

**Oral History Interview of
Carter Dildford**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
May 3, 2016
Lubbock, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Dildford Carter. Carter discusses his time in Korea before returning to Texas to finish his bachelor's, master's, and PhD degrees. Carter talks about his work as a biologist at Texas A&M and later at Texas Tech. Carter discusses doing fieldwork in a variety of locations including Yugoslavia.

Length of Interview: 02:14:39

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David Marshall (DM):

The date is May 3, 2016. This is David Marshall interviewing Dildford Carter at the Natural Science Research Lab Texas Tech, Lubbock, Texas and this is a continuation of an interview part one from last week. We were talking a little bit about the Korean War experience and a name that appears in some of the papers that you've written in Cuddy, C-u-d-d-y.

Dildford Carter (DC):

Yes.

DM:

Now you had another story to tell, a story to tell about that.

DC:

Yeah, yeah, Cuddy was from Harlan County, Kentucky, and across the river from Ohio. Harlan County was a coal mining area, and Cuddy was a professional gambler and so [laugh]. He, there was always some question about how he came to be in the army; some said it was because he was escaping some Harlan County tussle. In those days, Harlan County had a reputation for being a really rough, rough county, rough area. And anyway, Cuddy played poker, and a lot of the men, on payday, as soon as they got their money, they'd start playing poker. And so then Cuddy would end up with everybody's money. And nobody ever figured out that Cuddy was just a really, really smart poker player because he didn't look smart; he didn't act like he was brilliant, but he was a brilliant poker player. Kind of guy that could read your mind and get inside your head and see what you thought. And anyway, we were always friends, and one of the reasons was because I never played poker [laugh]. I wasn't given to gambling. I did—my deal was, I'd loan money to those people that lost all their money, and the going interest rate was 50 percent.

DM:

Oh, pretty good!

DC:

For one month! So, but you had to work out a deal with the first sergeant because the first sergeant was always there when the exec officer paid out the pay, and it was always in cash. And so he'd count it out and hand to the first sergeant. The first sergeant would take it and he'd remove from it what the guy owed me, or anybody else loaning money, he'd take out that amount and give the remainder to the guys.

DM:

Pretty good, that's fail safe, isn't it?

DC:

Well, if you didn't get killed or wounded, you were in good shape. But that was one of the reasons for the high interest rate. So anyway—

DM:

[Laugh] Oh man!

DC:

Cuddy was a machine gunner and with a machine gun, he was a brutal. And he'd gotten a couple of replacement ammo bearers. The machine gun had three men, the gunner and two ammo bearers, and one, sort of the assistant gunner and the other [cough]. Anyway, they both carried two cans of ammunition. I think there were 250 rounds in each can, so that made a 1,000 rounds plus anything the gunner himself might have carried. It was in one of these things, one of these patrols, where we were looking for enemy and we came up, found them, and it was a platoon size operation, there were two machine guns, one on the left, one on the right flank. And so it was a fire-and-maneuver deal, trying to work our way up, really to test the strength of these positions. And so came—and right at the beginning, and Cuddy grabbed his machine gun, it has—they were A6 machine guns, they had an assault handle on them and a shoulder stock—he grabs that machine, flips up the cover to the receiver, takes out the belt, the assistant gunner then picks up the belt and his ammo and is to follow him up there and when he throws the machine gun down, he flips up the cover, the assistant gunner puts the belt in there, he closes it, and cocks it, and he's ready to shoot again. Well, they weren't there. Cuddy turns around and yells at him, and with some profanity, to get up there. And so they tell him, they say back to Cuddy, "Fuck you, we're not coming up there."

DM:

[Laugh] Oh!

DC:

So, anyway, Cuddy gets up, and we're getting pretty good incoming fire, some mortars and small arms fire, and so Cuddy just walks back there and machine gunners have a sidearm, a .45 caliber, because you can't put a bayonet on a machine gun, that's for, you know, when you, hand to hand [laugh] stuff. So he takes out his .45, tells them that if they don't get up there, he's going to shoot them, so they don't believe him, and he shoots one guy in the knee, and the other guy grabs the ammo and hightails it up to where Cuddy had thrown the machine gun down, and so Cuddy walks back up there—he doesn't run, he walks—and commences firing. Well, after this action was over, the guy shot in the knee was complaining bitterly and he wanted to file some kind of assault charges against Cuddy, and the platoon leader wasn't paying any attention to him, the captain walks by, he's on the lying on a stretcher, and he tells the captain that Cuddy shot him in the knee, he said, "Why'd he do that?" Well [laugh] he comes up with this story and the captain

says, "Well that's not what I heard. What I heard was that you wouldn't move up when Cuddy moved the machine gun." He said, "Well it was pretty heavy firing" and all this stuff. He said, "Well okay, here's the way it works, you can file the charge if you want to, and I'll fill out the paperwork, but if you do that, I'm going to have to charge you with desertion. By the way, the penalty for that, at the time, is death." So the guy says forget it [laugh].

DM:

[Laugh] I'll take the wound!

DC:

[Laugh] Well, I mean, this guy was out of the war, you know?

DM:

Yeah, yeah, mm-hm. Golly!

DC:

That was the end of that.

DM:

Well, was that fairly common? Had you ever heard of anything like that before?

DC:

No, no I'd never heard anything like that, I mean—

DM:

Did you ever hear of any fragging? You know, just shooting—

DC:

That became, I think, more common during the Vietnam War. There were, I mean—well, to begin with, when I joined the company in Japan, it was the 34th Infantry Regiment. As I said before, the position of designated marksman, so I thought that was a good thing for me and so—

DM:

You said that regiment was pretty well decimated, wasn't it? Or what was the deal, it was—

DC:

Well, it was one of the first that went to Korea when the war started. So the 34th Regiment, but it wasn't a full sized regiment then, it was just a regiment on paper, and there were two battalions, it didn't have the third battalion to it. And those two battalions were below strength too. But, you know, anyway, they went in, and the 1st Cav [**1st Cavalry**] sent a regiment over, and then the

marines so, but those were the first ones, I think the 34th and the 1st Cav were really the first two units that went in, and they were just regiment sized. You know, we had the idea, Oh well, we can take care of those guys, but we couldn't, you know, and they were really serious. But, that put me in the—anyway, they put me in the headquarters platoon, and so I had two jobs then. One was that when we were on the line, I was the advanced guy for the supply sergeant, and so I had to keep them informed of supplies and deal with the ROK [**Republic of Korea Army**] unit that carried everything up to where we were because everything had to be carried up those hills. And so then, as I said, it depended on who the company commander was, really, as to what he did. Some kind—we went through several company commanders. We had one for a week or two once, and we were supposed move out at 0800 in the morning and it was 0805 and we hadn't moved out, and the regimental commander came flying up in a jeep and relieved him on the spot and replaced him with another guy who wasn't with us long, and I don't remember his name, but we went through several of them. Company commander is a tough job, in combat in particular. So anyway, I was pretty good at stealing stuff, so I'd gotten some guys together, and we'd stolen the A6 machine guns and, which started off with these [laugh] A3s, which were on tripods, but A6 were shoulder wired and had a bipod on them and much more maneuverable. And so, they'd gotten enough for one for each rifle company in the battalion, and everything got really confused one night, and they brought them up, unloaded them, and then we had to move out. We didn't have any trucks to move the stuff in, and so I managed to steal the three A6s for our company, which meant every man in our, every machine gunner an A6, and also stole two crates of BAR [**Browning Automatic Rifle**], so company commander thought that was pretty neat and I should be more active in the supply business, but that was not something I really wanted to do, so—but anyway, my, then our supply sergeant was named Riston [?] and he was from Tennessee, and he had a Confederate battle flag, a small one, and he'd put it on a pole and stick it up wherever the supply outfit was so you could always see where supply was, you know. But, he wasn't always—normally supply wasn't with the advancing units so he might not be on the line with us. And so when we lost him, company commander made me supply, acting supply sergeant, and so I did that for a little while. Stole the battalion officers' mess tent and traded it to the supply sergeant in Able Company, 1st battalion, for a worn out tent that was full of holes because I could turn that in for a salvage and get a new tent for it, and so when the battalion commander, his name was Miller, Major Miller, he came immediately to me, looking for his tent.

DM:

[Laugh] His mess tent?

DC:

Yeah, the mess tent, I, you know—

DM:

That's a big tent.

DC:

Yeah, a big tent, it took a bunch of us, to—I don't know, we had half a dozen guys to go over there to steal the tent. And we just struck the tent, right, you know, between luncheon and dinner [laugh]. Hauled it off immediately, took it over, then we had to put it in the trailer, you know. And then we hauled it over to 1st, to Able Company, and supply sergeant at Able Company took it, they took it out and put the, that shot up tent in the trailer, and we took it back over. And so when Major Miller showed up, that's what I had there. And so he said, "You stole our tent. I know you did." I said, "No sir, I wouldn't do that," and so he wanted to see this tent, and so they open up the tent, of course, you know, it's full of holes and everything and so that wasn't his tent. But finally we got a new company commander and I told him, I, you know, Jim Elly [?] would make a good supply sergeant, so why not make him supply sergeant and let me rejoin the unit. So anyway, he said, you know, said he'd put me in the 2nd platoon—2nd squad, 2nd platoon as the assistant platoon leader. And so I stayed until I was, I moved over to the 1st platoon as assistant platoon sergeant, and before I left, I moved up to platoon sergeant in the 1st platoon, but I kept my MIC, my designated marksman's rifle. And, like I said, after shooting that Soviet general, that, somebody sent me this Winchester Model 70 with a 10 power scope on it. But I never got to use that one.

DM:

You couldn't bring it home afterwards?

DC:

No, no, couldn't bring anything home. All the guys back, you know, behind the lines, they were the ones who brought all the souvenirs back. You know, if you captured Burp gun or anything like that, then you had to send it back to battalion supply and they were supposed to hold it for you, so whenever you left you could pick it up, it was never there when you left.

DM:

Oh man!

DC:

So, that's the way that worked [laugh].

DM:

Someone was bringing them home.

DC:

Yeah, [laugh] with a manufactured war story to go with it. Anyway, that was the deal with Cuddy. And I was going to something about Alabama, about Earl C. Bouldin, he was a—

DM:

What's the last name again?

