BS: This is an oral interview with Lt. Commander Calvin Larsen, conducted by Brian Shoemaker at Lt. Commander Larsen's home in Sequim, Washington on 21 August 2000. The interview is part of the Polar Oral History Project sponsored by the American Polar Society and the Archival Program of the Byrd Polar Research Center on a Grant from the National Science Foundation.

Lt. Commander Larsen, you had a very distinguished career in the Antarctic that I know of and you certainly had a distinguished career before you came to the Antarctic or you wouldn't have been there. We're interested in what got you interested in photography, how you got into photography, where you were educated before that and what got you into the Navy, really. And somewhat from your childhood which I understand was in Montana, to demonstrate what you had to offer when you came to Antarctica.

CL: Well, my background, like you said - I was born in eastern Montana and grew up there. My grandfather got out of the Danish Navy the day Eisenhower was born. My father served in the American Navy in World War I - made many trips across the Atlantic hauling troops back and forth. And I joined the Navy in March of 1945 and in those days, this was during World War II, this is what you did when you became 17 or thereabouts - you got in the military. In my high school class in Culbertson, Montana, I think there were 14 graduates and there was one boy who
graduated. The rest of us had already gone into the military in '45. I went through boot camp in San Diego and then from there went to CASU 5, i.e., Carrier Aircraft Service Unit 5, in North Island. And my cousin had joined the Navy with me and he got on a draft to go to the Philippines and this was right at the end of the War in September of 1945. So, I wanted to go in the worst way and I went over to personnel about getting on the same draft as my cousin was and I really liked the Navy. They had all the water you could use. They had all the food you could eat and these kinds of things. So the Yeoman, second class said, "Sure, but you'll have to join the regular Navy." And I just couldn't believe somebody was actually asking me to do that. And so I signed up then for four years in the regular Navy. Up until then I'd been reserve duration plus six months, or whatever it was. And so I went to the Philippines and there my cousin and I were engaged off-loading ships carrying "C" rations on each shoulder. And one morning they were mustering the working parties there and this boatswain mate says, "I need two high school graduates. One for the print shop and one for the photo lab." And neither one of us had actually graduated from high school, but we talked a good line and so he wound up in the print shop. I wound up in the photo lab, and I went into - I was assigned to Fleet Airwing 10 and in very short order, I was flying and making aerial photographs of all the damaged lighthouses in the Philippines that had been damaged by action during World War II.

BS:  *When was this about?*


BS:  *After the...* 

CL:  After the Japanese had surrendered. Yes. I was still in San Diego when the war ended. So I was doing that and then I talked to personnel one day. Somebody called me up and says, "You know, you have re-enlistment leave coming." I had signed up for four
years and I didn't even know you got re-enlistment leave. And so he said,"You could go on leave right now." And so I took my leave and went back and saw Carol. Carol and I were high school friends.

BS:  *How old were you when you joined?*

CL:  17.

BS:  *And that was in '45. OK.*

CL:  And so I went back on leave and came back and I was shipped out to Guam to the receiving station there and then went on board the *USS Tarawa* into VA-1A - an SB2C Squadron - hell diver - dive bomber squadron.

(50)

Later, Vice Admiral Miller was, Jerry Miller was, he was our executive officer. He was Lt. Commander Miller at the time. So I flew in the SB2C there and we went to Japan, we went to China, we brought the two Marine squadrons out of China - this was when the communists were taking over China. And eventually wound up at Pearl Harbor about 1947 - June of '47 and by then I had figured out that I need some school. And so, we got back to Pearl Harbor. We came in there with 6 squadrons of aircraft aboard. Everything was filled up on the carrier except one catapult track and started launching planes. Pretty soon we had two catapult tracks open. And after about two hours of this the decks were cleared and everybody went to Barber's Point. Like I mentioned, I had figured out by then that I needed training in photography. I loved photography and I had put in and I had made second class by then and put in for photo school and I went to Pensacola, Florida for Photographic A School there. Went through that and then I was asked if
I'd like to go to camera repair school and I did and finished that and did so well at it that I was asked to stay as an instructor. Well, in the meantime, Carol and our relationship was getting closer, so after I finished camera repair school I went back home to Montana and we had a large wedding there in Trinity Lutheran Church on November 9th of 1947. That's when we were married. And so we came back to Pensacola and I went on my instructor duty and that was the first of three tours of instructor duty at Pensacola. I finished teaching there as a master chief, the command chief, and in January of 1962, as I like to say, I was demoted to Ensign on limited duty officer as in photography. But in the meantime, I had been in the combat camera group during the Korean War. I was in the combat camera group as a crew chief. There I did things like we spoke of earlier - the Navy at that time. . . the military was, television was just coming into being and we were producing color film and the networks were very anxious to get our stuff. I did films for Edward R. Murrow like "A day in the life of Charlie Tanks." I did one of an artillery outfit and then we also shot for the motion picture people - "The Bridges at Toko-Ri," I did background and ground footage for that. "The Caine Mutiny," a friend of mine, first class and I was chief at the time - we flew to Subic Bay in the Philippines and we rode the DMS 34, the USS Doyle, a destroyer mine sweeper, I think it was, to Pearl Harbor and all the way en route the skipper of the Doyle, we had him looking for heavy seas so we could get photographs - motion pictures of these heavy seas coming across the bow as they had in "The Caine Mutiny" in the storm there. And then this was used as background footage as they call it. They project it onto a screen in the studio while the acting is taking place on the bridge or whatever it might be. And so . . .

BS: The Navy did this to help the film industry. Were they paid for it?

CL: No. There was no pay involved but it was good for the Navy, I think. It just . . .

BS: Good image.
CL: Good image, yeah. It's like "The Bridges at Toko-Ri." There we photographed out of P2Vs. We took the turret out in the back and we photographed Navy fighters making their banks and turns by us because we was right there with them, you see when they would do. . . We was using the large 35mm Mitchell motion picture cameras at the time. Because I had taught motion picture school after I had become a motion picture photographer. Then I taught motion picture school and then I taught also in the next tour in the PH "B" - the Advanced Photographic School.

(100)

All of my enlisted service was done teaching in Florida. Then in 1956, of course, came the - maybe it was late - no, early '56 came the request for people to volunteer for Deepfreeze. And I put in for that and was accepted, got my orders then for. . .

BS: Was it '56 or '55?

CL: Well, I went down in '56. I rode the USS Glacier down. I think we left Davisville in Rhode Island there about late September probably. We went through the Canal. We stopped in Valparaiso, Chile, and then on down to the Ice. We did not go to New Zealand. We were, at that time we were the earliest ship in history through the ice pack. And as I recall, it was late October when we got into McMurdo and then we sailed on up to, or back, whatever you would call it - back to Little America.

BS: That's October of '56.

CL: Yes. And then I got off.
BS: *Was that when they were getting the first tractor trains off.*

CL: Yes. They were putting the first one together.

