A NEW YEAR AT THE PRINCESS ELISABETH ANTARCTICA



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With most parts of the world experiencing some sort of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, New Year's celebrations have been, for the most part, relatively small and rather calm affairs. With only 15 people at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica, New Year's was small compared to previous years. Yet the crew still was able to have a festive evening.

As there is currently no designated cook at the station until the next crew rotation, the crew is taking turns cooking for everyone each day. On New Year's Eve, Expedition Leader Alain Hubert was in charge of making dinner.

As a starter, he prepared a traditional Belgian dish of tomatoes stuffed with shrimps, which was a nice taste of home for the Belgian crew. The main dish was composed of duck legs cooked in the oven accompanied by potatoes and fruit salad with berries, with tiramisu for dessert.

Later in the evening, everyone stayed up chatting with one another cheerfully in the living room of the station until midnight came.

Enjoying some time off

After weeks of work insulating the new garage, renewing the floor of the station near its entrance, upgrading the Toyota Hiluxes the team uses to transport material, and installing new double-sided solar panels for the station on ridge next to the station, it was nice to be able to have a few days off to relax or work on a few side projects.

Alain and a number of team members headed to the former Japanese Asuka Station site, which has been abandoned since the 1990s. Located 60 km towards the east, it was a great opportunity to test out the upgrades the mechanics had made to the Toyota Hiluxes for driving on rough terrain. While there, they collected some fuel drums that a previous BELARE expedition had left there in case of need.

Others took advantage of the time off to enjoy their surroundings, taking a guided hike along the nunatak in the vicinity.

Now everyone is back to work and ready to finish off what needs to be done for the 2020-2021 season!