DC:

Bouldin, B-o-u-l-d-i-n. He was from Fyffe in Dekalb County Alabama, and actually there were 22-3 or 4 men from DeKalb County in our regiment, most of them were in Love Company, but—in the 3rd battalion—but it was kind of, always been amazing to me that there were that many people from one county in our regiment. But nearly everybody in the regiment was from the south. Nearly everybody in the rifle company was from the south, except for some of the guys at headquarters, platoon, and the drivers, and the cooks, some of them were Yankees, but everybody else was from the south nearly. But Alabama was—we called him Alabama being from Alabama—and so he was a BAR, man and when I joined the 2nd platoon, he was in the 2nd platoon, in the 2nd squad actually, same squad I was in as a BAR man. There were two BARs in each squad, that makes two fire teams, so you have three men and a full automatic weapon. And then the, the squad leader, there are nine men. Lieutenant Greene was the, our platoon leader, and he was a career second Lieutenant, he never got promoted to first lieutenant. So anyway, he had sent Alabama and me to this demolition school there, and we didn't get to leave [laugh] we were just there during the day [cough] then we'd go back to this demolition school. They taught us how to blow up things without getting blown up and how to collect unexploded munitions and to dig up mines, anti-personnel mines, any, even mines as big as Tellermines, which had a couple pounds of TNT and blow the treds off a tank. So anyway, that was one week we went to that school, Alabama and I both. And I kind of think that he sent us there because he thought, you know, we'd blow ourselves up, [laugh] we'd no longer be a problem for him [laugh].

DM:

Well, you have to wonder when they're sending you in to demolition school, you know.

DC:

But boy that stuff was a lot of fun, but, and because of this, in the end, when Alabama came to me one morning, and this was in, well it was in, it was, I'll tell you the day, it was April the 10th. Because that was holy Thursday, in 1952, and we were, we were pulled back into reserve, but we were only about three or four miles behind the line, and we were clearing and surveying a fallback MLR [**Mainline of Resistance**] position, and so we were going to go up there and start this sweep, survey of this, of this, all these ridgelines for this fall back. And it may be were the current Mainline of Resistance is, I don't know, but he said, "Carter, I've been having some really, really bad dreams. I really don't feel good about today, can you get me on the litter detail?" And I said, "Alabama, it's, you know, we're not going to be doing anything dangerous today, it's unlikely anybody is anywhere around that place. We're just going to survey it." "Well I just don't feel good, I had this bad dream last night. I'm due for rotation any day now. I don't feel good about it. Please, get me on litter detail." "Okay, all right." So I went over to medics and

they said, yeah, they could use another guy on litter detail, we went up, surveyed, started our survey and work on this hill—

DM:

But this wasn't Alabama. This was someone else?

DC:

No, Alabama was—

DM:

Went ahead and started?

DC:

No, he didn't go with us. Well, he went, but he went with the medics.

DM:

Yeah, I got you.

DC:

And so medics were going to set up this, an aid station at the base of the hill somewhere in there and he found this abandoned hut, and so they were going to set up their aid station there and so Alabama said, "Wait, whoa whoa whoa," and, of course, I wasn't there so this was all based on what the guys, the medics told me, and so everybody had a different story as to what happened but putting it all together, he said, "Wait, wait, don't go in there. Don't go in there, that building's booby trapped," and so they said, "Well, let's just go somewhere else," and he said, "No, we can't do that. We know it's booby trapped; we can't leave it like that to kill somebody. We got to do something about it." Alabama said, well, he thought he could disarm the booby trap. So, I kind of think it may have been one of those things where there's a double trap. The one you see, you think, oh that's stupid of them to set it up like that, I can take care of that, and when you do, it detonates the real one. So I kind of think it may have been one of, a deal like that. Anyway, what happens is it blew up and killed him. And so when we came back that day, the exec officer came over and he's said, "Where's Boulder?" And I said, "Well I don't know, I haven't seen him, he was with, on litter detail this morning, today," and so I went over to the medics and I said, "Where's Alabama?" They said "Oh, you didn't know?" "Know what?" "He was killed this morning" "Wait a minute, nobody gets killed on litter detail" "Well yeah," and they told me that this is what had happened and, which, it's a—there's an ancient story about a guy in Damascus. And he's had a tavern there, and he looks across the room and he sees Death looking at him and so he thinks, No, no this is not my time. So he flees the tavern and rides all night to Samara. And arriving there in the morning, he was exhausted and thirsty, he stops at a well to get a drink of water and so, and to water his horse. Looking across the well he sees Death

again, and he says, “No, no, I just escaped you in Damascus, it’s not my time” and Death said, “Yes, I too was surprised to see you there for our appointment was always here in Samara,” and it was that kind of thing. And his brother, he had an older brother, who told me later that he’d gotten a letter from Earl and Earl had said he didn’t think he was coming back. So I really never could figure out how that worked. Guys that get that feeling sometimes and usually it, you know, often it can be true. But I don’t know whether it was just because it made them too cautious—

DM:

Or if there’s some kind of clairvoyance there? I mean what’s—

DC:

Or what it was, yeah.

DM:

Have you written this up?

DC:

That was a hard one to write. I started it but I don’t think I finished it. He—

DM:

Yeah, yeah, interesting that he was concerned but he went ahead in there to take care of the explosives.

DC:

Yeah, well, it was the matter of honor and duty, and it’s awfully hard to, you know, avoid that.

DM:

Like you said, he probably said, Hey we can’t leave this.

DC:

No, yeah, one of them said he couldn’t—

DM:

And he was the one with the expertise.

DC:

Yeah, he said, “No, we can’t go off and leave that for somebody else to come along and get killed,” you know, and so he was compelled through, you know, duty and honor, to do something about it.

DM:

So for someone like you who's there near the front line, off and on the frontline and a friend of this guy, how does that affect you later? Do you shrug it off for the time being and go on and do what you always do or does it kind of haunt you and follow you around?

DC:

Well, and it's kind of like Achilles and Patroclus. When Achilles was mourning Patroclus and Thetis, his mother, came to him and said, "You've got to stop this because there are people that depend on you, the outcome of the war is dependent on you" and stuff like that. And so, you know, you mourn your comrades loss for a day, and then you go on. But afterward, you think about it. I've got a picture of Alabama hanging on the wall there at the house, and yeah, I think about him often. And on or around the tenth of April every year, I have a mass said for him.

DM:

Is that right? I wonder if his family ever heard that, you know? I wonder if he had—has any family or if his family was—

DC:

Well, yeah, his older brother, I've got to call him again because he was in a, kind of a nursing home-like facility there in Alabama, and I haven't talked to him in several months, but I know he wasn't in good health so—but I usually send him a program from the church with Earl's name in it, Mass Intentions for that day.

DM:

Right, good, okay, some kind of tribute, some kind of tribute for him.

DC:

He was a good soldier and—but I'd forgotten how many men were killed until several years ago. There's this Korean War Project and they got, for each company, a list of those that were killed—the dates, their names, where they were from. So you can go look all that up. So anyway, looked all that up, and gaw, I was really surprised that we lost as many as we did.

DM:

You went on the Honor Flight recently, didn't you?

DC:

No, no, no, I never did.

DM:

You've seen the Korean War Memorial though, there in Washington, D.C.?

DC:

Yeah, yeah.

DM:

Which to me is just so far beyond the Vietnam Wall or the World War II Memorial because it's real life kind of thing. But what is your impression, that's just my outsider's opinion.

DC:

Yeah, I liked it, I liked it. And—

DM:

Is it realistic, the way the men are deployed as a platoon or a squad?

DC:

Well, it's a squad size. In fact, I've forgotten how many men are in that—yeah I think so, they're kind of close together, but if you really spread them out, you know, it'd take up too much and then you'd lose the impact of it.

DM:

Right, I managed seeing that in moonlight and it was eerie, you know, that white marble or whatever it's made of.

DC:

Yeah, there—I haven't seen it for several years, I think the last time I was there it actually was in 2001, just before 9/11. I had a granddaughter that was competing in the AAU [**Amateur Athletic Union**] Summer Junior Olympics, and it was in Virginia Beach that year, and so after the track meet we went to Washington for a few days.

DM:

How does a guy like Cuddy—is it Cuddy or?

DC:

Yeah, Cuddy.

DM:

How does a guy like Cuddy take a close shot from a mortar and just get knocked around a little bit, I mean that's just so unusual, but I can see unusual happenstance can allow for that occasionally.

DC:

Well, you know, he wasn't injured at all and from, I think what happened was that mortar round hit in the mud next to that dive he was on and exploded and blew him up in the air. But some weird things happened that—I knew a guy that was shot in the head, helmet, bullet went through the, kind of the left—or right back corner of his helmet and it all the way around the helmet and he was wearing a soft cap underneath the helmet, and it had a little bill on it, you know, and it chewed it's route all the way around, chewed the bill off, and the bill was just hanging by a thread and the bullet fell out! So everybody's saying, you know, "What the hell were you doing that you were getting hit in the back of the head, where were you going?" and he said, "Well I was turn around [laugh] to tell some of the guys to get their ass up there." [laughter]

DM:

Where those World War II surplus helmets? Were they pretty much the same helmet?

DC:

Same, same helmet.

DM:

Were they effective? You know, what if you took a rifle shot?

DC:

Well, if you take a rifle shot, you know, it's a miracle, or you get killed but they did, they did—I guess they helped you with, in case of shell fragments. I read, one time, a study in World War I after the British, when the war started, they used soft caps, but the number of head wounds was so great that they decided they should be wearing a helmet like, you know, everybody else wore. So once they wore helmets, it increased the number or mortal—mortal, mortally, mortal wounds!

DM:

Really?

DC:

Well see, the thing was, it reduced the number of, we're looking at statistics here, ratios, okay?

DM:

Right.

DC:

With the soft cap, a lot of guys got hit, you know, in the head okay, but they weren't necessarily killed. But once you put the helmet on, it kept you from getting wounded but it didn't keep you from getting killed! So the ratio changed [laugh].

DM:

Well, the reason I ask is I always thought of the helmet as, for shell fragments and things like that, but I was reading about the World War I, U.S. World War I helmets, and they said they were designed to withstand a .45 caliber shot from ten feet, and I thought, Man that doesn't sound like they could withstand that, but what do I know?

DC:

Well, it—you get a lot more penetration at any rate from a .30 caliber, 30 ought 6. The North Koreans and the Chinese both used that Russian rifle from World War II, Mosin-Nagant, was their main battle rifle. And a lot of them used, had burp guns, which were these sub machine guns and they had a drum magazine on them and they fired ninety-nine rounds or something. They were Soviet Surplus from World War II.

DM:

What did you call the rifle?

DC:

The Mosin-Nagant.

DM:

Can you spell that?

DC:

Oh, no.

DM:

[Laugh] I'll see if I can—

DC:

N-a-g-a-n-t, I can spell the last. And Mosin is M-o-s something, e-i-n or—

DM:

Okay, that gives me enough to find it.

DC:

Yeah, you can find, it's, I got missed so many times with it that at a gun show I bought one, one time, and you couldn't hit the inside of a barn shooting from the inside with that thing, that was the most inaccurate rifle I had ever had.

