

**Oral History Number: 163-029**

**Interviewee: T. Richard "Dick" Flaharty**

**Interviewer: Gregg Phifer**

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**Project: Civilian Public Service Smokejumpers Oral History Project**

Gregg Phifer: ...get us into the tape here. This is Gregg Phifer, a professor of communication at Florida State University in Tallahassee. Now interviewing one of the smokejumpers from the CPS experience. Dick, your full name and where you from.

Dick Flaharty: Yes, my full name is—I use the first initial T. Richard Flaharty, and currently from the Los Angeles area, Granada Hills.

GP: Nobody calls you Richard though, do they?

DF: No, Dick is the name I use.

GP: And I'm not going to try to pronounce that last name. I had a hard enough time with Oliver Huset. I've always called him "Hugh-set" but now he insists on being called "Who-sit." Well, the CPS, of course, represents Civilian Public Service. These were objectors to military service during World War II. Would you say just a word about your own religious background?

DF: Yes. I was raised pretty much in the Methodist Church and still am an active member of the United Methodist Church. During my formative years, I was under the influence of a Methodist minister who was very much a pacifist and I think I took on much of his philosophy in my teen years.

GP: The Methodist Church was very much that way. Much of the literature—because I was brought up a Methodist—much of the literature was very much anti-war and really a near pacifist position. Of course, the church as a whole did not take that position, but there were about as many Methodists as Quakers in CPS. Did you ever follow those numbers?

DF: No. I thought I had recalled that there were many more Methodists than there were Quakers but that was because, of course, the Methodist Church was much larger.

GP: I think eventually it shook down to being about the same. I think we were ahead for a while. Of course, the largest number were the Mennonites and I guess they were one of the largest numbers in CPS 103 as well. Now, the people in the historic peace churches, the Quakers, Brethren, Mennonites generally speaking didn't have any trouble getting the 4-E classification. But some of us were not in the historic peace churches, had a little more trouble. How about you in the 4-E classification, which means classification as a conscientious objector?

DF: Well, I think because of the reputation of this particular minister I was growing up under, and the fact that several members of our church had already applied for the 4-E classification with the local Selective Service Board, when I appeared before that board I was not challenged at all. They just accepted that I was going to be a CO and they didn't test my religious points of view at all.

GP: My local board in Cincinnati, Ohio, just routinely rejected all applications—I think there are probably a couple of others and that same board—so I went up before a hearing officer in Nashville, Tennessee, and he agreed that I should have this 4-E classification. I gather some men went on to the third level, to the presidential appeal, but apparently you were, in a sense fortunate, I guess in that way. On the other hand, the fact of my appeal delayed my appearance in CPS, I'm sure, by at least six months. When did you enter CPS?

DF: I was drafted February 20, 1942.

GP: I didn't get in 'til December '42. That may be part of the reason for it. Where were you assigned first?

DF: I was assigned to Coshocton, Ohio, CPS 23.

GP: I went to Buck Creek, CPS 19. Did you stay at Coshocton?

DF: Yes. I spent all of my CPS time at Coshocton, with the exception of the few months I was in the smokejumpers in 1944.

GP: So you had quite an experience. What was it the Coshocton project like?

DF: The Coshocton project was a soil conservation project. Testing and proving the validity, you might say, of contour plowing and strip plowing to prevent soil erosion in the hilly areas of Ohio.

GP: I wouldn't have thought of Ohio as being a great agricultural state even though I was born and brought up in Cincinnati. Of course, that was a city and I really was not acquainted as much as I should have been, perhaps, with the rural areas of Ohio. So you stayed in Coshocton that whole time. Now, how did you first get acquainted with the smokejumper unit?

DF: The notice of the invitation to volunteer for the project, I don't believe, arrived until 1944, the spring of 1944.

GP: '43 they had some, because I know some people left from Buck Creek in '43 to go to the jumper unit.

DF: But we didn't have any CPS men leave Coshocton in '43, and I don't recall ever hearing about the smokejumpers until the '44 season. And then there were a number of us who volunteered and I was not one of the first ones chosen. In fact, several, I think Murray Braden and Lew Berg were accepted earlier, and I was very despondent because I had not been and was left behind. Finally a call came later for more volunteers and my name was then accepted.

