ANTARCTIC DEEP FREEZE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH LYNN M. CAVENDISH, CAPT, CEC USN (RET.)

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DOB: Today is February 9th, 1999. This is Dian Belanger and I'm speaking with Lynn Cavendish about his experiences in Operation Deep Freeze during the 1950s.

Good morning, Lynn, and thanks so much for talking with me.

LC: Good morning, Dian. It's good to be here.

DOB: Tell me briefly something about your background. I'm interested in where you grew up, where you went to school, and what you intended to do with your life, especially anything that might hint at how you got to end up in Antarctica.

LC: I come from the hills of West Virginia, a native of Charleston, West Virginia. I attended West Virginia University for three years in civil engineering. The Navy sent me to the University of Louisville where I completed a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, and immediately went into the Navy as an officer of the Civil Engineer Corps, a graduate of the first and only midshipmen school for Civil Engineer Corps officers in Camp Peary, Virginia. I made a career in the Navy, eventually retiring as a captain in the corps.

I had a tour of duty in the White House in 1955, and at that time they were staffing people for Deep Freeze I, and I got nominated and selected and that's how I got into it. I didn't really pick it, I got picked.

DOB: How nice. But this was a volunteer organization that went to—

LC: Yes, it was theoretically volunteer.

DOB: You're saying theoretically?

LC: The people that wintered over were, I believe, all volunteers. Well, the others were theoretically because generally speaking, they were "volunteered." In my case, I was volunteered. But it worked out well. I made two trips there, in fact.

DOB: Were you eager to go?

LC: At the time I wasn't particularly eager, but I wasn't opposed to it either. I knew it would be an interesting adventure.

DOB: What did you know about the Antarctic continent before you went there?

LC: Almost nothing. I read up on it pretty quickly at that time, but before that I knew almost nothing.

DOB: And where did your Antarctic adventure begin? Was that at Davisville?
LC: Yes.

DOB: Tell me what happened there to prepare you for the ice.

LC: Preparations there were basically designed to establish Mobile Construction Battalion (Special), which was to provide the wintering-over parties in McMurdo and Little America and to do construction and eventually to provide for the construction of the polar base.

However, there were ideas for other bases in the next year, and a desire for a permanent landing strip even in McMurdo Sound. So a special organization was set up to conduct surveys during Deep Freeze I in McMurdo and supposedly at various places around the continent. And this was set up as what was called Detachment G of the Construction Battalion Base Unit (CBBU). Construction Battalion Base Unit at Davisville was really an administrative organization set up to support construction battalions in and out. So the fact that it was a detachment of that really didn't mean anything except that it was something to tie it to, something to give it an identity. And it was to that organization that I got orders.

It was a strange little organization. They attempted to tailor it to be able to conduct rapid surveys at various places. It had four officers—two commanders, a lieutenant (that was me), and a lieutenant junior grade, that was Frank Lewis—and about a dozen enlisted people. They were surveyors and draftsmen and even an equipment operator or so, basically.

DOB: What, a couple of dozen maybe?

LC: No, it was a total of not much more than a dozen.

DOB: Well, now, what kinds of preparations did putting Detachment Golf together do? It was called Golf but it was really G?

LC: Well, golf is the phonetic word for G in the Navy's phonetic—like alpha is A, and so on. And so it was called Detachment Golf or Detachment G.

DOB: Why G? What's the significance of that letter?

LC: I have no idea. There must've been some other detachments of that organization, maybe A through F, I don't know. But anyway, that's what we were. We were Detachment G.

Preparation involved really orienting the people who were selected, converting them into an organization, and gathering up the necessary equipment—surveying equipment, transits, survey equipment of other types, and collection of foods, tents, the type of thing to be able to go ashore and live in those circumstances in the isolated spots for periods of time.

DOB: Now this sounded like a rather last-minute decision. Was it?
LC: It may have been. It was the last minute as far as I was concerned. By the time I got to Davisville, which was . . . I can't remember the exact day, it must've been September or something like that, the plans for and the operation of MCB (Special) were a long way toward readiness. They were a definite organization by then. We just started from scratch, but our mission was simple and clear-cut. It didn't require the same type of preparation by any means it did for a full battalion.

DOB: So being a last-minute thing didn't cost you too much.

LC: It didn't, I think, cost us much if anything. Probably that was about as early as was reasonable to have people gathered or they probably wouldn't have had anything to do.

DOB: Members of this unit went to the ice on a number of different ships. Why?

LC: I don't know. That's the way we were ordered to go. The enlisted people basically went on, I think, the Wyandot or on some other ship, and most of the officers were on the Eastwind, but not all of them. Art Meeks, Commander Meeks, was aboard another ship. I've forgotten whether that was the Wyandot or not.

DOB: Did it make any difference?

LC: It didn't make much. We turned into an organization immediately when we got on the ice, so it really wasn't much of a problem. And it was a very informal organization. We all lived and worked together. There was no segregation between officers and enlisted or very much thought of rank difference. So it really was just a good group. They were picked well. They were all very congenial, good people.

DOB: Who picked them?

LC: BuPers as far as I know.

DOB: So you didn't know any of these folks before you left?

LC: I knew the one that was the commander, the Officer in Charge, Commander John Koleszar. I had met him in Tinian during the war—it's in my diary there about that—but he was on the staff of Admiral Hoover, who was Commander of the Forward Area (CINCPOA: Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area) on Saipan, and he visited our—I was at that time the Brigade Adjutant for the Sixth Naval Construction Brigade on Tinian, which was the organization that constructed the airfields which all of the flights from Tinian used. The atomic bombs were flown from there.

Anyway, John Koleszar came aboard at Tinian, and so I knew him. Other than that, I had never met any of them before.
DOB: What ship did you go south on?

LC: USCG *Eastwind*, a Coast Guard icebreaker. There was a whole family of icebreakers that were called the Windclass. The *Eastwind* was Coast Guard, and the *Northwind* and the *Westwind* were Navy ships. I don't think there was a *Southwind*. If there was, I never ran into it.

DOB: Tell me about the trip, particularly as you entered the ever colder waters surrounding the Antarctic continent.

LC: Well, about the only adventures we had really were a stop in Panama, and then crossing the dateline we had the traditional ceremonies. And after a stop in New Zealand for a little bit of liberty, then we headed south, and you could tell the difference almost every day as you headed south. The water got rougher and the temperature began to drop. And even well before we got to the continent, we would see icebergs occasionally floating around.

DOB: Big ones?

LC: No. Most of them were pretty small that I saw at that time.

DOB: How small?

LC: Of what you'd see—the size of this room or something like that to perhaps as large as the ship.

DOB: That's small.

LC: Big ones can go acres or even square miles in size. In fact, it was in the paper here fairly recently the huge chunk broken off the ice shelf that's bigger than one of the states.

DOB: The size of Rhode Island, I think it was.

LC: Yes. So they can be very large.

DOB: So what did you see when you began to approach the continent?

LC: Well, you see a lot of very interesting scenery. We first began to run into pack ice.

DOB: What's that?