BS: *OK.*

CL: And, again, the Captain Dickey called me down and asked - he knew something about my background. I grew up on a farm in Montana, was used to big tractors. I was used to cold weather. I was used to snow. And he asked me if I would like to go on the tractor train and I said, "Yeah. Can I take pictures?" And he said, "Sure. That's one of the reasons you're going." And so I did that and David Boyer, who at that time was an editor, foreign editor of *National Geographic Magazine*, was down there too. And he asked me if I could shoot some pictures on the tractor train that National Geographic could use. And so I told him that I would have to have SEC NAV (*i.e.*, Secretary of the Navy) permission to do that because this was what the Navy manual of photography says. I just didn't give it any further thought. And so about 3 days later, here comes the chief radioman and he says, "Wow. Are we important or what?" you know, and he has this message to the CO from SEC NAV telling him that your chief photographer, Calvin Larsen, has permission and is directed to cooperate with the National Geographic Society in making any photographs that they might wish for. Well, this, as I mentioned earlier, didn't really turn Commander Flynn on, of course. But I went on that tractor train and then as a result, here's this article in *National Geographic Magazine* that I illustrated - Calvin Larsen there. And it's called, "Across the Frozen Desert to Byrd Station," and all these photographs are mine. Well, there are one or two of Boyer's in here. But these kinds of things. David Boyer was the foreign editor of the National Geographic Society at the time.
BS: *Did he come?*

CL: Not on the tractor train, no. But he had been out on a couple of the reconnaissance trips. What they would do is fly out there and

BS: *Go back*

CL: Yeah. And I rode the train all the way to Byrd Station, of course. And we had on our train six tractors. Each outfit weighed, depending on how big it was, about 90 tons. We had the entire initial Byrd base. We had the buildings - that's me right there. We had food, we had fuel. And everything. And when we got there we helped start to put the things together. And there's an incident related in this article which, uh...

BS: *This is September, 1957.*

CL: 1957. There's an incident related in here which is very interesting. It shows up also in Admiral Dufek's book and in Commander Paul Frazier's book, "Antarctic Assault," I guess. But as we come out of the crevasse junction, one of our tractors, and we had the D-9 Caterpillars, one of them broke a push rod. OK. And so it shut down. And so our radio man, the one radio man immediately gets on and asks for a push rod to be flown up.

Well a blizzard was just coming in to Little America and the airplanes were going nowhere and it was going to be 3 days before it was over. Well, I had seen them take this push rod out - the old one that was broken - two pieces of it and they just threw it off in the snow - the Seabee mechanics did. So I went and dug it out and the reason I did that
'cause I wasn't unacquainted with push rods. I can remember my Dad making push rods for the John Deere tractors. Those John Deere tractors were two cylinder tractors. And he would use well rods which is about 3/8ths inch rod and you cut it to the proper length and you take a blow torch and you take the ball off of one end of the broken one and the cup off of the other end and you do, with lots of hammering, you put it back together and after a while you've got a push rod. And you put it back in there and away you go. And so I got a hold of this first class steel worker, or was he a driver - Elliott was his name. And he . . .

BS: _This was on the traverse._

CL: This was on the . . . right after we went through. We hadn't gotten to Byrd yet. And it's all related here in this story. It's also in the book. But . . . so I got a hold of this Elliott and said, "What do you think?" He said, "Yeah. I don't see why we can't do that. You've said you've done it?" I said, "Yeah. My Dad and I used to do that." And we went in and the cook around his table, or stove - I'm sorry - the range - had this steel bar like you have on destroyers and such to keep the pots from going off during rough weather. And we convinced him that we had very good use for a piece of his steel rod. And so we took it out and we got a blow torch, just like we did in Montana, and we cut it to length and after a lot of pounding, we had ourselves a push rod. Well, it was one of those situations, you know, where the train commander - Chief Warrant Officer Victor Young - a fine officer, but do you go and say, "Hey Mr. Young. We have a uh . . . we built a new push rod. Can we put it in the tractor?" We had decided that wouldn't fly because it was sure a non-standard part and everything and so we just put it in the tractor.

BS: _He was a Lt. Commander?_
CL: Warrant Officer. Chief Warrant Officer, Victor Young was. We just put it in the tractor and we started the tractor and, of course, Seabees came out of the woodwork then. Most of them had been sleeping because you get tired driving 12 hours.

BS: *Who did this with you?*

CL: Elliott, his name was. He was a first class driver, CD-1 - construction driver, CD-1. And so we started the tractor and the Seabees came out and Mr. Young comes out there and he says, "What are?..." you know. And he says, "Shut that rig down." And so I tried to calm him down a bit and I said, "Now the Admiral and Commander Frazier, the operations officer, they want this train in Byrd Station, don't they?" "Yeah." And we never shut our tractors down. We didn't even shut down during refueling. And I said, "It's running and it's going to keep running." And I said, "I've done those before, Mr. Young." But he said, "That's a non-standard part." It's true because we made it. But he finally gave in, and so everybody got back in their tractors and away we went.

BS: *All the way to Byrd Station.*

CL: Oh sure. And the reason it got into the various books and magazines was that this Chief journalist was doing the initial writing of a book with Commander Frazier, Paul Frazier. And the story they (the CB officers and the TF staff) were putting out on that was, "Yeah, you just can't stop those Seabees. You just can't stop those Seabees." So I got a hold of him. I had known him before someplace else too. And I said, "You want to know the real story on that push rod." he says,"Yeah." So I told him. He says, "That's a heck of a lot better story than the one the Seabees are putting out, you know." So, I don't know if that push rod ever was taken out of that tractor.
BS: *Was that before you got to the crevasses? You were there when . . .*

CL: No it was after the crevasses.

BS: *You were there with the first guys to ever try and get up on the continent.*

CL: Yeah.

BS: *So you went through that serious crevasse field.*

CL: Yeah.

BS: *Tell me a bit about that. I need to back. I realize you've already got the first section. But let's talk about getting through there. What did you have to cope with? How wide were the crevasses? How deep? And what kind of problems did you have?*

CL: Well, the crevasses were big and they were deep and the reconnaissance party, you see, had gone through ahead of time.

BS: *What were they driving?*

CL: They were just in the Tucker Sno Cats with the crevasse detectors. We knew where the crevasses were. But, uh. . .

BS: *But you had much heavier equipment.*
CL: Oh, our tractors - the ones that have the cranes and the 'dozer blades on them - their
rigs weighed about 90 tons. And so we were much, much heavier. And so it was finding
out where the crevasses were and then setting charges and dropping the bridge that was
over the crevasse and then taking one of the D-9s and gradually just filling the crevasse
so it was half dropped in, half filled, and pretty soon you wound up going down hill and
then up and that's the way they were done then.

BS: *Now tell me... you lost one Cat and one went down a crevasse. Correct, no?*

CL: No. That wasn't us.

BS: *That was before you or after you?*

CL: That was on a different trip. I think that was the trip towards the Rockefeller
Mountains down . . .

BS: *Oh, I see. That was not on the Byrd Station trip. I understand.*

CL: Byrd Station trip, no.

BS: *So Max Kiel was lost.*

CL: That was elsewhere.
BS: Max Kiel was lost on a trip to somewhere else. OK. Now the second question that pertains to all this - the Army with Warrant Officer Phil Smith came down. When did they come down to supposedly help with all of their experience?

CL: Well, they were on the reconnaissance that run the trail to Byrd Land. Major "Skip" Dawson was O-in-C of the recon party. Phil Smith was a Lt as I recall. Both were U.S. Army with Greenland experience.

BS: OK.

CL: They put in a snow cairn with a barrel on it every 25 miles. We had 5 flags to the mile that they had punched those in. And I think it was 5 flag to the mile. There was a cairn with a 55 gal. drum on top of it every 25 miles. And, of course, that's what we aimed at was those. And we would - we went, and we were making about 2.8 miles an hour on our trip to Byrd Land because we were heavily loaded and driving most of the time, I recall, mostly in second gear with the D8s and we would drive, like I said, 12 hours. We would go all day, then we'd quit and then both crews would refuel the tractors. We each had our own supply of diesel fuel in the first sled and then it was pumped up and put into the tractor's tank.

BS: Let's back up again here a second. Kiel was killed before you went on this tractor traverse. Was there a tractor traverse before yours?