GP: We had about three or four men from Buck Creek, CPS 19, who went to the first unit. Harry Burks...I guess Bryn Hammarstrom was from 19 as well. Anyway, there were several people who went there. I knew about it. I had just arrived in camp several months before, and was really not into the Forest Service project enough to know what it was about. By the way, we were a National Park Service Camp, there at CPS 19. So I knew about it in the beginning, but didn't volunteer for that first unit, volunteered the second year, after having gone to Camp Antelope, out at Colville, California. Well, how'd you make the decision to apply for the smokejumper unit, anyway? If you and several others did at the same time, why?

DF: Well I was getting rather depressed at that time. I was concerned about the fact that I was losing much of my initial enthusiasm about making a witness and making a witness through Civilian Public Service. I felt that my work at Coshocton was very unimportant. And I really felt the need to make a change in my life. I wanted to take on a new challenge and I was just feeling rather desperate about getting out of Coshocton and shaking myself up, in essence. In fact, as soon as it became apparent that I was not chosen initially for the '44 smokejumper crew, I then immediately went back to the office and this time volunteered for one of the human guinea pig units. I guess, in some ways I was lucky that the smokejumper consideration came along a little later.

GP: I knew some of the people who are in the hunger unit, some others who were in the pneumonia unit. My, some of them had very tough times.

DF: I think I was volunteering for the malaria unit at that time.

GP: So you volunteer for the smokejumpers, were accepted, and you came to Ninemile for training, right?

DF: Correct.

GP: And were you in that D unit with me, or were you do with C, or what did you do?

DF: I think I was with you, Lee Miller, Walt Reimer—

GP: Oliver Huset.

DF: And so forth.

GP: Yes. D unit we went through...the last group to go through. I'd been with an earlier unit, but had a bad shoulder, I think injured probably from a tower jump.

DF: I thought you had preceded me.

GP: Yes I had, I'd been there earlier. Even they were talking about the possibility of my going on at one of the observation towers, but I never got there. I got some of the training for it, but then they started the D unit and I went through with that, and had no particular difficulty. So you went to training. What do you remember most about that training?

DF: Well, I remember from a personal point of view again, of pitching in and really getting into the swing of it very quickly, wanting very much the full experience, being ready for jumping. I wanted to feel good about myself physically, so I really entered into the—

GP: Gung-ho! How about that.

DF: —the training.

GP: Running around there, taking the calisthenics, and all the rest.

DF: Right. Even though I soon realized that I was the slowest runner in the group, and always the last one to come in from the run around the track.

GP: I think I was the first one coming in, but boy when I came in puffing and huffing I'd be first but I'd really take a long time recovering afterwards. Well, the training. Do you remember the part of it as being particularly difficult for you, or any part that you either enjoyed, or—

DF: No. The running was the greatest. I realized, for one thing, that part of why I had been passed up on the first go-around, the first selection out of Coshocton, was that I was right at about the crucial limit of weight that they would accept for the smokejumpers. They were being very particular about not having anybody who was overweight, and I was right at the balance line, so I was doing a lot to trim myself down and knock off some of that weight. I think being one of the heaviest, one of the reasons why I was one of the last ones on the run. But I soon found that I was able to pull myself up as fast as anybody on the ropes, and do most of the physical—

GP: Method hand-over-hand from one ladder, overhead ladder.

DF: Went very well.

GP: Well I was the opposite way, because I barely made a smokejumper weight at the minimum level. At that time I probably weighed about 133 or 134, and the minimum was 130. Of course, I

came out of graduate school weighting 120, which is amazing now at 160 or 65. I can hardly realize at that.

DF: Well, I was a 165 at the time I was going in to smokejumpers. The one thing too that I recall on the obstacle course and the physical training and so forth was that I always wanted to be the first one off the jump tower.

GP: Oh really, the tower?

DF: Right. And I never was sure whether that was that I was afraid I might begin to lose my nerve a little bit if I had to wait and think about it, or if it just was that macho bit of wanting to be first.

GP: I remember going off it but I don't remember wanting to be first. I think that's where I got a bad shoulder, taking that tower jump. And remember also there was that mock-up of the plane in which you were sitting there and he tapped you on the shoulder you'd step out two or three feet down to the ground. That was the easy part of it. And then the stakes and the going through the various tires we had to step in. All kinds of climbing through obstacles—

DF: The tube.

GP: Yes, sort of an obstacle course. I remember the training pretty well. How about the hit and role? Were you good at that?

DF: Yes. I had very little difficulty with the jumping off the platform and hitting the ground, in spite of my weight.