LC: Just an ocean full of ice. Not very hard, but free floating. It is broken up sea ice that's broken loose from closer to the continent and then floated further north.

And then you began to see the continent itself, and it's a very startling beautiful thing. You see the mountains and the ice and the black and white contrasts and a very stark, beautiful
thing with the blue sky above it. It's really quite a wonderful sight. And when you get into McMurdo Sound, the first thing you see is Mt. Erebus, which is the active volcano there, and you see it way up above you and the smoke coming out of the top of it because it is active.

I remember spending Christmas Eve there at midnight looking at that, because it was daylight still, and taking pictures of it.

DOB: What does it sound like?

LC: Very quiet. Unless there's a storm, very still. Any other sound, the sound of any equipment starting or people talking or anything comes out bright and clear because it is very quiet. There just isn't any other sound there.

DOB: Does the sound you make carry?

LC: Oh yes, yes. Because, that's what I say, you can hear people talking from some distance that you would never notice in normal circumstances, because background noise could keep you from it. There just isn't any background noise. If there is, you see its source, or you hear it clearly.

DOB: What does it smell like?

LC: I never thought of that. Very clean and clear, I suppose.

DOB: Does the ocean smell like the ocean in other places?

LC: No, no, I think you don't get that sea smell. I don't recall that at all. I think it must be because the water is so cold that no algae or anything like that is in there. Well, there is because that's what some of the animals feed on, but it's not near the surface. You don't get an odor the way you do in the north. I'd never thought of that.

DOB: Well, what's the first thing you did when you got off the ship?

LC: Well, in the first place, we spent several days trying to get off the ship. We knew that we were going to go to—our first deployment was going to be to Cape Royds area which is the slope of Mt. Erebus on the north side, I guess, of McMurdo Sound, because on the maps it looked like that might be an area that you could build a runway, and so we knew that that's where we ought to try to go. And, as you noticed before, our group was divided—part of us went on one ship and the other part on another—but we could coordinate by phones and radiophone.

And to get to where we wanted to be, which was up at an elevation maybe six hundred feet above the sea level, it would be quite a job to walk it there, to carry our equipment. So we had to depend on helicopters because the various ships had carried helicopters for such
transportation purposes. There was a whole organization—I can't remember the name of it now. VX . . . .

**DOB:** VX-6?

**LC:** Yes, that's it. They had helicopters to provide transportation back and forth. But we had to get on their schedule, and we finally did. Most of the gear we had was aboard the *Eastwind,* and we had to bring the people aboard from the other ships to go down in the hold and sort it out because it was just piled in there with everybody else's. Not very scientific.

We finally got authorization, and five of us went ashore initially. Commander Koleszar, Commander Meeks, a first class surveyor, Bob Hadley—he was the senior of the enlisted people—and another first class by the name of Hebenstreit, and I don't even know if I can spell that. H-e-b-e-n-s-t-r-e-i-t, I think. Anyway, and myself went ashore.

**DOB:** This is at Cape Royds?

**LC:** Yes. And set up camp there. The first night, I believe, is the night we were hit with a blizzard.

**DOB:** Tell me about that.

**LC:** It blew the tent down, and we were trapped underneath the tent for a period of better than a day, the tent flopping up and down on us. Finally we set up a transit tripod to hold it up enough to keep it off of us. Until the wind dropped, we couldn't do any work. It's described a lot better in my diary, of which I have given you a copy.

**DOB:** Yes, it's wonderful. Were you able to eat and sleep during this time?

**LC:** We didn't do much eating at that point, but we did a lot of sleeping. We had sleeping bags and some snack-type food.

**DOB:** And you could sleep with all that racket and the tent flying?

**LC:** You know, eventually you can sleep in almost anything. For a while you don't, but you can eventually. I was in a hurricane, one of the worst there was in *World War II,* aboard a ship that was heading toward Tinian, Marianas Islands. The ship was a cargo carrier. It was a liberty ship, a commercial-type ship, used to transport some military along with cargo. The storm was so bad that you couldn't stand up. It was rolling almost over. I went down below and got on my bunk and just got ahold of the sides so I wouldn't roll out, and I slept through the night. I got up the next morning and it was all clear. So you can sleep through anything.

**DOB:** Were you able to stay warm?
LC: Oh yes. As long as you're in the sleeping bag—those sleeping bags were outstanding.

DOB: And how long did that last?

LC: I've forgotten. It's a day or something like that, a day or so maybe. It's in the diary, too.

DOB: And then eventually the storm just quit and you were able to—

LC: Yes, and we started doing some surveying and brought eventually the rest of our crew. We ran two surveying parties at that time.

DOB: Let me just back up a minute. You, or whoever wrote this report, commented that "All hands were properly impressed by the preserved condition of Shackleton's 1908 hut, the beauty of the surroundings, and the appalling odor of the rookery," penguin rookery. Tell me about those three things.

LC: These are a couple of the things from Shackleton's, and these are old matches and they still will strike.

DOB: Oh my. How small they are. They're stuck together.

LC: Yes. I haven't moved those. They are wax covered to burn better, and the wax has melted and recongealed. Very likely I didn't take proper care of them.

DOB: These are tin boxes of matches that are about two inches long. Why are the handles of the matches so short?

LC: These are not quite the same as those. I said they'll strike; maybe they won't. Let's see. They will in some cases. But anyway that's some of the stuff that came from there. We were the first people to be in there since Scott in 1912, I guess it was. Shackleton had been there in 1908, I believe it was. So Scott probably visited that camp, but other than that, we were the first people to be there in that time.

DOB: It must have been quite an incredible thing to have built that hut in the first place, because I don't suppose it was as pre-fabbed as what you were using.

LC: No, it wasn't pre-fab. They just took lumber and carpenters and built them. It's surprising. If you go in the summertime, you have a lot of daylight—it's just endless. The sun just goes round and round in the sky, never setting. And the weather is not really that dire. You'll see I've listed the temperatures every day in the diary. They get up to thirty and forty degrees. You can live in that. And particularly in that environment where it's so dry and clear. Unless there's a storm, it feels warmer than it is. So really, it wasn't an amazing thing that they were able to build that cabin, but it was a worthwhile project.
**DOB:** It certainly would've taken them longer than it took you to do yours.

**LC:** We didn't even have them. We just lived in tents the whole time we were ashore.

**DOB:** Well I meant the Deep Freeze Clements huts.

**LC:** Yes, well, MCB (Special) erected these pre-fabricated buildings, and they went up quickly. Very comfortable living.

**DOB:** Now the report also talked about the beauty of the surroundings which you've mentioned and the odor of the rookery.

**LC:** You're standing in the middle of hundreds of Adelie penguins and their young—little tiny balls of gray fur is what they look like. Feathers, I guess, but they look like fur. And when you have that many animals in one place you're going to have a lot of odor. So standing in the middle of that, yes indeed, you're very aware of the odor.

**DOB:** Even in clean Antarctica.

**LC:** Yes, that's true.

**DOB:** All right. So after five or six days, the rest of the detachment then arrived.

**LC:** Yes.

**DOB:** So you've got maybe a dozen, and you've spoken a little bit about the education and training and skills. But this was basically a party of surveyors?