CL: No. I'm not real sure. Max Kiel went into his crevasse and to his death in Feb., 1956.
BS: *What I'm getting at is, Dufek makes a big point of calling the Army in because they had a lot of experience in Greenland. And . . .*

CL: See Philip Smith was there too. Now I knew Philip. I got to know him fairly well.

BS: *Yeah. He was head of the Army group.  

CL: **No, Major Dawson was the head.**

CL: Yeah. Didn't he stay with Antarctic Research afterwards as a civilian?

BS: *Forever. 

CL: Right.

BS: *Forever.*

CL: OK. Well, I knew him after he was that, too. But he was there on that first one when they did the reconnaissance, as we called it.

BS: *He led the reconnaissance, then.*

CL: I thought it was an Army Major, but you say it may have been a warrant officer.

BS: *Well. Smith probably. . . probably had a Major in charge, but Smith was the guy who had done it in Greenland.*
CL: OK. Yeah. I agree.

BS: OK. So I understand now and it's very revealing on Kiel. OK. So, it took you how long to get through that crevasse field?

CL: I think about three, four days. This is the first time that we had shut the tractors down.

BS: Uh-huh. And did you rope them together? Chain them together?

CL: Tractors? No. We went individually.

BS: Abreast, or following?

CL: No. Following. We'd prepare and uh... get it prepared and going I think there were about two tractors who were unhooked that were doing the work of the dozing and such on.

BS: And those were just all Seabees, you said, and photographers.

CL: On the tractor train.

BS: No Army...?
CL: No. Absolutely not. The Chief Warrant Officer, Victor Young, was the O-in-C (i.e., "Officer in Charge") of the tractor train, or the train commander, I guess you'd call him. And then we had a Seabee Chief, and there were all the other Seabee rates. There were six rigs - six tractors, and of course Chief Warrant Officer Young did not drive and the assistant, who was the Chief Seabee, didn't drive either. They were the shift commanders. I drove my 12 hours and then I took my pictures. The first class radioman drove and then he did his dit-dat-dits, or did his radio work. But then the only other person who did not drive was the cook. We had a first class cook. **CWO Young and the CB Chief did not drive the tractors. The cook, a first class, did not drive. The other two non-Seabees on the train, myself and the radioman, both drove our 12 hour shifts.**

BS: *He was up all the time.*

CL: That's right. When we got off the shift, the off-going crew ate supper. The on-going crew had just had breakfast made for them.

BS: *I understand how it worked. Now, other tractor trains followed you. How did they know where to go?*

CL: Well the flags were still there and the cairns were still there. And after about the second trip, you had large tracks and drifts from the . . you can see from this photograph here the ruts that we made.

BS: *You call this the highway? Wasn't there a word . . .?*

CL: Byrd Trail is all we called it.
BS: Byrd Trail?

CL: Yeah.

BS: Yeah. Byrd Trail, for Admiral Byrd, huh?

CL: Yeah. Well, it's for Marie Byrd, because it's Marie Byrd Land, and so that's where the - I think Marie Byrd was his wife, huh?

BS: That's correct.

CL: But this is how we would drop the crevasses, like that.

BS: You used explosives.

CL: Explosives. And drop a crevasse. And then it would go in. And then you would see how much you had to fill, and then you started filling.

BS: So you're just pushing snow in until you got it filled.

CL: Push snow in until it came up to level, because you were taking the snow you were pushing in was coming off the top edge of the crevasse.

BS: How did you get fuel for the Cats and everything out there? That's a pretty long traverse.
CL: About half way there, the VX6, the R4Ds had flown in fuel in two large 5000 gallon rubber tanks that were on the snow and when we got to that point, then we refueled our . . .

BS: *Were these roll-off bladders?*

CL: No, these were big ones that spread out.

BS: *OK.*

(300)

CL: And we had . . . I forget what they each held - 5000 gallons, I think. But, each - you had a tractor and two sleds you pulled. The front of the first sled had large fuel tanks - two of them, I think, in it. And this was what provided the fuel - that tank provided the fuel for that tractor for the first half of the trip - about 600 miles. No, I'm sorry. I think the round-trip was, what? - around 1200-1300 miles, so it would have been about 300 miles and then we refueled. And then when we got to that fuel dump there, just after Crevasse Junction, we filled then the sled tanks again and headed for Byrd and of course when we got to Byrd, the fuel had been pre-laid in there too

BS: *By aircraft.*

CL: By VX6 R4Ds.

BS: *OK. So you had about 700 miles getting out to Byrd Station.*

CL: Yes.
BS: *And how many days did that take you?*

CL: I'm trying to think . . . We made 2.4 miles an hour when we were going, and we went for about 23 hours a day, we were underway, so I suppose you might could figure it out from that. As far as actually recalling, we spent about 3-4 days at Crevasse Junction. It seems to me in my mind that it was between a good two weeks, maybe - 2-1/2 weeks to make the trip up.

BS: *Uh-huh. So about 55 miles a day.*

CL: Yeah. That seems to ring a bell because we went by two snow cairns in a day. Well, they were 25 miles apart, or something like that.

BS: *OK. That's about 55 miles a day. OK. That's very important. So you did the 700 miles in about two weeks which comes out about right.*

CL: Yeah. Well someone could figure the arithmetic on it. But I remember the 2.8 miles an hour and coming back, when we were empty, running in fourth gear, we got up to over 4 miles an hour.

BS: *Do you remember any of the pilots who flew stuff up?*

CL: Oh sure. Harvey Speed was outstanding.

BS: *Harvey Speed? How 'bout Eddie Frankiewicz?*
CL: I remember the name. I didn't know him personally. Harvey was not only a superb pilot. He was one of those people like you were talking about Lloyd Beebe that was always there to help whenever you were doing something. If I was carrying camera cases, and so forth, he's say, "Hey, can I take that Chief?" You know, one of these kind of people, was Harvey Speed. And he could make an airplane talk. I've never been a pilot, but I've flown an awful lot in the Navy and I was Skipper's navigators in the photo squadron and some people can make an airplane talk and uh . . .

BS: *He was a Lieutenant Commander?*

CL: At that time he was a Lieutenant, but he did make Lt. Commander, yes, before he retired and later died of cancer.

BS: *OK. So, you get to Byrd Station. What was there?*


BS: *What did you do when you got there? Did you help build the place or help build the station?*

(350)

CL: No. 'cause there were people flown in and the same planes that flew people in to build - I went back to Little America because I had other things to do as a photographer. Here's the post that was at Byrd Station when we got there. It was a post put in the snow that the recon party had put 80 degrees South, 120 degrees West on it.
BS: *That's what it says on that post.*

CL: Yes.

BS: *OK. So that was the post and after you got there, they flew in construction people.*

CL: Construction people, although there were construction people as drivers on the tractor train too.

BS: *OK. And how long did it take you to unload and get turned around and headed back.*

CL: I don't know because I flew out within the first 24 hours because they had the new construction crews there and I went back on those planes.

BS: *And who brought the supplies?*

CL: That'd be Harvey Speed and

BS: *Victor Young bring the tractor train back?*

CL: Yes. Yeah he took that tractor train all the way through.

BS: *So that was the first tractor train set up in Byrd Station.*

CL: Yeah.
BS: *OK. And so you flew back. What did you do when you got back there?*

CL: Well, I was doing aerial photography of the ice shelf, I suppose. And photography of the - you take like this book right here - you ask about the kind of photography I did. I have 76 photographs in this book and this is the Deepfreeze I book - the 1956 book.

BS: *So you did personal photography . . .*

CL: No. This is Navy.

BS: *Well, I didn't mean it that way. Personal. But back at Little America. They assigned you to do photographic, aerial photography work at that time?*

CL: Well, no one assigned me to do anything. I was the Chief in charge of photography in the Antarctic.