GP: And you had no injuries during the training at all.

DF: I did in my training jumps.

GP: Oh. All right, let's get to that training jumps now. How about the first jump, now. Was that easy for you?

DF: Yes. Yes. I don't think I was any more nervous than anybody else.

GP: [laughs] About right.

DF: We all admitted to that. But that when the time came I had little difficulty getting into the swing of it, and going out that door without hesitation.

GP: Now my first jump, I was the second man out, following Harry Burks. Did you ride the step?

DF: I can't recall whether I was first there second man out on the first jump.

GP: By about my third jump, I rode the step, and it didn't seem to bother me. On that first step, I think it might have. If I had been standing right there in the door, my foot on the step, looking down at the ground below. But looking out behind Harry Burks—he went out, I went out behind him. I had no trouble with that at all. How about later jumps? Now, we were supposed to hang up on about jump four or five, somewhere in there. Were you successful at hanging up in a tree?

DF: Yes, yes. I was able to get down.

GP: Let-down procedure.

DF: Using the let-down rope at all. It was my fifth jump where I had trouble.

GP: Oh? What happened there?

DF: I came out of the plane and let out my usual war whoop when I felt the shock of the chute and then looked up and, lo and behold, I had a line over. And it was right across the center, really pulling the chute up tight. Quick sense of panic because then, along with that, I could hear the rush of air in my helmet, and felt I was falling at a tremendous rate of speed. So I immediately felt then, I was falling fast enough that my emergency chute would pop open. I opened it, and instead of it flying up and catching air, it was falling down, I wasn't hold it fast. And it was falling down between my legs, and I grabbed some more of the silk, and tried to throw it out away from me, and instead of it going out and catching air, it just wrapped all around me. So I was really a cocoon falling down to the ground.

GP: I imagine I was there on the ground watching you. With that jumping stick.

DF: Right. And what calmed me down immediately, was as soon as the jump master turned that amplifier up and pointed the horn up at me and just said, "Take it easy Flaherty. Just get the silk away from your face and see what you're doing." Then I started using more logic and reasoning and concentrating a little more on what I was doing. But I came straight down and the estimation of those on the ground was that I came in about twice as fast as you would normally land. I sprained both ankles, one more than the other, and that had me on crutches for a while.

GP: So you had to postpone your sixth and seventh practice jumps?

DF: Right. But I caught up very quickly. It wasn't that bad a sprain. As soon as I hit the ground and rolled over, and the fellows ran up, I said, "Can I go up again?" I wanted to go right out up and make another jump. I wanted to before I lost my nerve.

GP: But with the ankles, they wouldn't let you do that, I'm sure.

DF: Right.

GP: Well, let's see. You got five jumps there in. How about the spot? You remember we were there jumping in the runway, and they put a spot out right there in the center. You ever come close to it?

DF: I believe I missed out on the spot jumping because of the delay of getting to my final jumps. However, my final training jump, the seventh, was made at a time when they were doing a demonstration for some visitors. And we did it over a hayfield, and I was unaware of it at the time, but I got about halfway down and got caught in a thermal. And I was hanging over the field and drifting and drifting to the far end of the field, and I was not aware of it in the air. The fellows on the ground told me afterward how I just got to that one level and stayed. But it was a nice ride.

GP: Yes, that's right. It was a nice ride, longer than usual. I remember in one of my practice jumps, I think some of the veteran jumpers were going along for a refresher jump and they insisted we go up higher. So we jumped from 3,000 feet, rather than two. Little longer ride coming down. 'course, on the fires, you were jumping frequently at 1,000, 1,200 thereabouts. In order to come closer to the spot. After you finished your training, then what? Where were you assigned?

DF: I stayed right at Ninemile. Was called out from there for fires.

GP: What sort of project did you have, out of Ninemile?

DF: I was on several details, but the main one was fence setting up and repair.

GP: Did you get any work at the Remount Station, with hay?

DF: I baled hay for a while, yes.

GP: Well I did that too. It's one of those several projects. While you had a sprained ankle on jump number five—two sprained ankles in jump number five—during the rest of your fire jumping experience, did you have any other injury?