**LC:** Yes. That was the aim. They did have, like I said, a couple of equipment operators because we had drills and things like that to operate, and we thought we might even have occasion to borrow heavy construction equipment or something to test out. We never did, but we didn't know that we wouldn't.

**DOB:** And it sounds like you were there for some weeks.

**LC:** Yes, we were. I think . . . my memory is just not good enough to tell you how many weeks. It's a matter, though, of maybe three weeks or four weeks or something like that. We moved from there to Dry Valley, the whole way across from the sound.

**DOB:** Before we go there, you wrote about using snowblocks to build windbreaks and a head and all kinds of things, and even held Sunday services with an altar and candles.

**LC:** We did, indeed. Art Meeks was a very good guy for that. He conducted the services and inspired everybody to try to convert something into something that feels like culture or
traditions you’d always lived in. So yes, we set up one tent that doubled as a mess hall and a chapel. It had an altar.

**DOB:** Made of what?

**LC:** I don’t remember just what we did. We had some bamboo poles that basically we’d taken as tent poles. We had more than we needed, which was a good thing because the first night we lost one. We didn’t have any other wood at all that I can think of. We had some bunting and decorated with that. I have pictures of that somewhere but I don’t know whether I could ever find them.

**DOB:** I’m struck that you had altar candles but no radio.

**LC:** No radio that would work.

**DOB:** Oh, you had one but it didn’t work?

**LC:** We had what they call an Angry 9 radio. It’s a hand-powered affair. You have to crank the generator to get electricity to run it, and let me tell you, that’s one of the hardest pieces of work that anyone could ever get involved in because the more power you’re using, the harder it is to turn. And we could never get it to work. We tried and tried there and in the Dry Valley, particularly Dry Valley.

**DOB:** So how did you communicate, or didn’t you?

**LC:** We just waited for the helicopter to come by and check on us.

**DOB:** And how often did you expect them to come?

**LC:** They’d come every two or three days.

**DOB:** So you weren’t too worried.

**LC:** When it got bad weather, we might go several days.

**DOB:** What are five-in-one rations?

**LC:** They were pre-packed ration boxes. There are several categories of them. You’ve heard of K rations and C rations and so forth. Five-in-one was a little more sophisticated. It had more foods in it, and I’ve forgotten the deal of what they did have, but they had basically canned provisions for a complete meal including cigarettes at the end and the can-opener and dessert.

**DOB:** Is it packaged in a box of some kind?

**LC:** It’s one big box with a whole bunch of little boxes in it of various things.
DOB: Wood boxes?  Tin boxes?

LC: Paper boxes, cardboard.

DOB: And would it be like sandwiches or what kind of—

LC: It's all in cans—canned beans, canned cheese, everything was canned.

DOB: And you'd eat it cold?

LC: No, we'd build a fire or make a—one of the things one of the guys did, Bob Hadley, found a Primus stove.  The Primus stove operates on gasoline, I think, or kerosene—probably kerosene.  And he found one at Shackleton's hut and brought it back and worked on it and got it to work and used that to cook on.  One of our guys acted as cook all the time.

DOB: But you didn't have your own Primus stove?

LC: We had a Coleman lantern, I think we did have a Coleman stove.  Maybe we used it, too, but the Primus stove was better.

DOB: Did the rations come with a can-opener?

LC: Yes.  It came with a very handy-dandy little can-opener that's not much bigger than a house key.

DOB: About an inch or so?

LC: Yes, and it'll open a can fine.  It has a place on it you can clip it onto your key ring and carry it with you all the time.  Every box would have two or three of those can-openers in it, so everyone carried one with him after that.

DOB: Okay.  So in the end you decided that Cape Royds was not a good place.  What were you trying to do there and why didn't it work?

LC: For a couple of reasons.  One was it was fairly steep, but the real reason we couldn't really do anything with it was that we discovered that we were on about yea much soil.

DOB: Six inches or so?

LC: Yes, something like that.  And underneath that was ice as deep as we could dig.  Pure, clear, crystalline ice, and what we thought is that we were sitting on top of a glacier or it was against Mt. Erebus, the mountain, and some time in the past a big eruption of that had thrown all this stuff out over top of the ice, and it all looked like you were on dry land.
We thought we were, and so did all the previous explorers. Nobody before us had ever uncovered any of the overburden. Where is that diary of mine?

DOB: We can look at it later.

LC: I drew a picture in there of what that looked like, you know, the soil and then what was under it and the various levels. There was probably a little more land than I say it was. There was a little bit of permafrost. I’d forgotten how much, but it’s in the diary.

DOB: And the purpose of that Cape Royds site was to be for an airstrip?

LC: Yes. That’s what we wanted, so we ran a lot of topography and proposed an area where the strip might be, but even if it had all been land, it would’ve been a major task to create it because it was so steep. And the road that we laid out to run to the bay would’ve been a torturous road down there and it would’ve been a long, miserable ride.

You could theoretically have gotten a runway up there if there had been proper material under it to put it on.

DOB: Ice is not too . . . .

LC: Well, you can build a lot of things on ice. You have to insulate it because of what you build generates heat in it. But it undoubtedly would be into the ice when you make the necessary cuts to get the runway level enough, and you’d probably be eliminating topsoil altogether in many places. I just don’t think it would’ve ever been a successful runway.

What they ended up doing is using the sea ice, and they were close to the main base then, and that worked and still works as far as I know.

DOB: All right. Then you investigated Dry Valley.

LC: Yes. The same reason. We hoped we might find an airstrip site over there. Dry Valley is very interesting. It’s called Dry Valley because it really is dry. There’s not any snow or ice in the entire valley, except for the glaciers that come just to the edge of the valley where they form great cliffs of ice.

DOB: Is there more than one Dry Valley?

LC: Yes, there are some others. The name of this one was actually Taylor’s Dry Valley. I never went to any of them. But in this one, there were various glaciers flowing into it, and the face of the glacier would be right just straight as this wall and maybe a hundred feet high.

DOB: Where does calving glacial ice go in Dry Valley?
It fell off and lay there, and eventually the periodic winds that came down that valley would melt the ice. I don't know whether I wrote that up in that report or not, but it's in my diary. We experienced it once—it's sort of like the Santa Ana deal in California, you know. You get that hot, hot wind that comes and hits the California coast once in a while and brings with it dust and dirt—a miserable thing. Well, this was the same way. It would come down that valley and everything—you got "hot," you felt surprisingly warm, everything melted. The little lakes that were in Dry Valley—and there were several of them—would dry up in a matter of hours.

So that's why there was a Dry Valley, I'm sure, because of the nature of that wind. I don't know what caused it, except the friction on the land.

DOB: The report calls it a "forlorn, lonely site. A scrap heap of creation."

LC: Yes, those are my words. I always thought if they wanted to make a movie about the moon, that would've been a good place to do it. I guess they'd have to avoid showing the glaciers, but the rest of it would work out pretty well. Nothing there.