BS: *I gotcha!*

CL: And so when Commander Frazier and those people would get to talking about, "Well I wonder if there's a crack up there," I would say, "You know, get me an airplane and I'll go up and make photographs and then we'll study it and we'll see if there is," kind of thing. I had been a crew chief in combat camera in Korea and had supervised photographic operations in a number of places. I was one of the few Navy enlisted motion picture directors with that NEC (Navy Enlisted job Code).

BS: *So all the photographers reported to you at what, Little America?*
CL: No. Not really reported. I wouldn't use that term. They were... the three of them... one at McMurdo, one at Wilkes and one at Weddell Sea. I had a second class at Little America with me and the other photographers were first class. And they were completely competent. They didn't need my supervision.

BS: I understand.

CL: Yeah.

BS: But was there a photo unit?

CL: No.

BS: You were assigned MCB.

CL: I was assigned to MCB Special, that's right.

BS: I gotcha. And they were too.

CL: They were too. Yeah. We were all in the MCB Special.

BS: OK. So, I forgot to ask you. The first thing you did - you got off the ship and went on a tractor train?

(400)

CL: Almost.
BS: *Un-huh.*

CL: You didn't do much.

BS: *A few days and off you went. OK.*

CL: Because they were putting this tractor train together, and they wanted to go. I was telling you about this blast I made down there.

BS: *This is before the . . . uh*

CL: This is before the tractor train left and this crack is appearing in the ice. Someone had detected it. And so I got in the air. Got a helicopter or something and we found out, through my photographs, where this crack was and then - ol' Gudmundson here. . .

BS: *"Goody" Gudmundson*

CL: *"Goody" Gudmundson. Put in the shape charges all around there.*

BS: *Blew it out.*

CL: And our iceberg went to sea and we had new places to tie up the ships.

BS: *Safer port.*

CL: Yep. No more icebergs coming from there.
BS: And so "Goody" Gudmundson did that. I did an oral history on Goody, by the way.

CL: Did you?

BS: Sure did. He's doing fine.

CL: Is he? Yeah. We saw them a few years ago down in Escondido

BS: Yeah. That's where he still is. So you saw a crack in the ice and you used explosives to blow out the iceberg and create a port.

CL: Yeah. Goody put shape charges all in that and then when they all went off, then the iceberg just went.

BS: OK. So you used your photography to show that this was an unsafe piece of ice that they were unloading on.

CL: Well, uh . . yes. And I think Commander Frazier had sort of figured that out but just didn't know where the crack was, exactly. But in the air with using your shadows and your light, you can see more than you can see on the ground when you're standing there staring at it.

BS: Um-huh. OK.

CL: Let me go . . . can I go back to the USS Glacier, coming down? Now here's some photographs that I made on the Glacier. They didn't have photographs, for instance, of a
bow of a ship breaking ice, so I got the XO to swing out a boom and hang me out there and then I made photographs just right down of the bow of the Glacier breaking ice there. And this - we went through - we were the earliest ship in history to go through the ice and it took us a while. I forget just how long. But we were completely covered with ice like this photograph here shows. So . . . and here's some of the way Crevasse Junction looked.

BS: Um-huh.

CL: Pressure ridges, and so forth. And these kinds of things don't tell you a whole lot about what - there's Victor Young. And there's Smith, I think. Philip Smith. This is . . . you can see here how far down that we dozed to get some of the crevasses. It was like cutting a trail through some of the mountains, as it were. You just . . .

(450)

BS: OK. So, you're back in Little America. The first tractor train is returning and you're there being assigned to other duties.

CL: Well, I'm making motion pictures and the - and this wasn't true of just the photographers - those of us who were selected to go down there, in looking back in hindsight, I can see where we were very competent. We had a long record of performance behind us. And there was no photographic officer, for instance, at Little America. No one told me what to do - that you should do this, or do this. As a photographer, I knew what to do and so did my first class at Wilkes, and so on. The only time this came up, when, as I relate there, I hadn't had many reports from McMurdo and so Captain Dickey, Com Nav Antarctica, and now this is moving on towards the end of the winter night, and he called me and said, "Chief, I'd like to know . . . do you know how many photographs have been
made by each of the labs?" And I said,"No," because I hadn't pursued it. I trusted my people completely. And he said, "How 'bout finding out?"

BS:  *This was the winter night?*

CL:  This was after the winter night.

BS:  *You stayed the winter '56 - '57. So you wintered in '57.*

CL:  Right.

BS:  *You were there when IGY started.*

CL:  Yes.

BS:  *You wintered with Goody.*

CL:  Uh-huh.

BS:  *OK. You knew Remington? He was a civilian meteorologist.*

CL:  Yeah. Um-hum. There's pictures in these books of all those people, and also in the slides that went down to Byrd, or the Polar Research Center, there's uh. . .

BS:  *Let me back you up a little bit. I want to see what you did the rest of that summer and then take you into the winter night.*

CL:  OK.
BS: So you blew up the iceberg and were you assigned to any other trail parties?

CL: Yes, in about early February, the second tractor train was getting ready to leave and left and it was under the train commander was Lt JG White. The assistant was Chief Quartermaster Verbincoeur, Ben Verbincoeur.

(500)

BS: Um-hum.

CL: And it took off. It was about 40 below the morning it left. There are pictures in here someplace of steam and clouds all over. And the - about three weeks later or so, Captain Dickey, Com Nav Antarctica, calls me in, so I went down to see him and he told me we're having troubles with the tractor train. Mr. White's crew - they're taking up to two hours to make fuel stops to change crews. He said, "I'm flying you up to Byrd Station and here's Mr. White's orders and you will give them to him and escort him to the plane and then Chief Verbincoeur will take over as train commander and you will be Assistant train commander and you will bring that train back as fast as possible." Because it was getting late in the season. This was getting into March sometime - late March, I suppose. And so I did that, and Mr. White came back and we had a couple . . . the first morning was interesting because I had taken over what had been Mr. White's shift, so I held reveille and there wasn't a lot of movement that morning and I got them out there - I just literally had to pull some of them out and the next morning - they had a trash can in there - and I had a 24" pipe wrench, and I held reveille an hour earlier than that to see if we could make it. And so I told them, you know, if everyone is not ready tomorrow morning, reveille is an hour earlier yet. And so that day the shift commander during the shift would
deliver lunch around to each driver in the Tucker Sno Cat we had that ran around and so I get over to one of the tractors and he said, "Hey Chief, jump on board." And so I jumped up there on the platform on the D9 and he says, "You win." And that was it. After that we made records that were never broken as far as I know, going back. He says, "You win." But they were a good crew. They were just . . .

BS: Verbincoeur had a pretty good . . . pretty good shape.

CL: Oh yeah. Have you had a chance to interview him, by any chance?

BS: He won't do an interview.

CL: Doesn't want to. . . He's uh . . .

BS: At first he wanted to with me, but a lady went down there to do a couple of Admiral Byrd's guys and she said, who else can I do while I'm here, so I asked her to call him. And I think maybe he wouldn't do it with her. And then I called and said why? He's made up his mind and backed off.

(550)

CL: Well, Verbincoeur is a French Canadian. His people were . . . they didn't capitalize their names when they wrote their names. There are still some people like. It makes yourself too important, and so on. But I see Ben nearly every winter down in Arizona. We go to Shoney's and have breakfast together. And we had - to tell you what kind of a guy he is - we're having our meeting before the winter night and everybody had left. We're all alone there. And I forget - it was the O-in-C there at Little America - Waldron-
not Waldron, but Orndoff. Lt. Commander Orndoff. And Capt. Dickey said, "Well, we're
goin' to need a watch system or something like that because we're going to run normal
working hours. Even though it's dark all the time, we'll start work at 0800 and so on and
so, meals will be at such and such a time, but we're going to need somebody on watch at
night when people are sleeping." And so, Chief Verbincoeur stands up and Captain says,
"Yes Chief?" And he says, uh, "I'll take the watch, Captain." And he did. He stood every
night watch for the entire winter night. And every morning we'd get this thing over the
PA system . . . he'd play this record, " One hour ahead of the posse."