DM:

Aren't you glad? [laugh]

DC:

Somebody, some soldier somewhere had taken a hammer and tried to knock the—it shot way off to the left, and worked over the front, and the front sight was not dove tailed in there, so you couldn't drift it over, you know? So he took a hammer and bent it over trying to get it to come back to zero, but it didn't work, it still shot way to the left.

DM:

Well, that says something for the inaccuracy of it right there [laugh]! Take a hammer to it.

DC:

[Laugh] so I thought, Well thank God those things were so inaccurate.

DM:

Oh for sure, golly. What else do you have to say about Korea before we move on to your education afterward?

DC:

Well, it, you know, you'd think—they started those peace talks after I got there, and I remember on time, it was in the summer, and peace talks had only been going for maybe three or four weeks and the Chinese and the North Koreans withdrew, they weren't going to talk, you know, so we mounted up an offensive that would move up and encircle about a third of the Chinese/North Korean army, and it was a really neat deal, the way it was, it would include encircling Panmunjom, in that area, dipped down below the 38th parallel. But you go up Pyongyang, and then cut across to the sea, it wasn't very far. And our regiment was to form the blocking position on Han river valley to the—and so, and move down that way, we become the anvil to the hammer in this deal. And so—

DM:

Was there going to be an amphibious landing also?

DC:

No, no.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

No it was just, we were going to shoot up this—and it was about eighteen, twenty miles up to the Pyongyang and, from where we were, at the, on the Han-Gang River [SIC: now the Han River] which became the, some other river, Imjin River, I think, went in to it, anyway. So we were to move out at 4 a.m.—Army's got this thing about 4 a.m.—so it was really something, there were tanks. I happened to go back to the supply depot for something and came back to where our positions were and all, for ten or fifteen miles, there were at every little draw, there were tanks, artillery was set up, and it was amazing, the amount of armor and artillery and everything they had amassed just behind our positions there. So that night, between I had started bombing Pyongyang, all that area up there, and artillery started and, I mean, for several hours—it started about midnight I guess—they started in with artillery and it was a hell of a show. And you could see the flashes from the B-29s [**Boeing B-29**] dropping bombs on Pyongyang and that area.

DM:

By the way, when you're going to move out at 4 a.m., do you sleep at all that night?

DC:

Well, you know, it's too noisy—well I mean you could sleep in, you get to where you could sleep in anything, but everybody was really keyed up, everybody was excited, I mean, we were finally going to do something, you know. And so we jumped off at 4 a.m., and by 4:30, hundred hours, 0430 hours we were stopped. And the North Koreans and Chinese had said, "Wait a minute; we want to start these talks again," and we were stupid enough to fall in, you know, so—and everybody was really so mad about that. And you would think everybody, you know, think, Phew we dodged a bullet there! But that wasn't the way it was. Everybody—

DM:

You probably figured what was going to happen, huh?

DC:

Everybody was really excited about, you know, getting after those gooks.

DM:

Yeah.

DC:

And then everybody was disappointed, grumbling—I remember a colonel came up to explain to us, you know, that, what had happened and I remember Red, red-headed guys from Crabtree Corners [**Crabtree, Tennessee**], Tennessee and he said, "Colonel, we all know that they've got colonels and majors there at the peace talks just to police up the whisky bottles, ain't nothing coming from that. And you stopped us from ending this war." So I always had that kind of

feeling from that, and we could have ended that war, and there wouldn't be a North Korea now and things would be a lot different—there might not have even been a Vietnam War.

DM:

Instead it's still going on.

DC:

Yeah, they're still there, so anyway, that's kind of the way I feel about it.

DM:

When did you get discharged again?

DC:

It was November of '52.

DM:

'52, you came straight back or were you—

DC:

No, I had an emergency leave and I came back to, then I had sixty days of leave, so then I was reassigned there at Fort Sam Houston.

DM:

Okay. Reassigned, and where were you—

DC:

Yeah, I stayed at Fort Sam Houston.

DM:

You stayed at Fort Sam Houston? Okay.

DC:

That's when my mother called either LBJ or George Parr, I think she called George Parr and he called LBJ because LBJ wouldn't have been senator if it hadn't been for George Parr. So I had, had this telegram from the Secretary of the Army telling them to reassign me to Fort Sam Houston and that's why they thought I was somebody important, you know. They made me represent post commander at military funerals until they found out I was nobody. From then on I pulled permanent CQ [**Charge of Quarters**] in the enlisted detachment and also got to practice my stealing ways for the supply sergeant there who was, we were having an IG [**Inspection General**] inspection, and so he was short on everything, and so, of course, being barrack

sergeant there for the 8-ball barracks, all these criminals, there was no short supply of criminals to—

DM:

Had plenty of help?

DC:

Well, we stole all these foot lockers, I mean wall lockers from the MP [**Military Police**] barracks, this is what they really like. And I said “If you’ll help me, I’ll let you, we’ll go steal some wall lockers from the MP barracks,” and they that was really okay, and I persuaded them and they went along with me then. We stole blankets from the laundry and we stole all kinds of stuff to get the supply sergeant back up to— [laugh].

DM:

Well the MPs, how did they react?

DC:

Well, they were walking in and out of the barrack, we were just taking the empty lockers, but I had a clipboard and a pickup truck, and we were loading them on to this pickup truck and so I was standing out there with a clipboard checking stuff off, and so nobody is going to question you if you have a clipboard, you know, so—

DM:

They just figured someone ordered it, huh?

DC:

[Laugh] Yeah, so anyway, so I got the supply sergeant out of trouble because he would short so much stuff, I don’t know what he’d done with it, but he would short so much stuff, he would have been [laugh], I mean, in real trouble if the IG had caught him, so, anyway.

DM:

This was still at Sam Houston?

DC:

This was at Fort Sam Houston, yeah, like I said, I was the permanent CQ, another guy and I pulled it, twenty-four on, twenty-four off, so we’d be on duty for twenty-four hours and so you really couldn’t sleep while you were on duty.

DM:

These guys stateside, did they know anything about your record, your combat record over there? Did they know who you were? What you'd been through or were there a lot of you guys that had been in combat and—

DC:

Well, this other guy with me that had been in my same regiment, and he'd been up at, when the Chinese first came in, up there. And let's see, he was with the 34th Infantry Regiment, which was the first regiment I was with, it was later, the 34th was deactivated, we were reactivated as the 14th Infantry Regiment and assigned to the 25th Division but originally we were in the 24th Division, and so he had been with the 24th Division in the 34th Regiment and so that's when everybody had to withdraw, and when the 2nd Division had to fight their way through Kunu-Ri pass, and I think the 24th and the 25th both came down the coast so they didn't try to fight their way through the Kunu-Ri Pass but somebody did, had to, and so it was the 2nd that got to do that. They were—the 2nd was commanded by a general named Keiser, and he'd had no combat experience at all. And so he was sent in, given command of the 2nd Division, and so he was nearing retirement age and say you get a promotion before retirement. Keiser—this is a true story—when they got, they were stopped there in the Kunu-Ri Pass the whole convoy stopped and so he's up near the head of it and he gets out and walks up to the front, and they're being pinned down by a machine gun, and he said, "What the hell are we doing here?" And these guys hiding behind these rocks said, "Well there's a machine gun up there, we couldn't get by," and the Kunu-Ri Pass was at the file, it wasn't very wide, you know, you're talking about 3 or 400 yard wide. And so he said, "Well why don't you do something about it?" "Well we can't get up there" "What do you mean you can't get up there? You, you, you, you, and you, and you, come with me," and so he takes them up there, takes a squad, here's led by a General Keiser who'd had no—

DM:

With no combat experience.

DC:

Before he joined the 2nd Division. And he hadn't been with them for very long, and so he takes these guys up there and they wipe out these machine guns.

DM:

Golly. Guess he go this promotion, huh?

DC:

Oh well yeah and he comes back and the story is he—and there's several accounts published of this but anyway, he said, "Now you know what to do, next machine gun we run in to, you know what to do. Don't hold this thing up anymore, let's get out of here," and so—

DM:

Sometimes it helps to not have a lick of sense [laugh]! Or experience, golly, that's a good story, wow! Okay, so when did you leave the military, when did you leave Sam Houston?

DC:

Well, I was discharged in November because as soon as I finished basic training, I went to Far East and I went to, I was in Japan while we were training for a few weeks before we went back to Korea for the, before the unit went back to Korea.

DM:

Oh, okay!

DC:

So once we got back to Korea, like I said—or maybe I didn't say—after I was out of the army and working for Shell Oil Company, Congress passed a hazardous pay bill for infantry. Pilots got hazardous pay, everybody, you know, in harm's way got hazardous pay except infantry. They didn't, like the saying is, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger except infantry, infantry will kill you [laugh]. So anyway, I got paid, I got paid for ten months and twenty-six days. That's the only way I know how many days I was in combat. The, but, all of us that had gone, you know, at the beginning of the war, gone through basic, gone to Korea, fought, came back, then we were just drawing wages, that's all, so the army decided that they'd discharge us, and so, save the money, so they did. But you got screwed on the GI Bill because the GI Bill was enacted for services of twenty-four months and so if you were less than twenty-four months, then you got your, your Bill was prorated by the number of months that you were in the service. That's what happened—

DM:

With no consideration for combat?

DC:

Well, see they didn't think about that, so the guys that went to Paris and served in NATO Headquarters for twenty-four months, they got the full GI Bill, guys that had gone to Korea and fought there and got discharged early, they got a prorated, reduced GI Bill. A lot of the guys I was with would never go to college anyway. There were men in my company that could not read

or write because there was several of them, I'd sign stuff for them, they'd make their mark, then I'd say "This is the mark made by so-and-so, witnessed by," and I'd sign my name to it.

DM:

Yeah, okay.

DC:

So there—anyway, got out, and so I needed a job, I worked on road construction for a while until [cough]—

DM:

Was that the state of Texas or?

DC:

Yeah, there in Corpus Christi, and my father died, the reason I had the emergency leave, but he lingered on for some time, and it was maybe 90 or 100 and something days after I came home that he finally died. It was after I had been reassigned at Fort Sam Houston, and then shortly after that I was discharged, and so I got a job with Helenfeld's brothers [?] who were, did a lot of the road constructions. And I worked for them until it dawned on me that I need job that, you know, when it rained you didn't go to work and you didn't get paid. I think my mother said, "Shell Oil Company is looking for a draftsman." I said, "Draftsman, that's me, I could be a draftsman." So I went and applied for the job and I thought, Well they're going to ask me to do a—probably have a test for me to see if I really knew anything about drafting, which I didn't, and so I better go lay the day. I knew they'd have some kind of psychological test or something like that, make sure I wasn't an axe murderer. And sure enough, they did and so I finished all this stuff and it was, like, 5:15, and so the drafting supervisor was waiting around until I finished this, and he said, well, they had a drafting test and, you know, and he was willing to stay late, you know, so I could take the test there if I wanted to or I could take it home and bring it back in the morning. I said, "Well I don't want to keep you, you know." I'd bring it back in the morning. So I left there and there was a store there downtown in Corpus Christi, and they sold drafting stuff, you know, a lot of stuff. So anyway, I made a beeline for it because I had to get there before 5:30 when it closed. And so I got there, and I said, "Here's the test, I've got to do this test tonight. What do I need to do it?" And so the guy looks at it, he said, "Well you're going to need, need a line pin, you're going to need all this stuff and probably need to read this book, at least, you know, certain pages of it." And so anyway, I grabbed the stuff, paid for it, went home and sat down and I read the book and read the test and figured out how I was supposed to do it and did it. Then took it back the next morning and they hired me.