There were some interesting signs of life. I don't remember, did I in the report tell about the seal carcasses in the valley?

DOB: I don't think so.

LC: Anyway, way up, miles from the sound, there were a tremendous number of seal carcasses. They'd been lying there, and I don't have any idea how long they'd been there. Some of them fairly well preserved, some of them were mostly bone and sort of like a . . . what's the word . . . mummy-type thing—mummified or petrified. And the thing was that the teeth of these seals—I even still have some of those at home—were like the teeth in the Weddell Sea seals, not like the ones in McMurdo. The McMurdo seals were straight, shaped like that, whereas the ones in Weddell have a sawtooth-looking thing, and that's the way these were. I have no idea why they were there or what happened or how they got up there.

DOB: Isn't that interesting?

LC: That is interesting.

DOB: Way out in the Dry Valley.

LC: Yes. It was miles from the sound. There were none of them close to the sound, in fact. Whether there had been some sort of an upheaval or what, I just don't have any idea what had happened.

DOB: How many?
LC: Hundreds. Just a whole graveyard of dead seals. We wondered about it at the time, we collected bones and pieces and so forth.

DOB: Someone must have studied that since, I would assume. Well, but you also rejected the Dry Valley site. Why?

LC: That's right. Mainly because it's too narrow and too crooked. We couldn't get proper approach distances for planes to land and take off, particularly in instrument conditions. So we did reject it for that reason.

DOB: It didn't take you too long.

LC: No. We were there another couple weeks, I guess, or so.

DOB: And then apparently after that, the detachment was split?

LC: Yes, it was. The other part of them, I don't even know what they did.

DOB: Somebody went to Cape Adare.

LC: Yes, and that was the other part. What they did in their adventures, I don't know anything about.

DOB: Okay. Why was it split?

LC: So we could cover both areas. Our part was supposed to make a loop around the whole continent and end up in the Weddell Sea area and then go north from there. We followed around about three-quarters of the continent and then went on. We never did stop in Weddell Sea. It became too late in the season, and the pack ice was building up.

We were on the Glacier, and I've forgotten what ship the other group was on.

DOB: This was March, so isn't it getting cold and starting to be dark by then?

LC: Yes, it got a lot colder as we went along and a lot more ice, and we frequently would end up in very, very heavy pack ice trying to go in to look at the shore and we couldn't even get there. We'd send helicopters out to look at the area, but we didn't even take people ashore in a lot of the places; some of them we did.

DOB: And you never got to the Weddell Sea.

LC: Never got that far. Got to Knox Coast, which is maybe a quarter of the way around the continent, was the main place we looked at. We looked at several others very, very briefly, maybe an hour or so or something like that. But we never really did hit a great spot. They did end up putting a base in the Knox Coast area.
DOB: Were there members of the press along on these?

LC: Yes. Disney had a representative there, and NBC did. I think that was it. I don't recall. I think maybe we had somebody with Associated Press, too, but I'm not sure of that. I know that NBC person and Disney had—

DOB: *New York Times*?

LC: I don't recall, but I don't think so.

DOB: How did you all interact with them?

LC: Pretty well. I'm trying to remember the guy's name now, one character that we see still on TV occasionally. He was one of the most arrogant-type individuals I ever met. But basically they were all pretty interested and interesting to get along with. The guy from Disney was fabulous. We all liked him.

DOB: Lloyd Beebe?

LC: I don't remember, but that name is familiar. We had a lot of interesting people. We had a priest from the Jesuits, and basically a scientist is what he was, an ice scientist. An interesting guy.

DOB: Father Linehan?

LC: Yes, that's him.

DOB: He was on the *Glacier*?

LC: Yes. He made the trip around the continent.

DOB: So you spent some time in Vincennes Bay, which would be on the Knox Coast?

LC: Yes.

DOB: By the Windmill Islands?

LC: Yes. That was where we had our adventure with the storm. You might've heard of that.

DOB: I want you to tell me about it.

LC: That's where I got my fifteen minutes of celebrity in my life. The NBC people made pictures of the return of our survey party from that adventure, and it was on national television.
DOB: At the time?

LC: Oh, no. Later that year. So I saw it myself.

DOB: Tell me about that experience.

LC: The Glacier tied up, or you might say what they did was nose into the barrier ice, and there was a place there where the ice shelf was low enough that you could get ashore, and that's where they nosed in. Most of the places we'd go in, the barrier would be so high you could nose into it but you couldn't get ashore. This one you could, and looking at the map and the terrain as best we could, it looked like this would be a place we maybe could run a survey around to see what we could see and get some idea of what it was like; see if this would be a place they could come ashore and set up a base.

I took a survey party, myself and three enlisted people, and we started running just a transit-type topographic survey around this bay. We landed where we could go ashore, and then we had to climb to the top of a ridge there because most of the ice shelf is so steep that you couldn't safely walk on it without fear of slipping into the bay. So we ran our survey on top of the ice shelf ridge. We ran maybe a couple miles of survey just trying to identify the shape of the bay.

We got out of sight of the ship and out of the sound of its engines, and we were hit by a blizzard—a violent snowstorm with zero visibility. And I mean it came up almost immediately. We had the transit setting there and the four of us gathered around that and sat there waiting, hoping the storm would break. We huddled there about an hour, and it never did show any signs of breaking. We knew even from the experience at Cape Royds and from reading that such storms could last for days, and we didn't have a tent or any sort of shelter with us.

DOB: You had no survival gear?

LC: No, no long-term survival gear at all, because we didn't expect to be far enough from the ship to warrant it. So finally we decided that we'd better see if we couldn't make our way back to that ship. And we started back—

[End Side A, Tape 1]

[Begin Side B, Tape 1]

DOB: All right. Continue with this experience. You had some rope, you said.

LC: Yes. And to that extent we had a little bit of survival gear. We had a piece of rope, we had ice axes and that type of thing, but we didn't have tents, we didn't have food. But we did tie all four of us together and started back around this thing. I had an ice ax and
whoever was on the rear end, and I am sure it was Bob Hadley, had an ice ax, and we started. We kept trying to stay up on top of the ridge heading in the direction of the ship the best we could.

We did pretty well for a while, and then all at once we lost our footing and we started falling down toward the bay, and we tumbled a distance. I mean we didn't slide, we tumbled head over heels and over top of each other. I think we all had visions of splashing into the icy water of the bay. It was a mess! I kept trying to drag the ice ax into the ice, because it was pure ice, and finally got it to catch, and Bob got his to catch after a bit, and there we were laying there on the side of that slope trying to—

DOB: How steep was this slope?

LC: It felt like it was about 45°, but it probably wasn't quite that steep. It couldn't have been or we would have never made it. On a hillside, 45° looks almost vertical. It was steep. Once we got ourselves stopped, then the next idea was to get back up on top of the ridge, and we couldn't stand up, we couldn't just crawl up the slope. So we would hook one ice ax in so we could try to pull against that and pull ourselves on our backsides up the slope. We would push ourselves back up a little bit, and then push it up another notch until we finally got up where the ice leveled off and we could stand up.