BS:  *Tell me. Who was Bert Crary? Did he winter with you?*

CL:  Yeah.

BS:  *And, uh, who was the former Skipper of the Glacier? .*

CL:  Maher?

BS:  *Maher.*

CL:  No. Maher was the Skipper of the *Glacier* when I came down on it.

BS:  *I understand.*

CL:  But he wasn't . . .

BS:  *But later on, he was O-in-C of the winter over group, I think maybe the next winter.*
CL:  Oh. OK

BS:  So, yeah, He and Bert Crary were buddies. You heard about both of them coming out to make it to greet the planes the following year.

CL:  No.

BS:  Yeah. They both stood out there and taxied the planes in. But anyway. OK. Here you are. You get back with the tractor train. The winter has started, basically. What did you do for the winter. What kind of photography? Did you do auroras? Did you . . . uh?

CL:  Yeah. I did some of that. And then . .

BS:  Sun dogs?

CL:  I had my own aurora. Ed Kamp, Chief Mech rigged up a Weasel for me with a generator on it - a good size generator that I had flood lamps on and so I could make motion pictures at night of people working out on the - whether it was tractors or ice or doing whatever, and so I did quite a bit of motion pictures outside during the winter night. And, of course, Little America was completely covered. During the blizzards we would have . . . the only access was through 54 gallon drums that had been welded together and we had a ladder going up those to access or exit.  But mostly of people working, I suppose. In fact, I made photographs of everyone.

(End of Tape 1 - Side A)
CL: Some of the photography I did - this is an example here, for instance, of all of the men doing their various specialized jobs. Navy aviation and so on. Here's more in this book. I think in that book I have 126 photographs, for instance - a book covering the whole Antarctic.

BS: *Were these photographs* . . .

CL: These are Navy photographs.

BS: *Are they back in the Naval Photo Archives?*

CL: They are now at the National - what is it where they keep photographs?

BS: *National Photo Interpretation Center?*

CL: No. It's a civilian, uh. . .

BS: *You took this?*

CL: No. Who did that one? Charlie Arndt?

BS: *Collins Rayo Corp.*
CL: Oh.

BS: *So, the Navy has these.*

CL: No, the Navy doesn't have them. When I was . . . I was head of the Still Picture Department at the Naval Photographic Center in 1966-67 and I was able to get all . . . we had pictures there from the Civil War forward on glass plates, and I was able to get all that transferred into the . . .

BS: *National Archives?*

CL: National Archives.

BS: *OK.*

CL: Into the National Archives. That's where these photographs are today is in the National Archives.

BS: *Um-hum. OK.*

CL: Yeah. We had tens of thousands of photographs there and . . .

BS: *And they're all catalogued and all that?*

CL: Oh, I don't know about that.
BS: *OK. So you took these during the winter of the personnel and the work that was done to build the camp.*

CL: This is the pictures I made of scientists working.

BS: *Un-huh.*

CL: These you can see some of them. Their names are down below.

BS: *And Dr. Siple was there?*

CL: Yep.

BS: *He wintered?*

CL: No. He was at South Pole.

BS: *He was at South Pole, right. OK. And there's Funkes?*

CL: Funkes was there. But many of these people used photography in their work and I would help them out. Help them improve their photography, either through technique or utilizing their equipment more effectively and this kind of thing. And I worked closely with many of them. The Danish - and I can't remember his name - the Danish, uh. . . he did ionosphere work. . . **Hans Bengaard.**

BS: *So you supported the scientists. Did you help the scientists at all?*
CL: Well in that respect - photographically.

BS: But they didn't use you as a warm body to help with their experiments?

CL: No. Well, only in the one that - we had a fellow . . . somebody there from Alaska where some of the . . . I didn't partake in it, but some of the people did on caloric intake and weight and the amount of work you were doing and this kind of thing where, this went on for some time because this is the only . . . one of the few times when you could have total control over the caloric intake of an individual.

BS: Um-hum. And IGY started July 1st.

CL: Of 1957.

BS: Did they have a kick-off or anything to celebrate it? They just - they were already doing their science?

CL: Yeah. I don't think we worried much about that. We had a mid-winter's night party, I remember, and, uh . . .

BS: June 21st?


BS: And . . . OK. You get through the winter and . . . tell me, going into the winter . . . the sun went down. Was anybody affected by the darkness so they were uncomfortable?
CL: Not that I . . . I don't recall. I still went out to our airfield there - Kiel Field - and took pictures of the guys working out there.

BS: Do you remember the sun coming up?

CL: Yeah. Well, you could see the horizon brightening and . . .

BS: You had twilight for a couple of days.

CL: Oh yeah. Twilight for weeks. Our sun went down at Little America - I think it went down completely in, what? April - late April sometime and then came up again in August. June 21st would have been the low point and we took the flag down. I remember that. We had a ceremony to take the flag down - the night it went down. Ben Verbincoeur - I think there's a picture in one of the books there. Ben Verbincoeur and our chief radioman was out there and some of the others had a flag-lowering ceremony.

BS: Um-hum. So . . .

(50)

CL: But . . .uh. . . Life went on. We had normal hours and Saturday and Sunday, we were off. We took rope-yarn - what do you call it? Rope-yarn Sunday on Wednesday afternoon. And people did their laundry. Our work hours still 8:00 o'clock in the morning or whatever it was - we ran regular routines.

BS: Did you run on New Zealand time?
CL: No. International Zulu time.

BS: *You ran on Zulu time.*

CL: Yeah. OK.

BS: *So, did you, for communications - how did you talk to the world? How did you talk to Carol?*

CL: Ham radio.

BS: *Who was your ham radio operator?*

CL: We had a chief radioman, Williams. Williams, his name was. And then we had another radioman, Chief Baldwin, who . . .

BS: *Walt Jones.*

CL: No.

BS: *No?*

CL: Another chief, I'm talking about. Jones - I certainly remember the name, but . . .

BS: *He was the - he wintered with you.*

CL: Yeah.
BS: *Big guy.*

CL: Yeah.

BS: *Lanky.*

CL: That's right. I talked to Carol about once a month. See, we were quite a few people there at Little America. We had . . .

BS: *Yeah. Had to schedule it.*

CL: We had a good community of scientists. I think there must have been 20 or 35. And there's pictures in front there of all the people that wintered over.

BS: *Got along well with the scientists? Everybody?*

CL: Um-hum. They are reduced so much, you can't read their names. I shot the photograph because I had a big board put up in the, in our recreation area which had pictures of everybody, so everybody would know who others were. That's one of the things I did too was to take portraits of everybody. We stayed real busy.

BS: *Anyway. . . you're in the middle of the winter and you have to talk to home. How important was ham radio to everyone?*

CL: Oh, I think it was very important. It was strange because when we first started the wintering-over, we had a newsletter that we - I don't know who did it and printed it up,
with world news on it, and so forth. And very quickly, no one was interested in what was going on outside there. We were - for instance - Sputnik went up when we were down there and we had a Russian scientist there.