DM:

[Laugh] That's pretty good.

DC:

And I worked for them for a while, for a year or so until I thought I had enough money to go back to school. I went back to SMU and got a bachelor's and master's there at SMU.

DM:

In biology?

DC:

In biology, yeah.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

Actually I got my bachelor's in June and my master's in August of the same year. And that was on account of I was supposed to graduate the year before, and I was going to do my research that summer on the feeding habits of trout in rivers and ponds and lakes and stuff in Chaffee County, Colorado, but I had to have four semesters of a foreign language, and so I selected Spanish because I thought that was the easiest one. And so anyway, I had one more semester, because I wouldn't take it in sequence, I'd, you know, I'd have a little slack one semester and I'd take one, you know, one semester and I'd think, Well okay I'll fill in with three hours of Spanish, you know, and so the next semester I'd have organic chemistry or something like that, eat my lunch, and I wouldn't take it. But I did have, this was the last semester, and I didn't have organic chemistry, and this was the spring semester and Spanish met at 8 o'clock in the morning and organic met Monday, Wednesday, Friday just like Spanish did, at 9 o'clock. So organic chemistry was the only course I ever took in college that I never could figure out what the deal was, never made any sense to me, always a mystery. So I cut a lot of classes in Spanish, but I always turned in, if I had any homework or anything like that to do, I always turned it in. Never missed a test, we had weekly tests, and I always came for the test. And so end of the semester, I thought, Well, you know, I might make an A in Spanish. You know, if I score above a ninety-five on the final I should, you know, have a ninety average, no way I could make anything less than a B. So, go to check the grades, and in those days they posted grades, had your name and your grade outside the door. So I go look at the grades and go down here, Carter, F.

DM:

Whoa!

DC:

I had an F! And I was like, Well that's impossible, there's been a mistake here. So I can't find the Spanish teacher, don't remember her name now, and so I go to my major professor, and I said, "You know, there's got to be some mistake here, I've got an F in Spanish." He said, "What?" "I've got an F in Spanish," and so he calls this woman, and she said, "Well"—and I said, you know, I had passing grades and everything. I had good grades on my exams and homework, all this stuff, you know? Figured I had made at least a 95, I knew I had made more than a 90 on the final. And so he calls her, and she says, "Well yes, he had good grades, and he made a 95 on the final, but his average was 90, you know, but his attendance, he got an F, and an F is what he gets." So an F is what I got, and there was no recourse. And so anyway, and I had an assistantship for the next year and everything, you know, which I really needed [laugh]. So anyway, they let me start my master's, and I did my research that summer, and next fall I took a course in Spanish, and I was sure, I made sure I went every day, and it wasn't the same woman.

DM:

I was about to say, I hope not!

DC:

Wasn't the same person.

DM:

Golly. Well, that's an interesting thing; you got it in June and the other in August.

DC:

Yeah, when I went to A&M to work on my PhD, there was a, the Dean of the graduate school's name then was Trotter, Dean Trotter. And so there weren't that many doctoral students in those days, and he would meet with every one of them. And he would go over, you know, you'd get your committee together, then they'd make up a course program and everything for you.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

And so, the committee would settle on this coursework and everything but I had to take it over to Trotter and get him to approve it. And so he has this old wooden desk, and so he pulls out this old little tray on the side there and I'm sitting on one side of it and he's sitting on the other and so he's got everything laid out on this thing, and so we're going through my transcript, he goes through everything, you know, the whole record. And he's looking through a transcript from the University of Arkansas, from SMU, and he said, "The one thing I don't understand, how can you get a bachelor's June and a master's in August?" He didn't understand that, and so I tried to

explain it to him, he really, he said he couldn't, still couldn't—but he said, “I notice here you've never had a course in economics,” and I said, “No.” “Well, nobody can graduate from the College of Agriculture”—and the Department of Wildlife Management was in the College of Agriculture, nobody could graduate from there without a course in economics, so I had to take this undergraduate course in economics, he added that to it. That's what he'd do, he might add some courses to it if he thought your committee wasn't strict enough. At that time, to get a PhD at A&M required a lot of coursework.

DM:

You know, Clyde Jones mentioned the same thing when he went over and worked with the Jim Finley at A&M, he had to take some leveling, chemistry or something, I don't remember what, but yeah, so, I guess it was—

DC:

Yeah, yeah, oh yeah, you had [laugh] yeah.

DM:

[Laugh] Well did your, your thesis, master's thesis, was on trout, did you say?

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay, so your interest was there at that time but it changed somewhere along the way to mammology apparently.

DC:

Yeah. Well yeah, I became, Bill Stallcup joined the faculty at SMU my senior year, I guess, there. And he graduated, just graduated from the University of Kansas, and his major professor there at E. Raymond Hall. And so anyway, he was interested in mammals, and so, of course, I became more interested in mammals. And so anyway, when I went to A&M then, William B. Davis was Chairman of the Department of Wildlife Management there and he was a Mammologist, and so I switched over to mammals.

DM:

Okay, so it kind of happened in transition from SMU to A&M.

DC:

Yeah, yeah.

DM:

Okay, interesting.

DC:

That's how that happened.

DM:

Okay, and then what was your main emphasis at A&M, did you go to bats at that point?

DC:

Yeah, I, I don't know, bats had always kind of fascinated me, but I wasn't thinking about bats necessarily when I went there, although I knew a guy, Dick Davis, who—forgotten where he'd gotten his Ph.D.—but he worked with these free-tailed bats, *Tadarida*, and he was an ecologist really. So, but they were trying to figure out where they were going, so he'd, he must have tagged, god, I don't know how many thousands of bats, you know, but you start—and you put these little tags on their—little aluminum tags on their arm and—but nobody is picking them up, but, you know, you tag bats out of Bracken Cave in Texas, and in August there are 50 million bats in the cave, so it's hard to make a dent in those things. So, and I never did see—and I worked on *Tadarida* after that—never found one with a tag on it. So, but, you know, out of all of them that came to Texas, there are, you know, well over a hundred million bats, or of these *Tadarida*. Anyway, I had seen a *Tadarida*, a mummified *Tadarida*, when I was a kid and I remember must have been ten years old, first bat I ever saw.

DM:

This was in Corpus then?

DC:

No, it wasn't in Corpus. I was with my father. We were hunting somewhere out in, near Pleasanton or Fowlerton, or something south of San Antonio.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

And it was in a—there was a shed there or something and there was a mummified bat there, so that was my first experience with a bat, and it was a free-tailed Bat, a *Tadarida*.

DM:

Yeah. *Brasiliensis*? Was it, like—

DC:

Yeah, well they're from—

DM:

Or how many species are there in Texas?

DC:

Well, there are two species in Texas, *mexicana* and *cynocephali*, now, *cynocephali* is one that is resident, didn't migrate at all. *Mexicana* migrates south, and I don't know the, what names are applied to them now, but *mexicana* is a species apart from *cynocephali*, it migrates but *cynocephali* doesn't. *Cynocephali* will hibernate and *mexicana* cannot. You can lower its temperature. You can put it in the refrigerator and force its temperature down, and it will live but it cannot recover. The temperature will start up okay, and you think, Oh, it's going to make it, but it doesn't.

DM:

Golly, huh.

DC:

And so those two look a lot alike and, but that was before people knew anything, really, about DNA and all that. So the population genetics you worked with then was statistical. I took a graduate course in population genetics and then a couple of courses in biological statistics, but anyway, there's a population in—the ones in California are the same way, they're resident, they don't migrate either, and then there are a couple of pockets in Mexico. There's a cave on this island in Janitzio is the name of the island, it's in Lake Pátzcauro, and maybe you've seen pictures of fisherman fishing with these butterfly-like nets from canoes there, or small boats. There's an island there in the middle of the lake, and there's a cave there with *Tadarida* in it. So we went there and nobody wanted to show us where the cave was and so, but finally I found some kid and corrupted him and he took us to the cave and then we couldn't get to them and we couldn't stay there at night because obviously there was some kind of taboo involving bats and this particular cave, and so I collected a sample there of, a fair size sample there with my shot pistol and it terrified this kid and he ran off and he told some village elders that we were killing bats in this cave and so they came after us. But we escaped from them, and so we made it back to where we'd left our boat there at this village on the island and jumped in the boat, and I told the guy to get it started, get out of here. And these guys were all coming down this like, all the villagers going after [laugh] Frankenstein.

DM:

Did you ever find—

DC:

They were throwing rocks at us and I was shooting at them with the shot pistol, of course it didn't hurt them with a shot pistol, but they didn't know that.

DM:

Did you ever hear why they were so upset about it? Or did you—

DC:

No, I didn't. I wasn't going back either [laugh].

DM:

It's like it was the souls of their ancestors or something, you know, it must have been.

DC:

It was, there was something about that cave and those bats in it. Once I'd shot some bats off the ceiling of that cave, this kid took off.

DM:

Phew, the life of a field biologist. You never know what you're going to get in to. Local culture, huh? Golly, is this while you were at A&M?

DC:

[Laugh] yeah, yeah.

DM:

Oh, how much, where all did you do your fieldwork?

DC:

In the Southwest, the Southeast of the US and then in Mexico and Middle America. When I was working in Mexico and Middle America, I lived in Mexico City for a while in '59 and '60 and worked out of there because it was a lot easier than going to Costa Rica from College Station. And at that time you couldn't drive from Costa Rica to Panama, there was no road. The road went south of San José, or out of San José, down to San Isidro de El General, and that was the end of the road. Anyway, that was where I did my research, fieldwork anyway.

DM:

Was fieldwork—did all biology grads, doctoral students at A&M do fieldwork, or were some only in the lab?

DC:

Well, in Wildlife Management, they had to do fieldwork. If you were working in poultry or someplace like that or there were students working with corn and cotton and stuff like that.

DM:

Okay, domestic animals and crops. Okay.

DC:

They did a lot of lab work, you know, they didn't go out in the field and do stuff.

