

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID KELLY WELCH

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Q. I'm Laura Kissel and I'm at the home of David Kelley Welch in Tucson, Arizona. And this is for the oral history project for the Byrd Polar Research Center archival program funded by the National Science Foundation. Okay Kelly, as you've asked me to call you. Can you tell me what attracted you to a career in the military, specifically the Navy?

A. Well, I graduated from college in 1940. And as you know from my CV, it was Franklin College in Indiana. And all of us knew that there was a war coming. And having been born in 1918, I grew up with people whose parents were in World War I. And I learned an awful lot about standing in trenches with water up to your ankles and carrying 70 pound packs for 30 miles and stuff like that. And that wasn't for me. And knowing that the war was coming, I decided on the Navy. And so in 1940, I got into something called the "V7 Program" which was taking college graduates and sending them off for three months to some preparatory school and turning them into an officer and a gentleman. And I went to the Naval Academy. First I went on a cruise, on a battleship, USS Arkansas. And we cruised to Panama and back to New York. And then I went to the Naval Academy for three months and lo and behold that strange place turned out to an officer and a gentleman. And I was in the Navy. And in the war I transferred from the reserve to the regular Navy and liked it. Because I liked the Navy. And so I stayed with the Navy.

Q. Okay. How do you think your work in the Antarctic as Commander of Task Force 43 Operation Deepfreeze influenced your career in the Navy? Do you think it was a good career move or bad or how can you characterize that?

A. Chances are it was not a good career move. No flag officer who went to the Antarctic ever made another star. It was just a dead-end because the Navy went past you the two years you were doing this. And you weren't in the place that was doing things for the Navy. But personally, it was a wonderful, wonderful tour. And Antarctica is one of the most beautiful places I've ever seen. And it's huge. And there's so much to learn about it and we're still learning.

Q. Absolutely. What can you tell me about your relationship with the National Science Foundation while you were commander of Naval Support force in Antarctica?

A. Well the next question is who is the director and the guy who sort of ran the program when I was there was a Dr. Tom Jones. Tom was a chemist and he came from a Quaker school in Pennsylvania to the National Science Foundation. And really fell in love with the Antarctic program. And I got along with Tom very well indeed. And I think that the Antarctic program, the Navy, in Antarctica did not get along very well with the National Science Foundation. And I think the scientists resented the fact that the Navy was responsible for the safety of everyone and therefore, matter of fact the director of the program, the Navy had head person, who was responsible by a presidential leader, for the safety of everyone in Antarctica. Hence, that person set of rules. And scientists don't like to take orders from military, whether they are Naval officers or Army or Air Force or whatever.

Q. Okay. Let's see.

A. But one of the things I heard a flag officer who was installing a new commanding officer of VHC6 which was the Navy aviation squadron that flew all the aircraft when I was there, said that this was an organization that was combat ready for peace. And I thought that was really quite unusual and it is so. And so all of us who were down there to make war or to increase our war making skills, but were there to support science in the best way we could. And the Antarctic Treaty prohibits military operations and hence that's what we did. And we furnished this support to the science program and did it the best we knew how.

Q. Okay, so your role as naval personnel and all other naval personnel was really to support the scientists?

A. Yes.

Q. Very good. And that's kind of question 4 too. Did you accompany any scientists into the field?

A. No. My job, strangely enough, this is kind of facetious. But my job was to escort VIPs through the ice. And they were United States citizens. One time I took the senior diplomatic representative for all the Antarctic treaty nations to the South Pole. And I took our ambassador from Australia to the South Pole and escorted them around and explained things. And introduced them to the scientists that I knew and so forth.

Q. So there were a lot of visits from VIPs to the Antarctic?

A. Yes. I spent I guess three weeks out of four on the ice. And the other week in New Zealand, getting ready for the next group of VIPs. We had to outfit them,

brief them, see that they knew the rules of not walking off by themselves. And that was one of the rules we had even for scientists. Don't go out walking by yourself. Because storms can come up, blizzards, in just a few minutes. And we didn't have very many, as they do now, didn't have very many weather stations. There were maybe six on the whole of Antarctica.

