

**Commander Edward M. Ward**  
**6 November 2001**

**Brian Shoemaker**  
**Interviewer**

(Begin Tape 1 - Side A)

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*BS: This is an oral history with Commander Edward M. Ward, who was the first Commanding Officer of VXE-6 and helped Admiral George Dufek structure the whole program. The interview was taken at Commander Ward's home in Ocean City, New Jersey, on the 6th of November 2001. Funding was provided by a grant from the National Science Foundation and the work is sponsored by the Byrd Polar Research Center of The Ohio State University and a grant from the National Science Foundation.*

*Commander Ward, I think it's important to know a little bit about your background, if we can start back with where the trail that took you to the Arctic began and what led you there. Your experience, your mentors, and possibly, the motivation that you had from any books or anything like that.*

EW: I think I can pretty well answer that. I was born in 1918, and I grew up in an era, really, where aviation was just in its infancy. And those who flew, in my mind, were certainly heroes. I recall vividly when Lindbergh made his non-stop flight. I was a Boy Scout and subscribed to *Boy's Life* and read all about Admiral Byrd and the young Boy

Scout he had with him in the Antarctic, Paul Siple. And then, of course, we had many more come down the pike: Amelia Earhart to Wrong Way Corrigan. Growing up in that era, I, became very Interested in model airplane building and [I] started [off] before the balsa wood era. I made little things called ROG's (rise off the ground. . .) tiny little flimsy airplanes, but they did fly and when I went to grammar school, I had a teacher who was very interested in aviation.

BS: *Do you remember the name of that teacher?*

EW: No, I don't, as a matter of fact. It's been a little bit too long, I'm afraid. In high school, [I had, of course,] I was in the plays and what have you and did all the normal things - football, basketball, a little bit of track, baseball, of course. And while in high school, I became even more deeply involved in model building and became the president of the LaSalle High School Flying Club, so all of my early life really was oriented around aviation.

BS: *Where was LaSalle?*

EW: That was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, run by the Christian Brothers who in my mind, were the finest bunch of teachers that I've ever had. Anyhow, the two prime movers that stepped me up a notch were my father, who was a Pennsylvania Military College graduate, an Army Captain in field artillery during World War I, and my Uncle Sante Santa Maria who really wasn't an uncle, but one of my family's closest friends. He flew with the Royal Canadian Air Force first, then transferred to the Royal Air Force.

BS: *How do you spell Sante Santamaria?*

EW: OK. Sante Santa Maria. Now, continuing on, when I went to LaSalle College it did not have an ROTC, but they allowed the Marine Corps to come in and recruit. In 1938, I joined the Marine Corps, Fleet Marine Corps Reserve, 7th Artillery Battalion, stationed at the Marine Barracks, Philadelphia, and also went for two consecutive years to what we called Platoon Leaders' Class, which, in fact, was OCS.

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And that was 6 weeks each summer. Upon graduation, we'd be commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve. At the same time, in 1939, the government came up with one of the finest programs that I can recall. It was the Civilian Pilot Training Program - CPTP. That year, they took 10,000 applicants from colleges and universities throughout the United States, LaSalle College being one. The other two colleges in Philadelphia were the University of Pennsylvania and Saint Joseph's College.

To make a long story short, I got my private pilots license and [wanting] **wanted** to continue my aviation training. [but not then.] **Not** having the necessary academic background to go into the military. I [was going] **decided** to take the advance pilot training program [which was then] a sort of an advanced program from a couple of standpoints, [but] mostly because we were to fly the larger airplanes, one being the old [Walko] **Waco** bi-plane. **Following** [So I went to] my Marine Corps **two weeks annual** training, I came back to **Wings Field** the [old] airport where I had gotten my private pilot's license **and** talked to the chief pilot **Guy Miller**. [there who was a great, great guy named Guy Miller. – and where I flew was a little airport on the outskirts of Philadelphia Wings Field. And] I asked him about this program and he said, "Sure, just fill these things out and I'll sign. I know that you're qualified. [and what not] The only thing you have to do is go [down] **to** one of the military bases and [you have to pass] **take** a [military] flight physical [and it has to be] given by a military flight surgeon." I said,

"Well, fine. Let me have the phone and I'll see what I can do." So I called the Philadelphia Navy Yard . . . this was early in the morning . . . and they said, "What are you doing now?" I said, "Well, I'm about an hour away." They said, if you can **come** right on down, we'll take you. [right in. So, I had all of the - and this I think is important -] I had all of the civilian physical exam forms that I was required to submit very, very plainly marked CAA. [ which it was then. Took these forms down and] **I** was met by a young Corpsman who took my application and I again reiterated, "This is a civilian training program." [I'm coming down here for.] So, **He** showed me to a small room that had a bunk in it and he said, "Just relax and make yourself at home for a while," which I did. And a very senior office then, a Lieutenant Commander Flight Surgeon] **A Lt. Commander Flight Surgeon** came in and [he] looked me over. [And he proceeded to start and] **It** was the longest most severe [really,] physical examination I've ever been through. [And at about] **At** 3 o'clock that afternoon **he came back in the room. I had drops in my eyes and [I still]** couldn't see too well. [I had drops in my eyes and I had drops in my eyes and he came back and he came back and he said,] "I want to congratulate you Mr. Ward," he said. "You're one of the few to pass the Naval Aviation flight physical. Of course, you're interested in the cadet program." [And I said, "Yes sir."] And almost for a split second until I had the quickest second thought of my life] I was **about to tell him I'd come down** [about come down " Look I came down here] for a civilian **exam** [deal] not military." Then **suddenly I realized** [that] I had something [now] in my grasp that I never dreamed of. [So] I met the board that afternoon. **It was** composed of three **Lieutenant (jg's)**. [JGs and of course] They questioned me about my interest in the Navy when I was already in the Marine Corps. [and assured of a commission and what have you.and] I **told them** [said, "Well,] all my life [I've] **I** wanted to fly." So one of the young officers said, "Well, there should be no particular problem. [You know] When you get down **to Pencacola,** [there,] you might inquire about getting back in the Marines." But, the hardest part was yet to come. Before I could get

into the Navy Aviation **Cadet** Program, I had to get a discharge from the United States Marine Corps. [and] My Commanding Officer was a fellow named Major Nolan who later had quite a war record on Guadalcanal.

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[So I had to see him and] He happened to be a very, very well to do insurance broker in Philadelphia. I walked into his office, hat in hand, and he said to me, "Now what brings you down here?" [Of course] I was then a Corporal in the Marine Corps Reserve. [and] I explained my case and [I] finished up by saying [that] I knew that my records had been reviewed and I would be commissioned in the Marine Corps, but I said, "Sir, my life has been centered around aviation and I'll do everything I can when I get down to Pensacola to transfer back to the Marine Corps." [So he said ....oh,] First he read me up and down **then asked, [and said]** "Why do you want to be a Navy guy when you're a Marine, Marine, Marine?" After he relaxed and throttled back, he said, "Well, you know, come to think of it, if you'd rather be a John Paul Jones **rather** than a Smedley D. Butler, you've got my blessings. Now, Smedley D. Butler was a retired Marine General who'd been hired by the City of Philadelphia as the director of Public Safety in the mid-20s. [– late '20s.] And he was tough. He was a tough, tough guy. [and he went in and] **He** raided all the speakeasies and refused any payoff. He was an honest guy. And he fired cops right and left. He'd walk into a station house, a sergeant would be sitting back with his feet up on the desk and he'd give them a whack with **his [the]** billy-club. [that he carried,] "On you're feet! I'm the commanding officer." And to make a long story short, he was just too good a man and they fired him. So, that was Smedley D. Butler who, incidentally [has] **had** not one, but two Congressional Medals **of Honor**. [... a , magnificent man]

Well, getting away from that, I did go to Pensacola, and I did graduate from flight school in May of 1941.

BS: *That's when you got your wings.*

EW: That's when I got my wings, designated Naval Aviator No. 7740. Well, I [had] put in for carrier duty as I guess most of us did, but in those days, they had just started to pick up in fleet training and knowing that the United States was coming pretty close to war, they were expanding in leaps and bounds. The problem was that you had one of three choices. You could either choose **VF**, carriers, **VP**, patrol or **VOVS**, [which was] scout observation. [and of course they flew they were shot] **They** flew off of the battleships and cruisers. So, most of us picked carriers and of course, I got P boats, flying boats, the old **PBY**.

Well, thinking I was going to go to the fleet immediately, I put off all thoughts of marriage, but then low and behold, they needed instructors. And the first thing you know, I was back in Pensacola, going through instructor's school. [and became an instructor in primary first and] I instructed in primary, **and** then was transferred to Corpus Christi. [was a young base just starting to build. And as soon as] **When** the war started, I transferred into the **PBY** squadron as a flight instructor. [and] **During** the first year and a half of the war, we flew [- they were known as] **anti submarine** long-range navigation flights. [but in fact what they were we'd take our students out and of course taught them navigation aboard the PBY but] **We** carried **[then]** four depth charges - two set for, as I recall, 50 feet, and two set for 25. And I did make two submarine contacts, believe it or not. [during that time. One was the one that I missed, unfortunately. Picked him up] **I made contact with the first just after** he'd [just] fired a torpedo onto a large Liberty ship coming into the Mississippi Delta. [right around the region.]

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[And] We picked up this sub **on** a very, very hazy day. [and of course, in those days] Before we had radar, it was all visual and unless you could spot your target ahead [pretty well,] it was difficult to make a bombing run. We'd fly the sub patrol **at** [down around] 300 feet. [and we came across this guy and] Before I knew it, I was over him. [and] We **circled** [went] around and did the usual pattern and came back on target, armed the charges, and that was the last I saw of him. You know, people thought, oh my, maybe this guy's joking, but the fact of the matter remains, as you know the Gulf almost became a German [sub] lake.

So, **much for that.** [enough of that Well anyway, I went to that squadron first. Then I ended up thing ahead a little faster, in] **My last wartime squadron was a PB4Y2** patrol squadron - Patrol Squadron 118 [- which was] in the Pacific and **I** ended up on Okinawa. In the meantime, I had put in for **a** regular Navy commission that came through right at the end of the war. So when the war ended, all of my friends who were Reserves went home on points and they kept me in Okinawa for what I thought would be forever.

BS: *Where were you based in Okinawa?*

EW: We were [at] **based at** [the first airport -] the first Japanese captured airport - Yan Tan. And then we moved to Buckner Bay. [I think that was ....]

BS: *That became Naha, didn't it?*

EW: **It may have later, I don't know.** We were **near** [first to] the town of Naha. [yeah I think that was Yana Baru, as I recall. So,] When I finally did get home, **it was** [and when I got home it was in] January of 1946. [This is the start of where my polar activities came in.]

BS: *Let me ask you a question before you get into that. You let something pregnant hanging. You said that you couldn't get involved with thoughts of marriage at first, but you got stationed in Pensacola and you left that hanging. What happened on the marital side of things?*

EW: Believe me, Brian, it wasn't intentional.

BS: *Oh, I won't tell. I might blackmail you, though.*

EW: Well, as I say, I didn't want to be a celibate for the next two years while I was an instructor in Pensacola. Now bearing in mind that at that time, we ensigns were forbidden to be married for two years and there was a very good reason for it. First of all, and this was across the board, most of the young ensigns, if not all, for the first two years, went to sea, particularly the Naval Academy boys right out of the Academy. They had to put in their two years sea duty even before they could apply for aviation training. We, on the other hand, of course, expected to go to a fleet squadron, a carrier, battleship, cruiser or whatever. Well, as it turned out, I became an instructor, so I thought well, the best thing to do, if you don't want to sit around and lead a bachelor's life was to get married and the girl that I married I had known for [I guess,] three years. [and] She was the love of my life, of course, and always will be and still is. We were married 60 years as of last September.

BS: *So, you were married in . . .*

EW: I was married in September of 1941.

BS: *And what was her full name?*



EW: Her last name was Hesser. Good German descent.

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BS: *Marilyn?*

EW: Marilyn. They say the marriage of a German and an Irishman makes a lot of sense because the Germans are very **serious and** industrious, [ness and hard working] and the Irish are lazy and witty. And fortunately, that's been the case. Well after five children, we were a bit **more mellow**. [accommodating]. Anyhow, we married and for the next three months, until the war broke out, **I** [it] was treading a very thin line because you were summarily bounced if they caught you and there was no question of yes or no, you were out. And, of course, it made life for me very difficult because I'd take her to the O Club **to the** [on these] Saturday night dances and she couldn't wear her ring. [and] She was my date, **a real cute girl** and [she] went by her maiden name. [she was a real cutisie poo.] So, the guys that were senior to me [...and in her day, and these guys.] were around her constantly and of course, I had to back off.

BS: *If I may inject here, she's still a very handsome lady.*

EW: Well, thank you very much, Brian. I'm sure I'll pass that on. Well, we were married and then the first child came down the pike. [and then] **In September 1943** [at the end of my two years.] I [had] **received orders to the Atlantic Fleet. I reported to Naval Air Station Norfolk. The following day I lined up with thirty or forty officers awaiting orders. An officer seated at a desk in front of a hangar was handing them out. I received orders to Utility Squadron Fifteen (VJ-15).** [a tour of duty that was just a

gravy train. and was standing in line and offered to pick them up, this would have been in mid – 1943 And at that stage of the game, there were about maybe 30 or 40 officers lined up in this deal that you'd walk up and there was a guy sitting there at a desk and he was handing out orders and it was sort of you get this and you get that. And so it went. And he handed me my orders and I took a look at them and said,] “What's this outfit?” **I asked.** He said, "It's up in a place called Brunswick, Maine. It's a utility squadron [VR... pr mp. It was ] VJ15." [Again] I said, "I don't want 'em." And the guy behind me said, "Oh, I'll take 'em." [And this] **The** Lieutenant looked at me and [he] said, "Listen to me brother. You either take these or you're going to be sitting right where I am. Would you rather be sitting here or would you rather be flying airplanes?" So, I flew airplanes. [for a little while. Then ...see,] This squadron was a real gravy train. I was the Officer in Charge of the Bermuda Detachment when the boys went into Normandy. [and] I went back that night, [and I] sat down and I wrote a letter [and I wrote right] to the Commanding Officer. [I said, “Look,] I **requested** [want] immediate orders [I want to go] to the Pacific. I don't care . . . *any* category." Well, the **C O** [guy] got my letter and flew out the next day and he said, "What's the matter with you? Are you crazy? You know you have a wife and a child and they're waiting for you." His name was Whitey Olstead, USN, retired, maybe long since dead. I'm not too sure. Anyhow, I told him I was dead serious and there was no question about it. And he said, "OK, if that's the way you feel, that's the way it will be." So, in about two weeks, I had orders to go to Hutchinson, Kansas, to go through PB4Y training, which I did and then progressed into Miami for advanced bombing navigation and then on out to Hawaii for a sort of finishing touch on the gunneries and crews and what have you. And that's the way I got married and that is the story of my life up until the point that I was going to make.

I went down, following the war . . . now this is mid-January of 1946. I had taken two months leave. You could take your accumulated leave then and I thought I'd better go down to Washington and see what they have in store for me. So, I went down to then the old Bureau of Aeronautics at 18th and Constitution Ave. in Washington, DC, and went in to see my detail officer. They happened to be stationed there **at the time**. Now, I understand, they're in the Pentagon, or they may be in Crystal City, I don't know. The Navy's gotten beyond me. But, I went in and I spoke to this young detail officer and I said, "I've been gone for a while. What can I expect?" And he said, "Oh listen, yeah, yeah. You're deserving of shore duty. Where do you live?" And I said, "Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was my home town." "OK, we'll put you right there." And I thought, "This almost sounds too good to be true." He said, "You're going to the Naval Air Station in Johnsville **Pennsylvania**." The Naval Air Station in Johnsville was [this] **the** old Brewster plant that had been taken over by the Navy. [because] Brewster went flat on their face with the **marginally performing** airplanes they were making. I said, "I've never heard of Johnsville." He said, "It's right by the Naval Air Station Willow Grove." Of course, I knew Willow Grove as a little boy, going out there begging and deviling my mother and father to drive me out to the airport. So he said, "Your orders will be in the mail in about two weeks." In two weeks, they arrived. I opened them up and I started to read and they said, "Proceed to the Naval Air Station Johnsville, Pennsylvania. You will take a PBY - they even had the Bureau number - and crew and you will proceed from there to Point Barrow, Alaska, in connection with an aerial magnetometer survey. The program is known as SPAM - Special Alaskan Magnetic Survey." So, Marilyn was reading **my orders** [these things] over my shoulder and she said to me, "Well, where are we going?" And I said, "We're going to Point Barrow, Alaska." She said, "Where's that?" I said, "I never heard of it." So, we got out a map of the world - a chart, I should say putting it in nautical terms - and looked for Point Barrow. I started off down in the

eastern section and went on out as far as Anchorage and Kodiak and there was nothing. Then I started a little farther north and then finally I said, "Oh my god, Marilyn, you don't get any further north than Point Barrow, Alaska. I'm sure this is an unaccompanied tour." So, I went to Point Barrow . . . we left in May.

BS: *But, your home port was Johnsville.*

EW: Johnsville. And I was working under the administrative control of the Office of Naval Research and the scientists that I had with me on this project were from the Geodetic Survey. And there may have been one from another organization. I forget.

BS: *Any civilian corporations involved?*

EW: No.

BS: *This was the US Coast and Geodetic Survey, right?*

EW: Yes, they were scientists. Fred Keller was one. Eric Shawnstead was another. Bill Balsley was the honcho and there were two or three others. Herb Hawkes, I recall.

(300)

BS: *Who was in charge again?*

EW: A fellow named Balsley. Jim Balsley.

BS: *And do you know if any of them are still around?*

EW: Brian, I would doubt it. I think the one who took over from Jim was Fred Keller and we were very close friends and he passed away. Eric Shawnstead, I'm not too sure. There was another little guy named Mitesky. But, from that time on, the only person that I had contact with was Fred Keller.

BS: *So, you flew to Barrow from where? Johnsville, direct or . . . ?*

EW: No, in those days . . . we had a PB5A, of course. . . and with a magnetometer that stuck out the **tail [back]** rather than the other variety **that [which is to] drop [them]** down below the plane – **[to] dangle down on a cable. [line]**. But, it was so slow and of course, going west, you have the prevailing head winds and our stops were Naval Air Station Glenview, Chicago. The following night, we spent in Billings, Montana. The following night at Anchorage, and then the following night in Kodiak. That's where **[of course, when] [I] we came [was up there, I was]** under the operational control of Com Alaskan Sea Frontier.

BS: *He was in Kodiak?*

EW: He was in Kodiak. From there, **[of course]** we flew up and made arrangements **for hangar space** at Ladd Field in Fairbanks. I don't think Ladd's a functioning Air Force Base any more.

BS: *It's something. It's the construction . . . flying for the Alaskan pipeline went out of there and it was Army. Of course, the Air Force moved to Eileson, when they developed Eileson, south of Fairbanks. First SAC operated from there.*

EW: I'll be darned. Is Eileson Air Force Base still there?

BS: *Yes.*

EW: Very interesting. Well, we had to stop in there to make arrangements for our checks. Barrow was a little bit nippy, as you know. And besides, I loved to get back to the luxury and conveniences of Fairbanks.

BS: *You're talking about airplane checks, not paychecks.*

EW: No. Airplane checks.

BS: *OK.*

EW: Then it was on to Point Barrow, Alaska.

BS: *What year was this now?*

EW: This was 1946 - May of '46. And I first caught sight of what would be my future home. [That I hadn't really figured on, but] I took a look down below and [that was too early for the ice to have moved out, so] the ice shelf was right up on the beach. Here were these rows and rows of Quonset huts. [and of course,] The native Eskimo village was about three-quarters of a mile **from the Navy installation. We landed** on the old Morrison matting runway. [And I came on in, landed and] It was cold. And I had a boy who was a third class then, third class mech and he stepped outside and he said to me, "Man, can you believe it, sir? Snow in May."

[Seabee units and the whole works, because the Seabees, at that time were the ones in charge of putting in all of the oil rigs..]

BS: *Building the facilities?*

EW: [Yeah.]

BS: *The uniformed Seabees were doing the oil drilling?*

EW: They were doing the drilling.

BS: *You had Naval Petroleum Reserve up there.*

EW: Yeah. Petroleum Reserve No. 4.

BS: *How many rigs did they have?*

EW: The one that I recall vividly then was at Umiat.

BS: *No, I mean rigs - the structures for drilling.*

EW: That I can't answer, Brian. I don't know.

BS: *You mentioned Umiat. What was going on there when you arrived?*

EW: Not too much. As a matter of fact, Umiat had been drilled and they had come up with a small amount of oil, but by the time we got there, there was only a caretaker civilian who sat around all day doing nothing until airplanes came **in**. **[and there] Umiat** was a little emergency field that we used **for refueling**. [and you could go in there and your could pick up fuel] The only problem was that there were no pumps. You had to pump it out of a 50-gallon drum.

BS: *Hand pumped.*

EW: Hand pumped. And you put your fuel through a chamois which was kind of the archaic way of going about it and it would take forever.

BS: *I distracted you. You'd just arrived at Barrow and were giving descriptions there. I was interested in Gordon Ebbe, of course, as a friend. How many Navy personnel were there?*

EW: At **that [the] time they probably had 50 SeaBees and a handful of Navy radiomen**. [strangely enough a couple of them that were there in the program were in the Deepfreeze program.]

*Omit: Later, they were in Deepfreeze.*

*Omit:* EW: Yeah. One of the young officers up there, a fellow by the name of Jorgenson, Lieutenant JG, he was the aerologist. This is Point Barrow, 1946. And, of course, Gordon Ebbe, and there might have been one or two others. I'm not too sure.

*Omit:* BS: *So, here you are. You meet Gordon for the first time there, I take it.*



*Omit:* EW: Yeah.

*Omit:* BS: *He was there with his wife?*

*Omit:* EW: Yep. She was one of the few.

*Omit:* BS: *She was one of the few, huh? So, you arrive. What happens at the base once you arrive? Were you briefed? Okay: Did they tell you what the big picture was?*

EW: Yes, to a degree, although not briefed all that well. Our assignment, primarily, was to fly flight lines and then to cover all **Petroleum Reserve No. 4**. [the petroleum, as they called them then, 4 oil reserve which] It took in an area from the Bering Sea over to the Canadian border and from the Brooks Range roughly up to the Arctic coast.

(400)

BS: *So, the petroleum reserve then was not like it is now. It took up the whole North Slope of Alaska from the Brooks to the sea and then from the Chukchi Sea to the Canadian border. There was no ANWAR, which they're fighting over today.*

EW: No.

BS: *It was all one big chunk of federal territory.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *There was no state.*

EW: No.

BS: *No lands that belonged to the territory of Alaska. It was all Navy.*

EW: It certainly was.

BS: OK. That's a very important point. So, you had to fly flight lines. Did you take any of these oil people along? Some of the coastal geodetic people when you flew these flights in?

EW: Never. The only ones we took were the two scientists or three that happened to be aboard.

BS: *Well, that's what I mean. Scientists.*

EW: Oh yeah.