DOB: What would've happened if you had not stopped sliding?

LC: We'd have gone right into the bay, and it would've been the end because you can't survive in that water more than about a minute or so at the most.

DOB: And the visibility is still very bad?

LC: The visibility is terrible, still a blizzard at this point. When we got to the top of the ridge, we finally could hear the ship's whistle through the noise of the wind. They were blowing it continually to give us direction. We kept staggering along, trying to keep erect and headed toward the sound of the ship. We finally rounded the curve of the bay, and through the blizzard you could make out the ship. We started down that final slope, and all of us were totally exhausted. It's amazing in such a comparatively short time how tired you can get. We were all pretty well beat up. We'd fall, we'd stumble and fall. And it was this sight of us coming back of which they took pictures from the ship—when they saw us finally through the still blowing snow—that they showed on the TV.

DOB: How long a time period are we talking about from the time the storm came up till you got back to the ship?

LC: I'm not quite sure. I just don't know for sure. I don't even know that I knew at the time.

DOB: Many hours?
LC: Probably about six hours. But it seemed like a week! The next day I discovered I had frostbite all over the side of my face, I had bruises all over me, and I could hardly move the next day I was so stoved up. And the other guys were the same way. But I would think we must've been maybe six hours or something, I don't know.

DOB: In retrospect, was going back to the ship in no visibility the wise decision?
LC: Well, I think it was the right decision. If we had known what finally happened, because it cleared up enough that we wouldn't have had any problem if we stayed another—well, about the time we got back to the ship it began to clear up. But I still think we did the right thing because no one could have said for sure how long the storm would last. The ship couldn't stay there forever either. That was another thing the ship was concerned about. As soon as we were aboard, they left. They pulled out, and they didn't like staying there at that time in that storm.

DOB: Well, now there were a couple of other smaller boats that had also gotten caught in that.
LC: That's true. They got caught in it because it came up on them the same way. They got back to the ship all right, but they had a scary time with it. They were going to meet us around on the other side of that bay, and they never got that far. We didn't get that far either.

DOB: They were going by boat to where you were going by land and then you'd rendezvous with them?
LC: Yes. We probably would've ridden back with them, in fact.

DOB: One of them was a Greenland cruiser.
LC: That's the only one I recall. The Greenland cruiser is a nice boat with a cabin.

DOB: Is it a type of boat or is that a proper name of one?
LC: It's both, I think. It's a type and that's the name of it. It was a generic name, not a name of a specific boat. A lot of the icebreakers carried Greenland cruisers aboard. It's a type of ship, or a craft rather, that was developed in the north areas up around Greenland for riding in those type of climates.

DOB: The other was an LCVP. What does that mean?
LC: It's a landing craft . . . some sort of personnel. I can't think what the V stands for. It's a very small landing craft, a little bit bigger than that Greenland cruiser, perhaps, but not a very big . . . . I don't recall that an LCVP was involved, but perhaps it was. I was well aware of the Greenland cruiser. Art Meeks was aboard it.

DOB: How big? How many people could go in one?
LC: I don't know. It probably could handle twenty people or something like that if they were standing up and ready to go ashore with their gear.

DOB: But eventually there was a base put in that area.

LC: That's right. I never saw it. I do know they—we left our transit standing there when we were there. They picked it up the next year, the people did.

DOB: It was still there.

LC: Yes.

DOB: It didn't blow away.

LC: No.

DOB: Isn't that amazing?

LC: Yes. But there's not much wind surface to a transit. There are three tiny poles holding it up, and it's not very big itself. Yes, it was still there. The amazing thing is that it was still in perfect condition. It wasn't damaged at all.

DOB: So you really didn't survey the area except to say this might be okay?

LC: Yes. We really didn't do much of anything. I expect that the decision to put it there was probably based on other topography that they had from other history, more than from our opinions.

DOB: That was at the end of your cruise then, or did you continue—

LC: We went ashore another time or so but just long enough to go ashore and hoist the American flag and take pictures. That's about it.

DOB: Were there still thoughts of making claims on the continent?

LC: The American deal was to make no claims. Our policy and claim was that nobody owned it and it was open to everyone. Now all of the continent is claimed by various people. McMurdo Sound, the area in a little pie shape that reaches all the way to the Pole, New Zealand claims and they built a base there the second year. Sir Edmund Hillary was the leader of the group that built that base.

DOB: What did you think about—I'm going back to this storm—what did you think about while this was happening? Were you scared?
LC: I was concerned about me, but I was also concerned about the people that I was responsible for at the time. And the question came, a very big question—the thing you mentioned a little bit ago—would it be better to stay there or better to go back. And I finally made the decision it was better to go. I still feel that way, even more than I did then probably. It was the right thing to do. Probably we should've used more care to stay on top of the ridge.

DOB: How much survival training had you had?

LC: I never really had any. I don't think any of us did.

DOB: That seems like a bit of a lapse on the Navy's part.

LC: Yes. They offered me a chance once to take parachute jump training. I declined it. I thought about it a lot, well that would be interesting and everything, but to deliberately stand and jump out of an airplane, I don't believe I'm going to do that. [Laughs] But that's as close as I ever came to having any survival training beyond just reading about it. We all did a tremendous amount of reading in the old explorers and what they went through and how they survived. We all did the best we could on that. We tried eating penguin meat and seal meat, that type of thing.

DOB: What did you think?

LC: Lousy. Awful. That's the awfulest tasting stuff I ever tasted—both of them. Penguin is a tough, very fishy type of taste.

DOB: Fishy?

LC: Yes, because they eat so much fish. They're a very muscular animal, too.

DOB: And what about seals, their taste?

LC: We did a little better with the seal. We'd cut steaks and beat it and try to tenderize it a little bit. It did a little better than the penguin.

DOB: You said you went about—I'm back now on your cruise—you went about three-quarters of the way around the continent but never got to the Weddell.

LC: Yes, that's right. It just got too late in the year, because as you were pointing out, it was getting so it was dark most of the time instead of daylight, and it was getting a lot colder and the sea ice was forming a lot worse. Somebody made a decision—Admiral Dufek was aboard the Glacier with us, and he made the decision, I guess, that we'd stayed long enough.

DOB: Where did you go after that?
LC: Went to Montevideo and went ashore there, and we flew from there back to the States. Landed in Rio de Janeiro and Caracas, and finally I guess . . . I don't know where. I'll be darned if I can remember where we landed in the United States.

DOB: How long were you gone?

LC: A total of about eight months, I think it was.

DOB: So you had never considered wintering over.

LC: I was never asked to be a part of that. As you noted, our organization was set up late. They had that other one staffed. I guess the decision that they needed a survey group came later, so I got orders late. As I say, when I got to Davisville, they were organized, the MCB (Special) was. Ours was nothing—well, ours was simple and didn't need much.

DOB: You apparently stayed involved with Operation Deep Freeze.