Q. So to predict?

A. Yes, to say what was going on over there, coming your way. Now they have stations automatic that they drop in various places.

Q. And there were only about six stations then. Okay. We briefly discussed on E-mail we had a little conversation about David Elliot's work in Antarctica. Could you just go ahead and say for the tape basically what you told me in the E-mail and that is what can you tell me about David Elliot's work in Antarctica?

A. Well David Elliot ran a group when I was there. He ran a group of mostly geologists and paleontologists. And you asked the question here was I there when David discovered the first dinosaur. And he himself did not discover the first dinosaur. The first ancient bone was discovered by a New Zealander named Dr. Peter Barrett and he is still active in Antarctica as a matter of fact. And this was what in 1967, 1968. And Peter told me that they had this place marked off with strings in one meter squares. And he knew just where he was and he found this bone and recognized what it was. And he immediately forgot what square he was in, where he was. He was so excited. And I think it was a Labyrinthodont bone, which means the teeth were a labyrinth, probably all wrinkled up. And I didn't see this piece of jaw bone. But while I was there, under David Elliot, at his place

of research which is a place called Coal Sack Bluff, cause it was cold there, there was a Dr. Ned Colbert. And Ned Colbert is from northern Arizona and he's still living there. He is a world class vertebrae paleontologist. I found two of his books in the public library in Kenya, for example, in Nairobi while I was visiting over there one time. Any how he was there and he discovered a Listrosaurus. Listrosaurus had already been discovered in India and in South Africa. And the following year was a researcher named Dr. Jim Kitchen from _____ University in South Africa. And he too discovered different things. I don't have pictures of Dr. Colbert but I do have pictures of Jim Kitchen and something that he discovered down there. But I have no idea what it is. But he was walking along and there was a rock and he saw something sticking out of the rock and when he hit it with his geology hammer it split open and there was a small thing. But later on, maybe ten years ago, David Elliott did discover a dinosaur down there and there was a huge dinosaur, not like a Listrosaurus. And it is called a Cryolophosaurus Elioti is its name now. And Cryo for cold, lopho – it's crested and saurus cause it's a lizard. And Elioti for David Elliott. And he didn't excavate this thing, somebody else did and his name escapes me. But I dare say will be brought back to Ohio State or some place, when it gets all discovered and put together. He did a fantastic job. He asked me later on if I took any Larry Gould out there. And Larry Gould and whoever was the president of Texas Tech at the time, they were both on the Antarctic committee for the National Science Foundation. And they were both down there at the time and I saw that they both got out to that place. And I did send messages to the Science Foundation and said

they ought to get a PR guy down to look at some of these things. Because it was really pretty exciting. But what I did for Dr. Gould, I asked David Elliott and he put on a sheet of yellow paper, that scientists collect things on, a map of Coal Sack Bluff and where they were digging and where the Listrosaurus was found. And he signed it and I gave that to Dr. Gould. So somewhere in Dr. Gould's possession there's this 8 ½ x 11 frames map drawn by Dr. Gould of where this was.

Q. Okay.

A. Dr. Gould lived here. There's now a building at the University named for him and it was named for he was still alive, strangely enough.

Q. That's kind of unusual actually.

A. Yea. He was a fantastic man. He had something like 24 honorary doctorates. He was Byrd's number 2 in 1929. And he took a copy down there, a video that was taken of him at that time on a dogsled trip that he laid caches. Cause Byrd flew to the South Pole and if they had to land on the ice, they would know where these things were.