BS: *Well, where were they from?*

EW: They were from Coast **and** Geodetic.

BS: *That's what I mean.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *So, you did have the two scientists aboard.*

EW: At all times, yeah.

BS: *Who were they?*

EW: Three of them, mostly. We had Fred Keller, a little guy named Eric Shawnstadt, and don't ask me how to spell it because I should, but I'm ashamed I don't know how. And the other guy was Herb Hawkes and he was the one that would sit up in the forward gunner's little position and do the navigating by eye with a map.

BS: *So, it was all contact navigation.*

EW: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, we flew the flight lines at 500 feet and, as I say, Herb Hawkes would sit up in the gunner's little nose cone we had. They'd rigged it so he wasn't rigged for battle, but he had a little kind of an observation platform so he could see down below. And a lot of **the** time, you have to hand fly rather than the automatic pilot because you had to be right on the money. There was no question about it. You had to be as accurate as you could get it. And, of course, you know there were no navigational aids up there to go by so it was strictly a case of VFR and looking down and having a guy that can interpret what he sees down below and then fly that particular line.

BS: *How far apart? Were the lines all parallel from east to west?*

EW: No, we would criss-cross. They were at about, maybe 10-15 miles separate along latitude lines and then, on longitude lines, maybe **they were a bit further.** [there was

quite a bit of further space.] I don't know quite what their theory was or their method of operation.

(450)

BS: *So, there was a grid.*

EW: A grid, yeah.

BS: *Did they fly it over the continental shelf over the ocean?*

EW: No.

BS: *They didn't. It was all over the land.*

EW: All over land. And, as I say, most of the flights were up to 8 to 10 hours. [which were fairly....of course you know] In the summertime, you could fly all day long and all night long because there was not too much difference.

BS: *OK. Did they have charts? Were there charts where they flew all this? Did they automatically turn out a chart of the grid or did they draw the grid by hand and say, "We flew this," and then they took the needle charts . . . what was that, on a drum?*

EW: Yeah. That was the way they correlated what they had. Amidships in the PBY5A, [mid ships,] they had their own little station [and they had] all of the electronics gear. [there and] This would record the intensity **that told** [which would tell] them whether they had an anomaly or they [did or they] didn't, whether it was cold or it was hot.

BS: *What do you mean by cold and hot?*

EW: Well, if they said, "We have a hot contact," then you knew that it was perhaps an indication of oil down below.

BS: *An oil deposit.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *How long did you fly these flights? All summer?*

EW: Yeah. All summer.

BS: *Did you get into the winter?*

EW: No. Summer, I think we left late August. [We completed...] And incidentally, this is a point I would like to bring up . . . we did have [the] aeronautical charts then put out by whoever put them out, I'm not too sure. I forget what the mileage was on them. But, the only ones that they had then were so inaccurate, Brian, that you couldn't possibly go by them. [and then what we did have,]The year before, the Navy had been up there and they photographed that whole area. [and] They **probably** used trimetrigon photography, I'm not too sure. But, whatever it was **it** was accurate and they were the charts that we used and you might as well **have thrown** [throw] the other ones away.

(500)

BS: *So, the Navy was up there the year before. 1945?*

EW: Yep. And so was the SPAM program. That started, apparently, in 1945.

BS: *So, they were already flying before you got there.*

EW: They'd been up there once, yeah.

BS: *Now these were . . . your primary instrument on these flights for detecting things was what?*

EW: A magnetometer.

BS: That stuck out of the back of the plane? That was a new development in your PBV?

EW: Yeah. It was rather odd. [You see,] Most of them that were **using a [flying that]** magnetometer, **that dropped [they'd drop it]** down below the airplane and it would flare out. [you know like they would hang a torpedo down.]

BS: *Waved around with a streamline?*

EW: Apparently not, [Apparently they had it so that] it would fare pretty well. But ours, like I say, **was [were]** right out the back, [just] looking like a gun sticking out.

BS: *Like P2Vs and P3s have now.*

EW: Yeah. Exactly.

BS: *So, this was a military instrument, correct? I mean, this was designed for finding submarines - the magnetometer.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *It wasn't designed for research for oil.*

EW: As I recall, it was not, but I'm not too sure. I wouldn't want to go on record either way.

BS: *But, did this become a permanent feature on the tail end of this model of aircraft later on or was yours the first one to have it stick out the back?*

EW: Ours was the first one and to my knowledge, the last.

BS: *OK. So, until the P3s.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Of course, you might have a different instrument inside that thing today.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *OK. So, we're up there on the North Slope. It's summer. Tell me about some of the hot contacts you had. You mentioned it in private conversation to me that you had a few up there.*

(550)

EW: Well, I think the one that really stood out was Prudhoe Bay and that, as you know, is on the North Slope. And when we surveyed that, I got a call from the scientist amidships and he said, "Ed, come on back here. We have a hot one." And I turned the controls over to the co-pilot.

BS: *Who was the scientist then that did that?*

EW: Fred Keller.

BS: *Keller said turn around?*

EW: Yep. He said to **come aft and look at the recording instrument then** go on back **over the anomaly**. [We have to take a look at what we've got.] And I went back there and as I recall, the indicator had practically gone off the recording device they had, whatever it was. And that's when he jokingly said, "I think we all ought to come back here and be homesteaders, " because at that stage of the game you could pick up, I don't know how many square miles of land and homestead it.

BS: *So, you went back and made additional passes.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Would you pick a point and flew north and south, east and west, northwest, southeast and so on.*



EW: As I recall, that's about what we did.

BS: *About twenty passes? Got it real good?*

EW: A little bit less, I think. We only made about three or four.

BS: *But, you nailed it down.*

EW: We nailed her, yeah. Now, of course, that was only the potential. It didn't guarantee there'd be oil in any great abundance, but we knew **it must be a large deposit** from the standpoint of the magnetometer reading . . .

(End of Tape 1 - Side A)

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(Begin Tape 1 - Side B)

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BS: *OK, so you nailed down the Prudhoe Bay. This was the first time anybody ever pointed anything out or saw anything of interest at the Prudhoe site.*

EW: Yeah. As a matter of fact, we'd found others that [were]looking back **were** insignificant compared to what Prudhoe Bay showed and as it later turned out, of course, it told the truth on this particular line.

BS: *But, you did find other sites of interest, too.*

EW: Yeah, potential interest.

BS: *Anything of the magnitude of Prudhoe Bay?*

EW: No.

BS: *Kaparak? You know where Kaparak is? Teshapuk Lake.*

EW: **Teshapuk Lake yes.** We covered it all. [No, nothing that I recall]

BS: *Nothing on what today is the Alaska Native Wildlife Refuge which they're fighting over?*

EW: Oh, yes. We did go over that area. As a matter of fact, where the new drilling has been proposed right? [of...] I think that might have been also tied in with the Prudhoe Bay. Prudhoe Bay showed the greatest significance. Now, I'm sure whatever they're using today they have far better means of determining what the potential is than we had back in that era.

BS: *Well, I'm sure they have modern planes with modern equipment that the oil companies own and what have you.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Plus, they go in on the ground. But, this shortens, I think, from my experience up there, this shortened the . . . it nailed down the areas of promise that they could go into. People don't realize that the North Slope is as big as Minnesota.*

EW: That's right.

BS: *And you're trying to nail this whole area down. What you did is, in some respects, hit or miss with one plane flying through that area.*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *So, you were lucky to have found it. Did I hear you right? Did you say this was the second year of SPAM?*

EW: Yes.

BS: *What did they have the year before for flying services?*

EW: Well, they had the same airplane and the same magnetometer.

BS: *But, it was let out and towed behind.*

EW: No. No. They had the same airplane and the same installation and I don't know really how much time they spent up there. It was all kind of hazy and I never got into the history of it. But, I don't think it was quite as complete [a] coverage as we gave it up there.

BS: *Did any of the natives get involved?*

EW: No.

BS: *How about working at the base where you were, the Navy operation up there. Did you have natives working up there?*

EW: Sure did, yeah. They'd come in . . . they had a little sort of a tractor. I think it was a Weasel that would tow a couple of sleds. [and] The Eskimos would sit on the sleds and be towed into the Navy camp to do a day's work. I know my lad that took care of our rooms and whatnot during the Ski Jump program was Pete Sabolik who became a very good friend of mine. [and] I used to visit Pete although it was considered taboo because of the large amount of tuberculosis amongst the Eskimos.

BS: *What amongst the Eskimos?*

EW: A lot of them had tuberculosis and that's the reason why they didn't want us to get to close to them, or at least to go down into their quarters.

BS: *So, some of them lived on the base?*

EW: No. No.

BS: *So, they lived in town, south of the camp.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Did they have doctors helping them out with tuberculosis there then?*

EW: I'll tell you exactly what they had. They had one nurse from the Public Health Service. And she had her residency in the Eskimo village of Barrow and she treated everything from pregnancies to broken limbs and you name it.

(50)

BS: *She became a surgeon doctor.*

EW: She did just about everything else. I would like to make one remark here. One of my fondest friends up there who taught me the art of Arctic flying was a guy named Sig Wien. Sig Wien was a bush pilot, later the president of Wien Alaska Airlines.

BS: *Did he have something to do with the operation there?*

EW: Sig was under contract then to the Navy as I recall, to fly people on occasion in and out of Fairbanks, or from Barrow to Fairbanks and to bring in some equipment when needed. He flew a little, as I remember, it was a Norden Norseman. He didn't have any big airplanes then.

BS: *Norden Norseman. Who made that?*

EW: I believe it was **De** Haviland. And what I wanted to mention particularly about Sig Wien . . . he, without being paid for it, without asking for a nickel, would fly the severely **ill** medical patients from Barrow, from the native village, down to Fairbanks. This, again, ran the gamut from severe illness to pregnancies to broken limbs and to what have

you and the natives simply adored this guy and the reason why they did was because he was a magnificent man. And in appreciation, because the Eskimos then were absolutely desperately poor. And in appreciation, the women made him the most beautiful parka that I have ever seen in my life and then mukluks. So, I just mentioned Sig because he was the only contract pilot they had. And at the same time they had a contract, as I recall, with TransOcean which was an airline that operated between Fairbanks, Barrow and I think they went all the way into Seattle. Sort of a non-sched.

*BS: How many natives were living up there at the time? Do you remember estimates of the number in the village?*

EW: I think . . . this is sort of a guess, but as I remember, I think it was between 300-500. It was very small.

*BS: I'm going to mention a few names of old timers who I know were there then and see if you knew them - Arnold Brower, any of the Browers?*

EW: Oh, you bet. Yeah. As a matter of fact, Charlie Brower's son, Tom . . . now you know the story of Charlie.

*BS: I know Charlie \_\_\_\_\_ below zero.*

EW: OK. Well, his son Tom was the mayor, the post office authority, whatever that would be -post master - and he ran the general store. And he was one of the nicest, most informative guys I've ever met. He told me all of the folklore and one story he told me and I'll make it very brief. I was standing out with him one day and I saw this sled come

by laden down with practically everything you can imagine **pulled by** [with] an unusually large team of dogs. [and]

There were about six or seven young men with their rifles slung over their shoulders and they were headed out to the boondocks. [and] Trailing behind about 50 feet was this little Eskimo. As I watched them go by and they went right by Tom's general store, I noticed this little person on the end was a female, so I said to Tom, "Tom, where's she going?" And he said, "Oh, she's the Eskimo girl." And I said, "Oh, what's that?"

(100)

And he said, "What we do up here. . . you know you call them wallflowers. Every little village or community has it's wallflower - the girl that isn't all that popular. There are more perhaps better looking sisters. [What we do and] The town fathers pick the gal out. Every time the Eskimo men go on the hunt for reindeer and caribou and they're gone for about two months [way back in there] we send the Eskimo girl and when they come back, she's a married woman." And he smiled and [he] said, "And we have yet to have one come back who wasn't." So, I just bring that up.

BS: *So, she goes out to where the men are desperate and picks up a husband. A nice custom.*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *A long standing custom, I imagine. I hadn't heard that. Well, so the natives were having a tough time.*

EW: They were, very, very much.

BS: *And we weren't doing much for them, it sounds like.*

EW: Nope.

BS: *So, what's amazing about all of that, is that you don't find them hard over racially prejudice, bad-mouthing today. They have money, they're better off. Certainly well off in comparison.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Have control of their own lives. The oil development has been wonderful for them. There's something in their make-up, from my observation, that causes them not to hold grudges.*

EW: Yes. They are very honest people.

BS: *You don't see that in other racial groups. We stole their land, they suffered, didn't even provide them medical care. Bureau of Indian Affairs, were they there?*

EW: If they were Brian, I don't recall. I don't remember them being there.

BS: *OK. So, back to your job. Basically, you just flew and they collected charts and plotted where you went and they kept the records. That went to the Coast and Geodetic Survey or was it to the Naval Petroleum Reserve 4 people?*

EW: Again, I'm sure that they all had a shot one way or another.



BS: *Yeah. But, all of the people that flew with you were Coast and Geodetic Survey.*

EW: Civilians.

BS: *Civilians, right. None was from the Office of Petroleum and Oil Shale Reserves - the Naval Office. OK. Important point. Interesting. Who was in charge of the drilling at Umiat? Do you know, when they drilled there?*

EW: No I don't. That was the year before I got there.

BS: *So, you flew project SPAM from May, 1946, to August, 1946. Did you come back the next year?*

EW: No, that finished the program. As a matter of fact . . .

*Omit* BS: *That was 1946.*

EW: Right.

BS: *OK. So, what happened after you were done with this project?*

EW: OK, I came home and went right back to Johnsville. We were still under the administrative control of the Office of Naval Research and from time to time, they'd give

us projects. We went out one time and surveyed all the - I shouldn't say all, but some of the sea **mounts** [mountains] around Bermuda.

One of the flights out there was rather interesting. [because of the heavy load of fuel we'd take because when we got out there, we'd do the surveying and then get back to Bermuda. And] **Just** before I took off from Patuxent, the duty officer said to me, "Would you mind taking on some extra fuel and looking for a downed aircraft?" And I said, "No, heavens no." He said, "It's called the Star Tiger." It's [was] a British converted bomber and it [has] 30 passengers aboard and I presume a crew of three or four.

(150)

They radioed in within about 200-300 miles of Bermuda **that** everything **was** going fine. He gave his estimated time of arrival and that jived with his flight plan and that was the last they heard. [And we went out there and] We were one of the first to work the aerial search, but then they brought a lot of airplanes in and a lot of ships and they searched and searched and searched and they never came up with so much as a floating life preserver. And, of course, the Bermuda Triangle was [just about] getting a lot of publicity. [But nerertheless,] **Then** we went down to Louisiana and **flew a** magnetometer survey off the coast in the Gulf and there may have been two or three more small projects that we flew. [But the [purposes] by then] **After that I** started flying some **missions** [flights] for the Aviation Armament Laboratory **at Johnsvill where** [which] I was attached [to] while I was not involved with the magnetometer survey.

[Then they were thinking I'd never see battle again and of course,] **My** ever-loving wife didn't particularly appreciate me having been gone for what was the better part of three or four months. Low and behold, in January or February of '47, I got a call from Fred Keller and he said, "Ed, how would you like to take an expedition up to Alaska and survey the Aleutian chain and [survey] the active and dormant volcanoes?" And I

said, "Fred, my wife will have my scalp." He said, "Well, suppose we don't say anything to anybody?" And I said, "Well, that may be the better part of valor." So, to make a long story short . . . as a matter of fact, I was kind of delighted because I . . . it was a challenge and when you're a young pilot, this is the kind of a challenge that you like. So, we flew up to Kodiak - operated out of Kodiak - and again, it was a magnetometer survey of the Aleutian Trench and concurrently, we would survey the dormant and active volcanoes. [the reason being as you know a] Great Sitkin, a dormant volcano. sits right at the entrance to Adak. As a matter of fact, it interferes with your **inbound** approach. [coming in and that thing is a dormant volcano that] If it ever blew, you could kiss everything in the way of an installation in Adak, good-bye. And that was the concern of the Navy. To make a long story short, we did get up there and as you know, the weather is not the best. As a matter of fact, I think we'd get only one clear day a month around most of that region. So, we had to fly on instruments to accomplish both. [Sometimes, the Aleutian Trench but more and more the Aleutian Trench because then] We had radar then - darn good radar operators - and **when we surveyed the Aleutian Trench**, they could guide us in between the islands. [And then for our vertical correspondent latitude runs, not so much on the survey of the volcanoes, because] **But** you really had to see **the volcanoes** [them] in order to get the lines precisely where you wanted them to be. But, this was a challenge and it was a good one.

(200)

And we completed that, ending up **at Attu**. [AT-2] Incidentally, the Skipper of **Attu** [AT-2] was a guy named Johnny Ogle, Commander John Ogle - one of the finest Commanding Officers that I've ever met. The morale of **Attu** [AT-2], which was the end of the world, believe me, was the highest of any unit I've ever seen, bar none.

BS: *Wow. On AT-2*

EW: On AT-2. Commander John Ogle.

BS: *So, this took you how long? January of 1947?*

EW: No, we went up there . . . as a matter of fact, I didn't go up there [again] until May and we completed the Aleutian chain, and completed the volcanoes, and the last bit of surveying we had to do was the island of Hawaii, **Enewetak** and **Bikini and Enewetak Atolls**. [We were asked to go out to Guadalane and survey Bikini and I guess Anewatol, as I recall. Now of course] Bikini is where they held the initial atomic bomb tests and the waters, they claim, were very contaminated. I guess the reason we were out there was to try to determine what the degree of contamination was at both **Enewetak** [Anawetik] and Bikini.

BS: *With the magnetometer, is that what you had?*

EW: Yeah. Sure did.

BS: *You were looking for radiation on the \_\_\_\_\_ magnetometer?*

EW: I presume. I don't remember . . . not being a scientist, I never got too much into the theory of it, but I know I asked the Alaskan Sea Frontier for permission for a direct flight from Adak to Midway which, to my way of thinking, was great and they said, "You can't do that because there's no air-sea rescue in between." And I said, "Well, you know going the long way around trying to make a transpac from the west coast like San Diego or what have you to Hawaii, is far more dangerous in my opinion from a fuel standpoint.

We have enough fuel to get down to Midway, no problem." To make a long story short [I sold them, so] we took from Adak, went to Midway **Island, Wake Island then on to Kwajalein. From Kwajalein we surveyed Bikini and Enewetak Atolls.** [. went down to Hawaii, did a brief run down to Hilo, and it was just , the time was running out so we had to get out to Bikini and Anasetok. We went out there. We were based in Quadulune and we'd fly these flights out from Qquadulune and these were long] These were long. [These were good] 10, 11, 12-hour days. We finished, [that our came back] packed up the PBV, put it on a carrier and it was taken back **to San Diego. We were provided transportation from Hawaii to Alameda on the Mars flying boat.** [Aboard a carrier and when we came back, it was the frst and last time I was in the Mars. We were all flown home in the Mars.]

(250)

BS: *What's the Mars?*

EW: A big huge flying bird. . . It was one **big** [of the biggest] **Navy seaplane** . . . well, they had five of them. The Caroline Mars, and the this Mars and the that Mars. They were huge flying birds - 4 engine.

BS: *And you got home what time?*

EW: I got back, I would say, probably in mid-September of 1947. Then I thought I was through.

BS: *So, you're back home in Johnsville for a while. I'm curious. How did you get matched up to your plane again? You shipped it back to . . .*

(250)

EW: We shipped it back to San Diego.

BS: *And you picked it up there.*

EW: Yeah. We flew out on MATS or NATS back in those days and picked her up and brought her back.

BS: *OK. You thought you were through.*

EW: Thought I was through.

BS: *Through with Alaska, huh?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Absolutely for sure thought you were sure.*

EW: I hung my parka up and put my mukluks beside them.

BS: *You had some Eskimo clothes, huh?*

EW: Yep.

BS: *Did you like wearing mukluks?*

EW: I did. Very comfortable.

BS: *Flying?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Didn't make your feet cold. No cold rudder pedal.*

EW: Matter of fact, the problem was, as you know in either the Arctic or the Antarctic, is to stay cool.

BS: *Yeah. The trick is you overdress then you go inside and you have to take everything off. You go outside, you have to put everything back on. Takes a long time. OK. You're back home. It's sometime after September, 1947.*

EW: Right. This is now 1948. I got a call from the Commanding Officer of Johnsville.

BS: *January or when?*

EW: This would have been probably . . . this was probably late summer **1948**. And I got a call from the Skipper of the air station and his name was Eddie Rounds, Captain. I went up to see him and he was irate and I wondered what I had done. And he said to me, "Do you know that you've been charging all of your fuel on this project that you've been doing to the station?" I said, "No, sir." "Well, it's been charged to us," he said, "and I don't like it." And he said, "How long have you been here?" And I said, "Well, I got here in 1946 and I'm going on three years." And he said, "Well, that's far too long for a young guy not

to have been to sea." So, he picked up the phone and before I could say, "Jack Robinson," he said to me, "You're going to be receiving a set of orders probably next week and the orders came in. And again, they were orders that I really didn't particularly care for, but like everything else, it all works out for the best. And they were orders to GCA school in Hutchinson, Kansas. So, I went through GCA school the winter of, I guess it would have been the fall and winter of 1948-49. I was supposed to have been assigned to one of the Alaskan bases, but instead we went to **Moffett Field** [Mountain Field], California, and I was the Officer in Charge of GCA Unit No. 9. It was a tremendous experience.

(300)

You know, it's one thing when you're flying GCA as a pilot and you sort of feel relaxed. You know the guy on the ground has got the word. He knows exactly where you are and everything's going to turn out just fine. Let me tell you, I would much rather be that pilot in the airplane any day than [the man, the pilot] the controller which I was . . .

BS: *Sweating it out.*

EW: Yeah. Sweating it out, bringing those guys in. It was *really* difficult.

BS: *Tell me what GCA stands for.*

EW: Ground Control Approach.

BS: *OK. You're in the GCA unit.*



EW: Right. And, as I say, the first assignment . . . well, the only assignment . . . I only was with the GCA for a short time . . . and again I got a call from the detail officer and he said to me, "You're coming up for promotion," and he said, "You haven't had any sea duty since the war." I said, "Well, I'm ready. Where are you going to send me, Stu?" Stu Sterling. I don't know whether you've ever met him. A wonderful guy retired Captain. To make a long story short, Stu said to me, "They said we have a billet somewhere, I'm sure. You'll get a set of orders real quick." Well, believe it or not, now this I think is a stretch in anybody's imagination. My orders were to MATS headquarters at Andrews Air Force base, MATS standing for Military Air Transport Service - MATS. The Skipper at the time was General Lawrence **Kuder** [Kidder] and the Deputy was Rear Admiral Whitney, Navy. It was a joint staff. Of course, the Navy was far in the minority, but it was one of the most enjoyable tours I ever had. It was just great seeing how the other guy thinks and what he does different from the Navy and it was quite different at times. Nevertheless, I said to myself, "How can this possibly be construed to be sea duty?" Well, by one of the flukes, you know, that only the Navy could come up with, I think the reason being . . .