LC: Yes, I spent the summer in Davisville after I got back. I was part of the planning staff for the next year's operation, and I got a set of orders at the same time to go join MCB (Special) in McMurdo Sound. So I went down there and was the construction officer in Deep Freeze II. I relieved Dick Bowers and he went to the Pole and built the Pole station.

DOB: Oh, you were his relief.

LC: So he could go to the Pole.

DOB: What did you do then at McMurdo? Some of the building must have been—most of the building there must've been done.

LC: Most of it was done. We didn't do too much. We erected another building or so, you know, those pre-fab buildings. We maintained the ice strip, the landing strip, and visited around. Visited Sir Edmund Hillary and saw what he was doing.

DOB: How different was McMurdo specifically, but Antarctica generally the second year?

LC: Very different for me because the first year it was old explorer-type stuff out by ourselves where people hadn't been, or just a group living in tents. This time we were living in a small town. It had a mess hall that you could go to in the middle of the night and get hot milk or coffee or whatever, and you ate good food. Had to operate the utilities. That was another part of my job, operating the water system, which was that you went out and gathered up snow and brought it back in and put it in a snow melter, that type thing. Very different life though. Had a chapel there. I guess you've heard probably of the chaplain that they had there, John Condit?
DOB: Tell me.

LC: He was a Catholic—he's dead unfortunately—but he was a Catholic priest. He was the son of a Methodist preacher, but his mother was a Catholic. But he had attended Methodist church a lot, so he set up services both for Protestants and Catholics, and he would conduct them according to what they were supposed to be. And he never proselytized anybody to Catholicism that I could tell. A wonderful guy. He could play a piano as well as anybody I've ever seen. He played real fast and had a tremendous sense of humor. It might've been very unholy-like, but it was good for morale.

He and I were roommates aboard the ship that took MCB (Special) back to the States after Deep Freeze II. I forget what the name of that ship was now. Anyway, he and I were roommates and he would get hold of the holy wine and he and I would have wine before dinner, especially since we were both aboard a Navy ship. [Laughs]

DOB: What was your specialty in the Civil Engineer Corps?

LC: I don't think I had a specialty. I was a general engineer, administrative or management. Management probably more than anything else.

DOB: And that was—so you stayed for another summer then for DF II?

LC: Yes.

DOB: And you didn't winter over again.

LC: No. I went back with the original MCB (Special) group to the States. We all rode together. I should know the name of that ship but I just can't draw it out right now, and it's not in the diary.

DOB: Okay. How much authority did you have over decision making? Were you pretty much in charge?

LC: Are you talking about on Deep Freeze II or I?

DOB: Answer it in both cases.

LC: Well, I had people over me in both cases. I generally had all the necessary authority for survey parties. I was the operations officer, really, they called it on Deep Freeze I, on that survey deal. I set up the schedules and reviewed the work and prescribed the type of notes that were kept, everything like that on that one. On the next one I had charge of construction and I had full authority. I don't think anybody ever questioned anything I did.

DOB: Did you ever screw up?
LC: Probably a lot of times. I don't think of anyplace that I got in any trouble with it. I don't remember of ever having any serious screw-up. That one at Knox Coast probably came about as close as anywhere.

DOB: What was the screw-up about that?

LC: Well, if I had ended up with everybody in the bay, it'd been a big screw-up.

DOB: But that could've happened to anybody.

LC: Well, it might. Maybe if I'd have kept them up on top of the ridge better, we wouldn't have gotten in that fix.

DOB: What effect did the long summer day have on the work you did?

LC: It's a funny feeling. It keeps feeling like it's still daylight—it is daylight—you feel like it's daytime, and you work for maybe three days in a row before you could ever sleep, and you're getting very beat and all at once you collapse. They used to call it the Big Eye. Everybody got the Big Eye there because you look out and it's always daylight. The buildings that they built at McMurdo all had blackout curtains on the windows so that when it was supposed to be night, it was night. It probably reduces efficiency in a way, but you get an awful lot more time to work. And really, working sixteen hours a day didn't bother you too badly. You didn't have anything else to do anyway.

You get some funny ideas of what's important in circumstances like living in that thing. Particularly on Deep Freeze I, when I was getting into all these various places, I got interested in picking up rocks, and I mean rocks of different types and different geologic history or that type of thing. And one of the things I carried home was a big satchel full of rocks, and it was heavy. I've still got a lot of them laying in a window. But that was an interesting hobby in those circumstances. Then you get interested in looking at, like I was telling you, the seal teeth and things like that.

Some of the things get kind of humorous. Male seals are built different than men. They have a bone, actually a bone, that makes them have an erection. And one of the guys found that bone in one of those seals in Dry Valley, took it home, and kept trying to figure out what to do with it. He finally decorated it and presented it to our OIC at a big party. [Laughter]

LC: Like I say, you get really weird ideas of what becomes interesting and important. The human being is such that if he has a lot of things to look at, why he'll be very selective. But if he doesn't, why he still can be interested in almost nothing. [Laughs]

DOB: I'm going to name a few people and I'd like you to tell me your impression of them. You've already spoken about John Condit. A lot of people have opinions about Condit.
LC: I loved the guy. He was a good friend. I used to keep up with him for several years after that.

DOB: How about Admiral Dufek?

LC: I didn't know Admiral Dufek very well. I met him and saw him and he seemed a stable, reliable leader, and I never was aware of anything that I thought he did that wasn't probably the right thing. He would go look at everything himself. He made the trip to the Pole himself, and on the trips around the continent there he would go ashore in all of these places and look at them. He was a good man.

I did have one interesting adventure on Deep Freeze I on the—you just made me think of it. When we went to go from Cape Royds to Dry Valley, I ended up aboard the Wyandot along with some of my survey party. But I was there without any other officers, and Admiral Byrd was aboard that ship at that time and this was his last trip that he ever made south. He and his staff, though, were aboard that thing, and I had the occasion to eat dinner with him one evening and also to attend the movies with him. Sat next to him at the movie. It was a very interesting thing.

He was in very poor health by that time, but he enjoyed what was going on, he enjoyed asking people what they were doing and what they were seeing. He asked about the survey party and what we had done at Cape Royds. He was interested, you know. And then he sent a couple of his people out there while we were surveying, really, to see what was going on. So that was one of the things that I always thought was interesting to me.

DOB: In what way was his health poor that you could see?

LC: He looked emaciated, he was weak, he could not walk real well, he actually was obviously straining himself to be there on this trip. I would imagine he probably knew that was the last trip he'd make and probably knew he was going to die pretty shortly. I never did hear if he had cancer or some other thing like that, but I think he must have. He was in pretty bad shape.

DOB: Were you impressed by him?

LC: Yes, I was impressed, yes. He obviously really had nothing to do with the real operation that was going on. He wasn't in any condition to, but he was there as a symbol.

DOB: Still a hero.

LC: Yes.

DOB: Was he your hero?
LC: No, not really. I'd never had any heroes in the form of Antarctic explorers until I got onto this thing, then I read everything. I got very fascinated with Scott and Shackleton and that type, you know. I'll tell you the truth, on Byrd I never could understand that—you know, he spent one winter in Little America by himself and wrote a book called *Alone* afterwards. In my opinion that was asking for something to drive you crazy. [Laughs] But I'm not sure it didn't come close to it for him. So no, I wouldn't call him a hero, but he was fascinating.

