

Russia celebrates 50 years at Antarctic

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Scientists and relatives of polar explorers Sunday celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Russian polar station Vostok in the Antarctic.

There are five permanent Russian polar stations situated in the Antarctic, but Vostok is the only one on a glacial plateau situated over a quarter mile above sea level, the head of Russia's Antarctic Expedition, Valery Lukin, told Itar-Tass Sunday.

Lukin said explorers with the second Comprehensive Antarctic Expedition team established the polar station in the late 1950's as a year round meteorological and geophysical monitoring station.

Explorers discovered a subterranean lake beneath 2.5 miles of ice near the site and named it Vostok, meaning "east."

The station recorded the coldest temperature on Earth in July 1983 at 89.2 Celsius degrees below zero.

The station monitors energy flow of the solar winds and conducts "unique scientific experiments that made Russia one of the leading nations in the international Antarctic community," Lukin said.

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