Q. Right. And you have a video of that?

A. Yes.

Q. So I assume that was a video made from original film at some point?

A. Yes, for movies at the time.

Q. That's interesting to note cause you know we have the Byrd papers and all that. So it's nice to know.

A. You must have a copy of that video.

Q. We probably do. We have a lot of film in the collection. And a lot of it has been transferred to video and cleaned.

A. Yes, this was given me by Yar Patrision, I think his name is. He's an anthropologist at the U of A, who was down on the ice just a year or so ago.

Q. Very good.

A. I had a dog and pony show and I still have a slide show using two projectors. And I gave it to the explorers _____ here and the R was there.

Q. Okay. So once you gave your slide show he gave you the copy of the video?

A. Well he gave it to me before that. But he's a member of _____ was there.

Q. Can you describe for us a typical day for you at the station in Antarctica?

A. Yes. A typical day for me would be at McMurdo. I had my own Quonset hut and I would keep guests. And two or three guests in there. And I ate there. And it had, because I was there during the boreal summer, it was light 24 hours a day. And so we had blankets over the windows to get some sleep at night.

Q. Was that difficult?

A. When you first got there, yes. But it's just like on the various stations, the pole station and Byrd's station or anywhere on the ice. The thing that kept the schedule was meal hours. And the Navy, when I was there the Navy were the cooks. And so the cooks had lunch at 12:00, dinner at 5:30 and they had a clock and they kept those schedules. And that was what made the day. Otherwise, it was just all the same.

Q. I can't imagine myself. It would be hard. But harder to be in six months of darkness.

A. We had a retired admiral who was also a chemist, who went to the Science Foundation. And I took him down there one time. I'll talk about this later.

Q. You can feel free to talk about it whenever the mood hits you.

A. But anyhow I too had two stewards and they cooked my food and prepared it. And also if I had guests they prepared the food for the guests that were living with me. And we would walk around the station. The Science Foundation had a scientists twice and they and they had a science lab. And I would take the guests into those places and introduce them and the guests, depending on their background, would talk to the scientists. And we would go to Scott Base and we would come back in time for lunch. And we usually had a number of people who had lunch in my cabin. And then we would go off and perhaps we would fly to the South Pole and then we'd stay there overnight. We might go to Byrd's station first and then to the South Pole. And then we didn't stay overnight, we would fly back. Because there's not an awful lot of room at the South Pole or at Byrd's station either for that matter. And Byrd's station at that time was completely under the snow because it was built before we knew much about building things on the ice and we used either a Quonset hut or a Jamesway hut. A Jamesway hut looked like a Quonset hut except for metal on the outside, it was canvas. And there was another canvas on the inside and insulation in between. And these could be transported and they were on a frame, so it looked like a Quonset hut. And you just put the canvas over the frames and the frames rested on the snow and there

was a wooden base that you put a stole on, so that you would have heat. And there was sort of a vestibule on the outside. So you could go into the vestibule and then go into the cabin. So the wind wouldn't go speeding through the hut. And that whole thing was transported by C130 aircraft that the Navy ran. And we would go and take a science party in and depending on how big the party was, put up one, two, three, maybe four of these Jamesway huts. And that's where the scientists would live and we would have the C130 would fly over and we would furnish radios so that we could talk to them. And we flew over to find out if they were sick, if they needed anything and we tried to do that more than once a week. Going over there.

Q. So when you say you're going over them, you're checking on them to make sure everything is going alright and they don't need anything?

A. Yes. To see if they needed things. We would put one, maybe two helicopters with them. And the helicopters are not all that reliable. And so they might need spare parts or whatever.

Q. And helicopters are not reliable because of the cold or the equipment?

A. No, they are just a different critter.

Q. Okay.

A. Matter of fact, at one time all the helicopters in the Navy at this particular time were grounded. Ours were fine. So we couldn't fly them. And here we were with helicopters out at remote stations trying to fly people various places and couldn't fly them anyplace. We couldn't even fly them back to where they could get into the C130.

