excellent cook; and the handler of the eight huskies here on the station, LANCASTER, who obviously likes his dogs a lot more than he likes his crewmates. The last members of the team are Ronnie & Nancy, the station cats...

The weather dominates everything: temperatures don't reach any higher than minus 15°C during the day, and can get as low as minus 50°C at night; the winds occasionally let up and there is still the odd still and crisp day to enjoy, but usually they howl and batter everything in their path; the white of snow is deep all around and new falls come all the time, and often are whipped into blinding blizzards.

Going outside without the right clothing at any time is a bad idea. The base has guide ropes linking all the buildings together, as often you cannot see one from another if the weather says so. Getting lost is easy, especially in snow falls, blizzards or fog: in bad weather salvation might be five feet before you, and you'd never know it. And dying when lost is easy and quick.

But, the crew gets on with the job, and the station falls into an easy routine of eat, sleep, maintain, explore and experiment, and the cats settle down to sleep.

One day begins to blur into another...