DOB: Were there others among the leaders that you can tell me about?

LC: No, I knew . . . of course I knew and still know Dick Bowers very well.

DOB: What did you think of him? Was he the right man for the job?

LC: Oh, Dick is a great guy. Yes, he's definitely the right—he was *the* right guy to set up that Pole station. He put together a team and gathered together the right stuff to take there, and they did the job.

DOB: What made him the right person?

LC: I don't know. Maybe that's one of these fate things. He was the right guy at the right time. But I think he was absolutely the right one. He was a success.

DOB: What was there about him that made you think that?

LC: Well, he's got good common sense. He doesn't get overwhelmed with either his own importance or the importance of anybody else. He has good judgment of people. He picked good people to take with him, because he was able to name who he wanted to go on the Pole trip. But I knew him well before that, he and his wife and family, and we've stayed friends over the years.

Dave Canham was an interesting person. Have you heard something about him?

DOB: Yes.

LC: He was the OIC in the McMurdo station, and a very colorful, warm individual that the enlisted people just really ate him up. They thought he was great because he really showed interest. He was interested in everybody and he was interested in their families. And he wrote a detailed diary. Has that been available to you?

DOB: Yes.

LC: He dictated that thing every day. If you've read it, why you can see it tells a lot.

DOB: Was there someone that you met on the ice that you were just particularly glad was there?
LC: No, I don't think so. I didn't get into any of the real great adventures, I don't think, that maybe you might run into that type of thing. We never had that serious a challenge.

DOB: [Laughs] Oh, I don't know about that. I think you had a few.

LC: We didn't have any bad people on that Deep Freeze I group that I knew. I thought they were all good. They were a very congenial group, they all got along well, they responded and I never heard anybody bitch or complain or say let's quit this and let's get back to the ship. I don't remember anything negative about it.

I guess I'm not a real hero-worshipper type of character. I've met some leaders that I regarded very highly in my career, but I don't think any of them I consider as heroes. Heroes are kind of scarce.

DOB: What are you proudest of?

LC: From my entire career?

DOB: From the Antarctic experience.

LC: Probably getting that group back to that ship that day. And I was pretty pleased with the report we wrote on it, too, on that thing.

DOB: It's a very fine report.

LC: Where did you find that report?

DOB: I got it from Dick Bowers who got it from Ken Aldrich, and I don't know where Ken got it.

LC: They wanted a copy from me at one time, and I thought I had it but I can't find it. I still think it's in my stuff somewhere, but I haven't found it yet.

DOB: How much were you aware of or concerned with world affairs when you were on the ice?

LC: Not very much. I knew that contentions—if we're talking about the Antarctic continent—I knew that contentions were very big, and I knew the American policy which was that nobody owned it, and it looked to me like that was operating very well. I didn't see any problems with it. World affairs beyond that, I don't think I was too greatly worrying about them at that time.

DOB: Well, certainly that would've been a significant time because it was at the worst of the cold war, and here come the Russians to do their part on the ice.

LC: Yes, well, we got along—on the trip back from Antarctica, we got one of the Russian scientists aboard ship. How that happened that he got there, I don't know. I couldn't
talk to him, but he and I played chess together several times. And I even beat him, which is rare because Russians are very strong chess players.

DOB: Well, my next question was your interactions with counterparts from other countries, and I guess that would be one.

LC: That was one, and the other one was meeting Hillary.

DOB: Tell me about that.

LC: Well, Dave Canham and I made a walk over to the New Zealand camp, which was a few miles away from McMurdo, and spent a day with him and he was very gracious and very much a regular-type individual. It was surprising. I mean to be supposedly a sir, Sir Edmund Hillary, you know, he was a real regular guy. And very interested in what we were doing and very open with what he was doing, and would respond to talk about his climb to the top of Mt. Everest. But we didn't get into that very much because we didn't know enough about it to ask him.

DOB: Okay. How did you keep in touch back home? You had a family by then, did you?

LC: Yes, I had a wife and a son and a daughter, and they were living in our hometown of Charleston, West Virginia, on that first year, and we didn't keep in touch very well. I wrote letters every day and she wrote, and I got the mail a time or so, but most of the time I never got any mail at all. And she didn't get mine because it didn't go out. Eventually she got it, and eventually she got—because I'd send her the slides, and she'd get them developed, and she had a big time with them. She even took them to some of the schools and showed them, even though she didn't know for sure what she was showing. But she had a time with it.

The next year I moved them up to Rhode Island so they'd be there with me during the summer, and then they spent the winter there. And she spent a lot of time with Sally Bowers and Joyce Lewis.

DOB: It's tough to be left behind.

LC: Yes. It was tough. She had a tough time with some of it.

DOB: Did you have radio contact?

LC: No, we never did. That was on the first year particularly there was never any way of doing it because we were usually so isolated we didn't have any kind of contact. Then on Deep Freeze II, it could have been done. They would set up special radio contact. They'd have to find somebody in the neighborhood that was a ham operator to tie into the calls, and some of the people did. We never did try it. On one of the trips to New Zealand I
did call to talk to her on the long-distance phone there, and that's the only time I ever contacted her directly—and that was on Deep Freeze I.

DOB: A long-distance phone call was a big deal then.

LC: It sure was. It was a whale of a big deal. It was thirteen dollars a minute, I think it was, or some such thing as that. Especially in those days it was a lot of money. Maybe it was thirteen dollars for three minutes. Maybe that's what it was.

DOB: It's still a lot. Did you worry in the '50s about littering and pollution and all of those environmental concerns?

LC: Not as much as we should've. What we kept thinking was whatever we do, it'll all freeze anyway. And we just dumped everything into that sound, which was probably a lousy thing to do. On Deep Freeze I, any littering we did was negligible. And we didn't really litter. We would keep our camp clear, but that operation at McMurdo Base was a mess at times. When the snow really melted it was the ugliest place I ever saw. When it was covered with snow, it looked very nice.

DOB: Well, it's not the way it's done now.

LC: No, I'm sure. I'm not up on what's done, but I know that environmental protection has assumed a great importance in that period. Civil Engineer Corps probably doesn't have any greater duty anymore than environmental protection, and they didn't even have a branch called that back in those early days.

DOB: There was a lot that got left around, I imagine.

LC: Yes.

DOB: Covered up with snow. How about concern in the 1950s with living resources like penguins and seals and whales and krill and fish and all that sort of thing.

LC: I think we considered that they were there and that generally speaking we didn't bother them. We were curious. We went around to see the rookeries and we experimented trying to eat them, but that was an experiment that didn't thrill us. And I don't think anybody's ever bothered them very much.

We thought that the killer whales probably were very dangerous-type animals. And as the stories from the old explorers were about them going under the ice and breaking it off, so we were always leery of that. I don't think there's a word of truth to that. I think they're not even dangerous because I've seen them since then at the Marineland in Florida and other places, and they're really a very congenial animal.