DM:

Right, right, well what was your intention? Were you going to be a biology professor? Or were you going to be a, you know, a wildlife personnel, ranger or—

DC:

Well, at some time, you know, I was doing it because I liked doing it. So, I didn't give a lot of thought to what I was going to do afterwards. But anyway I stayed on at A&M for a while because, let's see, Dr. Davis and I had a grant from the National Institute of Health to do more work with *Tadarida* because it was thought, at that time, that bats were carriers for rabies. And so there was a lot of interest, particularly in those that migrated in and out. And some guy from the Office of Naval Intelligence came and talk to me once about, they would fund a lot of work for me if I would work for them.

DM:

What did they want, I wonder? How are they going to, with bats specifically?

DC:

Well, they were kind of interested maybe in bats as a carrier for biological warfare, you know?

DM:

Oh yeah.

DC:

But they were—anyway, as near as I could tell, you know. I didn't agree to it, I mean I didn't hire on, so they didn't, you know, we didn't go in to great detail but—

DM:

It wasn't about sonar or something like that? It could have been something pretty ugly.

DC:

No, no, no [laugh]. It seemed to have something to do with biological warfare. So, I wasn't opposed to biological warfare, it was just that I wasn't excited about working for them. So I stayed at A&M, and then Dr. Davis and I had another grant from the National Science Foundation to work on bats of Middle America and so we worked on the bats with the Middle American Corridor.

DM:

Now where were you at that time, where in the field?

DC:

In Middle America, it was from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec south to the Isthmus of Panama. So we collected in that highland area that had been isolated from South America, North America periodically during the Pleistocene and then before, actually. It—anyway, I worked on that and then—I would have stayed at A&M except the Corps of Engineers [**United States Army Corps of Engineers**] wanted to build a dam on the Navasota River, and so that seemed to me to be kind of a dumb thing to do. But the City of Houston was the main mover of this deal because they wanted more water for the city of Houston, and they were running short of sources for fresh water in Houston. Houston was growing and so the Corps of Engineers, you know, they've got a division that, you know, they like to build dams, and that's what they do. They find places where you can build a dam and anyone says, "Hey, listen, we'd like to build a dam here," they scurry on down there and they do a study and make a proposal and it goes to Congress, and so anyway the Navasota bottom is fairly shallow, I mean it's not—so anyways, there's not a lot of relief there, and it wouldn't be, it'd be a very large and shallow lake. And so there—the biology of the Navasota bottom is kind of interesting but the important thing about it is that there were more pounds of venison per acre produced in the Navasota bottom than any other place in the U.S. of A for which there was data to compare it.

DM:

Venison you said?

DC:

Yeah, deer, deer, deer! If you measure the pounds per acre, the Navasota bottom at that time produced more pounders per acre than any other place in the U.S. for which there were data to determine the productivity. Even the upper peninsula of Michigan doesn't have that. There was data available then on how many pounds per acre you could, you know, you could use the data to figure it out.

DM:

So this was deer rich country?

DC:
Yeah.

DM:
And 1960—

DC:
This would have been 1970, well actually it was in the late sixties that they started this and so several of us got together and we thought, you know, This is a bad idea.

DM:
Well I'm wondering how critical the issue was at that time, had the deer population rebounded much by '70 because, you know, I know screwworm had gotten it, over-hunting had gotten it early on, and it took a while—

DC:
Well deer had been reintroduced to the area in 1937.

DM:
Yeah, okay, okay.

DC:
And the deer had adapted to it remarkably well, so there were just, there were lots of deer there, big deer hunting area, and a lot of people hunted deer there, came in from all over the place to hunt deer. And it was just a very productive area, and screwworms were pretty much annihilated by then because they had that big screwworm project while I was a student at A&M. And so the, David Rideout was with the Department of—let's see, at that time, I'm trying to think, when the Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission became the Department of Parks and Wildlife, their— Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission was headed up by a guy named, what was his name? I'll think of it in a minute, he—it was changed because LBJ had a run in with a game warden down on the Pedernales over shooting doves after sundown. And he invited some friends down there and they were shooting dove and he wasn't driving, he was in the backseat, and when they crossed the Pedernales and the game warden was waiting for them, and so he wanted to know what they had been doing. Well, they had been shooting some birds, he wanted to know if they were the ones shooting after sundown over there and LBJ kept interrupting, he'd ask the guy driving and LBJ would answer the questions and finally the game warden said to the driver he said, "You tell that big eared son of a bitch in the back to shut up or I'm going to run all of you in to jail," and so Johnson took exception to that, and so he tells the governor of Texas to fire him, fire the, you know, he wants that guy fired. And—what the heck was the name of the director? Anyway, he wouldn't fire him so the—anyway, this went on for a year or two, and so

finally what happened was, they just, because—god, what was his name? Because he wouldn't do it, they just did away with Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission and folded it in with Parks and Wildlife.

DM:
Golly!

DC:
With the Parks Department and made Parks and Wildlife. And so, anyway, I don't know how we got off on that, but David Rideout was with Parks and Wildlife, and he and another guy, I don't know, we were bs-ing about, that was a Wildlife Management Area at the time. So anyway, we decide that, you know, we ought to do something about that. We ought not let the Corps of Engineers get away with ruining the Navasota bottom.

DM:
And all for a shallow lake.

DC:
Well, you know, and of course it would impact David's job too [laugh]. So we formed this group called Friends of the Navasota. And so, and we restrict membership to biologists only. If you're not a biologist, you can't be a member of the Friends of the Navasota. So there were several people in the Department of Wildlife Management and—which then was called Wildlife and Fishery Sciences—and I think somebody from biology was in it, maybe two guys from biology, were in the department and so, or in this group, and so they were all thing, Well you know, the Navasota River is the boundary between the eastern, whatever, biome and, you know, the pine hardwood, that's the western extension of the American Holly. And they were all, you know, stuff like that. And so I said, "Nah, it's not going to get us anywhere, we're not going to do that, it's just going to put everybody to sleep. We need to address this the way the Corps of Engineers has addressed it, you know? We need to use their figures, use their formula for figuring the economic impact of this thing." So I said, "I got an idea, that David and I have been talking about this and we think that the Navasota bottom is the most productive deer hunting area in North America. It produces more pounds of venison per acre than any other place and we think there's enough data available in the literature to prove that. And if we can do that, we think we can prove that the economic value of hunting deer exceeds substantially the economic value of damming the Navasota." And sure enough that was the deal, and I wrote up the brief.

DM:
Did the deer hunters flock in in support of that?

DC:

Well, we didn't, nah, we didn't have, I mean, we didn't address that at all. This was, I never talked to a deer hunter about it, really.

DM:

Oh, okay.

DC:

But I wrote up the brief to submit to Congress on the Appropriations Committee, and I went to Washington and there was another guy named Coulter Hoppes [?] who was an old, oh I don't know, he was sixty, maybe seventy, then. His family had been in Stephen F. Austin's 300 families that settled that area in the 1830s, so Coulter owned a lot of land in the Navasota bottom and all his friends did, owned more land. And so they were opposed to it, of course, and so Coulter said, to me, said, [in a gravelly tone] "Hey Carter, I'll pay your way up there" and I said to Coulter, "I can't let you do that you know, we got to be independent. You can't tie us to any other thing, you know, any other group. We don't want, you know, we got to do this independently, I think we can pull it off that way and that way nobody can say, 'Oh well they're just paid by Coulter Hoppes.'" And so I go to Washington and, for these hearings, and let's see, we meet in the morning with the House and that committee is a sub-committee of the Appropriations Committee, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee was George Mahon. But the sub-committee that dealt with dams and stuff was chaired by a guy named Jamie Lloyd Whitten, he was the author of a book entitled "That We May Live," which was a counter attack against Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring." I don't know if you've ever read those or not.

DM:

I haven't read them. I'm aware of it.

DC:

Okay. So he was—he had this, this just, immeasurable disdain and intolerance for anything ecological. So I didn't get anywhere that morning with him, I mean he ate my lunch. And I kept saying, "You know, I'm interested only in the economics here; I'm not addressing anything else, just the economics of it" and then he raked me over the coals as a tree-hugging nutcase. So those hearings can be kind of interesting. But I think the next day, it was either that afternoon or the next afternoon, it was the Senate we met with and that was chaired by a guy by the name of, a Senator from Kentucky. Cooper. John Sherman Cooper was his name, and he was, he and a congressman by the name of Church, were the primary opponents to funding the Vietnam War, and he had introduced legislation that would cut off funding for any military action in Southeast Asia and other, and eventually he was successful in reducing the funding for the war in Vietnam. So, of course, there was a big contingent from A&M that was up there, A&M supported the dam. This is where I got in trouble, A&M supported the dam and the Chamber of Commerce, they

were really supportive because all these developer types in the Chamber of Commerce saw all these dollar signs on how they could do all this, you know, real estate development around the lake because this would be big shallow lake with a lot of lakeshore, and there was going to be a lot of development. So, of course, they were behind it. Well the guy with the Chamber of Commerce introduced—and they had a big contingent there, maybe a dozen people or more. And so he introduces everybody and a couple of guys are from A&M. And he goes on about how A&M supports this dam and A&M—and this was when they were having all these, a lot of, you know, campus unrest opposing the war and stuff like that—so anyway, so he goes on talking about how A&M produced so many officers for the war and Vietnam and how they were patriotic and they really supported the war, and so I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe that this guy was saying this to Cooper who was chairman [bangs table] of this committee. And Coulter Hoppes was sitting in front of me and he turns around to me and says, [using a gravelly tone] “Carter, Cooper's going to tear him a new asshole” [laugh]. And so anyway, the proponents go first, and then the opponents testify. So anyway, I've submitted my brief, and so I'm sitting in the hot seat up there and so Cooper looks at me and said, “Okay” he said—he was confused, he thought that A&M supported the dam, and here I was opposing the dam. And I said, “Well, I'm not representing Texas A&M. I'm representing the Friends of the Navasota,” and he said, “Well who can be a member of the Friends of the Navasota?” “Well you got to be a biologist, something like that” “Well who in the world hires biologists in College Station other than A&M?” “Well, we've got a couple of guys here from the, you know, members from the Parks and Wildlife,” and he said, well it looked like to him that, you know, A&M both supported and opposed it. He said, “Who's the University other than the faculty and staff?” you know, which was a pretty good argument but anyway he was sympathetic to all of it and in the end he said this seemed, was similar to a similar case in Kentucky with the Red River and he managed to stop that and he thought that, by god they weren't going to build a dam on the Navasota. And they didn't, they did appropriate some money in the Reconciliation Committee to do a further study on it, and so they did a real detailed study then on the economics of it and hunting and all that stuff on it, and they came to the conclusion that it was a stupid thing to do, to build a dam. And so Kunkel, who's dean of agriculture, dean of the college and director of the experiments station, everybody, nearly everybody in agriculture was half time teaching and half time research. So, but Kunkel was most, director of the experiments station and then dean of agriculture. So he calls me over to his office, “Dilford, did you go to Washington?” “Yes sir”, “Why'd you do that?” “Well, I went to testify, you know?” “Well, A&M, you know, supports the dam on the Navs.” “I know, as an employee I support it but as a land owner and individual I oppose it.” “Well you can't do that! You work for A&M, you have to support it.” “Well I do, as an employee. But as a private citizen and a landowner, I oppose it.” “Coulter Hoppes put you up to this?” “No, he didn't have anything to do with it.” So anyway, in the end, he explains to me that I'll never get another promotion and never get another raise in salary. I could stay, but you've gone as far as you're going to go.