BS: *You flew over the ocean.*

EW: You could be assigned to the VR Squadrons that flew the Berlin airlift. All this sort of thing came into it. Nevertheless, I didn't argue the point. I found that living with the Air Force was a lot of fun. They'd give you an airplane any time you wanted. You could fly anywhere you wanted on the weekend as opposed to the Navy that was very tight at that time. And then is when the next shoe dropped. I'd only been at MATS headquarters a year and a half.

BS: *It was about 1950 then?*

EW: This would have been toward the end of 1950, say October. And I got a call from Stu Sterling who was my detail officer and he said to me, "How would you like to get back in the Navy again?" which was a fair enough question. And I said, "Frankly, Stu, I'm kind of happy, but what have you got in mind?" He said, "A couple of guys came in from the Wood's Hole Lab the other day and they sold the Chief of Naval Operations a bill of goods." And I said, "Well, what's this have to do with me?" And he said, "I'm getting to that." So, they proposed to take an R4D on skis and to fly up to the Arctic Ice Cap and make landings and do oceanographic stations.

(350)

And he said, "How would you like to volunteer and if you volunteer, I'll let you pick out your crew." "Holy mackerel, Stu. Landing on the polar ice cap, how can I figure out the thickness of the ice?" And he said, "Well, let me go on. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you accept this and you pick out your crew, when you get back," and he said, "I hope you do, I'll let you pick out your next tour of duty. I don't care where it is and that goes for your crew as well. The whole kit and caboodle." So I said, "Well . . ." He said, "Let me know by tomorrow." And I said, "Wait a minute. Let's talk this thing over again." So, we **did.**[went through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the two that came in and bill of goods and the whole bit and] I thought to myself, "My gosh, here's a chance to do something that all my life I wanted to do, to sort of emulate Admiral Byrd and all the rest of these old guys." I said, "Stu, let's give it a whirl." He said, "Great. Your orders will be in the mail in a couple of days." I said, "Wait a minute. One last question, Stu. Where do I go to find out how thick the ice is.?" He said, "You're the O in C now. That's your worry." And that was the end of that. So that started me off on the Ski Jump I program.

BS: *Did anyone suggest to you to look in the Ellsworth-Amundson book where they went down on the Ice early on? Did you know about that? Remember, they had one plane out of two. Sir Hubert Wilkins. He did some of that, right out of Barrow, in fact.*

EW: That was the only information that I could come up with.

BS: *Was the Wilkins stuff.*

EW: Yeah. Wilkins - Sir Hubert - and who was his co-pilot?

BS: *Eielson.*

EW: **Ben [Ted]** Eielson. Of course.

BS: *That's Eielson Air Force Base that we were talking about earlier.*

EW: And the reason that I knew about those two, you know, he didn't intentionally land, but they had engine trouble and landed for the first time and got the engine repaired OK. But, to his great credit, he then, took one of the first soundings that had been taken of the ocean up there. They apparently repaired the engine enough to take off and they did. Then they lost their engine again. They were about **70 [200-300]** miles out of Barrow. Made a forced landing and this time they totaled the airplane. So, they made a sled out of parts. These were real heroes in my book. I believe they took another sounding before they started to walk to Barrow. Well . . . they didn't get to Barrow. They got to the coast. I forget where and got picked up. That was the only thing that I had to go on and I thought, gee whiz, that isn't too much.

BS: *So you were linked to Hubert Wilkins for landing on sea ice. Nothing of Admiral Byrd and landing in the Antarctic on sea ice?*

(400)

EW: No.

BS: *I don't think he did. I think he only landed up on the continental shelf. He had seaplanes.*

EW: He did.

BS: *The Curtiss Condor used skis for the ice shelf and floats for the ocean and . . .*

EW: Right.

BS: *So, there wasn't much to . . . nobody had any experience. And Wilkins' were accidental. The Russians did.*

EW: They did, and of course, we knew nothing about that. There was not one word.

BS: *You didn't have any old Polar Times then. It was written in the Polar Times in 1937.*

EW: That's right.

BS: *I'll send you an issue if you want it.*

EW: Yeah. That's too bad because . . .

BS: *So, you had to learn. You had to learn how to land on sea ice. How many pilots did you have working for you?*

EW: I had a co-pilot, Lieutenant Edward Woodward - one of the finest officers that came down the pike. Great for just what we were doing.

BS: *This was really pioneering stuff.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Really. Edward Woodward. Still around?*

EW: I'm not too sure. He had a rather pathetic story. When I mentioned that we could have any orders we wanted when we came back, he chose to go back to school, which he did, and he got polio severely and the last time I saw him was on my way out on Deepfreeze. We stopped in Oakland, and he was living there at the time in Walnut Creek.

BS: *He'd left the Navy then.*

EW: Yeah. He had left the Navy. Physically retired. And since then I haven't caught up with him.

BS: *Well, anyway. Here you are, heading up there wondering how you were going to do it.*

EW: Right.

BS: *And you operated out of . . . ?*

EW: Out of Barrow.

*Omit:* BS: *OK. Was Ebbe still there?*

*Omit:* EW: Nope.

BS: *Was operation SPAM still going or was that terminated?*

EW: No that was terminated. I think we were the last ones on SPAM.

BS: *So, you came back . . . I want to put you in Barrow. OK. You came back to Barrow. What was going on in Barrow at that time? You're at the Petroleum Reserve 4 Camp, basically.*

EW: Yeah, that's exactly right. Things had improved beyond my wildest imagination. The first year we were there which was 1946, on SPAM, we lived in Quonsets and they were comfortable, but this trip, we lived in the new lab that they had and had inside heads and showers and I couldn't believe it.

BS: *This was the super-big Quonset, right?*

EW: It seemed to me that it wasn't built like a Quonset.

BS: *Square building?*

(450)

EW: As I recall, yeah. And as a matter of fact, one end was the living quarters. It had a center section and the center section, as I recall, held a library and a few other things. And Dr. Wiggins, at the time, was the Skipper of the Navy Arctic Research Center or whatever they called it at that time.

BS: *So, it was the Naval Arctic Research Lab where you stayed then.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *It was Naval Arctic Research Lab by then.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *So you stayed at . . . the Air Force or the Navy running the base?*

EW: Navy.

BS: *The lab was separate. It was a tenant.*

EW: Navy was still running the base.

BS: *You stayed at the new NARL headquarters. And they did have the Naval Arctic Research Lab formally established as an agency of the Office of Naval Research.*

EW: They did.

BS: *OK. And so, you mentioned Wood's Hole a little bit ago. They were the ones that proposed setting up ice stations.*

EW: That's correct.

BS: *Were they linked to the Air force stuff down at MIT, by any chance?*

EW: I don't know.

BS: *OK. I ask that because Fletcher worked out of there a lot. So, here you are. You came in with the plane. It's you, flight crew, support crew? Who did the mechanical repair and upkeep of your aircraft?*

EW: Oh, we worked on our own airplane.

BS: *Everybody flew.*

EW: Everybody flew.

BS: *And you had a crew of how many?*

EW: Had a crew of . . .

B S: *Co-pilot?*



EW: Yeah. the first go-round on Ski Jump I, we had a really high priced crew. Not from the standpoint of the officers, but from the enlisted men. **There were three officers, [I had the officers],** myself, and my co-pilot, Eddie Woodward, and the best navigator [again] that I have ever had the pleasure to fly with, a fellow named Dave Morehead. And Dave Morehead was not an aviator.

(500)

He was strictly a navigator and he'd come **from the** [right off flying with] Military Air Transport Service on the initial runs they were making, then out to, I believe, Korea. And he was based [over] in Japan. Anyway, he volunteered. I didn't pick him. I didn't know him. They asked for a navigator volunteer and he just volunteered for the program. But, as I say, he was magnificent. And then I had a Chief Petty Officer as the plane captain. I had a first class as the mech. The radioman was a Chief Petty Officer by the name of Duke. The assistant mech to the plane captain was a Chief Petty Officer by the name of **Sosha** [Sojia.]

BS: *Sosha was who? What was his job?*

EW: He was the mechanic and he assisted the plane captain. Now, the first class had been with me in the SPAM program and he was the finest mechanic I ever met.

BS: *What's his name?*

EW: His name was Gordon. Last name Gordon. **First name Robert.** I have all their full names. Then we had the whipping boy. Of course, there always has to be a whipping boy.

And he was another Irishman. I'll have to think of his name and come back to it. And we had a photographer, **a First Class by the Name of Halverson. During SPAM, 1946, our photographer was a First Class** by the name of White, who incidentally, I bumped into later. **He'd made Chief and** he went down on the **Icebreaker Atka [Afga]** on their initial reconnaissance crews which would have been back when Deepfreeze was forming, 1955.

BS: *1954-55.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *January. '54, January -'55. Right. I had their list of guys.*

EW: He was Chief Petty Officer White. Darn good man.

BS: *Photographers and radiomen knew a lot of what was going on.*

EW: Yeah, they did.

BS: *And so did cooks in the small camps. Well, here you are. You've got them all right here. Lieutenant Commander Ward, Lieutenant Woodward, Lieutenant JG Morehead, ADC McHale, ADC [Sojia] Chief Radioman Duke, AD-1 Gordon, AD-3 McEwen.*

(550)

EW: McEwen, yeah.

BS: *Civilian oceanographers, John Holmes and L.V. Worthington.*

EW: And Val later made quite a mark for himself, as you know. Johnny Holmes, I don't know what happened to him.

BS: *And they were from Wood's Hole?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *OK. So, you went out to set up research stations on the Arctic Ice Cap. That was your job, to figure out how to do it.*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *So, you had quite a task. Did you have a plan in mind?*

EW: Have what in mind?

BS: *Did you have a plan in mind, like going out just a little ways and practice, or . . .*

EW: Well, it's like taking your first dip in a cold ocean. And we made a couple of reconnaissance trips out to take a look at the ice and it soon became obvious to me that if you attempted to land on an old ice field with all of the hummocky bits and pieces and the pressure ridges surrounding and the whole bit, this would be tantamount to suicide.

BS: *Because of summer melting the year before, it's a little rough.*

EW: Oh, it's terribly rough. And you don't get a nice smooth strip.

BS: *Now this wasn't in the height of winter when it was dark. This was . . . the sun was up. About March?*

EW: Yeah. This was a little after that. Yeah, around March, April. Exactly.

BS: *March.*

And that's when I first met Gordon Ebbe. He was resident officer in charge at the time.

(350)

BS: *Gordon was . . . of what?*

EW: Gordon later became the first Commanding [...the Command that relieved me  
was the first permanent, I was acting. First permanent commanding] officer of VX6 -  
Air Development Squadron 6.

BS: *I see. But, Gordon was in Point Barrow, ahead of you as . . . what did he do? Run the base facility or . . . ?*

EW: He was in charge of all of the Navy personnel up there. They called him **Resident Officer in Charge** and I'm not too sure I ever read his job description, but I would assume it entailed being in charge of **all the officer and enlisted personnel at Barrow.**

BS: *Was Gordon Ebbe and Toni there then or was just Gordon there?*

EW: The following year?

BS: *No, this year, the first year you were there. You met Gordon Ebbe as the resident.*

BS: *And she was there.*

EW: And his wife, yeah. We got up there in February, and started the reconnaissance and it worked out from there. So, I got together with Johnny Holmes and I said, "John, you know I think the fact of the matter is what we should do is maybe try for these newly frozen leads." And what really had surprised me was the amount of open water in the middle of winter up there. All of a sudden you'd come across this, it looked like a huge lake. Blue water, glistening, beautiful.

And, of course, I'd say two or three days later, it would start to ice up and given enough time, I guess given about a month of time, she would accumulate to about 3 feet and as it turned out, **on the initial ice landing**, we [initially] lucked out. [very, very...] To our great surprise . . . the ice was 3 feet thick.

(600)

BS: *On a refrozen lead.*

EW: A refrozen lead. And it must have been a good, I'd say, two to three miles long and about a half **mile wide**.

(End of Tape 1 - Side B)

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(Begin Tape 2 - Side A)

(000)

*BS: This is Tape 2A of an interview with Commander Edward M. Ward on the 6th of November 2001. Commander Ward, we were discussing developing the techniques of landing on the open sea in the Arctic ocean on the sea ice and you were developing techniques, more or less, as to the safe place to land on smooth ice. Can you cover that a little bit again?*

EW: Certainly. When we arrived in Barrow, I proposed that we make a nice long reconnaissance flight over the area where we anticipated landing, and then check the ice out. It was my first experience [even] flying over the ice and I was amazed, as I just mentioned, at the number of lakes that we saw, the number of huge leads that had opened up in the Arctic Ice Cap. And, of course, the ice is constantly breaking and drifting apart and then refreezing. So, it was these refrozen leads that we chose to make our first landing on and as it turned out, we were very lucky. The lead itself was about two or three miles long and about a half-mile, maybe three-quarters of a mile wide, and we had three feet of ice under us, which was very reassuring. And to make a long story short, we spent the night and the scientists went to work on an oceanographic station.

Oceanographic station No. 1. The next day we came back very, very enthusiastic and excited about the fact that we had survived the first landing.

BS: *So, you're out on the ice at Oceanographic Station No. 1. You didn't have any funny name for it - special name? Ward's Ice Island?*

EW: No.

BS: *Just Oceanographic Station No. 1. And your scientists were from Wood's Hole?*

EW: Wood's Hole. Correct. Now, there's one little point I'd like to interject in here. When we first checked in to Commander at Alaskan Sea Frontier - we were under their operational control - the Admiral in charge was very much opposed to this project and he let me know he thought it was a hair-brain scheme and he wanted no part of it because he was the guy that was [sort of] responsible for our welfare. So, between the two Wood's Hole scientists and myself, we managed to persuade him to at least let us give it a shot and he said, "The only way I'm going to do that . . . I'll assign a PBY from the air station down here in Kodiak to accompany you on every flight and every landing. Now, as soon as you land successfully, he'll come home, but he'll stay there and he will watch every landing you make." I said, "That suits me fine." So, he sent up an old PBY5A and they were the guard ship, so to speak. So, at least we had company out there to watch either the greatest success or the greatest failure.

BS: *So, where was Alaska Sea Frontier stationed?*

EW: Kodiak.

BS: *OK. Kodiak. You don't remember his name, do you?*

EW: The Admiral? No, I wish I did.

BS: *That's fine. How far off shore were you when you made this landing? How far out from Barrow?*

EW: From memory now, it seems to me we were maybe about 280 miles north of Barrow, directly north.

BS: *Why so far out?*

EW: This was the first beautiful lead that we came across that looked like a suitable landing spot.

BS: *OK. Good enough reason.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *And this PB5A was flying res cap over you.*

EW: That's exactly right.

BS: *Sort of like the C-124 when Shinn landed at the Pole later.*

EW: Yes. Exactly.

BS: *OK. Was he, if you crashed . . . what was he going to do?*

EW: I presume . . .



BS: *Drop supplies?*

(50)

EW: The only thing he could have done . . . well, he could have landed, but he was forbidden to. The Admiral told **him,[me]**. "Under no circumstances will you put that airplane down." So, poor old Zach, the pilot, he was eating his heart out, of course, after he'd see us go on the beautiful, beautiful strips. Nevertheless, I think **if we crashed, he'd land and [he could have]** then alerted air-sea rescue or whatever, but he'd have the first hand account that we'd creamed and then go from there.

BS: *Did you have ski-equipped R4Ds?*

EW: Yes.

BS: *R4D . . . these were not R4D8s.*

EW: Oh no.

BS: *They hadn't come along yet.*

EW: I had the R4D 1 or 2, yeah.

BS: *OK. So, you didn't have a long-range R4D.*

EW: Nope.

BS: *OK. You needed fuel.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *So, you made Ocean Station No. 1. You got your confidence up. How thick . . . did you drill the sea ice?*

EW: Oh yeah. Let me give you the modus operandi.

BS: *OK.*

EW: And of course we would pick up this as we went. It was one of these things that everybody was just learning. The procedure would be, and this was what Johnny Holmes and I worked out - provided everything went well on the landing, first we make a touch and go to see how that went. If that looked pretty good, we'd come around and if we were hesitant, we'd make another touch and go, but normally one touch and go and if it felt ok and everything felt fine, we'd land on the second time around.

BS: *How could you determine it was OK? Did you look at the ice?*

EW: Well, I'd let her get down to just about maybe . . .

BS: *I mean on the touch and go, after you came around. Did you look at the ice where you did the touch and go?*

EW: Yeah. But, on the first landing, you see, we didn't pick up what we should have picked up. What we should have picked up was the fact that **the landing site had** [we were landing on about maybe....now there was a snow cover...perhaps] two to three inches **of snow**, which was a great indication of the age of the ice. [This eliminated me some] It got by me and I guess in the euphoria of making the first landing, you sort of forget. Anyway, we made the landing - the touch and go landing. Then I'd keep the engines turning and John Holmes and Val would jump out **with** [and the first year we had] an ice saw. [,so they'd put the ice saw down into the ice and,] I'd keep watching and watching and watching [and] until I saw that saw go way, way down **and** {until} water came out. And **then** John **would** give me the thumbs up.

BS: *Plain old chain saw.*

EW: Old chain saw.

BS: *Plain old logging chain saw.*

EW: Right. And I cut the throttles and we cut a hole in the ice - a square hole. [- and on the airplane,] We had a winch and an A frame that came out from the **R4D** cargo **doors** [section of the R4D] and 10,000 feet of cable that **would reach** [we could go down to] the bottom of the ocean for not only bottom samples, but temperature samples and salinity tests and the whole bit.

BS: *You had BTs on it then.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Bottles . . . Nansen bottles?*

EW: Oh, yeah. Nansen bottles. Yep. We sure did.

BS: *You basically set up an oceanographic, multi-disciplinary oceanographic station.*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *But, you didn't have an Eskimo with you.*

EW: Nope.

BS: *We later on used the Eskimos and \_\_\_\_\_*

EW: I tell you, we missed the boat on that one.

BS: *Sure did. They knew. So, anyway, you developed these techniques for the US Navy which continued on for another 40 years or so. Do you remember the date of this first landing?*

EW: Oh yeah. I have it in my logbook.

BS: *They're probably all in there.*

EW: They're probably all in the Wood's Hole reports.

BS: *OK. This is great. So, you're out there. You set up what, a tent? You sleep in your aircraft?*

EW: Slept in the aircraft, yeah. Now the aircraft was configured, I thought, ideally, for what we were doing. We had a couple of engine heaters. These were portable. As soon as we'd land, we'd haul the old engine heaters out. [and] We'd [would] put **banjos** over the nose of the engines. [, we called them banjos and] The reason they called them banjos was because when they were separated, they looked like two banjos. And we put the banjos on and they had little holes where you would plug in the duct for the portable heater. And then we'd light off the heaters and they'd just go as long as we were on the ice.

(100)

Now, for the inside cabin temperature and heat, we had an outside portable unit that would operate out in the open air. So, there was no chance of contamination inside which worked very, very well. It kept the cabin . . . as a matter of fact, it was uncomfortably warm for us when **it [we]** got to about 60 or 62 inside the cabin. **And** if you're working outside with your heavy gear on and **[you] came [come]** back in, in a minute or so, you were hot.

BS: *Yeah, so bright sunny day. OK.*

EW: Well that was another thing too, Brian, if I could interrupt just a minute. We fast came to the conclusion that if you ever tried to make ice landings in **anything but** VFR weather, [or at least overcast,] the chances were you weren't going to make out too well because there was no definition. Not a thing.

BS: *No shadows.*

EW: You have to have your shadows, yeah.

BS: *OK. What did you do after that. Did you go back to Barrow?*

EW: Went back to Barrow and they were rather surprised to see us because when we first arrived at Barrow, the word going around the camp [was] that here are a couple of Kamikaze guys on their way north. [and] **When** we came back [and then they sort of] **they** thought [this was pretty good, but] we lucked out. And as a matter of fact, they were almost right because on the second landing, we almost didn't luck out. And that was the one when we landed on about 18 inches of ice and maybe it might have even been a little less. That was kind of a comedy in itself. Being completely self-confident . . . **well pride goes before a fall.** [what you get in pride- you know goes before pride or vice versa..]

BS: *Why was 18 inches not enough?*

EW: According to what we'd gotten from one of the federal agencies, [they gave us the weights for both sea ice and then fresh ice and apparently on 30,000- we were awful heavy, of course-a 30,000 lb airplane, lets say , we figured that ] 2 feet would be about the minimum **for a 30,000 lb airplane.** [that you'd get along with and] **Most** of the time, we were shooting for three. [I'll tell you one of the reasons why and that was just after] I was so cocksure of myself [that we came across this lead and] **on the second ice landing,** I said, "Woody, this time we won't make a touch and go. We'll just go on and set her down and let the guys get out and go to work." So, we did. We put her down on a beautiful lead and the two scientists jumped out with a chain saw [and]. **My** radioman,

Duke - Chief Duke - must have weighed about 240 lbs. I don't know how he got into the radio compartment [stay up with the co-pilot, but he came up and he said to me,] "Hey, Skipper, **he called out.** "If I'm seeing things right, we're bobbing up and down." And I said, "What are you talking about, Duke?" He said, "Yeah, we're bobbing up and down." At that stage of the game, I looked out the window to see what was going on with Johnny and Val and Johnny was giving me a wave off. [and] They were hustling to get back in **the plane.** [and] I said, "OK, my god, we must be on thin ice. Woody, get ready to get out of here real quick." So, I called back aft and I said to McHale, the plane captain, "Everybody back in the airplane. We're cranking up and we're going. Let me know when it's secured." Well, the first thing you know, McEwen who was the young whipping boy, the young seaman, or whatever he was at the time, he did what he'd always been told to do. He grabbed the fire extinguisher and jumped out of the airplane, ran around and here I see him standing by the port engine manning the fire **extinguisher** and of course, this is what **he'd been trained to do.** [...only training.] So, I tried to motion him back in because we were turning the port engine and instead of that, he thought I was motioning him to go around to starboard, so he ran around to the starboard side. Well, the starboard engine lit off and those 20 seconds or 30 seconds it took him to get back on board were the longest ones of my life. He finally got aboard and Chief McHale called me and he said, "All aboard, we're all secure." [So, we were for take off. And we threw them] **We shoved the throttles to** the fire wall and got out of there and I thought, "Wow." Well, then, of course, the thing that came to mind. . .

BS: *Now did you have the Res Cap overhead?*

EW: Oh yeah **we did.** I thought **to myself,** you know the crew **knows...** [knew] you can't kid the crew on this one. They know that you doggone near bought the farm, so you better give them a little more reassurance of your ability. [So,] I called Johnny up and I

said, "Johnny, we can't leave without making another ice **landing** " I said, "I'm not going back until we do." So, we came across what appeared to be a pretty good piece of frozen lead. Did a touch and go, sure enough there was a nice snow track, so I said, "Well, we'll give this one a whirl," which we did and that worked out fine. So, that day didn't turn out to be all that bad, and the strange thing and not to jump way ahead, but after about our sixth or seventh successful landing, we had a waiting list back at Barrow from the Lab to join us on one of our forays on the ice. And the first one to go with us was Dr. Wiggin who was the head of, the skipper, of the Lab.