DOB: In the 1950s, what would you have expected to be done if someone had discovered some valuable mineral resources there?
LC: I don't know. That would've been interesting. I think that there would've been a gold rush of some sort. I don't know if it would've been like what we had in the old west or even in Alaska, but I think it would've been a major effort by governments that claim certain areas to try to move in and establish a control on the thing.

The United States' policy was that everybody had a right to it, which probably would've been an anarchy-type thing. I think the American policy had worked very well for what's there because as far as I can tell there is not really anything of any value of that type there.

Byrd wrote and claimed there were seams of coal and that type of thing. I never saw any of it. I saw a lot of black rock, but I never saw anything that looked like coal or anything that indicated that there had ever been a plush-type growth.

DOB: Well, in 1959 the participating nations in the IGY negotiated and signed the Antarctic Treaty that said that the continent would be reserved for peaceful uses and particularly for science, and it has been since. Do you think it's possible for those attitudes and activities to continue indefinitely?

LC: I think it will continue as long as there's nothing there to attract greater interest. I think that's why the agreement came to be.

DOB: What do you think of the growing tourism?

LC: It's interesting. I've known several people that have gone. I think they're gluttons for punishment myself. There is some tremendous scenery, there's no doubt about that. It's just fabulous scenery. But beyond that, I can't imagine why anyone would want to go.

DOB: Can the continent stand human encroachment?

LC: No, it couldn't really stand much. There's no growth down there anyway, of course, except a little bit of lichen or something like that in the bottom of melt ponds. So there's not much that can be damaged, but it can become ugly if we keep putting litter and things there. It's not a place to try to have a real tourist-type thing like Charleston.

DOB: What did you do with your life after your polar experience, and what effect if any did your polar experience have on what you did next?

LC: My next job was in a public works department in Florida. About the only effect that it has had is that people are interested in it and interested in what my experiences were and what I thought of it.
DOB: You said people were interested in your polar experiences.

LC: Yes, they've stayed interested in it. I've made talks on that thing as recently as . . . about three or four years ago I made a talk to a group. And I warned them, I said, "I don't think you want to hear this. This is very old news." But they did, and they were interested in the pictures and the maps. I have maps showing the continent and base sites. But that's been the main effect. I guess it probably had some effect on my naval career because it was always in the record of that and a lot of people knew about it.

But as far as my duty after that, it was normal Civil Engineer Corps type duty in public works or a resident officer in charge of construction or staff type duty in various organizations. And I don't think that my experience in that, beyond the experience of living with people and learning how to do that and survive under certain circumstances—and it's always valuable, of course. Yes, I guess it had some effect all right.

DOB: I didn't ask you much about living on the continent in a very strange sort of society. What can you tell me about that?

LC: You live very close with the people that you're involved with. That first night with the tent that fell on us . . . . It gets to be a very close thing, and what do you do about going to the bathroom and things like that, because you're so close to everybody.

But you get to know the people, too, real well and you get to value the things that they value. The things that they're interested in become important to you, too. You feel that they're probably somebody who would do something for you in a problem and that you would do for them if you had the opportunity or the need to.

I think you can—the chances are there to get awful sick of the people, too. We didn't in that particular experience, which is surprising almost. We never really had anybody get real upset and real bothered. And there were occasions when you—the agonizing wait for the helicopter to show up, and he's supposed to come today, he didn't come, and then he didn't come the next day. But that generally didn't affect people. They seemed to get along very well.

DOB: Did you talk a lot about your other lives and learn about your personal . . . ?

LC: Yes, you do. You get so you know everybody's family and what they've got. In that circumstance, at least, everybody is very moral. I don't remember of ever hearing a story of an immoral adventure or anything amongst that group. They never told anything on themselves, at least, of that type.

DOB: They didn't want to admit something when the rest of you were so good.

LC: That maybe has some bearing on it.
DOB: So you spent most of that Deep Freeze I summer out in the field or on a ship.

LC: Yes. All of it. Either on a ship or in the field. I guess I did visit McMurdo one time, the base. It was just to be there and back. I also visited Scott's camp at the same time so I know that I did get over there, but I didn't really stay long enough to see what they were experiencing and what they were doing. They were too busy to be interested in what I was doing.

DOB: Have you been back?

LC: No.

DOB: Would you go back?

LC: Not deliberately. Several years later, oh maybe five years later, I got called by the CEC detailer in BuPers and asked if I was interested in having the job of staff civil engineer on the staff of the admiral that was in charge. I don't think it was Dufek by that time, but whoever it was. And I told him no, and if they wanted me to go, then they'd have to issue me a set of orders. I wasn't going to volunteer for it.

DOB: Why not?

LC: I was a lot more interested in my regular career. And Antarctica, I thought I'd seen all of it I wanted to.

DOB: Been there, done that?

LC: Yes. I don't have the real old explorer mentality. I wonder how George will respond to that. He really was quite an explorer.

DOB: George?

LC: George Moss. You're going to talk to him, and he's probably told you something of his experiences. I see he sent you his scrapbook. I couldn't find my scrapbook. My wife made a scrapbook for me and we talked about it and I think maybe my daughter got it. I'm sure that he's got a good one because he had some real adventures there.

DOB: Yes, he did. If you were an artist and could capture on one canvas the essence of your Antarctic experience, what would you paint?

LC: I guess the thing that I think of is the scene of those mountains and the ice and the snow, and the darkness of it with the beautiful blue sky above it, and maybe Mt. Erebus with the smoke coming out of it. It's the continent itself is what impresses me more than the adventures that I had. I don't know, but that's as close as I can come.
DOB: It's interesting that most of the people—and I ask everybody that question—and most of them describe a scene rather than their own activity.

LC: Yes. That is interesting.

DOB: Paul Siple wrote that the "Antarctic generally wields a profound effect on personality and character and few" are the same after they've been there. Do you agree with that statement and were you changed by your experience?

LC: Yes, I think that is true. And I think every experience changes you. I don't think there's any doubt about that. And definitely I think that one did.

One of the things that affected me was the amount of reading I did on the old explorers and what they—they were very colorful writers. They described in great, beautiful language what they went through, and that affected my writing really. And it affected that report. The way they wrote and what they experienced and felt and so forth went into my writing in that report. There wasn't any doubt about that. I can feel it. I think it has affected my writing ever since because I like to write.

DOB: It's nicely done. What haven't I asked you that I just really should have?

LC: I think you've done well. You've made me think more about that than I have in many, many years. A lot of it I still can't remember in detail—it's been so long. I read that diary before coming, and that was the first time I've read that, I guess, since I wrote it really. And reading that, it brought a lot of it back. A very interesting feeling.

DOB: Any last stories?

LC: I can't think of any right now. Maybe something else will occur while we're having lunch or something.

DOB: All right. Well in that case, thank you so much. It's been a pleasure. I really appreciated talking with you.

LC: Thank you very much for asking me. It's been an adventure just to be with you and to go through these times again.

[End of interview]