DM:

But that's it, man. That's pretty rough. What exactly was your position at that time?

DC:

Well, let's see, I was an associate professor in Wildlife and Fishery Sciences.

DM:

You'd already gotten your Ph.D.?

DC:

Yeah, yeah, oh yeah. And of course—

DM:

Well, that's the writing on the wall then, time to start looking somewhere else? Is that what you—

DC:

Yeah, well, yeah. And, you know, it was a shame because we owned some property down there on the river, I mean, it's a beautiful place, and nearest neighbor was a mile and a half away and so, but—

DM:

What year was this by the way, that this happened, the testifying?

DC:

Yeah, '69 or '70.

DM:

And when did you get your Ph.D.?

DC:

In '62 or '61.

DM:

Yeah, okay, so you weren't a new Ph.D. You'd been there; you'd had some experience.

DC:

But agriculture, the college, was dependent on a lot of support from chemical, you know, companies, and they got a lot of ag chemical support and stuff like that, and so you couldn't be very critical of some things. A&M was, we didn't have department chairmen, we had department

heads. There was no committee in the department that made any decisions. The department head made all the decisions and it was—

DM:

There wasn't room for independent thought then?

DC:

Well, it depended on the department and your department head, but it was a top down kind of, very structured. And, of course, at that time it was still, let's see, that was about that time at the end of the all-male school.

DM:

Yeah.

DC:

A&M did something really clever, they allowed women and blacks in at the same time. All the alumni were outraged over allowing women to attend, so they overlooked the fact that it was integrated [laugh] at the same time. Actually women, there were some women in school there because if you're on the faculty at A&M and you had a daughter, she could go to school there.

DM:

Is that right? Okay. I didn't know that.

DC:

So it wasn't strictly all male, but, you know, a woman couldn't go there unless she was the daughter of somebody on the faculty.

DM:

Well, those would sure be interesting times to be at A&M, with the war controversy and the integration and the gender change.

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Wow. And there you were [laugh] causing trouble.

DC:

[Laugh] There I was causing trouble, I mean, well and then I had a graduate student, well I had a couple of them, they were working on a master's degree—and this is a new degree there—a

master's degree in, it was for somebody that wasn't going to be a career biologist or a career wildlife manager, but somebody that wanted to be in a related field, like law. And I had a student there who later became the attorney general of Idaho, state of Idaho, for example. And he went to law school after that, and so anyway they went out, I was shaving one morning getting ready to come to work, and on the news they'd announced that they were going to be spraying for fire ants in the county, or in Bryan-College Station that afternoon, and this was just to kill fire ants and the Mirex wouldn't, you know, it was not harmful. It just killed fire ants, but it would probably be a good idea not to have a barbecue outside, you know, don't do a cookout. And Mirex? What the hell are they doing, there are no fire ants. Dean Potter, who was the an associate dean in the College of Agriculture, he had a couple of kids and they had a nursery in town, they'd imported some trees from Alabama and they brought fire ants in with them. And so, they were trying to get a jump on the fire ant population before anybody found out about it and it became a problem but, and of course, this colleague of mine [laugh] Clark, he—Don Clark was a herpetologist and entomologist, I mean herpetologist, and he did some work with a toxicologist there named [Frederick W.] Plapp, and they had been working with DDT [Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane] and DDE [Dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene] buildup in snakes in the Brazos Valley, and they'd found out that all the egg laying snakes had pretty much disappeared. The number of snakes remained the same but now they were all venomous snakes. And so [laugh] then you had to, we had to publish, but you had to get an experiment station number assigned to the publication and so you had to submit it to the Experiment's station before you could send it to, you know, to a journal for publication.

DM:

They could shoot it down.

DC:

And so they shot that paper down, and Don published it anyway and then he had a student, and I had one or two, and they all went down, went out to the airport and they were laying down there in front of the plane, wouldn't let it take off, and Kunkel calls me on the phone [laugh].

DM:

Who called you?

DC:

Kunkel, the Dean of Agriculture and Director of Experiments, he says [gravelly tone], "Carter, goddamnit, get those students out of the, off of the airport," you know? And so, and this was the first I'd hear, I didn't know they were out there, you know. So anyway, that turned out, and Don did a paper on—and Plapp did some work on the effects of Mirex, you'd see doves flying across campus and all of a sudden they'd just take a nose dove and hit the ground and they'd be dead. It decimated the morning dove population.

DM:

It decimated the non-venomous snake—

DC:

Well that was DDT and DDE.

DM:

That was DD—okay, yeah okay.

DC:

Yeah, and then this Mirex—

DM:

—did the dove in.

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Gaw, what else did it affect?

DC:

Squirrels, and you know—

DM:

Pretty general, then.

DC:

And it, well the birds, it really affected the birds because they were in pellets, and they'd pick up the pellets. You know, those tiny little pellets, and they'd think they were seeds or something, I don't know, and eat them so, but it would kill them. It knocked Mirex, you know, it wasn't too long before they banned Mirex because it's—

DM:

Did it even curb the fire ant population?

DC:

No, it didn't have much of an effect on it. Of course, the fire ant population was like any other introduced population—they either fail miserably or succeed beyond your wildest dreams. And this one succeeded, but eventually those things like that come into some kind of equilibrium.

And if everybody could just sit back and, you know, be calm about it they would know that eventually fire ants are going to become, they're going to reach an equilibrium and so they won't be the problem that they are right now.

DM:

Okay, interesting.

DC:

Because there was already a fire ant in Texas, it'd been here for a long time, and it'd been introduced back in the 1800s or sometime like that, and it had reached an equilibrium, and it wasn't a real problem.

DM:

Wow, that's interesting.

DC:

But this fairly recent introduction from Argentina—you go to Argentina, you don't see, they're not a problem there.

DM:

Because they reached equilibrium.

DC:

Yeah, they were at some kind of equilibrium, ecological equilibrium to begin with. So you don't see a lot or hear a lot about fire ant problems now that you did back in the seventies, for example.

DM:

That's right. So what's the story with A&M? How long were you there? Did you come to the conclusion—apparently you came to the conclusion somewhere along the way to look for greener pastures.

DC:

Well, yeah, Kunkel kind of suggested that would be a good idea.

DM:

Oh, okay.

DC:

He said I could stay, but I wasn't going to get another raise in salary or another promotion as long as he was dean. And he was a fairly young dean, and so I figured he would be there forever.

DM:

So what did you do?

DC:

Well, then Knox called me and said he was coming out here to Tech to interview. And so he was thinking, maybe, you know, I might be interested, if he got the position out here—so he was interviewing for dean of the graduate school and so he wanted to know if I'd be interested in being an associate dean for research at the graduate school.

DM:

Well, that's an encouragement! Even if it does mean going to West Texas [laugh].

DC:

Well, you know, at least [laugh] at least it was a raise in salary, which was not possible at A&M.

DM:

What did you think about administrative work?

DC:

Well let's see. Knox was figuring that they needed a museum of natural history here and so because there was this museum—and Robert Baker may have told you about Knox, and I think I was there at the same time, but we sat down there at his kitchen table, Baker's kitchen table, and Knox was sketching out—

DM:

This thing [indicates image on the table].

DC:

Yeah, not this part but—

DM:

The NSRL [**Natural Sciences Resources Lab**].

DC:

Yeah the initial part there, yeah.

DM:

But it was about the natural science part?

DC:

Yeah, yeah.

DM:

Yeah, okay. And now, give me a year here, I can't remember the chronology. So when would this have happened? You came out, Baker was here, Baker had been here a few years, I guess?

DC:

He'd, Baker had been here a couple of years, a guy named Robert Packard, Bob Packard. Everybody called him Freddy.

DM:

Freddy? Oh I don't know if I've heard that.

DC:

Well, they called him Freddy because he was one of E. Raymond Hall's students, and he was there when Knox was a student there, and Hall had had a student by the name of Packard some years before and his name was Fred, and so Hall had a hard time with names of people. He's kind of like David Starr Jordan, you know, he was an ichthyologist that learned the names of every fish in the Atlantic and the Pacific and all of North America, but couldn't remember his students' names and somebody told him he really ought to make an effort to remember his students' names and so he memorized one of his student's names and probably forgot the name of a fish. So anyway, Hall was kind of that way, and so he was always calling Bob Packard Freddy, and so everybody started calling him Freddy [laugh].

DM:

That's funny [laugh]. Hall was prolific wasn't he? He had a lot of grad students scattered about.

DC:

Yeah, he did. He had a lot of students. He was an interesting guy.

DM:

So Packard was here, Baker—

DC:

Packard was, Packard had been here. Packard first went to, what was it, East Texas State, I think what it was called then.

DM:

Commerce?

DC:

Well, where was that? He, it was—

DM:

East Texas A&M now?

DC:

Well it may have been—no, Texas A&M at, there was a separate but equal A&M down at—

DM:

Yeah.

DC:

But no, it was, it may have gone to the one in Huntsville. Which one was that? Stephen F. Austin. That's where he was, he was at Stephen F. Austin. That wasn't—

DM:

Nacogdoches.

DC:

Nacogdoches, yeah, that's where Packard was [clears throat] and then he came out here and then Baker got his job, got his Ph.D. and Packard hired him, or got the department to hire him, and so then there was Baker here and then Baker had been here a couple of years when there was a vacancy for dean of graduate school.

DM:

When he was coming out to interview for that, he went ahead and called you, like he knew you would be a good fit?

DC:

Well, I feel like, it was—what—we'd gone to a meeting somewhere, where was it that he first told me about it? I think that he was coming out here for an interview. I think it was at Southwest Biologist Association.

DM:

SWAN? Southwest Association of Naturalists?

DC:

SWAN, yeah, it may have been a SWAN meeting that he told me about it, but then later he called me, he'd come out here and they'd offered him the job and wanted to know if I would come out for an interview.

DM:

Let's talk about that meeting when they started proposing NSRL or what you heard of it. You were probably there, you think.