BS: *Dr. Wiggin?*

EW: Dr. Wiggin.

BS: *He was the Chief Scientist?*

EW: Yeah. He had his wife up there. Very, very lovely couple. Then Gordon Ebbe came out with us.

*Omit lines 22 to line 27, page 64. BS: Yeah, I see his name on here. Did he come up on a visit or was he still running the base? He's with Pet 4, right?*

*Omit. EW: Who was that?*

*Omit. BS: Gordon Ebbe.*

*Omit page 65/. EW: Gordon Ebbe.*



*Omit. BS: He was the resident officer in charge the first time you went up from Point Barrow.*

*Omit. EW: Let me back off. You know, I'm going to have to retract that. He and Toni did not arrive until Ski Jump I...so we'll have to cross out that.*

*Omit. BS: He was the resident officer in charge at Barrow, though.*

*Omit. EW: At Barrow, yeah, at that time.*

*Omit. BS: For Petroleum Reserve 4?*

*Omit EW: Yeah. And for everything that was going, yeah. Whatever the Navy was doing.*

*Omit. BS: So, whatever we have, for the tape purposes - what you said about Ebbe being up there in 1946, it really belongs here in '51. But, he was not with your operation.*

*Omit EW: No.*

*Omit. BS: He came as Resident Officer in Charge, Office of Petroleum Reserves. OK. I got it. That fits with what I remember about Ebbe, too. But, he wasn't a flyer with operation Ski Jump.*

*EW: [No. And] I think he came out the same day as Max Brewer. Max Brewer was, as you know, a wonderful guy and loved that kind of thing.*

BS: *But, Brewer was with the oil exploration business then. He wasn't at Point Barrow. He didn't come on until '59. I mean he wasn't a scientist until '59. He was with a different operation.*

EW: Yes.

BS: *OK. So, that was Max Brewer's introduction to ice stations.*

EW: Yep. He was the tundra expert, as I remember. And Bill Kielhorn who was a Lieutenant Commander Coast Guard Reserve and then I think he was with - I have his book here - he wrote an article for Naval Institute Proceedings, which I have. He was very impressed.

(200)

Now in addition to making the salinity tests and one thing or another, we did **take** [make] soundings and this was done by firing a little charge of dynamite. We had a recording machine that would record the **depth**. [sound and what have you] And they matched exactly what Ben Eileson and Sir Hubert Wilkins had gotten many, many years before.

BS: *They have in your map here your soundings and also the 10th Rescue Squadron soundings by Bert Crary.*

EW: Right.

BS: *So you knew Bert. Did he fly out of Barrow?*

EW: No. Never. And it was always sort of a mystery to me why there wasn't any coordination on this thing, but apparently Crary decided to go with the Air Force and Holmes and company decided to go with the Navy. But, we . . . no, I never spoke to him at all.

BS: *How many stations did you make? I see six that first year?*

EW: I think we made 12.

BS: *Oh yeah. There's No. 12, I see. OK. Way up north you've got 9, 10, 11.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *So, twelve stations the first year.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *OK. Ski Jump. But, you beat them for the first station, huh?*

EW: I think so. I had no record of Crary, when he went, why he went. I remember Val Worthington mentioning it. He said, "I think old Crary's over with the Air Force trying to do something up there. I don't know what he's doing." It was all very vague. And I, really Brian, I don't know where you could get records of that.

BS: *Probably Air Force History Center. They have a History Center. And also Mildred Crary. She's got stacks of this stuff.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Stacks and stacks of it. I'll talk to her. In fact, I talked to her the other day down in Washington. She happened to be in the - what's the name of that club? - Cosmos Club. I went there to record Nate Gerson and we ran into her as we were coming out and talked a while. OK, so 12 ice stations that first year. Let me ask you a few things on technique. Did you put your skis down after you landed or did you just land on skis?*

EW: No. Landed on wheels. Every landing on the ice was made on wheels.

BS: *And when you parked, did you put the skis down?*

EW: No. The ski configuration was a neat one. Between the ski up position and the ski down was only about a 3 inch differential and the only time that I used skis was on the final landing of Ski Jump II. **That's** when I crashed during the takeoff. That was the only landing I ever made with the skis down.

BS: *So, all this took place between March and... what... May, June, of '51?*

EW: Yeah. By the early part of May, things were starting to warm up and we figured it was time to pull the plug on it. And I didn't... nobody said anything about a second Ski Jump, or a Ski Jump II operation.

BS: *So, you guys packed up and...*

EW: Packed up and said goodbye to Barrow and all of our pals. Came back to Washington. Crews got exactly...

BS: *To Washington, DC?*

EW: Washington, DC, yeah. Anacostia.

BS: *Where was your wife at this time?*

(250)

EW: She was living in Washington. See, I had been with MATS headquarters and she was in Hillcrest Heights. And at that stage of the game, I was so busy giving presentations [and writing up whatever I had on the program] in the Pentagon that I lost all track of time and all track of events and the first things you know, the little guy who was the detail officer then and great friend of Stu Sterling's and a friend of mine - Mickey **Weisner**, [...I'll think of his last name.] He said, "Well, seeing as how we didn't hear from you, I got your orders [in]." And I said, "Oh, is that right?" He said, "Yeah." And I said, "You know any place in the world sounded good to me. Where am I going to be sent?" And he said, "You're going to go to Chincoteague, Virginia." So, I went to Chincoteague, and this was also considered sea duty. And it was very enjoyable and very interesting. It was all **drone** operations, which I thought was pretty, doggone clever. And one day, I'd been there about a year, I guess it must have been about the following January, I got a call from a guy in Patuxent and he introduced himself as being Jack Cooley. And he said, "Ski Jump is going to go back as Ski Jump II, but this time there are going to be three airplanes. The R4D and two P2Vs and the two P2Vs are going to be tankers. And they're going to refuel the R4 so we can get up to the Pole or anyplace else. How's that grab you?" And I had to think pretty long and hard on that one and the reason

why I did . . . Jack Cooley, I guess, must have had a year seniority and you remember Jack. I think you've met him probably. Did you ever meet Jack Cooley?

*BS: I've heard a lot about him, but I haven't met him. What was his position at the time?*

EW: He was at the test pilot center at Patuxent, going through test pilot school which was very difficult. Very smart guy. And not only that, but he had a tremendous background in the P2V. He was the one who made all the initial tests on P2Vs on skis up at Lake **Bemidgi** [Wimigeon] in Minnesota. So, he was not without ski experience, but he had no experience in the Arctic. And my thinking was, not that I knew it all, but it was sort of I'd been there and done that and you don't particularly like to turn over the helm when you have your own ideas about how you'd go about whatever you're going to go about up there. Nevertheless, to make a long story short, I thought this would be fascinating, landing on the North Pole if I can be refueled, my golly. So, again, I said, "Well, OK, let's give her a shot." So, we did.

*BS: You were O in C again?*

EW: No. Jack Cooley was O in C for Ski Jump II. And he had **one of** the [other] P2V on skis. I have their **Bureau** [VR] numbers.

*BS: Now, he flew the P2V.*

EW: He flew the P2V.

(300)

BS: *OK.*

EW: So, again to condense it just a little bit, we all left from Patuxent, but before we did, I'd never seen so many news people coming to cover it. We got no news coverage whatsoever **during Ski-Jump 1** and that suited me fine, but apparently the papers got word of it because we were taking one of the curators of the Washington Zoo. **He** [who] was taking homing pigeons up to Barrow to [test them out and] see if they could fly up there as well as they can back here, or some such thing. And then, Johnny Holmes was rather unique. His wife was a scientist and he was taking her up to do the paperwork and what have you.

BS: *Johnny Holmes? What was his job?*

EW: He was the Senior Scientist from Wood's Hole. And Val Worthington, again, was with us.

BS: *His wife stayed in Barrow?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Did she ever come up to the ice station?*

EW: Never.

BS: *You never had any women out at any of these.*

EW: Nope.

BS: *OK. Interesting. I've got a question to ask to back up a little. What did you do about polar bears? Did you have any come into camp? You had a gun, I take it.*

EW: Yeah. You bet. That was the first thing they told us. They said, "Look, you know the polar bear is the only bear that tracks men and you know you look like a seal. [And they're going to get you because] They will come up behind you and that's that. So, we'll give you a couple of carbines," or whatever they call them, which as it turned out I don't think would have even dented them. But, we carried those along and I saw polar bears walking on the ice up there with their brood, but I never, never saw a polar bear in the vicinity of where we were.

BS: *Probably a reason for it - you picked tight ice.*

EW: Could be.

BS: *They like loose ice. Seals come up.*

EW: They do indeed.

BS: *OK, that was an aside, but I think it was an important one. You probably had nobody that was trained to shoot one anyway. If he was coming at you, even with the proper rifle, you probably wouldn't have even knocked him down.*

EW: Exactly



BS: *Made him angry is all. OK. You're at Point Barrow and what year is this for Ski Jump II?*

EW: 1952.

BS: *So, you're about February '52.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *Five planes at Barrow? Three R4Ds, you say?*

EW: No, one R4D.

BS: *Oh, one R4D. Three planes total. OK And so, you had the same R4D you had before?*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *OK. One R4D, two P2V tankers and that was their purpose. Just to tank you. They didn't have scientists?*

EW: Not a one.

BS: *They didn't stay overnight at ice stations with you or anything like that?*

EW: No.

BS: *How long did you stay at these first ice stations the first year? Overnight each time?*

EW: No, it was getting lighter around the clock and we made maybe two a day sometimes.

(350)

BS: *I meant . . . you'd stay a 24-hour period for 24 hour observations, or . . . ?*

EW: Yeah, I think on one or two we did.

BS: *But, you did not just one set of observations and get out.*

EW: No.

BS: *OK.*

EW: [We also took the other navigator who I say was the best I've ever flown with and]  
We could measure ice drift and it surprised me how far you could drift.

BS: *I asked you a question on putting your skis down. You know when we park on the sea ice runway at McMurdo with the Hercs today and have for a long time, we put the skis down because long term isostatic balance thins the ice down a bit with the wheels down because you have a high point of pressure. So, you put the skis down and you spread that out and it doesn't bend as much.*

*You're going up and it's February, '52. You're up at Barrow. What's the plan?*

EW: The plan was sort of a freewheeling operation. We, again, weren't quite sure how to work the refueling business and we had problems - not the old R4D, there was no problem there - but, the two P2Vs had a lot of problems. When they first got to Barrow, it was very, very cold and they had nothing but oil leaks. [and they lost an engine-one or **They had two engines failures requiring an engine change** [two or them-] and they had to have **them** [those things] flown in. And then, they had one of the airplanes that had a ski "barndoor" which essentially means that the doggone thing flopped down and created quite a bit of drag on one side and it could be very dangerous. [Which, incidentally] **They** found out later what the problem was: [and they found] a couple of the bolts had been sheered just about through. Why, I don't know, probably from wear and tear.

BS: *Six bolts?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *They never fixed it. It happened in Antarctica, too.*

EW: I know it did. You bet your life **with Jack Torbert**.

BS: *Were these the jet assisted P2Vs ?*

EW: No.

BS: *They were just the two reciprocating engines - P2V something.*

EW: They probably were the first models because, I'll tell you, their gas configuration was similar to but didn't hold quite as much as the **Truculent** Turtle. You remember the **Truckulent** Turtle that **set a** made the distance record from Australia to Columbus, Ohio?

BS: *That was a P2V.*

EW: P2V, yeah.

BS: *I do remember it.*

(400)

EW: That's a long distance. They were going to come on through to Washington and complete, but they figured they'd better stop while they were ahead and came into Columbus. Anyway, to get back to your question, there wasn't any rhyme nor reason to the way we operated. We couldn't be sure of the P2Vs **would be operational** for maybe about the first two or three weeks. So what we would do...there was always one P2V that happened to be up and This time, we had no PBY guard ship to worry about, so I could go off on my own. And we made, I guess, **3** oceanographic stations while the P2Vs were in various states of repair. And finally, when all systems were go, we decided that we'd attempt to **set up** put down some little gas caches. and We had some bladders that we **filled** picked up and we went out with a couple of them and put them in position. The fact of the matter, was because we had no way of ever getting back to them **because we had no long range homing devices.** other than by guess and by golly, and trying to go by your own navigation. In the meantime, they would drift god knows where, so we never did find them. And that idea fast went out the window.

So, then it was direct refueling. I would land. Jack would come out, pull along side and directly refuel me, plane to plane.

*Omit: BS: This was after these first 6 stations.*

*Omit: EW: Yeah.*

*BS: So, did you have fuel in bladders or in 55 gallon drums? What were they when you tried those stations that you set up? You dumped fuel out to come back to . . . the caches?*

*EW: Yeah.*

*BS: And what were those, bladders or . . . ?*

*EW: Bladders.*

*BS: Then you went back to direct refueling. This was after those first 6 stations.*

*EW: **No, it was the fourth station.** [think there were a little less because I think it was on the 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> station, that the problem arosxe and I'll get to that in just a moment.] But, as I mentioned to you, I think, prior to getting to Point Barrow when we were making arrangements for hangar space and what not at Ladd, Joe Fletcher came through and he was about to embark on his ice island, T-3, venture.*

*BS: Now, this was on your way up to Barrow, Ski-Jump II, 1952. So, you met Joe Fletcher at Ladd.*

EW: Right. And we talked things over.

BS: *He'd just been relieved of the squadron down at Eileson then.*

EW: I presume.

BS: *Yeah. So, you and he talked.*

EW: Oh yeah.

(450)

BS: *And he was interested in how to land out on the ice?*

EW: Yeah. We thought that we would give each other mutual support in case something went haywire, we could help them out and they could help us and we knew that he was headed to the ice island. They hadn't settled on it at that point and that's when I jokingly said to Jack after our meeting, I said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we were there to greet him when he arrived?" And Jack thought that was a good idea. When I mentioned that at my presentation at Ohio State, of course, Joe was in the audience and afterward he said to me, "I had no idea." I said, "Joe, I'm sure you smelled a rat." He said, "No, I didn't." I had not the slightest idea you were figuring on upstaging us and I said, "Well, it wasn't exactly that. It was sort of one of these pranks," but nevertheless, it never did happen, unfortunately or fortunately.

Finally, everything was ready. Both P2Vs were operating first rate. No maintenance problems and all systems were go for the big push [up] to the North Pole. [area Well, as a matter of fact eventually to land at the North Pole, we hoped.] So, I took

off and I went up as far as I could go safely with the fuel that I had aboard and all we had were what we could carry in the wing tanks, **700 gallons as I remember.** [which I forget How much gas that was.] . But, it wouldn't get you awfully far. I think we were about 600 miles out and landed and worked an oceanographic station. And we had good communications. One of the few times we didn't get a black out from the aurora. Everything was set to go for the following day. Jack said, "I'll come on out, I'll land, I'll refuel you and we'll keep on going." I said, "Look Jack, we have 3 feet of ice and there's no problem with the weight of the P2V and the R4." So, the following day, Jack appeared overhead and circled around and he said, "We're going to change the plan. You're going to take off and we'll go a little bit further north and go as far as we can with the fuel you have and then see what happens." I said, "Jack, I've got a bird in the hand here. You know, I only have maybe about another hour and a half fuel. Maybe less . . . an hour and 15 minutes." "Well," he said, "I don't think the ice is thick enough." And I said, "I know it's thick enough."

BS: *Now had you refueled with him before this on the ice?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *You'd done that before.*

(500)

EW: We'd done that before **on three feet of ice**, so no problem. And again, not to go into the details, but I was pretty well miffed about the whole thing. [and I figured...] I said, "Jack, I **don't** know [what I've got here.] what's ahead and I know what we have behind **us.**" Well, nothing would do but we pick up and go, so I thought, well, fine. Mine is not

to reason why, mine is but to say "aye-aye" type of thing, and off we went. And we flew about an hour north and the only ice we ever came across was the old hummocky ice surrounded by these huge pressure ridges. [and] At this stage of the game, I was fast becoming a glider so I figured well, you better do something real quick. [And] I picked the best of the worst, is what it amounted to, and landed on an old chunk of hummocky ice. Fortunately it was fairly smooth. At least I thought it was. [Of course,] It was snow covered, [and it was] maybe a foot of snow, so that was the one time I landed with the skis down [and] Jack came in behind me. [and] He was a little hot and he almost ran into the pressure ridge [on] **at the end of the runway** which scared us all to death. [and] **He** finally got her stopped. [because it] **The P2V** had reverse thrust. [on the thing, on the props. But in the reverse thrust,] When he hit it, the port engine kicked in, the starboard engine didn't. [and] **He** [started to] cart wheeled to the left and that broke his forward ski. [ a big twist in the doggone thing. And the engine, in the meantime...] A fire erupted from his port engine [and] **Our** crew picked up our fire extinguishers and rushed over to help his crew put it out. [and] The fire went out in a matter of about a minute, but we didn't know how much damage **was done**. [that was. So, while] Jack and I [were] put [putting] our heads together as to what to do next. **We** [next] checked the **P2V** [plane] out and it looked like the engine might have been damaged a bit, but it was still OK. [But the ski and] **Then** they **jury** [gerry]-rigged the ski and [doggone thing to] straightened it out. Jack had a great crew. [, so they straightened out the ski and got that squared away and] Jack refueled me and then climbed back in the airplane and said, "Well, let us know where you are. We won't do anything until we hear from you."

(550)

So, off he went. And I watched the take-off and it scared me to death. The deck was uneven and he was bobbing up and down and when a P2V bobs, they really bob. [And]



finally,] He **finally** got airborne, thank goodness, and got home **okay**. And we set up an oceanographic station. The following morning, and you know hindsight is much better than foresight. If I **had** ['d have'd] been smart, I wouldn't have taken on a full load of fuel. I'd have taken on about half because **of the** [you] weight, [a tremendous ammount,] particularly with all of the oceanographic gear. [And the whole bit.] And again, had I been smart, I would have walked the landing strip and made sure that there was nothing below the snow that would foul us up. But, [again,] I wasn't all that smart. So, we taxied to the end of **the ice runway**. [this thing and] **In** snow, much like a seaplane, you have to use a lot of throttle differential [and control service] to maneuver. I finally got turned around and [got headed out,] made an initial attempt to take off. [and saw the] A pressure ridge **kept** coming closer and closer. [And] I knew as any aviator will tell you, you know when you're not going to make it. So, I aborted that **attempt**, [and] turned around and came back. [and I thought] I **taxied back** [was] on my same ski tracks, knowing that the first **run** {time} I didn't hit anything. [And] The second time, we were gaining speed, looking just fine to me. [and] I had **that** [the] feeling, as every aviator knows, when you're about to get airborne. [start hunking back a bit and] **The** first thing you know, the co-pilot said, "There she goes," and what he saw that I didn't was the propeller careening across the nose going from the port side to starboard. [and] It went for about another 100 yards, rolling down the runway on the ice floe and stopped. In the meantime, we **had** cartwheeled to the left. [violently. And] **When** we came to a stop, I thought **we were** [we the engine prop had been I thought the thing was] on fire.

(End of Tape 2 - Side A)

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(Begin Tape 2 - Side B)

(000)

BS: *OK, before we turned the tape, you were taking off and you lost a propeller.*

EW: Right.

BS: *What happened after that?*

EW: Well, as I mentioned, we cartwheeled to the left and when I looked out the port side, I thought the engine was on fire, but it was condensation **I was [we were]** looking at, thank goodness. And McHale, always the great Chief Petty Officer, **[he was]** jumped out with a fire extinguisher and got up on the wing, but as I say, it turned out to be a false alarm. **[thank goodness. In the meantime, from constant drilling]** I had the crew **trained [drilled]** so that if we ever did have this happen, they'd have **the [everything in their]** survival gear out on the ice because once you burn, then it's a little bit too late to think **about that. [About what's in the plane.]** And the next time I turned around, the crew had everything out there on the ice in the way of survival gear. I was the proudest guy in the world. So, I got out and with the co-pilot and Chief McHale, we looked over the engine and it was a sad sight. **There [it]** was a big hole in the engine hub where the prop had pulled completely out.

BS: *How come it came off?*

EW: **It hit** the ice. What had happened, apparently, **we hit [nd we saw the piece of ice that caused it. It was]** a chunk of ice just under the surface of the snow. **[and]** The port ski **[hit that and]** buckled and the wing went **down. That's when the prop flew off.** It was

just before we had flying speed. [Unfortunately. And then just enough to tip the wing enough so that the prop hit the ice and pulled off.]

BS: *What latitude were you?*

EW: I think we were 82 north. I have that in here.

BS: *That's 700 miles from Barrow.*

EW: **No, it's 800 and some odd nautical miles.** [Yeah Exactly.]

BS: *So, you were in a survival situation in about the most remote place in the world.*

EW: It was. According to the scientists, we were at the Point of Inaccessibility in the Arctic Ocean. And to make matters worse [and this was rather amusing in hindsight, but ] the aurora **caused a** [aparently had hit and we were in a complete] communications black-out. Couldn't get a word out anywhere to any body and the radioman kept pounding the key and then he'd try by voice and there was nothing. So, for two days, nobody knew where we were and I don't think they were particularly worried because they figured that we were doing fine. They knew back in Barrow it was a blackout.

BS: *If you'd got off, would you have gone on to the North Pole?*

EW: I would have, you bet.

*Omit:* BS: *But, you had another 11 degrees, 660 miles to get up there.*

*Omit:* EW: I think I was 400 miles from the Pole. I'll have to look at my latitude again.

*Omit:* BS: *Then you were about 80.*

*Omit:* EW: Yeah. 87, 86, somewhere along in there.

*Omit:* BS: *Yeah, ok. So, it must have been 80 . . .*

EW: I have the coordinates.

BS: *Yeah, I'd like to get those. So, you couldn't get radio transmission.*

EW: Right.

BS: *You were waiting for somebody to come up and say what's going on? Where are you? We're trying to get a hold of you?*

EW: **Yes**, we knew **if not**, it was going to be [one thing or another. It as] a long walk back.

BS: *But, the North Pole flight upon you losing that prop was automatically aborted. That was the end of that.*

EW: That was the end of that.

BS: *But for that, you would have been the first one to land there since . . .*

EW: We hoped, yeah. [What was more severe in the way of damage] The chief looked over the wing spar [real good] and he figured we had a cracked wing spar and that was the death knell. And so, anyway, getting back to the communications thing, the radioman said, "Sir, I've tried everything and nothing seems to work." I said, "Well, just go back about every hour and sock the key and see if you can raise anybody." So, **after** [about two or three hours later, I guess...this would have been about] two and a half days without any communication, he came forward and he said, "I finally got through, sir. It's **an amateur radio operator, a ham.**" [HAM.] And I think the **ham** [HAM] was in Vermont [and] I said, "A **ham** [HAM] radioman?" And he said, "Yeah." And he said, "Do you want me to send a Mayday and the position and the whole bit?" [and] I thought to myself, "Gee whiz, a civilian. I don't know what the procedure is. Whether this is [not] right or **not.**" **Finally,** I said "Yeah, let somebody know where we are."