DF: No. No, I didn't. I made three fire jumps. And the first one was the largest fire I was on—there were actually six of us who jumped. There were eight of us who were taken out to the airport at the time because a call came late in the afternoon and there were evidently a number of fires spotted at the same time. It must have been a storm that went through Idaho at that point. The main fire that we were called for was way over on the west side of the state, and when the plane arrived over the fire area, we determined that—or I should say, the Forest

Service men determined that—the fire was in the Potlatch Timber Protective Association's area, and not in national forest ground.

So the decision was that we would then have to scout out all of the fires in the area and make sure they were covered before they would jump anybody on private land. Two men were used, then, from the eight of us in the plane, to cover another fire that did not seem to be covered. And then we got back to the Potlatch fire. In the meantime, the plane had done a lot of circling and some of us were feeling pretty queasy. In fact, one of our members, Murray Braden, got quite ill. And unfortunately, Murray and I had just had a bottle of orange soda before we got in the plane, and I kept thinking, I had it too, I drank it. Yet I was working hard to keep my stomach in check. I think out of courtesy to Murray and how badly he was feeling, we made sure that he was on the first pass to get out of the plane. By that time it was late in the afternoon. The spotter did not have time to find a clearing to put us in, wanting us on the ground as quickly as possible because it was getting dark. Dusk. We therefore were told to hit the timber at the top of the ridge above the fire and work our way down. Well, from the air, as you know, you can't tell the height of the timber. That timber proved to be at least 150 feet tall. All the branches up at the top 40, 50 feet. When I tried to hang my chute over the top of the tree I hit, I was unsuccessful. It rolled up behind me, I tumbled down through the branches, and then suddenly saw an elevator shaft of the rest of the trunk of the tree. I could even see the log on the ground that was going to smash into. I was just bracing myself as I was falling for that crash when my chute unfurled enough to flap around the trunk of the tree, snag a branch about as big as my thumb, ripped up through the chute, and then caught and held, and I ended that fall with my toes touching that log. I was able to step, put my weight over on one foot, step on the log, and unsnap my harness and climb out.

GP: Boy you were lucky. We all have stories like that, of luck. Where it's a matter partly of skill and a lot of luck involved in there too. There but for the grace of God go we, because we found men with broken backs and broken legs and broken everything else.

DF: Well Murray received a concussion on that jump. And another jumper, I thought it was Phil Stanley, was left hanging very high in a tree and I had to finally go up with climbers and give him my let-down rope to tie to his so he could get down. But again, it was, for most of us, a very successful—

GP: You finally got the fire out?

DF: Yes. We found that after we were down there were some Potlatch men already in there, had come in on a hike in and were starting to circle it. It was a larger fire than normal. It was several acres.

GP: Most smokejumper fires tended to be relatively small, at least that's what they wanted us to do. To hit a lightning strike before it really started to spread. When it was just sending up

smoke from maybe one snag, and a little bit around there. That was a good smokejumper fire. Did you hit any of those?

DF: Yes. I had several. The other two were both very small fires. And in fact, the second fire I was on, Loren Zimmerman and I jumped on the fire. And it not only was small, but it rained heavily that night. If we had missed any embers, they were well soaked by morning. As were we.

GP: I'll bet. I remember the last fire I was on, out in the Nez Perce. We jumped, we barely started to fight the fire when the rains came. And we didn't really put that fire out. The rain put the fire out. It was nice, to have something else do the work for us, really. Well you were on only three fire jumps, is that right?

DF: That is correct.

GP: In 1944. And then after 1944, what did you do? Went back to Coshocton?

DF: Well, I went back to Coshocton, and remained there until I was released from CPS.

GP: How come you didn't come back in '45?

DF: I had met my wife-to-be in '44, before I came out to the smokejumpers, and that relationship solidified when I got back to Coshocton and we finally made the decision that we were going to get married in 1945 because we could see the war still dragging on, and not knowing how quickly we'd be getting out.

GP: Well, we knew nothing about the atomic bomb. Nobody else did, including Vice President Truman. Until he became president he didn't know what was happening, had to be briefed on the Manhattan Project and what it accomplished there. Well obviously, with three fire jumps, you were not sent out on any rescue units. And your only accident occurred there in the practice jump, so you didn't have to get rescued yourself.

DF: Right. I was on one other fire, ground fire, where we were trucked out from Ninemile. A lightning fire. So I did have one other additional fire experience.

GP: I had quite a few of them before I came to CPS, smokejumper unit. But at Coshocton, you wouldn't have gotten into any of this. No fires out of Coshocton?

DF: No. We were pretty much into just handling soil conservation problems.