DC:

Yeah, well that was the first time that Knox had gone over the plans. I know that when I came out here, we were over at Packard's house—no over at Baker's house—and we were sitting around the kitchen table there, and Knox was drinking Old Fitzgerald, and we were, and he was going over his plans for the Natural Science Research Lab.

DM:

Okay, wow.

DC:

And we were all there and we were drawing plans and laying out offices. This is going to be my office was that corner office over there [indicates image on table].

DM:

Lot dreaming going on there but maybe something [inaudible talking at the same time 1:44:22]

DC:

Well, Knox figured that, let's see, who was the president then?

DM:

Grover Murray?

DC:

Grover Murray, yeah, Grover had some money. And he talked to Grover about this. You know, if he came out here, this is what he wanted, you know, for a research lab, a collection and all that stuff, and so Grover agreed to it and he'd find the money for it.

DM:

So there was a good chance of this happening? It must have been quite an excitement.

DC:

Yeah, yeah, well it was kind of 99.9999 if not a hundred.

DM:

Wow, that'd be a fun thing to be in on the ground floor of.

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

What was the original intention? Were you talking in terms of a specimen collection and all of this and how large it could be or what it would focus on? Like mammals, birds, you know.

DC:

Yeah, yeah, it was mammals, primarily mammals, birds. There was an ornithologist here at the time, what was that guy's name, I can't think of it right now. He wasn't as crazy about it, there was a herpetologist here and he, it did have a—we didn't have a herp collection, but they also hired a guy named Black from—a paleontologist. I think he was—

DM:

Rylander might have been here; he was ornithology.

DC:

Yeah, Rylander was here, that's right. He was the ornithologist. Herpetologist, I can't remember his name, kind of a grumpy guy, whoever it was.

DM:

What was Rose, I can't remember what his field was.

DC:

Rose was a—

DM:

Botanist?

DC:

No, he was a herpetologist too. He worked with—oh god he had all those salamanders with the tumors on their heads.

DM:

Oh, the ones that, yeah.

DC:

Yeah, he collected out there in that pond on Reese Air Force Base.

DM:

Francis Rose or something.

DC:

Yeah, Francis Rose, he had this big, giant tortoise in the backyard.

DM:

What kind of tortoise was it?

DC:

I don't know, Galapagos Tortoise or something.

DM:

Really? Golly!

DC:

There, that's not the only tortoise that gets really big, but that's the one everybody knows about. But anyway, he had this big tortoise. And—I talked to Francis not long ago.

DM:

Really?

DC:

Yeah. I've forgotten—

DM:

Is he still around here?

DC:

He's, where, he's over in Louisiana somewhere. Yeah, I've forgotten what the deal was, but I talked to him. He called me about something, he said, "Hey!" You know, same guy. I asked him about his tortoise, oh he had to leave it with somebody when he went off to do something and it got cold and they had it out in the garage or something, and it got too cold and died.

DM:

Oh man, otherwise the thing would have lived longer than any of us, I guess [laugh].

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

You find some interesting characters in biology. That's what I've always liked about it, you know, you guys, you're a different breed.

DC:

When I was at A&M I did every summer for the ten or twelve years, I'd be gone for three or four months in Mexico or Middle America or someplace, southwestern U.S. So I did a lot of field work while I was there and collected a lot of mammals.

DM:

Well what did you—when you were talking about this Natural Science research Lab, do you remember any talk about what the square footage should be, how much it could accommodate, if there were going to be lab space, do you remember any of that conversation?

DC:

Well, of course, Knox was mainly interested in mammals, but he figured he'd get the support from some other guys they needed, you know, they couldn't be, we couldn't be exclusives. So the top floor, the second floor was all mammals. There, I don't think there were any, well there may have been, I think there was a room over on the north side there for herps and one for birds, or something like that, but that was, Rylander wasn't that interested in—

DM:

Yeah, and birds eventually went to UT [**University of Texas**], I guess, not too many years ago.

DC:

I don't know. I don't know what happened to them.

DM:

Okay.

DC:

But he was not really a—

DM:

Collector like that?

DC:

A collector, interested in taxonomy or systematics.

DM:

What about tissues? Was there any talk about tissues at that time? Tissue preservation?

DC:

Yeah, you know—

DM:

That's pretty early, but—

DC:

It was pretty early but, not, I don't know that we talked about it in the very beginning. Later on we did, I know it, I collected tissue when we worked on that project, which was early on really, in the early seventies. And I'm not, let's see, I guess, I came out here in '71 and, Fall of '71, and then in '72 or 3, we got that project, Smithsonian Excess Currency Grant. You probably don't have any excess currency in your pocket but that was a deal where America sold surplus grain, after the second World War, sold it to several countries, Yugoslavia was one of them, Poland was another, Tunisia was one of them, there were several others, and they took payment in local currency. And the deal was, they would leave that currency in the country, they wouldn't take it out, and of course Yugoslav dinars weren't any good anywhere except Yugoslavia. And the same—

DM:

Yeah, yeah, got left in the bank and accrued interest on it?

DC:

Well, and then it was used for scientific and cultural exchanges.

DM:

Interesting, okay.

DC:

And, of course, it meant exchange working there in country because the money wasn't worth anything outside the country.

DM:

Right, place for you to do some field research.

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Yeah, neat.

DC:

So we wrote up this project for, to work on the, really to work on the islands in the Adriatic there off the coast of Yugoslavia because they'd been, during the Pleistocene periodically during each glaciation, they'd been connected to the coast and then interglacial they were separated. And the next glaciation, they were joined.

DM:

That would be interesting. Some variation resulted I guess.

DC:

Yeah. And so he thought it'd be a good colonization, you know, in the speciation lab, those islands. But we never got to work on the islands, actually. That's the way it was written up and that's the way it was approved, but when it came to actually doing it, we—of course Tito was alive then and Yugoslavia was one country but after we got there, we could tell that once Tito was gone, everything was going to fall apart. Because he was the only force that kept these, what they call independent republics, together. So I was told by somebody, whether this is true or not, that the Soviets thought that if we can do research on those islands, they thought they ought to have a research project there also.

DM:

[Laugh] A miniature Cold War going on.

DC:

Yeah and it, Tito didn't like that idea, he didn't want the Soviets in Yugoslavia at all but so, they never would let us do this work. On island, although, that is what had been approved, and it was approved by the Research Council in Belgrade. But we never got to do that.

DM:

Golly. Wow!

DC:

And, in fact, you know I was told, a couple of times, “Well why don’t you just go down to, you know, spend the summer at Dubrovnik, it’s a nice place, you know? You don’t really have to do this work,” and [laugh]—

DM:

Kind of becomes a perk, huh?

DC:

So these were Yugoslav people. In fact, when we got there, we were there six, eight weeks before I could ever draw any money and we were staying there at the, in Zagreb at the Intercontinental Hotel, it was running up a huge hotel bill, I couldn’t pay the bill because we had no U.S. dollars in the project. And so I couldn’t check out of the hotel because I couldn’t pay the bill. And so, and the Research Council in Belgrade wouldn’t release the money. And they said, well, they couldn’t because the treasurer was on vacation. Well she’d been working for the government all her life and she was sixty years old then so she, you know, every year she accrued more days of vacation so she had three months of vacation every year. And so she was on vacation for the whole summer.

DM:

And there wasn’t a subordinate that could do this?

DC:

No, she had to sign it, and so finally—and every day I’d go over and talk to the guy in the consulate, the U.S. had a consulate there in Zagreb—I’d go talk to him, and finally I said, “Listen, you know, why don’t we, why don’t you talk to those people down there and see if they’ll do a treasurer for the day, you know, you remember *Queen for the Day*? Old TV program?” And so he said, “Well that might work.” So sure enough they decided, they think, Well okay we’ll do that, we’ll appoint a Treasurer for the Day. I’d even been down to Belgrade to talk to the Ambassador about it. I mean, we couldn’t get anything done. And so, anyway, he finally, finally they said okay, they would appoint a Treasurer for the Day and when the treasurer found out about it she came in to work that day and she signed it, the disbursement order.

DM:

[Laugh] She didn’t want to share her authority!

DC:

No, huh-uh [laugh] didn’t work that way.

DM:

Treasurer for a Day bologna [laugh]!

DC:

[Laugh] She could see the handwriting on the wall, they did it once, they could do it every time she left the office, so. I had to, you know, there's only one bank in Yugoslavia. There's only one bank, same bank in Zagreb, same bank in Belgrade, same bank everywhere. Split everybody every place. But, they wouldn't send the disbursement order to Zagreb, I had to draw the money in Belgrade. So this girl from the Research Council goes with me to this bank, and I draw 24,000 dollars in dinars and the exchange rate was 17 to 1. And so I had all these bundles of 100 dinar notes and I stuff them in to this brief case. I mean it took an effort to get it closed, I mean it was full of dinars, 24,000 dollars' worth, 24,000 times 17. And I'd missed the fast train back to Zagreb that afternoon. So the next train that would take me back to Zagreb was the Orient Express.

DM:

Slow, slow, slow?

DC:

Well, in those days, by that time, it was. It was not an express train, but it was still called the Orient Express, still started in Istanbul and ended in Paris. And, you know, I expected at any time to see Poirot [**fictitious television detective**] walk down the aisle or Sydney Greenstreet or Peter Lorre [laugh] show up, but they didn't. And I was sitting in this compartment with—it held six people, five of them were swarthy Serbs.

DM:

With your bulging briefcase!

DC:

With the briefcase on my lap! And I thought, Well these Serbs are not going to be going, you know, they're not, they're going to be getting off the train soon, but they didn't! They were on their way to Germany to work, you know, as guest workers. And so we all, and this was at 5:30 in the afternoon it left. And so from 5:30 to 4 a.m. when it got in to Zagreb, we all sat there staring at each other.

DM:

Probably didn't want to fall asleep, did you?

DC:

No, I wasn't going to fall asleep. And for some reason or another I just knew they knew that I had a briefcase full of money. So we get to Zagreb, and we're ready to go, but every time we went they'd issue all the money at one time, and I had to carry all this money around.

DM:

Man! And all the way up to Belgrade.

DC:

Well after that I think I got it in Zagreb, but that first year they were, they wouldn't send it to Zagreb.

DM:

Well how long were you there?

DC:

Well, four years.

DM:

Really?

DC:

Well not totally, I mean I was there three months at a time.

DM:

Off and on, off and on.

DC:

Three or four months at a time.

DM:

Well did you get to do any biological fieldwork there?

DC:

Oh yeah! Yeah.

DM:

They opened up—but not on the islands?

DC:

Not on the islands. We did it on the mainland there, we worked up and down the Velebit, Dinaric Alp range that runs down the coast of Croatia there and Montenegro, all the way down to, you know, Macedonia, and the Greek Peninsula.