(50)

Well, to make a long story short, the **ham** [HAM], [I think it was in one of the New England states, I forget which one. He] received it. **We asked that he relay the message to** [and we had a message on the bottom of it to see that] the Commander of Alaskan Sea Frontier [got a hold of this] in Kodiak. [Well,] He sent a [HAM] radio message to his buddy somewhere in the middle of the United States who sent a [HAM] message to his buddy in Seattle, who sent a [HAM] message to his buddy in Kodiak. [and that] **The** result was the whole world knew what our position was and what our problem was long before the Navy. And the Navy started getting calls **asking** [on this thing, wondering] what was going on. [And who was up there that was lost and the whole bit. And] I'm sure it was rather embarrassing. Had I known it was going to be that embarrassing, we'd have gone through some other military source. Nevertheless, that's the way it happened.

And to Jack Cooley's great credit, he [was the guy that] came out [I guess] 6 or 7 days later, [and] plucked us off the ice and brought us safely home.

BS: *He landed in the same P2V he had out there? He fixed it and came back, right?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *OK. Cooley flew P2V out. Where did you go? Right back to Barrow?*

EW: Right back to Barrow, yeah.

BS: *OK. All of a sudden, you don't have an R4D.*

EW: Correct.

BS: *You've got one busted P2V and another one that's working. What happened? Operation ended there?*

EW: Almost. [The next thing that happened was that] **It was planned that Jack Cooley** in company with the other **P2V** airplane **would make** [made] **an ice reconnaissance flight** [run] **in the vicinity of** [out over] Ellesmere Island.[and that vicinity.] **But first, Jack and Lcdr. Dale Kephardt, pilot of the other P2V would visit Ice Island T-3. They landed and were met by Col. Joe Fletcher Officer in Charge of Project Icicle. On take off, Cooley lost an engine and returned to Ice Island T-3. So, all of a sudden, Joe's complement about doubles requiring** [and] **additional** living space, [and] food and everything else. And believe it or not, an Air Force R5D landed on T-3 **with an engine for the P2V.** [and the landing-I've seen pictures of it-and] **How he** managed to land and

get out without being totaled, I don't know. [They delivered the engine. The engine was changed there and Cooley came back to Barrow and we went home from there.] The **other P2V continued on to Thule, then returned to Pt. Barrow. Following an engine change, Jack Cooley flew over the North Pole then on to Alert and back to Pt. Barrow.** [When they were close to Joe Fletcher's ice island T-3 and he made an emergency landing there. And the other P2V followed him in.]

BS: *OK, the P2s returned to Barrow and everybody went home.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *Did you develop as many ice stations as you did in Ski Jump I?*

EW: No, as a matter of fact, that was the 6th oceanographic station that we made, so we had a grand total of 18 when we racked them all up. There is one point that I want to digress for just a moment and that is on survival rations. On our way up to Barrow, on Ski Jump II, I drew some midnight small stores at the commissary, then went to the Sick Bay. [Now] **The** commissary gave me a box of triple A grade steak. It weighed about 50 lbs. **Then** I went to the Sick Bay and I said, "Look, in the event we have a real emergency, do you have anything like alcohol that you could **spare just** in case we needed it, medicinally, of course." [That] **The doctor** was a real good guy. He said, "Sure, **this** ought to be exactly what you need." And he gave us a gallon of 190 proof, I guess medicinal alcohol, I don't know what it was.

(100)

And I said, "Now is this all right to gargle with and if you drink any, does it hurt you?" "Oh hell no, it's fine," **he said**. Well, that's exactly what I wanted. So, I packed these together **and** marked on the package, survival gear. **I took it to [and I said to]** Chief McHale **and said**, "Put this in the tail. Don't let anybody know what's in it. It's only known by you and me and Woody, the co-pilot." "Aye-aye, sir." Well, I forgot about it. And the first day after **we crashed, and [that we were on the ice after]** we knew we were going to be stranded I said, "The only way Jack is going to get in here and get us off this ice floe is if we have a runway that's smooth and suitable for landing because he's going to be heavy." So, I organized working parties and everybody worked - scientists, officers, enlisted, the whole bit. And we'd go out and work for about maybe - it was awful cold - work for about 45 minutes, then I'd bring them in for a cup of tea and a warm up and then out we'd go again. **[and]** **We** worked right on through the day and the first evening, I thought, "Well, let's boost the morale of these guys." So, I told McHale, "Chief, break out the survival rations in the tail, **[and]** **We're** going to have a little happy hour and then a steak dinner." Now, McHale was a wonderful cook, loved to cook steaks. And, of course, we had a nice little galley on the R4D. **[and]** **It** was comfortable except for the fact that **the plane [you]** had a list to port, which didn't make all that much difference, really. Nevertheless, at about 1800, I summoned the crew and I said, "OK now, we're going to have a little treat tonight. We're going to have a happy hour." And Brian, they looked at me as if this guy has lost it completely and they kind of looked at each other and I said, "Now, I mean that. Chief McHale, break out the emergency rations." McHale came in, opened up the emergency package and pulled up a jug and I said, "Now what about the can?" We had canned grapefruit juice. I had plenty of that. Every guy got a 2 oz. shot of this stuff and that was it. That was the ration, followed by a steak dinner. And this we had every night until we were picked up. Now, here's where the point of the story comes in. We set up a series of watches **[, of course, and]** **that** went through the night. And you stood your watch in the cockpit. Two reasons: first of all, you could see all the way



around and secondly, you could put the earphones on and tune in to whatever you could pick up and most of the time we got radio Moscow loud and clear. Wonderful program, beautiful classical music and the whole bit. So, it was my turn to go on watch at 3 AM. [and] I was cranking around on the ADF to see if I could pick up something. [and] You got a [that] skip distance occasionally, you know, you got a stateside station. This one came in and it was a station in New Orleans and he was just announcing the news. And the top news story and here's what the guy said, "Tonight there are 9 Navy airmen waiting to be rescued. They are in the most desolate, most god-awful situation and they're cold and they're this and they're that," and I thought to myself, 'Good Lord, we just had a happy hour and a steak dinner. This is horrible. What will our dependents think if they hear this?' First thing that came to mind. I just bring that up because granted we were stranded about 7 or 8 days - whatever it was - but in the evenings, we led the life of Riley. No question about it. [So, the program,] **When we came back** [, and again] I hung **up** my mukluks [up] and my parka and I figured that was the end of any Arctic expeditions **besides** [because] the Antarctic was dead in the water.

(150)

BS: *So, you're back in the Pentagon?*

EW: No.[, I] **In May, 1952, I returned to Squadron VX-6 at NAS Chincoteague Virginia. In December I was detached from VX-6 and reported to the General Line School held at the Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California. In July 1953 I was ordered to** [attached to the Navy,] the Bureau of Aeronautics, **Washington, D.C.** My job was in **Plans Coordination. We** [which] did all of the planning for future buys as well as the maintenance programs. [and the rest of it.]

BS: *This was down by the Lincoln Memorial.*

EW: Yeah. Old Main Navy, 18th and Constitution.

BS: *OK. So, how'd you get roped into Deepfreeze? What happened?*

EW: Well, a couple of things happened in sequence that were quite significant. One, quite by accident, I happened to be roaming around on the third deck of the Bureau of Aeronautics and as you know, the Bureau then gave the retired admirals an office and secretary [and what not] and one of these offices was Admiral Byrd's.

BS: *Admiral Byrd had an office there.*

EW: **He** had an office [there] in **BuAer** [BEAUAIR Yeah.] **on the third deck.** [and] I forget what the wing was. [but] I was running around getting some autographs for a Navy buy and you **had** [have] to go to all the departments. I happened to pass by and I saw Admiral Byrd's **name**. I thought, 'Holy mackerel, here's my boyhood hero.' So, on sort of a whim, I knocked on the door and walked in. The secretary said, "Yes?" And I told her who I was. [and] I **said**, [told her,] "You know, I've always been a great admirer of the Admiral. I wonder if he'd have just a minute to say hello?" And she said, "Well, certainly." So, she went in and I don't know what he was doing, but fine, she said, "The Admiral will see you right now." So, I walked in with this great huge sheaf of papers under my arm. He probably figured I was bringing him a lot of unnecessary work or whatever. **He** got up from his desk And he said, "Commander," **he asked.** **"What** can I do for you?" [and] I said, "Sir, I'd like to talk to you for just a few minutes about **the** Antarctic programs [that you were in] and find out if you were going to take the helm of any future ones." "Sit down, sit down," **he said.** **He was** very cordial, very nice. One of

the nicest men **I've met.** [And at this stage of the game, he was quite...] **He** was a lot smaller than I realized and he was older, but still a very handsome, older man. So, anyway, he told me a little bit about the expedition and I mentioned Paul Siple. [of course. So he said,] "Do you have any experience in the Antarctic?" **he asked.** [and I said,] "No, sir, **I replied.** "Mine was all Arctic." I told him I was on [the] Project Ski Jump. "Oh yeah," he said, "I remember that." So, we ended up by my saying, "Admiral, if you have another expedition [going down there,] I would appreciate your keeping me in mind. I really would." And he said, "I'll do that, but at the moment, the funding is just not there. Not there." [And] I thanked him very cordially and left. [out I went.]

BS: *What year was that?*

EW: 1954.

BS: *Did you know that the scientists went to the Navy and asked from the national committee for the IGY and asked the Navy and they turned them down?*

EW: I didn't know that.

(200)

BS: *True. Got that from two of the heavies who were there. One was Shapley who was at Pole, he was there. He was the number 2 guy behind Larry Gould. He did all the work. Gould was the front man. And the other is Nate Gerson the other day, who was on the national committee as well. Gould got to Eisenhower and said, "I've got a little problem." Ike had been to Carlton College. Had graduated his students. Picture of Eisenhower and Gould on the back of a Cadillac. They used to sit on the back and the top.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *And he says, "I've got a little problem." and he tells him the problem. Ike says, "Well, let's have a little drink here and let me fix that. You just sit down, Larry." Larry used to tell this story in the club at McMurdo. And he said he calls and he says, "Mr. Secretary, I've got a little problem with the Navy." This is the Secretary of Defense. He says, "We've asked them to support our national program down in Antarctica and they don't seem to want to do it. Can you fix that? He says, "Yeah, well call me back." Pretty soon the call comes back and "Well, thank you Mr. Secretary, I knew you could handle that." He says, "Larry, there's not going to be a problem. You just call up the Navy again they they're ready to roll." True story.*

EW: Isn't that amazing. Now these are the things that you never hear about.

BS: *You get it out of oral history.*

EW: Absolutely. Great.

BS: *Anyway. I thought that would be a good interjection there. So, this was 1954 when this happened.*

EW: 1954, right. And perhaps maybe a month later, a letter went across my desk [and it was] from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. I have a copy of it and I'll pass it on to you if you want. Anyway, the gist of the letter was in response to a request for information on any future Navy expeditions to the Antarctic. [and] The Assistant Secretary of the Navy's [- I think this] letter [is] dated sometime March '54. [We can

verify that. It] stated absolutely not. The Navy has no funds and no way is it able to support any expedition in the Antarctic and that is for the foreseeable future. So, I figured well, I guess that ends my being able to ever see the Antarctic. So, [when the next trick that came about.] I was totally unprepared **when** [and] my boss, Captain Henry Dietrich at the time [told me, he.] said, "Ed, I know you've been in some cold weather operations. If you have nothing better to do, take a run on over to the Pentagon today. There's a captain over there. I know nothing about him. His name is Dufek and he's holding a meeting on cold weather **operations.**" [don't know what it's about." So.] As it turned out, the meeting had representatives from all the CNO offices and I was the only rep from **BuAer.** [BEAUAIR. Strangly enough.] I thought maybe some guy from maintenance would have come over and a few others, but they finally made the rounds and got to me. [and] Captain Dufek said, "Now what would you suggest in the way of airplanes?" So, I gave him a rundown of what I knew we had.

BS: *Tell me for the tape, but I want to back you up a little. You told me a little story earlier and I didn't get it on tape about how you ran into Dufek. I mean, he says, "Anybody got any experience?" or something like that. Was this in that general meeting?*

EW: No, no. It was my Skipper in **BuAer.** [BEAUAIR.]

(250)

BS: *Oh, he was the one. OK.*

EW: So, we got to the point where it came [up] to airplanes. [And] I knew what we had and I mentioned [those] P2Vs on skis **and** R4Ds. [I mentioned the fact that...]

BS: *This is in the general meeting.*

EW: Yeah. I **said** [mentioned the fact that, no question about it,] the **utility plane** to pick is the **DeHaviland**. [And] **It's** a far better small plane **than this Country builds. They can be equipped with ski, floats or wheels.** [equipped and to float, if you want.]

BS: *This was the . . .*

EW: [The UF?] That **was the De Havilland Otter.**

BS: *The UF.*

EW: [UF]. And I also told him that the Air Sea Rescue Air Force **Air Sea Rescue** [Unit] had been experimenting with the Grumman **UF-1** Albatross. What was the designation of that? Do you recall? Ufs?

BS: *UF.*

EW: UF. And this was rather unique in that it was a triphibian land, sea and also had skis for landing on snow. And the skis were rather unique. [because] They had a couple of them dangling **from** [off] the wing-tip **floats.** [wing tanks] and a big skag that came down the **keel.** [center and] I never landed it in snow, but those who did said it worked pretty well. Anyway, we had a couple of those. And I guess I finished **the meeting by discussing winter clothing and spare parts.**

BS: *Was Dufek an aviator?*

EW: Oh yeah. Sure was. So, the meeting ended and **he** [they] pounded the gavel and that was it. [and] I started [right] out **but** [and] before I could get to the door, he called me back. [and he said,] "How come you know so much about this stuff?" **he asked.** [And] I told him what I'd been doing and that's when he asked me, he said, "Would you like to go with me?" And I said, "I'd be delighted." I said, "Captain, the fact of the matter is I'm only about half way through my tour in **BuAer** [BEAUAIR] and I'm sure my boss would never, ever give me his concurrence." And he said, "Don't you worry about him. You'll have your orders in a couple of days." So, I went back to **BuAer** [BEAUAIR] and thought about it that night and the next day, I figured I'd better fess up. So, I knocked on my Skipper's door and Captain Henry Dietrich said, "Come in." And I went in and I told him, I said, "Captain Dietrich, I can expect orders coming in for me pretty quick." He said, "Where to?" And I said, "To the Antarctic." He looked at me as if I were out of my mind and he said, "You don't want to go there, do you?" And I said, "Yes sir, I do." And he didn't particularly cotton up to the idea, but I left with his blessing. [and he said that was the end of that.]

So, my first job with Captain Dufek, [then], was in his office in the Pentagon. **There** [when it] was Captain Dufek, myself and we had a Yeoman.

BS: *You were the first three in Deepfreeze.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *Who was the Yeoman?*

(300)

EW: I forget. But, we occupied a little rinky-dinky office on the **fourth floor, E ring** [E-ring] of the Pentagon. [as I remember, and] We were only there a very, very short period of time. I would say no more than two weeks. And then they moved the headquarters over to the old Post Office building in Washington, DC. **It** [that] had been somewhat restored for office space. It still creaked and groaned and the elevators I always thought were unsafe. Nevertheless, we had a lot of space over there and within about the next two or three weeks, Captain Dufek had his staff pretty well formed.

BS: *This is for the . . . ?*

EW: Deepfreeze I.

BS: *Deepfreeze I. Did that include the squadron?*

EW: Yeah. \_\_\_\_ Squadron, yeah. Because I was [their] **Air** Operations officer on the staff and it was my duty to plan for the squadron, the planes and the personnel. [and provide for where we were going to...]

BS: *So, you were hiring the first of everybody for the squadron.*

EW: [As far as I know. **No. Planning** for the squadron **compliment and aircraft**, yeah. No question about that. [But for the staff...as far as ...maybe. He might have had Dustin...I don't know. But, I know in that office there were just three of us to begin with. That I know. So, the staff formed and I was air operations.] I don't know whether it's ever been known how Deepfreeze got its name.

BS: *I don't know.*



EW: OK. The Admiral, one day, got very, very angry at the whole kit and caboodle. Apparently he wanted more action than what had been going on. He called me in and he said to me.

BS: *This is Dufek now. He got promoted to Admiral somewhere . . .*

EW: Yeah. And at this stage of the game, he was an Admiral. He had just been promoted. And he was Admiral Retired, but given special dispensation.

BS: *He had been a Captain Retired, wasn't he?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *He was brought back.*

EW: Yeah. Tombstone promotion, yeah, and given permission to command a unit at sea, even though he was in a retired status. And that takes, as I recall, Congressional approval. I know he was sort of worried about it for a while and then it finally came through, so it was no problem.

BS: *You know he'd been on the national committee as an advisor to Larry Gould and Shapley and the national committee doing all these meetings and he was a Captain and he made a hit. Probably Gould swung it.*

EW: He was a good man. I thoroughly **agree**.

BS: *I mean this is something that's really rare. I mean the Navy's got plenty of guys that could have probably handled it as well.*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *So, tombstone promotion.*

EW: Right.

BS: *OK, so anyway, you're putting the Deepfreeze staff together.*

EW: Right. And I was called in and the Admiral was very upset and he said, "You know, we're moving too slow. What have you done? You've done nothing." And I said, "Well, sir, you told me I couldn't do anything because you're waiting for the new **VX-6** commanding officer to **report [come in]** and I can't go over his head." That's another story that I'll tell very briefly. Well, to make a long story short, **he read [you have to...reading us all] us** off up and down the complete staff except for his Deputy, Captain Ketchum, a wonderful guy, and Captain Thomas who was a Coast Guardsman on the staff - they had apparently done their homework and all the rest of us hadn't.

(350)

So, he said to me, "Ed, you get out there and you tell that staff that nobody is leaving this building today until such time as we get a name for this - whatever it's going to be - and tell them to put on their thinking caps and come up with something. Something real good." So, I told the guys. I said, "You know, this is what the Admiral said and this is what we'd better do." So, sure enough, **[It came]** about half hour before secure, right

about 1600. We were all summoned in. The Admiral said, "You know what I'm expecting . . . some names for the program. What about you Dustin?" And Dustin said, "What about Snow White?" The Admiral said to Dick Black - Dick was Commander then. The Admiral said, "What about you?" And Dick said, "What about Bear Away?" And he went into the constellation Bear and that was a little too deep for the Admiral.

BS: *They were both on the Bear.*

EW: Yeah, that's right. And **we** went around the bend and I forget what I put in. [and] Apparently the Admiral figured we were all a bunch of deadbeats. So, he sat back in his chair and he said, and now it's getting to be about 6 o'clock in the evening and everybody wants to get out of there, and he said, "Well, what do you think about Deepfreeze? I kind of like it myself." And we all said, "Oh that is the greatest!" And that's how Deepfreeze was named and I'm sure the Admiral had that in his hip pocket.

BS: *Did you tell this to Diane?*

EW: I don't know whether I did or not.

BS: *I'll ask her. So, he was just airing everything out.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *So, the logo, I understand, was offered up by Walt Disney himself.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *That came later.*

EW: Yeah. Sure did.

BS: *So, that's how you did it and that's what, late 1954?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *They coined it and it caught on with the press.*

EW: Yeah. Absolutely.

BS: *Well, Dufek . . . that was the most significant thing he did. Good leadership, huh?*

EW: You bet your life.

BS: *Was Admiral Byrd involved in any of this?*

EW: You bet he was and that brings up . . .

BS: *Did he come to some of the meetings?*

EW: Oh yeah. [But, see, the problem was and this, I'm sure, was pretty well known, but] From where I sat and fortunately I had duty on both staff and squadron, [so] I saw the beginning and a lot of the intrigue that went on. Now, Admiral Byrd was called in **out of retirement**. By this time, he is not well. He's really old and very frail. **In the meantime,** [and] Dufek had been **promoted to** a Rear Admiral [who had been] **and** given command

of Task Force 43. [which included the whole kit and caboodle.] Now, when Byrd came in, in order not to offend **the man** [Admiral Byrd,] who had been the honcho for **many Antarctic expeditions**. I mean Admiral Byrd was "Mr. Antarctica."

(400)

They gave him a title . . . [I think] They called him the Officer in Charge of Antarctic Programs which essentially meant nothing other than sort of a glorified consultant. Well, I don't think it really sunk in to Admiral Byrd until we had our first get together, but some people from his staff and some people from ours and Larry Gould came in occasionally and Eddie...

BS: *Goodale?*

EW: Yeah, Goodale. Anyhow, Admiral Dufek made it perfectly clear to one and all that he'd take anyone's advice, but he was running the show and he was calling the shots and let there be no doubt in anybody's mind the way this was going to go. Now this, I think, triggered off a bit of ill feeling. I know there was sort of an animosity . . . not animosity, but a feeling between Admiral Byrd's staff and Dufek's staff. But, nevertheless, this was an innuendo that had occurred and along those lines I'd like to now step back to where Admiral Dufek, [just after we] named the program **Deepfreeze**, and get back to where we were in the squadron.

Admiral Dufek said to me, "Ed, Trigger Hawkes is going to be the Commanding Officer, **the first** Commanding Officer of the squadron. We have yet to get a name for it. We have yet to get people ordered in." And I said, "Well, sir, [you know, what about] Trig Hawkes, he's the guy. I mean, we should get him in right now and put him to work." "Well," he said, "He's AEDO." I didn't know Trig was AEDO.

BS: *He'd shifted after High Jump.*

EW: Oh, he did?

BS: *Yeah.*

EW: That was it?

BS: *After High Jump. He changed over.*

EW: AEDO.

BS: *Yeah.*

EW: So, I said to the Admiral, "Admiral, AEDOs can't command at sea. They can command a shore station or maintenance center or O and R." And he said, "If I have to go to the Secretary of the Navy, [m going to go to the Secretary and] he's going to be the Commanding Officer." Well, when the Admiral says it's going to rain, you put on your **raincoat and** boots and walk around in the sun. So, what do you do? Do what the Admiral says and the Admiral said, "Look, I want you to go up tomorrow. Go down there to Anacostia and get yourself an SNB. Fly up to Johnsville. That's where Trig was stationed at the time. And get together with him. Get the guys he wants. Bring them on back and the next day you're going to go over to the Pentagon and you're going to see that those people are had." "Yes sir."

(450)

So, I did precisely that. And I hadn't met Trig before. He was a real, real wonderful likable guy. So, we got together and hit it off real good and I said, "OK now, Trig. You're going to have to come up with the names that you want." "Oh," he said, "I've got them all right here." So, he started to name them off and I copied them down and he said, "I'll want Hal Kolp as the Exec. He's a Marine." I thought, "Isn't that a little unusual?" I got Hal's name down and I said, "OK, what about the rest of them?" Anyway, he said, "I want Paul Bower to be **the [an] Operations and navigation officer.**" [and] I said, "Oh, Paul Bower. Is he an aviator?" "No, No. He's a ground officer, but he's an old reserve and he's this and he's that." So, I thought, "Boy, Air operations. We've got a commander that's pretty high powered for a navigator in the operations department."