GP: And no grass fires or anything like that?

DF: I can't recall that we were ever called on any. I don't remember any.

GP: Well, if you had an experience now as a jumper, what was your most interesting experience? You've told of several so far. Was there something else that was particularly interesting to you?

DF: Well, I, of course, always enjoy letting people know I entered Idaho first by parachute. But this, by the way, was my first experience west of the Mississippi River. And I think it was this experience that really had me fall in love with the northwest of the United States and resolve that, ultimately, I would move to the west coast.

GP: Which you have done?

DF: Which I have done.

GP: And you're now living in?

DF: Los Angeles, California. Where we've been for now 20 years.

GP: Can't get much farther west than that. But they have a lot of fires down there around the Los Angeles area, don't they?

DF: Yes. They have a lot of fires, earthquakes, houses sliding down hills.

GP: My. Perils a lot of the rest of the country don't know much about. Well, you got married then. While you were still in CPS?

DF: Yes. Right.

GP: And your wife came to live near your—

DF: No. We were married—I met Betty while in CPS, in that she was at Dennison University, which is there in Ohio not far from Coshocton campground. And she and a number of other Dennisonian students came to visit. I think one of them was the sister of one of the fellows who was at Coshocton at that time. That's how the relationship was formed. There were a number of marriages that came out of these visits of the girls from Dennison. When we were married, Betty had finished her work at Dennison, was at Western Reserve, University of Cleveland, and she was completing her graduate work. In fact, completed it just at the time we were married.

GP: Master's degree?

DF: Master's degree, in social work, right. And then she stayed on to work in Cleveland, so my seeing her meant my having to get away on weekends and get up to Cleveland.

GP: From Coshocton, Ohio.

DF: From Coshocton, Ohio.

GP: Well that's...it's still the same state, at least. Where was Coshocton, geographically?

DF: Geographically, sort of eastern central Ohio. It was...Well, I would gather it was about a third of the way from Columbus, up to Cleveland, that Coshocton was located.

GP: I was born and brought up in Cincinnati, and then taught for two years at Baldwin-Wallace College, which is just outside Cleveland. It's in the small town of Berea. And I've been in the Western Reserve campus a number of times. So that location is very familiar to me. Well, what work had you been doing before you went to CPS?

DF: I had completed high school but I had never been able to, or felt able to go on and start a college education. I was working in an x-ray company, first as the office boy and finally as a billing clerk, but it wasn't work that I was necessarily intrigued with. I really had the feeling that I wanted to be in some form of work with people. I felt I had skills in recreation. I was playing drums as a sideline. I would play in dance orchestra work on weekends. I enjoyed that sort of life much more than I did working in the x-ray company. But as I say, if I had, without the war experience, made a professional decision for advanced training, I probably would have gone into the field of recreation. And it was my association with Betty, and learning that, I think, that I ultimately would get more gratification out of working with people in a therapeutic sense, that I also made the decision to go into the field of social work.

GP: Really?

DF: But social group work. So that it would be a combining of the therapeutic approach along with the use of recreational skills.

GP: My wife was also named Betty—Elizabeth—and she came out of Mennonite background, was very sympathetic to the CO position. Some of her ancestors had been COs in World War I. How about Betty, your wife, now? Was her background at all sympathetic to the CPS and, if so, how?

DF: Betty's own personal philosophy was, it wasn't so much out of her religious training I think, but just out of her own personal feelings and all, that she was very sympathetic right from the start to the pacifistic point of view. In my own family, I was the middle of three sons, and it was very interesting. Both of my brothers accepted that my position was my position, and that they could accept me with my position, but it was not theirs. It was not for them. My older brother, in fact, volunteered for the army at the time of the war, whereas my younger brother waited to be drafted. He wasn't that gung-ho to become a military man. He just felt, as he told me later, he just didn't feel he had the strength of conviction to be a conscientious objector.

GP: So you had two brothers in the army. Not at all uncommon, I gather.

DF: It was very interesting, too. The older brother was in the paratroopers, so he and I are correspondents, even during the war years. We were able to compare training techniques and so forth. He and the paratroopers and me and the smokejumpers.

GP: Had he gone to the paratroopers before you volunteered for smokejumpers?

DF: Yes.

GP: I wonder if that had any influence, then, in your decision to come to smokejumpers.

DF: I don't—

GP: Probably not much.

DF: I don't think so.