- Q. Wow. Okay. We kind of talked about this a little bit but not very much. Did you have any problems with morale during the winter due to isolation and darkness? Or any problems with morale in general I guess.
- A. Morale, no. The problems that we had and I had a flight surgeon that was on my staff. And he would interview both the scientists, civilians and the Navy people who were going to winter over. As I say, at the South Pole for example, there might have been only 20 people in the winter. And half of those would be civilians and half would be the Navy. Cooks, maintenance people, the officer in charge who was responsible for the safety of all these people. And one of the reasons that you interview these people and he was assisted by a psychiatrist, an MD, in interviewing these things. Looking for strange things. Because if, for example, every time you sit down to dinner you put a knife in one hand and a fork in another and say "Alright, bring it on." Pretty soon that gets very old. And so you interview people to see how they get along together. And one of the things, we had liquor at all of our stations, McMurdo, Coal, Byrd stations. And one of the problems was and you can't really find this out very easily, is a lush. And at the pole station we had a lush and he was a civilian and he was a weather man. And he belonged to the weather service. And one of the problems with that was his civilian friends kept bringing him beer. The guy who was in charge of safety, the Navy officer in charge, said no more booze for you. You get drunk and you're not reliable. And so the civilians got around that and this is what I mean by scientists not liking to get along with the military. And so he sent out messages and he sent me messages and I was back in Washington at the time, saying he was

going to hire Louie Nizer and sue me and sue the Navy when he got back. But he never did. As soon as that airplane showed up in October he was so glad to get out of there, that he just forgot the whole thing. But that is the kind of thing that is very difficult. But in morale, the people who lived there, the Navy, we didn't have morale problems. And the civilians didn't have morale problems either. They were there because they wanted to be there.

Q. Okay. I've heard that before about little irritating habits people have and how little things that normally you could ignore really grate on people after they live together. Living so closely. In some of your correspondence with me, you mentioned that there were some unusual things that occurred and I was wondering if you would want to talk about that.

A. Sure. There were several things that happened while I was in Antarctica. One is that I was selected by the Ambassador to Australia, who I had taken to the ice, to come to Australia and represent the United States in the Corel Sea Celebration. As you may remember in 1943, something like that, there was the battle of the Corel Sea, where the Japanese Naval Force and the American Naval Force had this big battle and the ships never saw each other. It was all aircraft. First battle that was ever done that way. And there was the Japanese invade Australia. And if this hadn't happened, the Australians would be calling their honorable ancestors now, the Japanese. And so every year the _____ American Association sponsors somebody to represent the United States to come over. And I was the one this year. In 1971. And no other person from Antarctica had done that. And Mary and I both went. And we had a C130 we took to the ice equipped with skis

and we flew back to Australia. First we stopped in New Zealand where I had a dog and pony show. I had a canned speech that I gave. I did it in New Zealand. It was good practice for me. And the people in New Zealand knew me anyhow. And in one talk I gave this talk and the prime minister of New Zealand was on the floor in front of me and just kneeling with his legs crossed. And I had never had that happen before. And I had a steak in front of me giving this kind of a talk. But then we went to Australia and I made a speech in every capitol in Australia. Some of them were formal and I was in formal uniform, Mary was in long dresses. And we were taken around and Mary held koala bears in her arms for example. And I was taken in various clubs and so forth. And gave out pictures and things like that. And I went to meet the prime minister and took him a tray of some kind. And he gave me a picture which I have here still. And he was married at that time and I met too, an American, which is kind of nice. And I've forgotten his name. It's been 30 years. But in every city, at one of them I met the wife of a famous Antarctic explorer, whose name escapes me. And she was Dutch. And that was in, I've forgotten the town. Not Melbourn. The next one south. But we flew across country, flew across that great railroad that runs 400 miles and never a curve in it. And in Perth I made two speech to the same folks because one was in Perth and one was in the seaport, whatever the town is there. And the Americans had been there in World War II, the submariners had been there. And many submariners married Australian girls and brought them back. We have some herein Tucson, submariners that married Australians. But anyhow, in Brisbane, Mary and I were the head of a parade in a car. My flag was flying on the fender of

the car and we had 42 piece band in front of us that was going along. And Mary had watched the queen and so we knew how to wave out the window and that kind of stuff.