BS: *What was his name?*

CL: Vladimir - I've got a picture of him in here someplace. **Vladimir I. Rastogurev.**

BS: *It doesn't matter.*

CL: But - yeah. And so even when the Sputnik went up - oh well, that's interesting, you know. He wasn't even overly excited about it, I don't think. I don't recall it. But we were a very closed community and I think our only concerns were our families which we contacted with ham radio, so that was the news - if someone talked to his wife and children back in New York - that was the news for the evening meal. 'How are they doing?' 'What are they doing?' and that sort of thing. If I talked to Carol and Sonya, our daughter, was born on Nov. 29th right shortly after I had gotten to the Ice. And so people were concerned about that kind of thing.

BS: *The only world that mattered was yours.*

CL: That's right.

BS: *So, the ham radio was extremely important. Did anybody get any "Dear Johns," or anything like that over ham radio, or messages?*
CL: Oh, yeah. I can tell you a funny one about that. I helped build the - five of us were flown in to help build the base at Beardmore after Liv Glacier Base was abandoned and when we were first there, we did our radio work this way, you know, and the chief radioman on his key and we're turning the generator, and so forth, and then you would write this stuff down and give it to the Captain. Well, one day afterwards, he handed the stuff to the Captain and a little later on the Captain comes over to see me and he said, and this was after, remember the kid out there with the ice on his face - Miller, his name was - he was a third-class engine man, or motor mechanic - and his father had been killed in a bar fight, or in a bar.

(100)

And so, the Captain says, "How in the world am I going to tell him that?" And I said, "All you can do is tell him." And so it was quite a thing to bring up. And so he does, and he's in the corner of our Jamesway there telling him this and this young kid says, "I always wondered when somebody was going to kill that s.o.b." And we all . . . what we had just witnessed, you know. It was really a weird experience. But the kid later, then, told us that his Dad had been in fights and stuff for as long as he could remember. He said it was just a matter of time.

BS: Let me . . . you touched on something that we skipped over, obviously, and that's the Liv Glacier thing which happened in November of '56, right?

CL: Yeah.

BS: How did you get in on that?
CL: Well . . .

BS: You got down there and . . .

CL: Got down there and this was after the tractor train. My part of that was - the only part I had in on that was to fly in there and help take the fuel out that was there. Aviation gasoline had been put in there in 54 gallon drums and I forget how many of them were. And so, I wanted to take pictures of that and I think it was Harvey Speed again, who was flying in there and we were going to haul that fuel out of there. And so we got ourselves some timbers and, I don't know, there were 4 or 6 of us. And rolled those barrels of fuel into the door of the R4D and then they went on forward.

BS: This is at Little America.

CL: No, no. This was at Liv Glacier. We were bringing the fuel . . .

BS: I want to know how you got out to Liv Glacier.

CL: Flew out in an R4D.

BS: From where?

CL: Little America.

BS: OK. So, but the flights to South Pole came out of McMurdo.

CL: Yes.
BS: *OK. So you flew out and built the - they flew out and set up the Liv Glacier before you?*

CL: It had never been really set up.

BS: *But somebody was out there.*

CL: No. There was no one there. All that was there were these barrels of fuel. And so we took the barrels of fuel out and flew them back to Little America and off-loaded them there 'cause fuel at that point - aviation fuel - was kind of a precious commodity.

BS: *Yeah. This was after the South Pole flight, or . . ?*

CL: Oh, I'm sure it was after.

BS: *So you went out after the South Pole flight to Liv Glacier.*

CL: Oh, I wouldn't be that specific about it because . . .

BS: *South Pole flight was November - October 31st of '56.*

CL: Of '56, yeah. So this would have been after that that I went to Liv Glacier. And then the base at Beardmore, you see, that was not put in until - what? September of '57? Something like that and there was - as I showed you in the photograph out in the garage, there was 5 of us that were flown in there - there was two planes that went in. We had two Jamesways and there was the Marine Captain in charge, there was chief radioman,
first class dental tech, first class aviation boatswain mate and myself, chief photographer. There were no Seabees and we had practiced putting up a Jamesway back at McMurdo and it was 63 degrees below zero when we landed there - I think it was September 18th or something like that rings a bell. And we off-loaded, the planes never shut down their engines, of course - we off-loaded and there's pictures of that in here too. The planes taxied off and left and there we started building Jamesways with great vigor. We had coffee on. . . .

BS: *And you were assigned to the Beardmore strip, to help.*

CL: Yeah.

BS: *So you went out to photograph it and they put you do work.*

CL: I also photographed it. Well, they didn't put me to work. I volunteered.

BS: *I understand.*

CL: We all worked.

BS: Yeah.

CL: You know, no one - this is the thing I think people have a hard time understanding a lot of these things. There were no bosses.

BS: *Um-hum. You just were all pros.*
CL: Everybody did the best they could and I am a helper kind of thing.

BS: *Yeah. So that was put in September '56 and . . .*

CL: No. September '57.

BS: *'57, that's right.*

(150)

CL: September of '57 and then they - we put in these large 5000 gallon fuel tanks was in there that was filled and then if planes coming from the Pole needed fuel, they could stop and get fuel and this kind of thing.

BS: *For planes coming back from Pole.*

CL: Yeah. It was directly en route from McMurdo to the South Pole.

BS: *OK.*

CL: And it was at the base of Beardmore Glacier, maybe about 15 miles or something. The weather is so clear there that it looked like it was right there.

BS: *OK. Now, when did you get involved with the Crary traverse?*

CL: That was right after that.
BS: *After Beardmore.*

CL: Yeah. Right after Beardmore. I came back and Dr. Crary was getting ready to go out and I think he asked me if I'd like to go or I said, "Hey, I'd like to take pictures."

BS: *Now this was a scientific traverse.*

CL: Absolutely.

BS: *And what was the traverse called?*

CL: Ross Ice Shelf Traverse.

BS: *OK.*

CL: Here it is, right here. Science traverses.

BS: *Can I see this?*

CL: Yes, please do. Ross Ice Shelf Traverse.

BS: *OK. So, you went out on the Ross Ice Shelf traverse with Dr. Bert Crary . . .*

CL: Dr. Bert Crary, right. And . . .

BS: *And where did that depart from?*
CL: Little America. And we headed first for Roosevelt Island and we had. . . Peter Shoek was with us - he was the glaciologist, I think. And there was . . .

BS: *Peter Shoek?*

CL: S-h-o-e-k.

BS: *Um-hum.*

CL: Hugh Bennett was with us. There was a Seabee mechanic and driver with us. I forget his name, but I think it's in here someplace.

BS: *Um-hum. Is Peter Shoek alive today?*

CL: As far as I know. Yeah. He was at the University of Minneapolis last I heard.

BS: *OK. And, uh, Bert Crary, of course.*

CL: Bert Crary. Um-hum.

BS: *And, uh. . . you went to Ross - not Ross, but Roosevelt Island?*

CL: Roosevelt Island, yes.

BS: *And you went up and over the island, or . . .?*
CL: Well, I left it on the island because that's where Peter Shoek fell into a crevasse there and was hurt. It was so funny - we had these ridges there and Peter was always investigating things. He was out there digging, you know, and I hollered at him, I said, "Peter, you're going to dig yourself right into a crevasse one of these days." Or, "I'll bet you a case of beer you're gonna" . . and uh, so, sure enough, Peter just flat disappeared. And he had fallen about - it was about 60 feet. Hugh Bennett went down and Peter had broken his back and so Hugh Bennett went down and literally strapped Peter's body to his back and then, of course, at that time, then you've got two down and five up. And so we tried to pull him up by rope, because, you know, Bennett couldn't do anything other than keep him off the Ice as Peter was in great pain. And in the end, we wound up using the Sno Cat pulling on the rope, and then, of course, the rope cut through the edge of the crevasse and it was a pretty painful process, but we got him out of there. In the meantime, they had radioed and they had an evacuation plane come in. Lieutenant Waldron came in and he stopped his plane about a quarter of a mile from where we were and we had to tow Peter over on a sled. And I came back with Peter to Little America. And Peter was evacuated, then, to New Zealand almost immediately with his broken back. And about two weeks later, here comes one of the supply people and he says, "I got something for you." And he's got this box and I open it up and here it's a case of beer from Peter Shoek. And he says, "You was right. Here's the beer!"