GP: Well you really didn't have much change in vocation as a result of the smokejumper experience, but you did make a definite change, probably in relation to your wife's profession. And also some things you had done and enjoyed doing.

DF: Right. The nice pursuit of a career following my release from CPS was that Betty, with the full master's degree, was able to be the breadwinner for the family.

GP: Ph.D. Putting Hubby Through.

DF: Right. While I did my undergraduate work, and then I was able to eventually get on and get my master's degree, and we started our family.

GP: Where did you do that? Where did you do your undergraduate and graduate work?

DF: I was assisted by the Friends in some initial scholarship support, to enroll at Roosevelt—what was then Roosevelt College, is now Roosevelt—

GP: Chicago.

DF: In Chicago. Which is now Roosevelt University. And did my undergraduate work going 'round the calendar and carrying extra credits after my first semester, so that I was able to complete my undergraduate work in two and a half years.

GP: Oh, that's pretty good. Normally a four-year experience.

DF: And then graduated in August and right into September of that same year I was enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh to do my graduate training.

GP: Some of my friends have taught at Pittsburgh. I know something about that institution. Well, looking back at your smokejumper experience now, what do you remember about it? Obviously, coming here to our reunion. Have you been to the earlier reunions?

DF: Yes, I've been to all of the reunions.

GP: All of the reunions. Well obviously then, the smokejumper experience is something that you remember, and remember with some degree of, I suppose, pleasure, is that right?

DF: Yes. It was the tremendous *esprit de coeur* that I felt in this unit, and the fact that the commitment to a particular type of work project, with which we were all thoroughly in love and interested in, seemed to help cut across the lines of difference we had here. Religious differences, philosophical differences, and what have you. It really seemed to solidify this group. Whereas, back at Coshocton, a few of the, what I might say were the well-educated fellows, who were given more meaningful tasks in the soil conservation program there, there wasn't that sense of dedication to the work we were doing that we had here.

GP: I think I can understand that. Looking back, I gather this was then an experience you look back upon with favor and that you really—it was sort of a high point in one way, is that right?

DF: Correct.

GP: I think I feel somewhat the same way about it. Now, is there something we hadn't talked about that we really should, in connection with the smokejumper experience, before and afterwards? Something that might be useful, for example, in this historical project, historical review of this particular part of the smokejumper history.

DF: I'm not sure I know what you're—

GP: Well, I just, I was really asking, is there something we haven't talked about that we really should have? Something meaningful to you?

DF: Yeah. I think, obviously, all of us who were in the CPS experience, as conscientious objectors, were concerned about the fact that we had to deal with the antagonism toward us by the lay community, their feeling that we were protected, in a sense, while their sons were overseas fighting and risking their lives for the nation. We didn't enjoy the feeling of being protected. So I think some of my personal feeling, I know, and I've heard it expressed by some of the others, was that at long last here was a project where there was an element of physical

risk and that we could really prove that we didn't necessarily shun that type of activity. We were willing to put our lives on the line if that's what it meant in terms of providing a service.

GP: Nobody shooting at you as you're coming down, but you might be heading in for a snag or a rock or something else very easily. I think everybody there could talk about experiences where you just barely missed something that might have proved either injurious or knock you out permanently. I believe that the black unit, 555th Negro Parachute Battalion, did have a couple of fatalities. We know, of course, that after CPS, Wag Dodge had a unit of men who were caught by a fire and died in that fire blast. We read about it in *Life* magazine and elsewhere. So I guess there's an element of that with most of us, when you look back at the CPS experience. From the standpoint of history, we were the transition unit between a small experimental unit, which hit just a very few fires with a very few men and a major part of regional fire control for the whole Pacific Northwest. That gives me a sense, at least, of national importance. Did it you?

DF: Yes. I have never felt hesitant to talk about my CPS experience, knowing that I can also bring out that this was an element of service that I provided, in service to our country. Whereas I think I might have been a little more hesitant to talk about my CPS experience to others with as full a sense of pride as I have.

GP: Perhaps even with just the Soil Conservation, which in itself is important enough. But it doesn't have the same sort of feeling or emotional tone to it that a smokejumper unit did.

DF: Yeah. And we just didn't feel, we don't have the feeling that it was as important. And yet, as you say, it could just very well have been every bit as important to the welfare of the nation.

GP: But not recognized as such.

DF: Yeah.

GP: Nothing to us that was probably important. Well, thanks very much!

[End of Interview]