BS: *He was a commander, huh?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *He's calling in the good ol' boys, huh?*

EW: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You bet your life. And a couple of the guys that he mentioned [that] turned out to be absolute gems - Rudy **Weigand**, [Wygan.] Commander **Weigand** [Wygan,] he wanted as the maintenance officer. And Rudy was good. And who was the other one he brought in?

BS: *Gus Shinn.*

EW: Oh yeah. Yeah, that's right. Gus Shinn was a foregone conclusion. Gus, I had known before and I had thought he was a great, great choice. Well, of course, he'd been

through High Jump. And, to make a long story short, I guess there were about 10 guys and I came back, went to the Bureau the following day, turned the names in and when I came back I said, "Admiral, I don't know about this. If this thing blows and then Trig, for some reason, doesn't make the grade, what is the new commanding officer going to do with what I think is a rather strange group?" So, he said, "We'll just have to wait and see. But," he said, " He is going to be if I have to go to the **Secretary of the Navy**. I've told you, Ed." "OK, fine." Well, as it turned out, Trig was turned down, cold. [And what the Bureau responded,] The gist of it was under no circumstances can Commander Hawkes be ordered to command the squadron. You may put him on your staff if you want. [nd give him orders there.] So, in default, so to speak, Dufek put him **on** [in] the staff and he replaced me as Air Operations.

(500)

In the meantime, I wanted to go to the squadron. So, Dufek said, "Well, look. You know Trig's going to be the operations officer. Now, I want a guy to replace you because if you'd stayed, you'd have been the assistant. Can you come up with a guy?" So, I called my pal in **BuAer**. [BEUAIR] I said, "Do you have anybody over there who would like to go to the Antarctic?" And he said, "What, are you crazy?" I said, "No, I mean it." He said, "Yeah, there's a guy - a malcontent - his name is Pendergraff. Penny Pendergraff. He's a malcontent. Hates his duty in **BuAer** [BEAUAIR] and would do anything to get out of it." I said, "How long's he been there?" He said, "A month, maybe two." [Well, that's a pretty long... ]

BS: *Commander?*



EW: Commander. So, I gave Penny Pendergraft a call and I explained the situation and who I was and I said, "Would you like a tour of duty on Admiral Dufek's staff? That means you're going to go to the Antarctic and be down there maybe three, four or five months. I don't know, maybe longer." Well, Penny jumped at it. "Yes sir!" So, I said, "OK. What about your boss?" "Oh," he said, "He won't mind." Well, as it turned out, I'm sure the boss wrote him off with pleasure because he was rather difficult. I'm probably uncharitable, but that's probably what **happened**. Anyway, Penny came in, reported, and on the 17th, I believe it was, of January '55, I flew the Admiral to **Naval Air Station Patuxent** and we held a little sort of commissioning ceremony in **the Commanding Officer's Office**.

BS: *What was the date again?*

EW: I believe it was either the 15th or the 17th of January, when the squadron was officially **commissioned**.

BS: *You and Dufek flew down, huh?*

EW: Yeah, we flew into Patuxent and this whole thing was done in the Commanding Officer's office, and they had a recording and they had a guy taking pictures.

BS: *Who was the CO?*

EW: He was a friend of Dufek's and the reason I remember . . .

BS: *No, I don't mean of the base. I mean who was to be the first CO of the squadron?*

EW: Oh, at the moment, when the Admiral asked me, he said, "What are we going to do now **that Hawkes has been turned down?**" and that's when I suggested **Gordon**, [I suggest an old friend of mine] a very old friend who has a lot of time behind him in the Arctic and it's a guy named Gordon Ebbe." So, he said, "Where's he?" Well, we looked Gordon Ebbe up and he was aboard one of the carriers and again, the Admiral pushed the button and the first thing you know, Gordon Ebbe had orders as Skipper of the **Squadron.**

(550)

BS: *Weren't you the first skipper?*

EW: Yeah. I was temporary . . . acting.

BS: *When the squadron was commissioned.*

EW: Oh yeah. I had that job for about 3 or 4 months. I don't think Gordon came in until mid-April, as I recall.

BS: *So, you were the acting CO. You'd already had your command, so they didn't want to give you another one, sounds like.*

EW: No, not of a squadron.

BS: *Oh, I see. Ski Jump didn't count.*

EW: No. I was Officer in Charge.

BS: *OK. But, you were the first Skipper of the squadron in actuality.*

EW: Yeah. And so, that's how Gordon happened to come in. And I recall at the meeting, getting back to where we were at Patuxent and my taking the Admiral over . . .

BS: *Wait a second. Let me just close this out. Gordon came. Did he relieve you right away?*

EW: Sure did.

BS: *So, he came down from the Arctic or . . . ?*

EW: No, he came off a carrier. You see, he couldn't get away from the carrier for a couple of months. That's the reason I had the helm so long.

BS: *You had it for how many months?*

EW: I'd say about four.

BS: *OK. I understand now. But, you were the first Skipper.*

EW: Um-hum, and the first man.

BS: *Yeah. And the first member.*

EW: I was all by myself for about the first three weeks.

BS: *VX-6 by self. Anyway, so here you are. You transfer down to Patuxent, or . . . ?*

EW: Right. That's where I was transferred and . . .

BS: *With your family?*

EW: **Yes. The family were** then [were] living in **Fairfax, Virginia.** [Hillcrest Heights, because I'd jus come off...., they weren't in Hillcrest Heights either. Oh, I know exactly, yeah. Because I was going to be , at least they thought I was going to be the first Skipper coming in and I guess] They assigned me a set of quarters so I moved Marilyn into [a set of] quarters on Patuxent and we were right across the way from Gordon Ebbe and his family and Toni, his wife, who, of course, I had known before.

(End of Tape 2 - Side B)

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(Begin Tape 3 - Side A)

(000)

BS: *This is Tape 3A of an interview with Commander Edward Ward on the 6th of November 2001. We were just discussing the formation of VX-6 in 1955.*

EW: OK, so I say I had my family in [the] quarters aboard the **Air Station Patuxent** **that** [which] made it very convenient [and liaison with] **to visit** the Admiral and staff. [Made it very convenient, too. Because I'd just got an] **The Squadron had been assigned an**

airplane, **an SNB** and **I'd** fly up there, **visit the Staff** and do whatever the Admiral had figured out for me to do. One of the times I went back and we discussed this and that and the other, he said, "You know, Ed, you know the one thing we don't have is a senior flight surgeon." We had the junior medical flight surgeon ordered in - Lieutenant Bucky Harris. And we had the dentist ordered in - a fellow named **Knoedlor** [Kernoodler.] And we needed a senior flight surgeon. So he said, "I want you to look around. When you get back here to Washington, on one of your visits, go over to **BuPers** [BEAUPERS] and see what you can dig up. In the meantime, maybe you knew somebody." I said, "What I'll do, Admiral, I'll go to the Naval Hospital **in Portsmouth, and then to** [here in] the local sick bay on the station and see if I can come up with a volunteer." So, I started off **at** [in] the Patuxent Air Station Dispensary which was almost like a hospital. I went in and saw the Captain in charge. He was very cordial and over a cup of coffee I said, "Well, Captain, I'll tell you what I'm here for." I explained just a bit about the upcoming operation and I said, "Admiral Dufek, **Commander of** Task Force 43 Staff [and] has asked me to look for a volunteer senior flight surgeon. Now would you happen to have anybody that would come to mind?" And, Brian, it was the **damndist** [damnest] thing. Right at that second, the Exec happened to be in on this conversation and they both said, "**Hedblom.**" [Headblum."]

BS: *Captain Harry Hedblom. Captain, right?*

EW: No, then, Commander.

BS: *OK, Commander.*

EW: Commander **Hedblom.** [Headblum.]

BS: *So. . . they wanted to get rid of him.*

EW: Yep. So, the Captain turned to his Exec and he said, "Where can I find Commander **Hedblom?**" [Headblum?] And the Exec said, "Where he usually is. On the pistol range." And I figured when I heard that, there's the man for us. It turned out that **Bloss** [[[Boss]]] **Hedblom** [Headblum] was a Camp Perry shot and having been in the Marine Corps many years before I knew that a Marine that had the honor and distinction of a Camp Perry shot was quite a guy. And this guy. . . his specialty was firing a .45. Anyway, they put out a call. [and] I waited about 10 or 15 minutes for him to come off the range. **While we waited, I** [We] discussed this, that and the other and particularly the **Antarctic** program. [comig up and] I could hear Commander **Hedblom** [Headblum] coming down the passageway - big deep voice. A lot of laughter - ha, ha, ha. He was **always** poking fun at the corpsmen and the others, intentionally, and I think sometimes not really being appreciated. Well, when he came in, Brian, I mean he arrived. He was a big, big guy, a [And] big booming, voice - Hah, hah. He said to the Captain, "What's the matter, Captain? You got a sick horse or something?" And the Captain didn't particularly like that remark. Hah, hah, hah, hah. So, the Captain said, "I'd like you to meet Commander Ward. He's down here as the first acting Skipper for the squadron going down to the Antarctic. He's looking for a volunteer to go on the staff **of** [with] Rear Admiral Dufek who will be going on an Antarctic cruise pretty quick." [coming up to deploy.] And **Bloss** [[[Boss]]] took a look at me and he took a look at the doctor as if, "What's going on here? Are these guys pulling my leg?" And he looked at me and he said, "Is this for real?" And I said, "Doctor this is for *real*. If you want to go to the Antarctic, all you gotta do is tell me." "Where do I sign up?" he said.

(50)

BS: *He wanted out of there. He wasn't the staff type was he?*

EW: No, he wasn't

BS: *He was famous.*

EW: I tell you, he was the greatest selection we could have ever, ever had.

BS: *He was still around and came to several meetings when I was Commander at Deepfreeze in the '80s.*

EW: Is that right?

BS: *Hadn't changed a bit.*

EW: He was the greatest.

BS: *You could hear him all over the place.*

EW: Yeah, big booming voice. Anyway, that's how we got the flight surgeon. Now, this is a **bit [big]** of intrigue that [perhaps it] was widely known in the squadron and resented, but other than that, I don't think it went much further. The problem arose when the squadron finally formed and we deployed as to what Trigger Hawkes' position would be. Now, Admiral Dufek said that he wanted Trigger Hawkes to go with Jack **Torbert [Torbard]** as **his [Jack Torbard's]** co-pilot in **the [a] P2V for the flight to McMurdo. [And fly in.]** In the meantime, he relegated Gordon Ebbe to go in on the *Glacier*. So, here we have the Commanding Officer of the squadron going in by ship and we have the air

operations officer on the staff in a flying status going in with the first planes [that are] to go in . . .the first planes that made it in.

BS: *Didn't Gordon have to go down and assure them that it was safe to land or did you do that?*

EW: No, as a matter of fact, the first year . . . I don't know whether this was ever brought out . . . Just prior to deployment, I had fallen in love with the UF. I thought I could get that down there. As a matter of fact, with about 120 hours **calculating** [on] cruise control, [and everything,] I *knew* I could get the UF [thing] in. Long story short, Marilyn was pregnant with the fifth and all the children were born Caesarean. The fifth child was born on November 7th and we were to deploy on the 10th.

BS: *1955.*

EW: **Yes.** Well, she had been through four of these and apparently no particular problem. The fifth . . . there was a problem and she was a pretty ill gal. And the doctor said to me, "I understand that you're going to the Antarctic or something. I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "I have nothing to do with the Navy, but if I did **you'd stay home.** She's not going to make it by herself. It's impossible. If I had the power and I was in the Navy, I would order you to stay home." And you know, for a minute, Brian, from the build-up and the emotional whatever it is that goes with the thought of getting down there and all the work that you've done to do it, to all of a sudden have the rug pulled out . . . there was a flash of anger. I thought well who is this guy, a civilian, telling me what to do? And then I took a quick second thought and I thought well, you know, this is for sure the time that you'd better not think about yourself. Think about your wife. And then I thought, well, if I don't go, what are the guys going to think? You know, one of the oldest dodges in the Navy to



get out of a bit of hazardous duty, you say you have a sick wife, you have a sick kid, and this, that and the other. So, I went back to our family's house where I was staying during this Caesarean and the birth of the fifth and I gave Gordon Ebbe a call and said, "Gordon, I just don't know how to tell you this, but Marilyn is pretty nip and tuck at the moment, but she's going to come out of it and when she does, it's going to be 6 months until she's really able to do much of anything." So, there was dead silence. And I said, "Gordon, did you hear me?"

(100)

And he said, "Oh yeah, I was just thinking. Well, no problem. What I'll do, I'll tell Admiral Dufek and we'll make you Officer in Charge of the Patuxent **Detachment.**" [Attachment."] I said, "Gordon, I don't know how to tell you how sorry I am. I'm just devastated." And he said, "Well, don't be. I'll take care of everything." Gordon is just a wonderful guy, you know.

BS: *What was your position at the time? Gordon had already relieved you, hadn't he?*

EW: I was operations officer in VX-6.

BS: *And the ExO?*

EW: ExO was Hal Kolp, the Marine Lieutenant Colonel.

BS: *OK.*

EW: So, I still don't know what my fellow members of the squadron might have thought about it. But, it did bother me, it really did. Nevertheless, that's the way it went. So, I was involved to some degree. [They all went to ...] As you know the four big airplanes - 2 P2Vs and 2 R5Ds both got in. And they did a magnificent job down there. They made some initial long-range reconnaissance flights. I think Hal Kolp made one to the magnetic South Pole and Hank Jorda, my very good friend, assistant operations officer, made some of the first long range flights in the R5D. And Joe **Entri**ken, [Entrigen,] **pilot** [incidentally, it] **of** one of the P2Vs, [sort of] created a bit of a problem for Trigger Hawkes. The P2V, being faster, **they** got to McMurdo first before the two R5s.

BS: *They were the first to land?*

EW: They were the first in.

BS: *First to fly intercontinental flight to Antarctica.*

EW: Yeah. Right. So, when they got to McMurdo, Trig Hawkes called Joe Entri

gen up - he was the plane commander of the other P2V, and they were flying side by side and he said, "You make a reconnaissance up toward Little America along the coastline. We're going the other direction, along the Society Range and back or whatever." So, Joe said, "Look, as far as I'm concerned, I've arrived and I'm going to land." And Trig Hawkes said, ["Nuh-huh."] **"You have [Got]** plenty of gas, it's clear as a bell. You've got no problem." And Joe said, "I'm landing." So, Trig and Torbard went off in one direction and Joe Entri

gen got in the traffic pattern and landed, thus being the first airplane to land in McMurdo after a long flight, and I don't think that went over too well.

BS: *After an international flight.*

EW: Yep. But, I was getting to one quick point. **During the [On that particular]** short time they were there, Joe made one very, very long range flight and at the end of the leg .  
..

BS: *Where'd he go?*

EW: He went toward the magnetic South Pole or in that particular area, as I remember it.

BS: *Incense Bay, that flight?*

EW: Could have been. I've got it all in my records. Anyway, when he got to the end of the leg, as far as he could be away from McMurdo and I think it was the port engine started acting up. So, he turned around and started back and he had only gotten a short way back and the damned engine, the oil pressure went up and head temperatures and everything else, and he was heavily loaded and he knew if he was going to get back, he'd have to keep the gas aboard that he had. He couldn't jettison. [so what he would do,] **When the port engine heated to the red line, [cooled,]** he'd feather and [he'd] lose altitude. [and] Then he'd windmill **and restart** when the temperatures were low. [again and would catch on and] **With both engines operating,** he'd climb as high as he could without the port engine blowing apart, and then repeat the process, so it was sort of like a pogo, up and down, up and down.

(150)

And he got all the way back, just about 50 miles from McMurdo, and he was still over pretty high territory. And that's when the engine gave out completely and he had to use

just about full power on the starboard engine to get himself home and he brought that baby home safely without a scratch. And for that, he never got any recognition until such time as **BuAer** [BEAUAIR] picked it up. [and] You remember the old pro page. [They'd devote, whatever] It came out - once a month. [or whatever.] Well, Joe was nominated as being the old pro and it gave a description of what he did and what an expert airman he was to get her back safely.

BS: *Gordon Ebbe, though, took a flight with Byrd and John Strider who was a plane captain on one of those R5s.*

EW: Yeah, that's right.

BS: *South Pole and to the Pole of Inaccessibility.*

EW: That's right. But, unfortunately, the R5 that Gordon Ebbe flew on - the pilot was Hank Jorda and the co-pilot was Jack Donovan - and I'm sure that Jorda let . . . Ebbe I don't think at that stage was checked out in the R5. I'm sure he probably flew as co-pilot. But, yes, that's exactly right.

BS: *Who was the co-pilot?*

EW: Jack Donovan. He died suddenly, incidentally, and Jack Torbard died a while back.

BS: *Now they were the last to take Byrd back to the Pole.*

EW: That's right, yeah. Hank Jorda flew the plane.

BS: *Everybody said he was sick, but he was one of the nicest, most inspiring people.*

EW: He was. He was a neat guy. I mean, you had to look at the guy in proper perspective and **think** [thinking] about what he did when he was a young, vigorous guy. It was something. And there was a lot of animosity, as you know, between Admiral Byrd and some of his classmates because he did get early selection to commander and then to captain.

BS: *Admiral Byrd never made captain. Congress did that. It had nothing to do with the Navy. There wasn't any selection.*

EW: I know, but that's the reason they resented the fact.

BS: *Of course. The Navy . . . the guys that . . . the Navy didn't like special things. They liked the routine.*

EW: Yeah, really.

BS: *They didn't like this when these guys went to the Antarctic. Still don't.*

EW: No, they don't.

BS: *I was there and was advised not to do it. But, I did it anyway.*

EW: Well, fortunately you made out all right.

BS: *I was Captain already. I didn't have any . . .*

EW: Oh, all right, yeah. That do make a difference.

BS: *So, Ebbe and Byrd, South Pole and Vostok, I'll call it. So, anyway, that's the first year. Tell me what you did back in Patuxent. You got planes lined up? Didn't they get R4D8s then, that summer?*

EW: I don't think so. I think the newest version we had was the 6.

BS: *I know what happened. I got it from Strider. They used tanks from a P2V . . . two center tanks from a P2V and one wing tank from a something else and they put it in the aircraft to get them down there.*

EW: That's right.

BS: *Shinn and who was the second? Shinn and Cordiner in one of them and . . . Cordiner, I understand to get qualified, flew all the way from the States to . . .*

(200)

EW: **To qualify as copilot in the R4D.** Doug Cordiner was one of the nicest guys. But, when he was on the staff, he was very sarcastic and seemed like he was very short tempered. And when Deepfreeze I came to an **end [and]** Doug Cordiner had been selected for **command of VX-6.** [Captain...]

BS: *Oh, he was on the Deepfreeze staff.*

EW: Yeah. That's right. So, he was transferred from the staff to the squadron.

BS: *OK. So you're back home and this is all going on down there.*

EW: Right. We haven't gotten to Deepfreeze II yet.

BS: *Oh, OK.*

EW: In the meantime, the only thing that was of great interest, I think, and very significant . . . as you recall, I got the word one morning quite early. Duty Officer called me up about 5 o'clock in the morning. He said there was an airplane reported missing down in the Antarctic. One of the Otters was lost and **we were** [we're] asked to stand by and perhaps send an airplane back. So, I got up and got dressed. Went down and read the thing and sure as all get out, the big planes had all come back. The little ones had remained down there and the pilots were brought back on the ship. So, we were the only people that had the capability of any long-range air-sea rescue.

BS: *This was Bob Stretch's plane, right?*

EW: Exactly. So, I called the squadron together - the detachment - and by that time, we were getting larger and larger because the flight crews had come back from the **Antarctic**. [other, and] I went over the whole situation. I said, "Here's the way it is. We have an airplane down - one of our squadron planes missing in the Antarctic. We don't know quite where it is. It's one of the Otters out working with one of the trail parties. [and he's now lost and we don't know where he is.] I want this on strictly a volunteer basis. I want volunteers, P2V crew, pilot, co-pilot, the works, to step forward." And do you know, Brian, to a man, those guys stepped forward. And I have never, I was almost

tempted to cry, it just made me feel so wonderful about the whole thing. So, anyway, the crew was composed of Jack **Torbert** [Torbard] pilot, Charlie Otti, co-pilot, a little fellow, Lieutenant (**kg**) [JG] then, Tom Winkler volunteered as navigator, Ray Hudman volunteered to go as the paramedic, which he was and parachutist. And the other crews were the regular P2V crew. Well, they left. The night they left, they had to go down and stop in at Cherry Point to pick up a Marine navigator. He was the one that was so seriously hurt - I'll think of his name - which they did. And the whole East coast was completely socked in. It was the most god-awful weather. Anyway, they got down and out of Cherry Point OK and headed for Ramey Air Force Base in **Puerto Rico**. [Port Aurica.] **They** arrived at Ramey, got a full load of fuel and they could carry a lot of fuel. Took off for Ramey, headed for **Manaus**, [Maturan], as I recall, Brazil. **They** had a full load of fuel **and** [Jack Torbard, they] were flying about 11,000 feet trying to top all this miserable weather. They'd been in thunderstorms, rainstorms, you name it. Just horrible weather. And all of the sudden, about maybe 70 or 80, maybe more than that, about 150 miles inland from the Venezuela coast line, headed toward **Manaus**, [Maturan.] damn if the engine didn't quit completely - port engine.

(250)

And there was no rhyme or reason for it. So, Jack Torbard did, of course, what he was supposed to do and they got the message out. They were on a single engine and declared [it] an emergency, gave a position, and Jack said, "I'm returning to **Pierco** airport in Trinidad." And this is from the horse's mouth. Both Charlie Otti and Jack were great friends of mine. Well, he turned around and started back and they got to within about 50 miles of the Venezuelan coastline. Now, at this stage of the game they'd been losing altitude because they couldn't hold it on one. They were down to, I think, about 4,000 feet, and the starboard engine quit cold, boom! Now, here they have a glider and they're



heavy as all get out and they're in the soup and they can't see above them or below them or anywhere. And Jack **Torbert** [Torbard, of course] did [what] the smart thing. **He** [is, you] **pushed** the nose over. You don't want to stall out. And they came down like a spare engine and at about 300 feet, they broke out and Jack **honked** back and leveled off. They had pretty good airspeed at the time. And Charlie Otti and Jack both told me, "We looked ahead and there was nothing but jungle. Nothing, nothing, nothing. All these big trees! You'd go in there. It would swallow you up and they'd never see you again." And Charlie Otti, out of the corner of his eye, saw a clearing and he said, "Jack!" And they **honked** that thing around and [hunked her back and] both got on the yoke and **heaved** [honked] back as hard as they could. Of course, gear-up landing. Landed in a swamp, jungle swamp - the only clearing within I don't know how many miles. And there was one tree in the middle of the swamp and the port wing hit it and of course, sheared it. And they swung around and the hull broke up into three parts. The nose from just forward of the cockpit, **then back** about **amidships**, [mid-ships.] and [that was] the tail section. [and then the midship section.] So, here they are in the middle of the jungle. It was just about nightfall. Their survival gear [is all] **consists of** mukluks, **parkas** and heavy stuff and what have you. And after the sun went down, the mosquitoes came out and the boys told me, you wouldn't believe the size of them and the amount of them. So, they **jury-**[gerry-]rigged parachutes as netting which didn't work too well. The only injuries that they suffered - they had their feet burned a little from the high-octane fuel. It was all over the place and fortunately, of course, no fire. So, I got the word then, back in Patuxent, that not only was there one airplane missing, but there **now there** were two. [They thought they knew because Jack, again, excellently trained crew.] **They** got a position **report** out about every minute as they were going down, so we knew pretty well where they were, but we didn't know whether they were dead or alive. And you have to presume the worst. So, I fired off a dispatch to the *Glacier*, [which was still down there] in the Antarctic. Ebbe was aboard her with Dufek.