Peter Shoek was a sketch. He was German, of course, and he had been in the German Navy late in World War II in rank equivalent to our Ensign. Captain Dickey liked to meet with various groups and discuss matters. I recall one meeting, but don't remember what the subject was, where someone suggested doing something in a certain way, and Peter comes back, "Mein Gott, ve vouldn't do it that way in the German Navy!" Then one of the chiefs immediately came back loud and clear, "Peter, we sunk the German Navy!" And everyone had a laugh. Peter studied the aurora and air glow and had a camera that automatically recorded such
through a glass dome above his lab. In the interview I mentioned the Weasel that Chief Ed Camp modified with a generator that powered my flood lights for winter night photography outside. Peter called this outfit "The Roving Aurora" since the lights from it also triggered his auto recording equipment. So I would let him know when I was going out to work and he would turn his equipment off temporarily.

(200)

BS: So you came back to Little America from Roosevelt Island. You didn't' go back on the traverse again.

CL: Oh no. No, I just wondered. . . when you're photographing, it kind of covers many subjects, is what it was. All you can do, or try to do - if you're going to get all of it is you just spend a little time in each operation and, 'cause I covered air crews and their work, mechanics, I mean you name it, and uh . . . and so you, I suppose I was with them 10 days, 2 weeks. The traverse didn't travel any great distance. They would move along and then at night they would do augers clear down and pull up samples - core samples. And . . .

BS: Did you go on any other flights after that?

CL: Oh I'm sure I went on at least photo flights, yeah.

BS: Um-hum. And . . . so anyway, you're done with the Peter Shoek thing, and you're back in Little America.

CL: Right.
BS: *What was your next adventure?*

CL: I . . . let's see, that would have been getting close to the time when we were coming home - heading back out. I was being relieved and, 'cause that must have been in, you know, October, November or something like that. And I think I left there in late November or early December. I was down there 13 months on the Ice.

BS: *November 1957. So you made two traverses. The one completely to and from Byrd and then traverse two you went . . .*

CL: Well, the one to and from Byrd, I went first on the - the first tractor train went to Byrd and then I . . .

BS: *And on the other one, you did the reverse.*

CL: That's right.

BS: *You came back. OK. So, basically, you have a good feeling for both those traverses. Tell me about Bert Crary.*

CL: Very hard working. During the winter night, for instance, I used to photograph the scientists working during the winter night and he did celestial, or star shots I think every 24 hours. He did star shots of a whole series of places there near Little America to determine how much the Ice Shelf was moving and what direction it was moving in. And that's a slow and cumbersome thing to do, you know, and it's a cold thing to do in the middle of the winter night there. But he did that day after day after day.
BS: *So he was finding out actually how much Little America was moving.*

CL: Yes. I think we... as I recall, we moved something like two miles North while we were there, or something. I forget the figures.

BS: *Um-hum.*

CL: But we were told after Bert had done all his arithmetic, how much we moved.

BS: *Did you get to work with Admiral Dufek?*

CL: Oh yes. I... let's see, I'll show you his book here. I shot the picture that's on the cover of his book and I just talked to him when I would be making pictures sometimes... very uh... I don't know where we had been before or working in the same place,

(250)

whether it was Korea or what, but he was a very pleasant person and he, like Captain Dickey, you could tell, truly respected the enlisted men and their skills and talents. And this is one of the difficulties, of course, with so many of the - with Commander Flynn, like, and the Seabees - that if you weren't a Seabee, you didn't count for nothin'. But Dufek was highly regarded. Of course he never lived at Little America. He stayed on the ship, of course. Whereas, Captain Dickey Com Nav Antarctica, lived at Little America.

BS: *Tell me what happened to Orndorff?*
CL: I don't know. He was the O-in-C there. He was the one that called me down, I think it's in that letter there - that one day I got called down and he had my annual evaluation sheet. Now this was - I was E-7 - and he shows it to me and this is signed by Commander Flynn over in McMurdo and I have 2.8s right straight down the far right side which, of course, would remove my gold hash marks and everything else - would have destroyed my career. And I just looked at it and I guess I probably turned a little white, you know. And he said, "Give it back to me, Chief." So he took it and tore it up and threw it in the trash can and he says," How 'bout writing your own?" Which I did. That time I got 4.0s, of course, and a helluva good write-up. But there were so many people down there, just like the Chief Yeoman at McMurdo who snatched - because that thing that Flynn had written on me - that was headed for Washington, DC. And the Chief Yeoman just jerked it and sent it over to Captain Dickey instead and . . . for which I've been eternally grateful.

Another thing that Captain Dickey did every 2-3 months was to show up at the chief's quarters with a case of beer on his shoulder. Then he'd get opinions and thoughts from us. He'd handle it in such a way that at the time one thought, "Wow, that Captain Dickey is certainly one superbly smooth conversationalist."

BS: So you owe the Chief Yeoman a debt of gratitude.

CL: Yep.

BS: A lot of good men have been hurt by some bad leaders.

CL: Oh yeah.
BS:  *Unfortunate. It's not just in the Navy. It's everywhere. So, anyway, you went back home. Did you transfer out for more... different duty?*

CL:  Oh yes. I left the Antarctic down there and came to Montana. Picked up Carol and our children and went to the Fleet Air Photo Lab (Light Photo Squadron 63) at Miramar, California. And I was the Production Chief there. And I went to the Rochester Institute of Technology. The Photo Officer had this new school - quantitative quality analysis or some such, and RIT was the best photographic, technical school in the US. Still is today. And I went there for a summer course in 1958 and that summer, or that fall, we took our first E-8 examinations and on the first E-8 list there was three Chief Photographers and I was one of them. And then I took over Leading Chief then at Miramar.

BS:  *So, a question... these beautiful Deepfreeze Yearbooks - who was in charge of putting all this photography together in these books?*

CL:  A Chief Journalist by the name of - he was very helpful down there also and he saw that a lot of my work got used - Chief Journalist Joseph Oglesby was the editor of these and he put them together.

BS:  *And you did it back home.*

CL:  Oh yes. Yeah, he didn't winter over there. He was down there just with the task force in the summertime.

BS:  *OK. Now, the... did you come back to the Antarctic?*

(300)
CL: Not until I was commissioned on 1 January 1962. I flew as a navigator in the RA-3s for 3-1/2 or so years and then went to Washington and wound up there head of the Still Picture Department and then in '68, I think it would have been, I had orders to VX6 to relieve Steve Riley and I was also a navigator, too. And so they had the one photo plane which was #320 and that was my plane, and then I got down on the Ice and I think I was out of there in 3 weeks or so with my bleeding ulcers.

BS: OK. You replaced Steve in VX6.

CL: Yes.

BS: And you went to the Ice again, to McMurdo? You were sick almost right away?

CL: Yeah. We flew down there in a C-130. I remember we went out - I remember fueled at Hill Air Force Base in Utah and then at Honolulu and then stopped at the Christmas Islands and Christchurch, and then on into McMurdo.

BS: And when did you find out you had a . . . when did you get there, when? October sometime?

CL: Yeah. It would have been late October, I'm sure.

