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National Center for Atmospheric Research
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For further information, please contact F. William Kroeck, 443-1960, ext 541

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eclipse Watchers See Solar Activity Reported by High Altitude Observatory

Boulder, Colo. --- An active solar region, reported by Miss Dorothy Trotter of the High Altitude Observatory (HAO) here before the May 30 eclipse, reached the west edge of the sun on eclipse day as scientists hoped it would. Observers stationed along the eclipse path across the South Pacific reported that a prominence was clearly visible to the naked eye during the eclipse.

Among the observers was Dr. John A. Eddy, HAO staff member who, with fifteen other scientists from HAO, the Joint Institute of Laboratory Astrophysics, Kitt Peak National Observatory, Sacramento Peak Observatory, and the Universities of Hawaii and Michigan, observed the eclipse from the island of Bellingshausen, an atoll in the Society Islands. Dr. Eddy reported that through his guide telescope he could see a bright red active prominence region embedded in the white corona.

The weather also cooperated, Dr. Eddy said. There were high cirrus clouds, and some worrisome low clouds, which cleared away just before totality, but the "seeing", he said, was excellent.

Cablegrams sent by Miss Trotter to eclipse watchers at several posts across the South Pacific alerted the observers to the probable appearance of the active region, enabling them to focus their instruments on the region during totality. Since the region appeared during a time of generally low solar activity, its effects may be identified more readily than if there were other active regions to clutter the observations.

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Observers from many nations studied the May 30 eclipse, some from airplanes, some from the ground, and some using rocket-borne instruments. Dr. Eddy said the vapor trails of two eclipse airplanes could be seen overhead a few minutes before totality. Sixteen French scientists also used Bellingshausen as an observation post. The atoll, about two miles in diameter, consists of four islands around a lagoon. It has a permanent population of five Polynesians who maintain a cocoanut plantation there.

The U.S. group was transported to Bellingshausen from Tahiti aboard the schooner "Goodwill", owned by a California manufacturer. With their fifteen tons of gear, the group arrived through the island's surf on May 8. A five-day Pacific storm interrupted their return, and they were finally evacuated to Tahiti aboard the French minesweeper that fetched the French scientists from the island.

Dr. Eddy, David Hultquist, also of HAO, and Dr. J. M. Malville, of the University of Michigan, made two kinds of observations during the eclipse: photoelectric recordings of the emission of ionized iron, and visible-wavelength ("white-light") photographs with a 35-millimeter camera attached to a small telescope. The white-light photographs will be compared with those made by Dr. Gordon Newkirk of HAO on June 3, using a coronagraph flown by a balloon launched from Palestine, Texas.

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