(300)

And I said, "I suggest that [what] we [do is] send two planes down," and I mentioned the crew - P2V. And I said, "And I'll be flying the R4D down the long way around. We can shoot the P2V down straight over South America and then on in - jump off from Ushuaia or wherever they can land down there and **then** take it in to Little America." So, the word came back real quick, "Yes you can do that. Send a P2V, but the R4Ds **will** stand by in reserve." So, we launched the P2V and this was the beginning of the ill-fated trip into the Venezuelan jungle. [And the think that was really interesting and] I had to get diplomatic clearance from the countries to be overflown. **I sent an operational immediate to CNO, Comnavairlant, and the State Department.** [and I forget who I contacted. I think it was in the State Department and] **In** a matter of, I would say an hour, **the State Department** [they] called me back and **we** [they] had not only permission to fly over, **countries on the flight route, but over all the South American Countries.** [volunteered in] Any way they could help **they would**, if we landed and needed fuel or maintenance or lodging or whatever.

BS: *This is after the P2V crashed or this is before? You were going to send a P2V and an R4D.*

EW: No, I'm sorry. I confused the issue. The P2V had crashed. The R4D, they told me [not to come on down]. to keep [it] in reserve. Now, after they crashed, they went through this routine of the big mosquitoes and what have you. Then I fired up the R4D with Eddie Frankowitz and I flew the R4D down to Trinidad. And, of course, you could make it non-stop. The R4Ds [the] had [their] cabin tanks. [And] I landed at **Pierco.** [Piarco, and of course,] **On** the way down, I thought, gee-whiz, now I've got a P2V crew

down and missing and who knows whether they're dead or alive. We have the Otter down with the boys down in the Antarctic. Who knows **if** [where] they are, dead or alive? So, at that particular stage of the game, everybody's morale was pretty well shot. It was a big loss.

BS: *Two planes, two crews.*

EW: Two planes, two crews. And this was the most amazing, magnificent thing that ever happened to me when I flew an airplane, I think. We got to within about 100 miles of Trinidad, and the radioman came up all excited. He said, "Read this!" And it was the report that had come back that the Otter had been found. All the crew had survived. And I thought, 'Oh, thank the good Lord for that.' And I'll bet it wasn't ten minutes later when he came up again, eye bulging, and said, "Commander Ward, look at this!" And it was to the effect that they had located the P2V in the jungle. That all survived and they were being brought out by helicopter and [they] were being taken to Trinidad. So, we came in and landed **but** not before we went to the jungle clearing and took pictures. [and] **Then we came back to** [into] **Pierco.** [Piarco.]

(350)

BS: *You didn't land. You just took them from the air.*

EW: From the air, yeah. And as we were taking those pictures, Brian, the natives, the Indians, were carting that baby piece by piece into the jungle. Amazing. Anyway . . .

BS: *It was a Godsend. Fell from heaven. Did they give the crew a hand . . . the natives?*

EW: Oh yeah. They did.

BS: *They wanted to get them out of there so they could cart the plane . . .*

EW: And the way that came about, very, very briefly, I'm afraid I'm getting too windy, but . . . Charlie Otti, the next morning when they could look around and see where they were, the only thing they could see was a tree, [not] in the center of the swamp. [because they'd cut that baby down, but another smaller one. It looked like] Charlie **volunteered to [could get up there-]** shinny up, climb to the top, look around and see where they were and get a [some] bearing. So, Charlie said to Jack **Torbert**, [Torbard, he said.] "OK, I'm going to head out over there and climb that tree and let you know." So, Charlie set out and had an awful time because you just don't go into the swamp you know and every step was tough like deep snow. He said he finally got to the tree, [and] he got up on top and looked [all the way] around and all he could see was jungle. He said all of a sudden he looked over and saw 7 or no, 8 of the most ferocious looking people coming toward **him** [me] with machetes. [because] He'd been yelling back and forth and the only one they could see was this guy in the tree. And he said they came up to the tree and surrounded the bottom of it and looked up at me. [and he said.] Their feet were big and wide and [he said] they had long **hair** [head] and they looked mean with these big machetes. He said he yelled over to Jack Torbert and said, "Hey, Jack. Stand by and repel boarders." And then Jack took a look and he saw Otti surrounded by these guys and he said, honest to goodness, he said, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He said they were the **damndist** [damnest] things I ever saw. So, **Jack** [he] went down looking for the . . . they had some carbines aboard and in the crash, the **carbines** [things] were bent like pretzels, so they had nothing. Anyway, I'm sure they wouldn't have had to use them. But, Charlie, through sign language, waved to the guys **around the tree** and they waved and he came down,

put his hand up and the other guys did too and he smiled and Charlie thought, this is great.

BS: *How do you spell Otti?*

EW: Charlie Otti, yeah. O-t-t-i. Yeah, Swiss. He asked them, **to** [do you mind if you'd help me] clear a little section for a helicopter, which they did. And they were **a** help in that respect. Anyway, **they were** [that was] the only visitors they had and when I got there, of course they were all gone. **The P2V crew** [They] had been picked up that morning and taken to Trinidad. We arrived in the afternoon, fairly late.

(400)

So, the natives, then had it to themselves and I've got pictures, I'll show you, of the natives swarming over **the** [ths] damn thing. So, now we're back in Trinidad and I greeted the crew like a bunch of lost brothers and they were the happiest bunch of guys you'd ever want to meet. And I said to Jack Torbert, "Jack, maybe we better think of getting out of here tomorrow or the next day, whenever you guys are up to it. I'm going to go check in now." So, I went to the BOQ and checked in and they said, "How long are you going to be here?" And I said, "Well, probably the day after tomorrow we'll leave." And she said, "Oh, you can't do that." And I said, "Why not?" And she said, "Oh, carnival. Carnival." I said, "Oh?" Well, it was the start of Lent. And I think it was a Sunday night [then] when I checked in. So, to make a long story short, she convinced me that if you only had one opportunity to see their Carnival and you missed it, you were missing half your life. So, we stayed for the Carnival and I brought them all home **to** [and arrived back in] Patuxent. [and] They were met by their loved ones and their [familier] -

wives, children, and it was sort of heart breaking. I looked out there and I thought, "My god, they all made it."

BS: *Great. Great relief. How come Eddie was there? Had he just reported in or was he back from Deepfreeze or what?*

EW: Yeah. Eddie had just come back. He brought the **R4D** [plane] back.

BS: *I interviewed Eddie.*

EW: Oh, you did? Good. He's a neat guy.

BS: *He'd never been through flight training in the Navy.*

EW: I know. He came in as an **AVT** {ABT.}

BS: *He'd been for three or four years a professional airline pilot. So, they needed long range aircraft at that time and they put him to work. OK. So, you're home.*

EW: Home.

BS: *Deepfreeze II coming up, huh?*

EW: Right. And this time, I said to myself, Brian, I said, "You know, Ed Ward, you missed all the way around. Had you [had] taken the UF down there, you think you would have made it because you were pretty self-assured," and I was. But, on the other hand, the

other guys didn't make it **to McMurdo**. And you know, I could have been aced out of the pattern too.

BS: *What do you mean, they didn't make it?*

EW: The smaller airplanes, the R4Ds **and UF's**.

BS: *But, the UF didn't go down there the first year.*

EW: Oh, yeah, they went all the way down **to Christchurch, New Zealand**. You bet your life they did.

BS: *OK, you said the other guys and I thought you meant the UFs.*

EW: No, the UFs and the R4Ds, they all went down to Wigram Air Drome in Christchurch, and they launched from there the first year. [which...] **The second year [they] the two UF's had been phased out. Four R4D's** went all the way down to Dunedin on the southern tip **where they launched for McMurdo**.

(450)

But, the first year . . . yeah, they launched the whole kit and caboodle at the same time. Two P2Vs, two R4Ds, two UFs and two R5s. [I say] **The four big ones made it in. The other ones had to come back because of fuel shortage**. And Dufek said, no flatly, they were not going to get a chance to try again, so that was the end of that.

BS: *That's for the UFs and the R4s.*

EW: And the R4s. So, I said, "OK, Ed Ward, you'd better think about checking out in the plane that **will get you to McMurdo**. [you're going to be able to fly in]." I said, "The R5D is going to be *mine*, by golly because I'm going to be the Exec. [and I'm shooting the orders around here.] So, anyway, I had Hank Jorda **check me out**. [who was a small] **He was a VR pilot** and one of the best R5 pilots I've ever flown with. He gave me a concentrated course in how to fly the R5D and I qualified as plane commander and flew that in on Deepfreeze II.

BS: *You flew it in the whole way from, by then it was Quonset, right?*

EW: Quonset, yeah.

BS: *Quonset to New Zealand, and then to Antarctica?*

EW: Yeah. Quonset . . . we transpced from the base in Oakland.

BS: *Alameda?*

EW: Alameda.

BS: *Hawaii?*

EW: Hawaii. The next stop, Canton. From there into the **Fiji** [PeeDee] Islands, and then on in to . . . couldn't make it into Christchurch the first time. Had to go up to Auckland. The next day went into Christchurch. But, now I had an airplane I knew could make it



and I wasn't going to be denied a couple of times. This was rather a strange situation because Captain Cordiner . . . I think at this stage of the game, Captain Cordiner . . .

BS: *You were his ExO.*

EW: I was his ExO. I don't think that he was on too friendly terms with the people on the staff. Now, this is just a gut feeling. But, one of the people on the staff and one of the most likable guys you'd ever want to meet was a guy named John **Mirabito**. [Maribedo.] Johnny **Mirabito** [Maribedo] was one of the most intelligent - he could speak 6 or 7 languages fluently, one of which was Russian. He was Admiral Dufek's pick as the staff aerologist. And when Johnny said, "It's going to rain tomorrow, you put on your raincoat and boots and walked around in the sun."

(500)

BS: *He was that good.*

EW: John was the most optimistic weather guesser I've ever met. He never wanted to offend us and tell us when things were bad. So, when it was going to be hot and dusty, oh yeah, it was going to be hot and dusty all the way. Well, the R5D with Dufek aboard and Hank Jorda at the controls, they made it in . . . no problem, VFR the whole way. Beautiful flight to McMurdo from Christchurch. The following day, Doug Cordiner had taken his brood - the R4Ds [before him] down to Dunedin, and I had the P2V and the other R5D in Christchurch. We were scheduled to go the following day down to McMurdo. [to launch]. So, that morning, we had a critique. [and] We'd flown **from Wigram** over to the other airport, **Harwood**. [Hairwood?] [And] We had a **a three way** critique there on the weather, **Dave Cary, pilot of the P2V myself, and the**

**meteorologists at Harwood, Captain Cordiner in Dunedin and John Marabito by Naval message from the Antarctic.** [and what to expect and] The Kiwis to a man said, "Look, you're going to have real bad weather when you arrive. **We're** [They're] forecasting a storm to move through that area, so it will probably be blizzard conditions, we think." So, John **Marabito**, [Maribedo,] who **had arrived in the Antarctic with the Admiral the day before** [was then had hardly arrived in the Antarctic. They would have gotten in the day before, they had a conversation down there and John Maribedo] **sent a weather forecast for McMurdo.** [said, "Naw,] "It's going to be hot and dusty when they get here," **John forecast.** And I forget the other . . .

BS: *You mean, when you say "hot and dusty," it's going to be good weather.*

EW: Yeah. All the way around. To make a long story short, there was a conference call. I had Captain **Cordiner** [Dufek] on the other end. [who of course,] **He** had the final word. [and] The Captain said to me, "Ed, what do you think?" And I said, "Well, Skipper, it's entirely up to you. I know the Admiral's kind of **anxious** [[whammy]] about getting things done down there. On the other hand, you know, the Kiwis and there was one other entity that said the weather wasn't going to be too good. So, I don't mean to throw the ball back into your court, Captain, but . . .

BS: *This was Captain Cordiner.*

EW: Cordiner.

BS: *He was flying the R4D . . .*

(550)

EW: With us, yeah. So, the Captain said, "Yeah, I guess you're right. The Admiral was getting a little bit impatient." He said, "Well, OK, Ed, we'll launch." "Yes, sir, **I said. I'll [We'll]** see you down there." So, we launched and of course, when we arrived, the P2V and myself, we arrived in the worst part of **the snow [this doggone]** storm. **[and]** I had all sorts of trouble. I lost an engine and brought it back on line again. **I'd had [and had had] an engine fire, number four engine. [slight fire and when]** She backfired, **[she back-fired]** beyond belief and I had a guy on board go bezerk - a fellow named Don Guy from I forget which news agency he represented. He was a big man - 6'7" maybe. Huge. He came up to the cockpit and ordered me to go home. Turn around and go back to New Zealand. By that time, we were beyond the point of no return and the flight was the worst I ever made in my entire career and I made a lot of bad ones. Well, the closer we got to McMurdo, the more grim the picture became and my engine - we finally got No. 4 back on line again - she was burning a lot more fuel than the others, even at a low setting. But, **it [we]** made more sense. **The way we figured it, better** to keep that baby on line at about 20 inches of manifold pressure rather than shut her down and have to pull an extra load. Well, Dick **Swadener, [Suedener,]** my navigator - an excellent, outstanding navigator - came up and I said, "You know Dick, just keep taking sights and let me know what you think." Well, what had happened, we were iced up until we got beyond the point of no return. We could take no celestial sights and based on the forecast winds that they'd given us, it looked like we had either a slight tail wind or at worst a no wind condition. Well, as it turned out when we finally found out where we were, we were well beyond the point of no return, we were flying into a headwind and we had ice galore. That slowed us down. The net result, I not only had a problem from a fuel standpoint of being way . . . an hour behind our expected arrival, but the bad engine that was swallowing more fuel than it should.

(600)

(End of Tape 3 - Side A)

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(Begin Tape 3 - Side B)

(000)

EW: When we finally broke out of the icing conditions, which precluded any celestial sights, [we broke out and] I saw the most beautiful display of the aurora astralis that you'd ever want to see in your life. And this, of course, meant . . .

BS: *Was it dark then?*

EW: Oh, yeah.

BS: *What date was it?*

EW: October the 16th or 17th, 1955. It was **the day after** my birthday. It was the 17<sup>th</sup>. [I think.] So, we had no communications. We couldn't communicate with a soul.

BS: *16 October 1956.*

EW: '56. I didn't know where the P2V was. Didn't know what the R4Ds were doing. I'm supposed to be path finding and sending the weather back to them. So, at this stage of the game, I asked Dick to give me a position report and based on the 'how goes it'. **What was**

the fuel state, [and what have you,] **and** how much reserve we'd have when we got to **McMurdo**. [in.] [and] Dick came back a few minutes later and he said, "Sorry to tell you, but **we'll be down to [will have] the fumes. [if we have that. "]** So, I said, "Well, OK, [just keep doing what...] there's only one direction we're going. Furthermore, I can put this thing down on the ice, I'm sure, if I can see the ice. No problem. I've done that a lot of times."

BS: *That's where your experience came in and was very valuable.*

EW: That wasn't too consoling, I don't think, to Dick. But, nevertheless, we kept driving in and to make a long story short, the first thing I saw in the Antarctic was . . . oh . . .

BS: *Erebus?*

EW: No, we were coming in parallel to the coastline. [The big formation].

BS: \_\_\_tory mountains? Across from McMurdo.

EW: No, oh no. This was way, way out.

BS: *Oh, OK. Cape Adare?*

EW: Cape Adare. And I looked at [that] Cape Adare. [and] It was overcast on one side and bright on the other. ]-sun out on the other. And] The sun was out on the Adare side. The most beautiful sight I ever saw. On the other side, it was all dark and starting to snow. [and the whole bit.] Anyway, we kept driving in.

BS: *Did they have picket ships then for you to navigate with?*

EW: We had one DE midway between McMurdo and New Zealand, yeah. We kept getting closer and closer and one minute it was like watching a football game and in the last quarter, it was tied up and could go either way. Dick kept saying, "Well, I think we'll have 10 minutes left by the time we get there." What this amounted to was, I didn't have the luxury of being **able** to make a GCA approach. As a matter of fact, the GCA down there was only directional, [and] they couldn't give you altitude. But, they did have an ADF on the end of the runway. [and] It was a new GCA unit and I thought [I think] [maybe] I prefer to use the ADF and just drive straight in which we planned on doing. So, we got to within about 50 miles out and Dick said, "Yeah, I think we're going to get there all right." And I said, "Well, that's very reassuring." But, of course, going by what you see on a gauge **that was** [which is] practically bouncing off zero, [and] you don't **really** know what's going on. [with the big E.] So, I called McMurdo, told them [I had an emergency.] I was declaring an emergency, low fuel, and I wanted **a** straight in and they acknowledged. Then they came back and they said, "We are in contact with **the** [a] P2V and he's commencing his GCA run." Well, of course the P2V was faster than I, so he got there about a half hour before I did, and he was high. He'd gone in at 10,000 the whole way and he had plenty of fuel and if worst came to worst. **With** skis, he could have gone up to Little America. Nevertheless, he was on his approach and they were working him down, working him in the pattern, and Dick and I put our heads together. [and said it looked like as if what would happen] **By** the time they got him wrapped around the pattern and headed in, there would be two planes in the same place at the same time. And this was not a good idea. So, I called the tower again and I told them, ["What we'll do,] it looks as if we're going to be arriving together. We're going to make a 360 degree **turn** when we get close and then drive on in." That suited the tower.

BS: *You were \_\_\_\_\_?*

EW: Oh, I couldn't see anything, yeah.

BS: *But, you were on ADF. You were on a bearing to McMurdo.*

EW: Hadn't picked it up yet.

BS: *You hadn't picked it up. Oh really!*

EW: We were maybe 50 miles out. Down there, things didn't seem to work too well. So, I said, "Dick, is there any altitude restriction. Do we have anything that you know of because I'm going to take her right down to the deck a few miles out." And he said, "Yeah, something here. There are two islands. One's Elephant . . . not Elephant . . . two little islands . . . oh, I should remember their name. These are two little islands near Cape Royds.

BS: *Oh, yeah, I know the islands you're talking about. I can't remember the name.*

EW: **The small islands are Tent and Inaccessible.** And he said, "All the chart gives us is an altitude of plus or minus 100 feet." And I thought, gee whiz. Well, again, you know, inaccurate charts. Back in those days we didn't have anything worth a hoot. So, I thought, well, no problem. [So, toward the end when I finally got clearance to land, and ] They delayed me one more **time and I made a 360 degree turn** [circuit] because of the P2V. [and] I didn't know about **the crash.** [it, of course.] Who did except those guys **in the tower**? Finally, I got permission to come on in and we started driving in and honest to goodness, Brian, I had the radar altimeter - it was a pretty good one - and of course, I was

on the gauges. [and] I told Hank Hansen, [Listen,] "I'm just going to keep driving in until that needle springs and if you see something, just bang me on the arm." [Dick said, "You got her lined up" –the directional runway] They had a big red curtain rigged on the end of the runway and it must have been just beyond the ADF and that old ADF needle was holding right smack on. Well, all of a sudden [, Hank...] the needle swung and Hank Hansen leaned over and gave me a whack and I looked up. [A And] I hit the gear **down** [at the same time] and **called out** 30 degree flaps. [and we'll go from there. Well, and]

BS: *He's your air crewman?*

EW: He's the co-pilot. And I looked up and honest to goodness, all I saw was sort of like shadows and I wondered if that was a snow bank or a runway or what. Well, apparently, the section that I saw that looked kind of dark was the runway and it was dead ahead, so I figured that's got to be it and we went on. And it was right down the line. And that's when on the roll out, I stopped, and I wondered about the P2V. [And] I was waiting for someone to come and get me and take me back to the parking lot. We looked [over there] and there was the tail of the P2V **off the port side**. [and] There were people pulling people on sledges and it looked like chaos. [and] I thought, Oh my God. And we looked again and the tail was separated from **the** [what] part of the hull we could see.

BS: *How many people were killed in that? A couple outright?*

EW: Four. Yeah, Ray Hudman and three crewmen.

BS: *Did you have enough fuel to taxi?*

EW: Yeah. Got back OK and they checked the tanks and they were empty. We were right down to . . . the good Lord was really with us on that one.



BS: *So, you're tanks were dry, huh?*

EW: Yep.

BS: The good Lord was with you. I'm sure he was. He should have been. So, here you are. What happened next?

(100)

EW: So, the next day, Gordon Ebbe appointed me as the **P2V** accident investigation officer. [on the P2V and then] Hank Jorda and I went out and looked it over and came to the conclusion [from what we had heard, trying to put the pieces together,] that the accident occurred when Dave Carey was attempting to make a right hand turn **starting** [on] a low visibility approach. [and] **W**hat should have been generally known by the P2V pilots because it was publicized [and that] was the fact that if you got into a tight bank one way or the other, with skis - and you probably remember - the nose had a tendency to drop and apparently that's exactly what happened to Dave. He was probably tired. You couldn't see a thing. It was like a whiteout type of thing. And all it takes is a split second in a tight right bank and if that nose dips even so much as an instant, you're in. And they went in and cartwheeled and that was the way that worked out which was a shame.

BS: *So, you did the accident report.*

EW: Yeah. And I also did the accident report on Trigger Hawkes' crack-up in the UF which happened the year before. That didn't make me the most popular guy.

BS: *He was down with Deepfreeze I and he flew the UF being the Otter?*

EW: The Otter. Now what happened, they were taking **Seabees** [a bunch of guys] from McMurdo out to the ship [and they were Seabees.] Just about all of them **were Seabees**, except for one of our maintenance officers by the name of Oliver.

BS: *Was Paul Siple in that?*

EW: No.

BS: *He was in one of them, a year later, though, wasn't it? No, it was that year.*

EW: I'll tell you who was though, the Seabee **construction officer that built South Pole Station**, [guy], **Lt. Dick Bower** was aboard her. And **Dave Canham**, [Kalen], Lieutenant Commander **Canham** [Kalen], the O in C of the Seabee detachment, he was absolutely furious about it. The way the accident happened, the pilot that I checked out in the Otter before we went down there was a little Dutchman, Lieutenant (**kg**) **Hoffman**. [JG]. He may have been senior grade. He was the plane commander and he was sitting in the plane commander's seat when they loaded. [and] Trigger Hawkes got aboard and he said to the young man, "Would you mind if I flew her?" And the young guy-here you have a captain **asking said**, "No sir, " and he got out of the seat and Trigger got in and **Hoffman** [he] got in the co-pilot's seat. [And] **One** thing about the Otter that was well known to Otter pilots **was** that unless you're trimmed properly for take-off, the force that would take place on that old yoke was impossible to overcome. [If you had too much nose or whatever.] Well . . .