BS: Yeah.
CL: Yeah, if it was that early. And they had a large photo lab there and we were processing film and I was sick rather quickly and the doctor - they did some analysis on my stools, and so forth, and I had heavy bleeding, and so I was Med Evac-ed out.

BS: And you never got back.

CL: No. No, because the Navy was going to - as I mentioned earlier, they were going to separate me with a medical discharge, but they messed around and I was back in Rhode Island and doing lots of exercising, watching my diet and this kind of thing and this Chief Corpsman said, "Hey Mr. Larsen. You're doing so well, I think you ought to rebut those findings," and I said, "Really?" And he says, "Yeah, I'll show you how to do that." So I got together with him and we wrote up this rebuttal and I submitted it and they then held a formal re-examination on me - these three doctors did - and they agreed with the Chief that I was set for duty.

BS: Were you in pain when you were down at McMurdo?

CL: Yes.

BS: So it went away with proper diet.

CL: And exercise.

BS: You changed your lifestyle.

CL: Oh. . . I think I quit worrying about some things that uh . . .
BS: *Were you a heavy drinker before that?*

CL: No. No, I smoked.

BS: *Um-hum. You don't do that any more.*

CL: No. I quit smoking the night my granddaughter was born. She's, what? 18 now.

BS: *But you stayed in touch with the Polar stuff.*

CL: Oh yeah. Yeah. I enjoy your magazine just to read the - just to see what's going on and . . .

BS: *Keep people up to date.*

CL: Yeah.

BS: *Tell me, would you do it again? That turn down in Deepfreeze II.*

(350)

CL: Knowing what I know now, as an enlisted person, I would never - no. Knowing that I was going to be used and abused like - with Commander Flynn. No. See I had run into, like other - one of my photographers, for instance. His marks were what? 3.0, 3.2? or something like that, and all of our people were 4.0 people. These people were selected by the . . .
BS:  *Commander Flynn.*

CL:  Right. But I mean all of the photographer’s mates and I think all of the radiomen. Everybody. These were top-notch people because this looked like a choice thing to do. And they were going to - like with photographers - they selected 5 of us, for instance. There were hundreds that had put in for it. And then to get down there, you see, and to have these people who - I had this one Seabee came out - we still lived in Port Angeles. He called me up and he and his wife were going through and he remembered me and so on and so forth. And he'd been over at Wilkes - one of the other bases on the second wintering over and he said, "You know the photographer over there?" - I don't know how we got talking about evaluations, and he says, "Well what we did on the rates that we didn't know anything about, like photography and stuff, we'd just give 'em an average grade - 3.0 or 3.2" Which is just barely below the - you know, it's just . . . uh.

BS:  *How did you, I mean, you got brownie points because you obviously wrote your own fitness report. How did just the fact that you had Deepfreeze duty affect your career afterwards? Was it looked upon separately for promotion?*

CL:  Oh yeah. Because I had done a good job down there, like this article in National Geographic and the . . . when I went back to the Naval Photo Center, for instance, and became Head of the Still Picture Department, one of the things I was able to do was to put the entire Navy on shooting Kodachrome for documentary purposes. Up until then, they had shot Anscochrome and these other kinds and Kodachrome has archival qualities. It'll last 100 years with any care at all. And so, I talked to our Commanding Officer there at Naval Photo Center, Captain J. J. Crowder, and he says, "Well, that sounds like a winner." And I showed him my pictures, and such. And we were able to take 35mm
Kodachromes and we made 70mm internegatives from them, copied them - the color
negatives - and then from there we made color enlargements up to 30" x 40".

BS: *Wow.*

CL: And I had one division that was just a color lab and some of the most fantastic
people and equipment there. And so, Capt. Crowder, I showed him these things and he
had our, the Navy photo guy at Bu Pers- photo people over at Bu Aer - everybody in one
day and I gave them a demonstration on what we can do on this and then he told them,
"Now Larsen is writing a new manual" -or what did they call it, tech order that came out.
And so that was put in Navy-wide - this was.

BS: *So how did you happen to use Kodachrome if it wasn't standard Navy film when you
were in Antarctica?*

(400)

CL: I was a National Geographic subscriber for many years. And National Geographic
has always used Kodachrome from Day 1. You see, Kodachrome was designed, or
invented in what? about 1936? by two musicians in Rochester. And it's - Kodachrome is
basically black and white film and then you add your blue sensitive layer, red sensitive,
and yellow and then you add your dyes to it afterwards. There's no silver left into it to
deteriorate. Because that's what kills other color film is the remaining silver that's in there
- takes on color hues. But even when I got back there and did

BS: *You have silver in black and white.*
CL: Oh yes. Absolutely. That's how come latent images are formed. Silver is light sensitive. That's what makes the image. Expose it to light and develop it and it's black. So I called David here over at National Geographic and I said, "I've got the Navy. We're going to go Kodachrome in the Navy." And he says, "What can I do for you?" And I says, "I'd like to come over there and just get completely checked out on how you do the entire thing," and he said, "Be my guest." And he said, "Come over. Come to lunch tomorrow." And I went over there and they had the most elegant lunch set up like I'd never seen, you know, kind of thing. And then he assigned a couple there - I suppose they'd be scientists or whatever - to me, and we went through every aspect of it. Whereas we were making 70mm internegatives, they made 5 x 7 color negatives of their Kodachromes. But we went through every aspect of it and I came back again two days later and did some more of it again. But they were just so helpful. And the people in the - you know, the Skipper there at NPC (Naval Photo Center), the Captain in Bu Aer (Bureau of Aeronautics) - these people, they appreciate it when you can do things like that. And because of your acquaintance and . . .

BS: Who, uh. . . not who. . . how 'about Fujichrome today?

CL: It's widely used by. . .

BS: Is it comparable to Kodachrome?

CL: No. There's no film like Kodachrome!

BS: If I have a choice, I should grab the Kodachrome.
CL: Absolutely. If you want it to last. The film I sent to - that I gave to you that went over to Ohio there to the Byrd Polar Research Center - the archivist there wrote me a lovely letter and those photographs were just as brilliant and sharp and snappy and the colors as brilliant and sharp as it was 40 years ago when I shot them.

BS: *I looked at 'em. I should have copied them. I could have used them. I could just call Ray and just have him send them.*

CL: Yeah. Send you a set of dupes. But . . . and I have Kodachromes in here that I've made. I first started shooting it a lot during the Korean War as a combat cameraman. But shooting it for myself. The Navy didn't want anything to do with it. But when I got this Navy program going, you see.

I got a contract with Eastman Kodak and they had a lab up there in Washington D.C. and Maryland, and at that time Viet Nam was going and so I would send film to the photographers there - 20 roll bricks of film - and after they shot it, they would send it to me and it would come in - or they would send it in. My people would get it. And it would come in and it would go over to Kodak that afternoon and they would process it that night and the next morning, we had it back. And then my editors in the film library would screen it and those that we selected for file we would make duplicates of. Those that were not selected, the originals were sent back to the photographer. Those that were selected for us to keep, we made duplicates of and sent them back to the photographer and so that he could see what we're looking for - kind of thing, you see. So, it just worked out very good and today, things in the Navy have gone towards digital, right up until it did, this is the thing that was used.
BS: *Well, I think that pretty much has done it. Did you do some work in the Arctic, did you tell me?*

CL: Well, no, not in the Arctic. You know, in reconnaissance, I did work - after I was commissioned and became a navigator, I did overt and covert reconnaissance throughout the Mediterranean, Albania, out of Norway.

BS: *But you didn't go up over the Siberian coast or anything.*

CL: Good. Well, I think we can end it there. It's been a good interview. It's very revealing and . . .

(End of Tape 1 - Side B) **End of Interview**

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