Q. That's important. The proper way.

A. Well that was a very interesting trip and we met lots of people. The Australian Navy assigned me an aide, the commander that sort of told me who was going to be at the next one and so forth. Lord Casey, we met him, I had lunch with him, just the two of us one time. And the Australians named a station for him. Casey Station on the Antarctica. And he had been the Australian ambassador to the United States. Wonderful man. I think the only Australian English Lord at that time.

Q. Did you have any other unusual things you'd like to discuss?

A. Yes. That was one. Second, the state department had a request from the King of Tonga to come to the ice. Tonga is a tropical island. And the state department was a little afraid to have the head of state come to the ice and come to the South Pole which is 9,100 feet above sea level, and is very cold. The average temperature is something like minus thirty degrees. And thought he might drop dead. So they sent me and Mary and a C130 and a crew and so forth to Tonga to talk him out of it. And so we went up there with pictures and my dog and pony show. And I took up a guy who was an expert in penguins, Rich Penny, Dr. Rich Penny was his name. And we showed him these pictures and talked to his staff, his personal staff, as to why he couldn't go, why the United States didn't want him to go. And he was a huge man, the biggest man I've ever seen. He's I guess

6'4, or 6'5". When he shook my hand, his thumb and fingers met around my hand. And his mother had been at Queen Elizabeth's inauguration. Coronation. And she rode with Hiley Solozi(sp??) in an open carriage. And it was raining. And she was the size of the king. Great, huge woman. And she was Queen, I guess they called her Salot. Anyhow, we did talk him out of it and I did get to meet, Mary took, I took, all at my expense, a great silver tray that was engraved about our visit and gave it to the king. Mary took a suitcase, it came that way, full of cosmetics to give to the queen. And the queen gave Mary a Tappa cloth rug which is too big to set up anywhere in this house. And it has her name inscribed in it. And I've got to give that to a museum of something. We have it here. It's a beautiful Tappa cloth. Well that's the second thing was this trip and I went in full uniform. I wore a sword, get off the airplane, inspected the guard and they had a band and when I got back to the United States, I stopped at the Navy music school and sent the band arrangement of "The Star Spangled Banner" there. Okay, that's the second thing. The third thing is I was responsible and approved the first women scientists in Antarctica. And I don't know whether you've seen the _____ just recently. But the head scientists was a Dr. Lois Jones. Lois Jones now has that liver disease, cirrhosis of the liver. Non-alcoholic and she's dying. And Pete Anderson has been sending out things to all the folks who might have remembered that. And I wrote her a nice letter. And he's acknowledged that and she's in Westerville, Ohio, wherever that is.

Q. That's very near where I live actually.

A. Anyhow they were there and they were in the dry valleys. You know about the dry valleys. And one of the dry valleys and Lake Vander was there and the Vander River and they are dry. And they were doing research, Lois Jones and she had four helpers. Scientist helpers. And I took them to the South Pole. And they were the first women in the history of the earth to set foot at the South Pole. And so the press was over me like white on rice, who's going to be the first woman off the airplane to be the first women in history to be at the South Pole. So I thought that over for a while and you may know the C130's have a ramp that is quite wide at the rear. And so I got these gals and a newspaper lady from the Detroit Free Press. And the six of us lined up in arms and we all stepped off together. So there were six ladies who were the first ladies at the South Pole and Lois Jones was one. So I'm quite pleased with that. And I started to tell you a story about this Navy Admiral who after he was retired, was employed by the Science Foundation, who was down on the ice. And I took him on a trip and we went to Byrd Station and there was a lady scientist there named Dr. Mahooney and what she was doing I don't know. But she had equipment there and she had a lady assistant whose name escapes me. But she took this man in hand and took him around and showed him everything. And when they got all finished with what they were doing, she said "Well, let's have a drink." So they went into the mess hall and she went into the refrigerator and opened up and pretty soon she came back to him with a very sheepish expression on her face. The South Pole is on 7,000 feet of ice and she said to him, "Would you believe it, we're out of ice?"