DM:

I can't remember when Tito died. Did he stay alive for you during this time?

DC:

Who is that? Tito? Ah, yeah, it was after that.

DM:

Kept things stable? Did you see any kind of deterioration at all, political?

DC:

But—well yeah there were the Free Croats at the time and they blew up a few airplanes. So when you went to board an airplane there in Zagreb, man, they searched everything. And then you had to put your suitcase down on the tarmac there and then, if you, well after they'd searched it and everything like that. They carried it out, and they put them down there and so when you went to board the plane, you all walked in on the tarmac then up the steps. You had to identify your bag, and if you didn't identify the bag you didn't go on the plane.

DM:

Right, right.

DC:

That was when they blew up a—it was a Boeing 727 and they blew that thing up at 30 something thousand feet. Or maybe it was twenty-eight, anyway it was right at 30,000 feet and it blew up and it's in the winter and there was one survivor.

DM:

Really?

DC:

A flight attendant survived that, fell 28,000 feet.

DM:

Golly, how? How does someone do that?

DC:

Well, it was in the winter, there was snow all over the place and so when the plane blew up she was buckled into a seat. I think it was, it may, I don't know, it may have been one of those bombs that, you know, has an altimeter, you pass a certain elevation and it explodes, whatever the word was, so she was still buckled in and so her seat was falling and it was falling at an angle. It hit on the hill side.

DM:

Yeah, so it didn't go [hits hands together] like—

DC:

No, it hit on this hillside and the angle of descent was parallel to the angle of descent on the mountainside, and she came down through all these firs and pine trees and stuff and that kind of broke her fall. And she didn't actually hit a tree or anything, it was just one of those 1 in 10,000,000,000 times and there was snow on the ground, she hit the snow then, and of course she was unconscious, and at the bottom of this hill was a lake and she went all the way across the lake, you know, before she came to a rest.

DM:

Yeah, iced over. How lucky is that?

DC:

And she had a broken arm, that was it. And—

DM:

So she woke up out there I guess?

DC:

Yeah, yeah, some people found her, debris falling all over the place, so anyway, she was found and she survived it. But the Free Croats were doing stuff like that and you, you know, people were really suspicious of us, and we had this VW bus I'd rented, we had the same bus 2 or 3 years in a row, and it was, had Ljubljana license plate on it, so you could see that that was from Slovenia, that vehicle, it wasn't from Croatia, and we were working in Croatia. Everybody looked at us like, you know, "Who are these Slovenians over here in Croatia" and people wouldn't talk to you because they figured you were from Slovenia. But then once they figured out that we were from Texas, it was okay.

DM:

What about when you were tried to explain what you were doing? I've heard field biologists say, "Yeah, it's kind of a tough explanation."

DC:

Well, the funniest case of that was when we were, we were up in the Velebit, and we were over near the border was the Bosnia-Herzegovina and, of course, lot of Muslims in Bosnia. So we'd sent some, there's this little village, maybe a dozen houses, something like that in this little village. And so we'd gone past this road, just a dirt road, went past it, and we went over these hills west of the village and we'd set out a bunch of traps up there and—

DM:

Trapping rodents or what was—

DC:

Yeah, rodents, and we'd set out a 100 Sherman live traps and these were aluminum collapsible ones and so sunlight was reflecting off some of it and you could see them as we found out later on. We went to leave there and some old men had formed a roadblock across this dirt road, and they had their weapons from the time when they were partisans with Tito during World War II and then so they had their Mausers out there and they stopped us, wouldn't let us pass, captured us. There's one kid in the village that had a bicycle with a motor on it, I don't know if you've ever seen one of those or not, but at one time they weren't that uncommon.

DM:

It's like a moped?

DC:

Yeah, it was a regular bicycle but it had a little gasoline motor under it. And so they sent him down to Karlobag to get the chief of police to come up and take charge of their prisoners. And so they thought, here's what they thought, they thought we were Muslims from Bosnia and that we had come over here and that those Sherman live traps were mines that we'd set to blow up their sheep.

DM:

[Laugh] How do you explain your way out of that?

DC:

Well [laugh], we couldn't and the women began to drift down there to where they were holding us prisoner and so they talked to us and we talked to the women and Beatricia Jülich [?]. She had a graduate student named Nikola Tervokavich [?]. And so they would speak to them in hrvatski [Croatian] but they were—they were still convinced that we were from Bosnia, we were Muslims, and we were going to blow up their sheep. And the women said, "Well, we don't think their Muslims, they didn't look like Muslims," and they said, "Well, you can't tell, those Muslims, they're tricky. They'll disguise themselves if it's to trick a Christian." And so the

women went back up, some of them went up there and they got some wine, they brought some wine down there to ask if we would like some wine. And we said sure, so we had some wine.

DM:

Ah, there you go.

DC:

And so they said, "You see, they're drinking wine, they're not Muslim." "Well, Muslims can drink alcohol if it's to trick a Christian, you know, that's permissible, if it's to trick a Christian. They can lie, cheat, or steal if it's to trick a Christian." And so the women went back and made some ham sandwiches, and they brought these ham sandwiches down there and so it, this home cured ham they make there, and it is really good ham.

DM:

I'm glad you were cashing in on this somehow [laugh].

DC:

So we were eating ham sandwiches, drinking wine, having a good time and the women said, "You see, they're eating pork. You can't eat pork in you're a Muslim." "Well you can if it's to fool a Christian! You can do anything if it's to fool a Christian." And so eventually, it was getting dark, and this kid came back on his motorized bicycle, and he said the chief of police said that we were guest of Tito and they'd better turn us loose before Tito got there. So they released us and these women, they were ragging on these poor guys [laugh]. "We told you they weren't Muslim!"

DM:

[Laugh] Now we're in trouble with Tito [laugh].

DC:

Nobody wanted to be on the wrong side of Tito. The idea that Tito would come up there, it never occurred to them that this was, you know [laugh]. So they let us go.

DM:

Shoot!

DC:

But we [laugh], this one village, when they found out we were Slovenian, this one, I'd caught a, I'd set these traps in this plum orchard, up in the trees for dormice and so—

DM:

Live traps like the Sherman?

DC:

No, these actually were snap traps but they were Victory rat traps for these fat dormice. But dormice, you'll have one, it can be in a snap trap, you've got the dormouse in the snap trap and you think the things dead, and you take it out and put it in your pocket and pretty soon that thing jumps out of your pocket. They are—

DM:

They're tough.

DC:

They are tough.

DM:

Man!

DC:

And it's like they're playing dead or something, you know? So, you have to tie these traps down, so I had, you know, so I tied the trap down, but this, some Colubridae snake, rat snake or gold and white snake, had tried to swallow the dormouse and it got to the trap and it couldn't negotiate the trap. And it couldn't bite the [laugh]—so it was stuck. Couldn't regurgitate the dormouse and it couldn't swallow it. So—

DM:

You had a Colubridae in a plum tree?

DC:

Yeah, so I, Nikola happened to walking down this road next to this field where I was, where the orchard was, and there's a rock, a little low rock wall there, and I said, "Hey, Nikola, look at this!" and I held that thing up, this snake hanging down from the trap there and so he comes across the wall and there's some native guy from this little village walking by at the same time. And so Nikola turns and says to him in hrvatski, you know, that I've got this snake over there. So the guy comes across the wall to look at the snake and so, in the course of this conversation, he finds out that we're from Texas and not from Slovenia. And Slovenia is just next door, not fifty miles from there is Slovenia. It's like going from here to Post, so you're in another country. To them, you know, these guys are untrustworthy and they're all thieves and axe murderers and all kinds of terrible people live in Slovenia. And so then the whole village finds out that we're from Texas, and we had to quit trapping in that area because we'd have to visit every house, eat a ham

sandwich in the house and drink a glass of wine in their house. I mean, we were unable to drive home after that.

DM:

Because you were Texans? You should have said Oklahoma [laugh]!

DC:

[Laugh] Everybody knows where Texas is!

DM:

That's right, that's right, it sure is. Oh boy.

DC:

That was the, that was the Yugoslav project.

DM:

Yeah, but was it all about small rodents?

DC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay, wasn't bats, it wasn't other mice—

DC:

Well, I mean. You know, I think we collected a few bats but it was mainly, what we were mainly looking at is not something that would fly back and forth from one of those islands, but you know, so the project wasn't ready to include bats. And this was, this country was limestone country and there should have been a lot of bats, a lot of caves bats around, but I don't know that, I don't remember collecting any bats.

DM:

But you were focusing on small rodents anyhow.

DC:

And shrews and stuff like, we were taking tissue. I think that's how we got into this. We were taking tissue and culturing the tissue. Later on, I had a student there worked on Molossidae bats in Mexico and Middle America, and we could take liquid nitrogen with us then but in Yugoslavia we did all cultures.

DM:

I'm going to pause this just a second.

Pause in Recording

DM:

Okay, you came up with the name of the Game, Fish, and Oyster.

DC:

Yeah, it was Howard Dodgen.

DM:

Dodgen.

DM:

He had been, ever since I was a little kid, seems like, the Director of the Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission of Texas. And John Connally, of course, was governor then. And it was, John's—LBJ was on Connally's case to fire Howard Dodgen and he wouldn't fire the game warden and I'd forgotten the name of the game warden, at one point I knew his name because I knew a retired game warden down in Refugio [?] County that told me the guy's name. And so this was kind of like, you know, I mean a real legend in the, he was a legend in the department among the game wardens because he stood up to LBJ. He said, "Tell that big eared son of a bitch in the back seat and shut up or I'm going to run all of you—" [laugh].

DM:

Dodgen, maybe if I look up Dodgen, I'll find this story.

DC:

I don't know if you will or not.

DM:

Or it wasn't broadcast much or was it?

DC:

No, it wasn't, because—but that was the reason.

DM:

Well if you think of it, if you think of his name, let me know sometime.

DC:
Okay.

DM:
How do you spell Dodgen?

DC:
D-o-d-g-e-n, I think.

DM:
g-e-n, and after Dodgen, then it got wrapped in to TPWD?

DC:
Yeah, yeah.

DM:
Okay, okay.

DC:
Yeah, they just rolled it over in to Parks Department, and Dodgen didn't have a job.

DM:
Good grief!

DC:
He wasn't in the budget anymore [laugh].

DM:
Golly! Man, that's some revenge, isn't it? Go to all that trouble because the guy, because of the game warden.

DC:
Yeah, yeah but Dodgen wouldn't budge on it.

DM:
[Laugh] Well let's go ahead and pause today, and we'll pick up on it, I want to talk to you a lot more about Texas Tech and more of your field research and then we haven't even talked about Envoye travel and I want to get a bit on that too, maybe some of your big game hunts and that kind of thing.

DC:
Okay

End of Recording



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