

RESPONSE OF PROFESSOR KOTLYAKOV TO AWARD OF SCAR PRESIDENT'S MEDAL

Dear Chris,

I am extremely touched by your information about awarding me with the SCAR President's Medal for Scientific Excellence 2008. This is a great honor for me since this reward celebrates 50 years of my continuous labor in the field of world glaciology. Being still a "green" youth, I did meet with glaciers of the Novaya Zemlya when long before IGY we stayed there (three men in one polar tent) for several winter months on the top part of the Novaya Zemlya ice sheet. That was my first polar school, and it got me attached to polar countries and glaciers for the whole of my life.

During those earlier years of my independent life, I had the great luck to be a disciple of two outstanding soviet glaciologists, who were professors Petr Shumsky and Grigory Avsyuk. During the IGY together with Professor Avsyuk we had organized the first large body of glaciologists in the USSR - that was the Department of Glaciology of the Institute of Geography of the USSR Academy of Sciences. At that time, young talented scientists worked in this Department, spending a considerable part of their time "in field", i.e. on the glaciers of Franz Joseph Land, Svaldbard, Novaya Zemlya, Severnaya Zemlya, Caucasus, Pamirs, and Tien Shan. In the 1970s, i.e. in the time of glaciological prosperity, more than a hundred collaborators worked in this Department under my leadership.

During those years I succeeded in realizing the great idea of the creation of the "World Atlas of Snow and Ice Resources". This Atlas contains a summary on the climatology, glaciology, hydrology, and paleoglaciology of all conceivable glacier regions of the world. We succeeded in this grandiose work owing to the selfless activity of 300 glaciologists from very different corners of the Soviet Union, i.e. from Ukraine to Central Asia, and to a special research program aboard the Soviet Orbital Station "Salyut-6". I agree with your estimate of this Atlas, and I do hope it will be used by the world science community for many decades in this century.

At last, I am proud of the fact that I am the initiator and principal investigator from the Russian side of a very fruitful long-standing collaboration with French (and then, with American) scientists in the project of deep drilling of a borehole at the Vostok station, and in the processing and analysis of the ice core obtained from this borehole. These were pioneer works, and the borehole itself at Vostok still "keeps the world record" of the depth of glacier core drilling. The results obtained have been recognized as the outstanding achievement of the XXth century in the field of Earth sciences. They are cited in hundreds of books and articles of scientists and politicians and have a fantastic impact-factor.

I am very pleased with these reminiscences evoked by the prestigious SCAR reward, and once again I thank you personally and the whole global Antarctic community for such appreciation of my 50-year work.

I am truly grateful to everybody for this great news. I do hope (in spite of my age!) to continue my polar glaciological investigations during the IPY and in the following years of special attention to the polar and high-mountain areas of our planet.

With best wishes and kind regards.

Very truly yours,
Vladimir Kotlyakov