But those are three things that I did that nobody before me had done and I don't think anybody since has done.

Q. Okay, I think you had recalled the wife of the person that you had met. I'll let you talk about that.

A. Yes, it was Douglas Mawson's wife. As I say, she was Dutch and Douglas Mawson was a famous Australian explorer in Antarctica and writer about Antarctica and he wrote a wonderful book called Mawson's Will, which I have a copy of here, about his journey with two other people to find, I believe, to find the magnetic South Pole, which is now off the coast. But it wasn't then. And the other two perished and he was the only one that came back. And when he got back to the station from which they started, the chief of the station looked at him "Which one are you?" Couldn't recognize him because he was in such terrible shape and his clothes were just nothing.

Q. Amazing. Okay.

A. This has to do with those peculiar things. I don't know, other people have flown to Antarctica in small aircraft. But one came through Christchurch on the way and this was Max Conrad. Max Conrad was known as the flying grandfather. And he flew piper aircraft from South Africa to New Jersey nonstop and he did it all by the seat of his pants. And he didn't use fancy instruments and he wanted to go to the South Pole. And I fought this as much as I could with the Science Foundation, which really had very little to say about it. And the Navy which had everything to say about it. And I finally got a message back from somebody in the Navy, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, a vice admiral, who said

“We’d like to see this grand old man go to the South Pole. So he came to Christchurch, was living in his airplane and we invited him to stay with us. And it so happened that Mary was a classmate of his niece. And had met him before. So he came out and stayed with us. And eventually he flew to McMurdo and we flew the C130 to crossing and gave him steer. Said come left or come right and so forth. And we did the same thing from his way from McMurdo to South Pole. And he landed at the South Pole. He got there with his aircraft. But when he took off he crashed at the South Pole. And he was going back to the Antarctic Peninsula. How he was going to get there I don’t know because he had instrumentation on his aircraft but he couldn’t use it. He didn’t know how to use it. But he told me later that when he took off he said “Everything turned black.” So he did a 270 and came around and landed crossways on the runway and crashed. And I don’t know whether his airplane is still there or not. Probably now, but I don’t know.

Q. But he obviously survived it.

A. He survived it without a scratch and we flew him back and he took a commercial plane back to the states. He also told us that that was the first time in I don’t know how many years that he had not owned an airplane. He was a barnstormer and he’s fly around and take people for rides, you know, ten minute ride in an airplane. And there was a lady who started to walk into a propeller one time when it was turning and he jumped for her and rescued her and the propeller hit him in the head. It cut his head open. It really went through his skull. And he went to the hospital and he came out and when he came out he couldn’t read nor write

and he knew that he could fly but he didn't remember learning to fly. And so he went to get a job someplace and he got an interview and the guy said "Fine, now take this paper and fill it out, your name and address" and that sort of thing. And he couldn't write. So he took it and went into the bathroom and left and had somebody else fill it out for him. He's a crazy man.