BS: *Trigger signed off as the plane commander?*

EW: Trigger signed her off and said he was. . .

BS: *Was he a plane commander? Had he been checked out?*

EW: No. Never flew it, I don't think. Maybe. I don't know, but whatever he was, he was not an **Otter** [UF] qualified pilot and sure enough, he took off and the tab was wound the wrong direction and all of a sudden that nose went up like it was headed for heaven and they got up to about 50 feet and the little plane commander sitting in the right hand seat figured enough of this. [and] **He** figured out if they went any higher, why then it was curtains. [so then he forced back on the] **He** throttled **back** and they came down flat as a pancake.[and] Fortunately, there were no serious injuries. This is what bounced Dick Bower out of the plane and he rolled over in the ice. It could have been horrible. The plane didn't burn, fortunately. And, of course, I was the senior member of the accident investigation for that and you could only come to one conclusion. Otherwise, I would have been forging something. So, I said, "100 % pilot error." And you know, **it was** a three-man team and we all came to the same conclusion. Well, I'm sure this didn't go over too well. But, that's an aside.

(150)

So, anyway, we're now back at McMurdo, my plane is flying and **three times** we covered [three times,] the R4Ds going into the South Pole. I made several long-range navigational flights. [and] It was getting close to Christmas and the runway, the ice runway, had started to melt. Great huge pools of water in the thing. So, Dufek ordered the P2V and the two R5Ds back to New Zealand to Wigram Air Drome. [and] The Skipper said to me, "What do you want to do?" And I said, "I'm the Exec. [You know.I said,] My co-pilot Hank Hanson **is** a qualified plane commander. He's perfectly capable and I'm

sure we have a qualified co-pilot." So, Hank Hanson took my plane back **to New Zealand**. Now, I'm like a fish **out of [without]** water without an airplane, but it was a lot of fun because I flew **the [a]** little Otter a lot. And on several reconnaissance flights, the Admiral wanted me to check out Marble Point as a possible permanent landing site and it looked good to me. **[and]** I flew many missions out there.

BS: *Let me back you up. You said you flew three long-range flights.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Where to?*

EW: We went beyond the Pole, headed toward the Weddell Sea area, over in that section.

BS: *How far? Did you make it to the Weddell Sea?*

EW: No.

BS: *To the Ronne Ice Shelf?*

EW: No. My range, you know the R5D was limited to about maybe at most 1000 miles out and 1000 miles back.

BS: *So, you flew out photographing?*

EW: Photographing, yeah.

BS: *Photo mapping, or . . . ?*

EW: Trimetrigon.

BS: *Trimetrigon, so your's was the trimetrigon bird - the R5D. Did you have more than the one trimetrigon bird in the squadron then or just that?*

EW: No. Just that one.

BS: *OK. Where were the other two long flights?*

EW: I'd have to look in my logbook.

BS: *But, original flights for reconnaissance. You were the first guy out there.*

EW: Not the first because you see I was in the second year down there.

BS: *No, I mean you were the first to these places.*

EW: Oh, yeah, we made them [the first] because we wanted to cover them [first] in the time we had.

BS: *So, you were the first to see it, is what I'm getting at.*

EW: Yeah, that was a big treat.

BS: *If we could look those up and you could insert them into this when it comes back to you, that would be very important, because those were original flights of exploration. Did Diane not pull this out of you?*

EW: No.

BS: *Who was your co-pilot? Hank Hanson?*

EW: Yeah. Hank Hanson.

BS: *And was Swadener your navigator?*

EW: Sure was.

BS: *He was a pilot, though.*

EW: He was. He was also a navigator.

BS: *Did he get to fly as a pilot down there?*

EW: Not to my knowledge. No. As a matter of fact, he was so good, I always lucked out on the navigators. He was so good **that** on the Pole flight, Dufek picked him.

BS: *I know that. Then you flew the Otter and you went to Marble Point. Now, you touched on something that is very important and kind of near and dear to my heart. Dufek wanted to set up our permanent base at Marble Point, the permanent station, after IGY. Was that not right, he really pushed it?*

EW: I didn't know that.

BS: *Well, originally, he was going to build the base there and the money was cut off by Admiral Carey. Again, the Navy stepped in and said, "You're going to be on the ice. You're only going to be there two years for IGY and you come in on the ice and don't worry about spending any money building a base." But, he had it locked in his head apparently. So, he never threw this at you? How did Marble Point come up?*

EW: Well, he asked me particularly, he said, "Ed, would you mind taking a run out to Marble Point and let me know what you think about a permanent base." And I said, "No sir, I'd be delighted." So, I went over a couple of times and from where I sat, it looked like it would be ideal to me. That's what I told the Admiral. I said, "It looks awful good to me, Admiral. You know, you **have to** [gotta] get down on the deck and walk around, see what goes on," which . . . of course, I never **did**. [landed.]

(200)

BS: *OK, you didn't land there.*

EW: No.

BS: *It would be a good permanent base. Several UF flights - Otter flights. No landings. OK.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *And that's all that you had to do with it.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *So, here you are. The plane's gone home. You're down there with Gordon Ebbe, Dufek. The season ended when?*

EW: Now, to get back to the runway again, in the meantime, the Air Force sent everything home, [and I was] back to New Zealand.

BS: *General McCarty?*

EW: He'd gone back. He came down, flew over the Pole and announced to the world that he was over the bottom of the world and I don't know if you ever saw the poem that the boys made up. Anyhow, as far as I know, he was out of the picture on Deepfreeze II. I forget who . . . you know the names are starting to escape me, but I have them all, of course. But, Admiral Dufek, in desperation called in this compact expert. [or something.] He had the idea that he could take snow and pack it down tight and do this and do that and flood the place with a layer of salt water and she'd start to freeze up and everything would be hunkey dorey. Well, apparently what the guy said worked out pretty well and we were only without a runway for about three weeks at the most.

BS: *Then it started to freeze up again?*

EW: It froze up beautifully. Of course, it was getting colder, too.

BS: *Did you start using wheeled aircraft again?*



EW: Yeah.

BS: *Did you call them down from Christchurch?*

EW: Yep. C-124s came in.

BS: *The R5Ds or anything like that come back?*

EW: No.

BS: *You left the R4Ds down there that winter.*

EW: Sure did.

BS: *The C-124s were Air Guard?*

EW: No, these were regular Air Force out of Dover, Delaware.

BS: *They started hauling people back and forth?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *They didn't go into the continent that year, or did they? Did they fly into the continent?*

EW: No. The only thing they did . . .

BS: *Back and forth to Christchurch.*

EW: **Yes, the C-124's shuttled passengers, mail, spare parts and even our helicopter and Otters from Christchurch to McMurdo.** [The only thing they did,] **On one occasion, on Gus Shinn's [the] first landing at the South Pole,** it was covered by a C-124 because both R5Ds were dead in the water. Both **were down for an [had]** engine change and to see it, it almost broke my heart, but the Air Force did cover the first landing at the South Pole.

BS: *With a C-124.*

EW: With a C-124.

BS: *That was General McCarty's guys.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *So, they came down in November and you flew out to South Pole the 30th of November, 1956. Gus Shinn flew to the South Pole the 30th of October, 1956. October of 1956. And what was your involvement in that?*

EW: I say I had an airplane that was sitting on the runway getting an engine changed, so I had no participation in the first landing, nor . . .

(250)

BS: *You were supposed to cover them, huh?*

EW: Yep, sure was.

BS: *Instead, it was the 124.*

EW: 124, yeah.

BS: *Now, I understand. So, the Air Force had to step in when the Navy, unfortunately, lost their air force.*

EW: Exactly.

BS: *And of course, the famous photo of the shadow of the 124 on the plane and the guys from the 124 taking pictures. Well, they did a good job.*

EW: They did. *Outstanding.*

BS: *So, they flew airdrops.*

EW: You bet your life they did.

BS: *How long did they fly airdrops?*

EW: Let's see, they came in . . . the first airplanes that we saw that came in came in just before the first landing at the South Pole. So, it must have been close to the end of October. And I would say about, as I remember, about a month later, the Seabees had to

figure out **how** [what] they were going to **construct South Pole Station**, [put in the way of buildings and construction,] **and** the people necessary **to do the job**. [and the whole bit.] And we **took** [put our] **the** initial group of **Seabees** to [in there in] the South Pole. I think Eddie Frankowitz took the first group in, as I recall.

BS: *R4D flights of people.*

EW: Yeah. And **the R4's** [we] took **the Seabees** [them] in and they set up temporary quarters and then they were there to retrieve all the air drops that were made. [and they] **The C-124's** dropped everything from supplies to oil drums to tracked vehicles and it was the most amazing thing in the world. Those C-124s, when they opened up that old bow, I mean you could drive a battleship in it. And they absolutely did a 4.0 job all the way around. We couldn't have gotten by without them. And then, of course, Dick Bower came in. He was the officer in charge of construction at the Pole and built the South Pole station. And Paul Siple, of course, was the first Commanding Officer or Officer in Charge, or whatever they called him.

BS: *You knew Jack Tuck.*

EW: Oh yeah. Very well. The dog driver, yeah. Very, very good man.

BS: *He was the military head and Paul was the head scientist, right?*

EW: Yep, that's exactly right. And there were nine apiece, as I recall. Nine civilians and nine military - nine Navy.

BS: *OK. Tell me, let's back up a little bit. What was your involvement or knowledge of the flight to South Pole. You had Dufek, Cordiner, Trigger Hawkes, Strider, Swadener, Ken.*

EW: OK, I'll tell you how that lined up. [Now this is again,] Captain Cordiner was no dumbbell. As a matter of fact, he was one of the smartest guys I've ever met. And he was sarcastic at times, but only at times when I think sarcasm was due. So, he came in to me and he said, "Ed, I spoke to Kay," [which was] his wife, "on a long distance telephone call," a [call] **phone** patch, you know – **operated by hams, radio amateurs.** [these HAMs put in] And he said, "I explained the crew position and my wife said, "Well, you know Doug, that figures." And I said, "Yes Skipper, I'm afraid it does." Well, of course, Gus Shinn was the pilot. Dufek had gone to Trigger Hawkes and said he wanted him to be the pilot to fly in the first time and Bill Hawkes said, "No, no, I'm going to turn it over to a guy that really knows what he's doing - Gus Shinn." To Trigger's great credit, Trigger was an awfully nice guy. But, he was sort of put in the middle at times. Anyway . . .

BS: *He wasn't current in an R4D, though, was he?*

(300)

EW: Not to my knowledge. And he flew co-pilot. Gus Shinn flew pilot. Cordiner and Dufek sat in the back as passengers. Here's the squadron Commander [and officer which] **who** had flown **with** [for] Gus Shinn as co-pilot for many, many hours. And Strider, you know, was the mech and Dick Swadener the navigator. [I forget who] **The** radioman was **Comby.** [I have his name. But, anyway,] **That** was the line-up and it was, I'd say it was difficult for Captain Cordiner. It was a difficult situation to be in because he was **the**

**Squadron Commanding Officer**, and of course Trig Hawkes' still had the Admiral's ear.

There was no question about that.

BS: *So, Cordiner didn't fly as co-pilot.*

EW: No.

BS: *What if there had been an accident on landing and the word came out there wasn't a qualified pilot sitting in the right seat?*

EW: That would have been difficult to explain.

BS: *Hand-picked by the Admiral.*

EW: Oh, absolutely.

BS: *With Ed Ward as the accident investigator.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *OK, but they pulled it off.*

EW: They did indeed. To Gus Shinn's great credit. I think **they** barely pulled it off, yeah. The first take-off was nip and tuck.

BS: *At 58 knots.*

EW: With all the JATOs.

BS: *Not only that. You're at 10,000 feet. 58 knots would have been bad enough at sea level.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *Well, anyway. Great flight.*

EW: Yep.

BS: *OK. We've covered that. You were back in McMurdo a little later flying the UF over to Marble Point and what happened after that?*

EW: **Flying the Otter.** OK, so long about the latter part of February, as I recall, the *Curtiss* came in - sea plane tender *Curtiss*. Pulled along side the ice and tied up. [And at this stage of the game.] We had been told we were all going to board the *Curtiss* , **that is** those that hadn't gone back by C-124. [And the remainder of the VX squadron that was there would be taken back to the *Curtiss*] And, of course, that included myself and Captain Cordiner. [So we went down to the edge of the ice and I think] Harvey Speed flew us down to the edge of the ice in an Otter. He ran a [out] sort of a shuttle service.

BS: *He wintered over?*

EW: He wintered over.

BS: *Was he the winter-over O in C?*

EW: Good question. I forget who the O in C was.

BS: *Anyway, you had the ship, but it wasn't an icebreaker. How far out was it?*

(350)

EW: The ice then had been broken pretty well in toward McMurdo. I'd say maybe about 3 miles. And we were all taken down and went aboard and of course, we were all straggly. I mean we had all the old working uniforms on. They were threadbare. Most of us lost weight because the last month or so, we were down to canned hamburgers. The supply ships hadn't gotten in and what had gotten in was put aside for the Seabees and the rest of those who were spending the winter down there. So, we looked like a bunch of homeless souls going aboard.

BS: *Did you have a beard?*

EW: Oh yeah. I had a long beard and I looked kind of scraggly. And when I walked aboard, the officer of the deck said, as I came over the side, he said to me, "Commander, **the** Supply Officer is in the ward room if you wouldn't mind going into the ward room to get your room assignment." I said, "Not a bit," and I walked into the wardroom and here, sitting behind one of the tables is a guy who I [had] well remembered from NAS Johnsville. As a matter of fact, he was **the [a]** supply **officer [guy that was supply]** for our SPAM program and for the Project Volcano and the rest of it. So, he looked up at me and, of course, didn't recognize me. And I walked over and [I] banged my fist down on the table and I said, "Commander, I want the best room in the house." [and looked at



him.] [And] He drew back and looked at me like, my god, the guy's going bezerk. And he said to me, "Ed Ward!"

BS: *What was his name?*

EW: Tommy Watts. One of the finest supply guys I've ever met. And to make a long story short then . . . it didn't happen right off the bat. A guy had come in from Caterpillar Tractor for a day or two, but when they finally put all the guys ashore who were going to spend the long winter night, I got the biggest state room you'd ever want to see. And it was beyond belief.

BS: *Cordiner went back with you?*

EW: Went back with us, yeah.

BS: *Dufek on the ship, too?*

EW: How did Dufek get back? That's a good question. Oh, I know. Dufek stayed on the *Glacier* and they went up . . . made a goodwill tour to Montevideo and came back that way, as I remember. He came back on the *Glacier*.

BS: *Did Gus Shinn come back with you?*

EW: Yeah, I'm pretty sure he did.

BS: *I heard that Cordiner was kind of bitter by then.*

EW: Yeah, he was.

BS: *He hadn't been treated well. Did he throw his slides and stuff over the side as I'd heard? I heard that he took all of his personal stuff and said, "I'm glad I'm done with this." Or is that a rumor?*

EW: If he had, it wouldn't surprise me. I didn't see him do that, but . . .

BS: *He wasn't very happy.*

EW: No, he wasn't. Not a bit. And I think he had a good reason to be a little bit unhappy.

BS: *He wasn't treated like a Commanding Officer.*

EW: Yeah. And Gordon Ebbe, poor guy, he had sort of the same problem to put up with. But, C'est la vie. One of those things, I guess.

BS: *Dufek was trying to run the squadron.*

EW: Oh yeah.

BS: *Wanted to make sure of the highlight.*

(400)

EW: Absolutely, yeah. So, the old *Curtiss* came in to **Lyttleton Harbor** and **my copilot, Lcdr. Hank Hanson** [Gus Shinn] was there with an R5D waiting. [and] We had to wait

in Christchurch until the staff officers I was bringing back were through getting the wrap up done [down there] for the season. So, we were the last group to get back, I guess.

BS: *How'd you get home from Christchurch?*

EW: Same exact route in reverse. Went to Fiji and then Canton.

BS: *R5D?*

EW: R5D, yeah.

BS: *Who flew it?*

EW: I did.

BS: *Oh, you did. That was your R5D.*

EW: My R5D, yeah.

BS: *Your R5D was . . .*

EW: **Bureau Number** [Np.] 56505.

BS: *So, you came back home via R5D. Quonset Point?*

EW: Yes.

BS: *You said you didn't go back down for Deepfreeze III.*

EW: No.

BS: *And . . . you got transferred?*

EW: Yeah. As a matter of fact, I got my orders when I was still on the ice. And they were to **Naval Air Station Chincoteague, Virginia** as Commanding Officer of VU 4, [which was] a utility squadron back in Chincoteague, my old [home] stomping grounds. The only problem was I was due to report there not later than the end of March and when I got them, I thought it was going to be an awful close race if I could get there by March, but we finally got back. We got back to Quonset . . . I took an airplane and flew down and checked in and I was very impressed with the squadron. It was real nice having a command of your own.

BS: *You were the CO.*

EW: CO.

BS: *Why didn't they make you CO of VX-6?*

EW: I don't know.

BS: *The Navy stepped in.*

EW: I don't know. Nobody ever asked me.

BS: *Well, what I'm saying is that the regular Navy stepped in and took you out of the irregular Navy which was VX-6.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *OK. But, promotion-wise, it was a better command, huh?*

EW: Yeah.

BS: *What was your utility squadron? What kind of planes?*

EW: We had a mixed bag, as they say. I had one P2V, [I had] 7 or 8 **F9Fs** [FINSs. I had] about 50 Drones. They were the old F6Fs that had been converted. I had a helicopter. Had a UF. Had a Beechcraft and I think I had a total of 12 jets. I had 6, as I recall, F9F1s **and six F9F2's.** [and then] The **F9F2s had** [have] the swept wing. [Whatever it was I had of them.]

(450)

BS: *You've got a whole passel of aircraft and the mission was to . . . sounds like you were running Drones for targets.*

EW: Yeah, we were.

BS: *You had 50 target Drones.*

EW: Yeah.

BS: And you towed them out and released them or did you . . . ?

EW: No, no, no. As a matter of fact, they were . . . we called them Nolos. We'd have a pilot bring **the F6F** [them] out, [and] line **it** [them] up on the runway, [and\_\_\_\_\_] check the mags and if everything was OK, he'd close the cockpit canopy and jump off the wing. And a guy with what we called a **foxcart** boxcart - it was a little . . . looked like an organ grinder. You know, the guys used to grind organs for monkeys and they'd jump around and play. It was about that size [on the deck] and they had a full set of controls. [exactly] **It was** a miniature of what you have on an airplane. And they could shove the throttle forward with a little stick and then fly it and the guys that were good at it could take off and land better than those with a live pilot, I thought. So, the theory, I mean the modus operendi was [that you come around and you're up six. And then they were so-called] **the** chase planes **would** come down low off the runway. [and] **As they did,** [You were coming over,] the Drone control **operator** [guy] would start the Drone rolling down the runway and he'd get her airborne up about 300 feet and then he'd say, "**take** control," and then, **the lead chase plane would** [you'd punch in from where you were and you'd] take over the control of the Drone. **The foxcart operator would** [and he put his] switch to the off position and didn't have any more to do with it until you brought **the drone** [it] back in the pattern [if they survived,] and then he'd land it.

BS: *Did the fleet shoot at them?*

EW: They shot offset most of the time. Hit one of them?

BS: *Hit one of them.*

EW: Yeah, [but] occasionally, to impress a congressman, they'd shoot them down, yeah. We had, the first **Ryan jet powered target drone missile**. [one] to demonstrate. [A missile that we got in, and I forget the nomenclature on the missile.] This thing would go almost the same speed as an F-9 and it was tricky to control. [but we'd control it.] They'd **control it from an F9F-2** [take it out] and make [these] high speed runs **for Fleet gunnery exercises**. [and then the way this thing operated] When it ran out of fuel, a parachute would automatically deploy and it would go into the drink. [and my] **A** helicopter would go out and pick it up, bring it in and wash it off, and get it ready to go again.

BS: *OK, what did you do after that?*

(500)

EW: After that, I got orders as Commanding Officer of the **Naval Air Technical Training Unit** at [- station-] the Naval Air Station Lakehurst, **New Jersey**. **It was** [had] a school [up there] for aerographers mates and parachute riggers. And I was the CO. [of the Naval Air Technical Training Center, I believe it was. I'd have to look it up. Naval Air Technical Training Unit, not Center.] And that was a fascinating job, really. I had a bunch of young kids - 600 of them - students. About 200 of which were the aerographers mates who had to have a much higher **GCT-ARI combined battery score** [IQ] than the parachute **riggers**. [guys.]

BS: *And this was at . . . ?*

EW: Lakehurst. This was . . . I took over in 1958, until 1959. It was a short command, the reason being . . .

BS: *That was the VU-4 or the aerographer school?*

EW: The VU-4 - I had that for a little over a year. I had that from March until the following . . .

BS: *March, '57?*

EW: March, '57, until [I think June or] July of 1958. [And] July '58, I checked into Lakehurst to take command of the Naval Air Technical Training Unit. And I had a lot of fun with the kids. They were great to work with. They were all recruits just out of boot school. [And] I decided I wanted a band. Anyway, I set up a **questionnaire** [deal] where each one of the students coming in would write out a **their** [little] personal **history,** [form,] where they went to school, if they played an instrument and what sports they played just to know a little more about them. [and anything else to get a general idea and somewhat the same as your interrogation to begin with,and] I found out I had a bunch of musicians. And I said **to myself,** look, we have [these] inspections once a week and I want a band to go with it." They had some canned music that we used and it was awful. At the Change of Command ceremony I thought, "Oh, this thing has got to go." Anyway, we organized a band in 1958, and it was one of the best bands that it's been my pleasure **to hear.** Navy bands - and do you know, Brian, that when I came back to the Philadelphia area in 1962-63, that was the only **Navy** band in the area and they were still playing for every Navy occasion and I think they played until Lakehurst was put out of commission.

BS: *Wow, they kept rolling people in and out like it was an official thing.*

EW: Yeah.



BS: *And it was unofficial to start with. Well, did you ever get back to the polar regions or have anything to do with the polar regions after that?*

EW: No.

BS: *You sorry you didn't?*

EW: I was sorry I never got back, yeah. I would not trade all of those experiences for all the rice in China. But, my affiliation in . . . I was a member of the New York Explorer's Club, or am still, and I was a member of the Geographical Society. I was a Fellow of the Geographical Society in Britain.

BS: *The Royal Geographic Society.*

EW: [Yeah.] **No, Geographical.** And I sort of keep up with it that way . . . what was going on.

BS: *And now you're an Honorary Member of the American Polar Society. There are only 38 men in the world that have been nominated to that since 1934.*

EW: Well, that was the greatest honor.

BS: *That certainly puts you in a class with Admiral Byrd and Stephenson and many others of your caliber, so I think that's a fitting note to end the tape with because we're about to run out of tape.*

EW: Brian, this has been very enjoyable. It's been tremendous.

(End of Tape 3 - Side B)

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**End of Interview**