Q. Can you think of anything else along the lines of your unusual stores that you want to share?

A. No, I think that's enough.

Q. Did we cover them?

A. Yes.

Q. We'll kind of switch gears here. What brought you to Tucson after you retired from the Navy?

A. I came to Tucson for a job. We decided to move from Washington, D.C. area. We lived just outside Washington in McClain. And so we sold our house, put our furniture in storage and about that time I decided that we was going to the Seattle area. Anacortes or what's the name of the island? Quibey Island. On Friday Harbor. So we had a dear friend in Friday Harbor. And just before we left, I interviewed for a job. I interviewed a man who was the president of the Association of Universities for Research and Astronomy. AURA. Which was made up of a number of universities, Ohio State being one. And as a matter of fact, the current head of the astronomy department at Ohio State is the man who used to be here. And is a friend. And he was in Chile for some time. In any case, we got to a dude ranch where we had been going for some years. And I got a

telephone call from this man who had interviewed me and he wanted to offer me a job. And it took me a long time, a couple of nano seconds, to say okay. And so I drove to Tucson and Mary took an airplane from Denver to Woodby Island, to Seattle to tell those folks we weren't coming. Which we weren't. And then she came down here. And so I came and took a job and I worked for AURA for five years. And the company moved back to Washington, D.C. and I decided to retire again. So I retired again. We like it in Tucson very much.

Q. You've kind of talked about this but I guess in a more general level, what do you think has been the most important accomplishments of your career.? I think you spoke a little bit about taking the women out to the ice which you felt was very important.

A. It was important for the Antarctic women. In my career, important accomplishments. One of the things that was responsible for was setting up the river boat force in Southern Vietnam, South Vietnam. I was a Navy captain on the staff of General Wes Morland. And somebody came to me one day and said "What does the Navy, get some boats and carry soldiers around in South Vietnam." And so in Delta Area. And I said "That's a good idea." And so we talked about and designed a boat. I designed a doctrine to go with it. And sent back to my boss through St. Pat who was the commander and chief Pacific and then on back to the Navy department. And it was finally accepted. And they bought the boat and build them. And so it was the first time that we had had boats in river warfare, in river marine warfare, since the civil war in the Mississippi. And I think Admiral Fotte was the guy then, but I'm not sure of that.

Q. But all are interesting. That's as important to us as well. For your Antarctic thing I think we've already covered what you felt were most important or is there anything more you would like to add about that?

A. The only other thing is that I think that the Science Foundation has made a mistake in hiring civilians to do the job that the Navy used to do. And getting the Air National Guard from the State of New York, who have to do the airplane, the C-130 work. And for people who were in the Navy who made a career of that, really love doing it, who were very proud of the job they were doing, and that's all the people. There's a couple of notebooks in front of you there. Those little blue ones to your right. To the left of your glass. Yes. And the top was given me by my predecessor. And it shows pictures of my first trip to the ice. And going to various stations and so forth.

Q. These are great.

A. Yea. And I did one of these and he did one of these for every visitor. VIP visitor. So did I. There was a handwritten note in front and pictures of their trip and pictures of them at various places in the ice. One of the things I did in Antarctica that had not been done before is I established a flag for each of the nations that was a signature to the Antarctic Treaty around the South Pole. And I have pictures, I have a slide of these lady scientists getting off the airplane, arm in arm with me, and also at the South Pole with these flags around them. So we can see that.

Q. That's very interesting.

- A. I don't know what's there now. Because now instead of twelve original nations signed this Antarctic treaty, and later on there were four more that acceded to it while I was there, so we had sixteen flags around the pole. And now there are some 38 or 40 nations that have acceded to the treaty.
- Q. When you discussed your accomplishments, that sort of leads us to maybe disappointments or things that you would like to have seen done differently. Do you have anything to say about that? You did mention briefly about your feeling that the National Science Foundation giving ...
- A. I think they made a mistake by getting the Navy out of the South Pole. Because our CB's built permanent South Pole stations, had ordered it during my trip down there and my last trip down there we had ordered this geodesic dome and the CV's put it together. And when they left, now they're civilians at the South Pole. And currently is having real problems with they wanted to give their contract to _____ and I think the current outfit is ASA. I don't know what that stands for. And they are suing to keep the contract. And I think the Science Foundation is going to have labor problems. We didn't have labor problems.
- Q. That's a good point. You've kind of mentioned some of the documentation that you still have about your time in Antarctica. Do you have other things besides these notebooks and what other things do you have?
- A. Yes. In documentation I have and I don't have it out here to look at. I had one of the operational orders that we did for one year that I was down there. And this was written by my staff back in Washington. It told the people who were going to be there, talked about the communications, how we would take flights from

Christchurch to the South Pole; to McMurdo and then to the South Pole. To Byrd's station, to put these people in. The current pilots, the Air Force are doing this too. The International Guard. The way they would decide whether or not to land some place on the continent, they would fly on the continent and drop their skis and fly along dragging their skis in the snow. And then they would fly up and turn around and look and if the snow had caved in someplace, that's a crevasse. So they didn't land there. They'd go somewhere else and drag the skis again. And if it didn't have that, then they could land. And that's how they put these scientists at various places like that. And this last year the International Guard, at least I saw a picture of this, didn't lose one of their planes, they had one of their planes get in a crevasse and they had an awful time getting it cleared.

Q. We have a lot of photos in the collection at Ohio State of various pieces of equipment and people.

A. I lost a Hercules and I also we had C-121's. These super _____. And we lost one of those at the ice. The super _____ couldn't fly all the way to McMurdo and fly all the way back to New Zealand. So after it got back to the place of no return, it had to go on. And as I mentioned earlier, these blizzards can come up in fifteen minutes and you can't see. And it's a crosswind. So this plane had to land and fortunately we didn't lose anybody. We lost a C-130 because one of our most experienced pilots taxied over sort of a scarp that he couldn't see, Taxied at a 45 degree angle. He dropped a wing, a wing tore off and the airplane caught on fire and burned. Nobody was burned or hurt there. So the Antarctica is an unforgiving place.

- Q. Okay, Kelly I think we're at the end. But I'd like to find out if there is anything you wished that I had asked while I was here or anything else you'd like to add?
- A. Well in the documentation you've seen my South Pole certificate and you've seen a group of South Pole pictures. Not South Pole, but Antarctic pictures. So you can see I'm still quite interested in this wonderful tour in Antarctica which wasn't a real career enhancing tour, but it was a wonderful tour.
- Q. Very good. Thank you.
- A. And I can't think of anything else that might be useful about the Naval Antarctic Support Force. Except I'm very disappointed that it's finished. We had one question that you didn't ask.
- Q. Okay.
- A. When I was there we had a nuclear power station. And this was transportable by Hercules and was put in and it was taken out the year after I left because the container, the liquid container in which the core was, developed a tiny leak. So this thing was taken apart and flown back to the states and the control panel, it was probably the same control panel, is now in the CB Museum. Since the CB's ran this, at Port Wynemee in California. And I saw it there when the NSF, the Naval Antarctic Support Force, was disestablished. We saw it there.
- Q. Okay. Can you think of anything else that I should know or that you want to share?
- A. I don't think ... well Mary talked about, I was the Senior Naval Officer in New Zealand, the senior United States Naval Officer in New Zealand. And consequently had much to do with the New Zealand government. I told you that

the prime minister was at my feet at one of these things sitting on the floor in front of me. One of the bad things that came down was we had a Minnesotan who wanted to fly to the South Pole. And he had a C-121, which when it took off couldn't fly all the way there and back. It had to land in there. And this man I tried to keep him from there. He flew into New Zealand without permission of the New Zealand government. New Zealand, because I was an American, the New Zealand government landed on me and wanted me to get him out of there, which he wanted to fly to the South Pole. The annual ice runway when he was there, it was warm enough the seals were coming up through the runway and put holes in it and I couldn't use it anymore. He had to have skis. And he finally left and I was real pleased with that, when he left. Made things a lot easier for me.

Q. Well I think we'll conclude our interview and again this is March 7, Tuesday and we're in Tucson, Arizona, wrapping up our interview with Kelly Welch. Thank you very much.

A. You're more than welcome.