**H2003-01**
Context notes for Carl Tenhagen interview
Date: 8/21/02
Interviewer: Robyn Russell
Place: Geophysical Institute Library, Fairbanks, Alaska

Judy Triplehorn called me earlier this afternoon and told me that she had a visitor who was telling some wonderful stories about the DEWLINE and putting a nuclear reactor under the Greenland Ice Cap. He was, she assured me, willing to do an interview with us. When I got up to the library on the West Ridge of the UAF campus, I discovered that was only partly true. Carl was plenty willing to tell stories—off the tape. He was leary of being recorded because he said he didn't feel that his memory, 42 years after the fact, was accurate. I spent some time in pre-interview with him, trying to establish when he was genuinely interested in making a tape or not. He did agree finally, but the results are not entirely to my liking. He was unwilling to volunteer very much and had to be prompted quite often. Some of the details about price and costs did not make it onto the tape, but are recounted below. Someone with more background on the history of the DEW Line/Anti-Ballistic Missile System construction might have been able to draw him out more. He might have also been more willing to talk if he had pictures or film footage to view and comment on.

Briefly, Carl was drafted into the military for WWII and because of his engineering coursework wound up with the Army Corps of Engineers. After the war was over, one of his first peace time assignments was with the Corps of Engineers Eastern Ocean District in New York City. It was a two year assignment from about 1959?-1960?. Carl's branch of the Corps was charged with overseeing the construction of the DEW Line and Anti-Ballistic Missile Sites along the coast of Canada and Greenland. Greenland was still under Danish rule at the time so the project was a joint venture with the Danish government.

Since these two projects were completely new concepts at the time, there was no way to put it out to bid so the project was paid for upon completion—the cost of construction plus a fixed fee. The final price tag was $900 million dollars—42 years ago. All of the construction materials had to be sea-lifted in. The workers were on one year contracts and most of the work was done during the summer time although on the missile sites once the structure was up the work could continue pretty much year round. Concrete cost about $300 per cubic foot because it had to be flown in. Water was provided by melting ice and sewage was simply dumped down a hole, there being no other way to dispose of it. The construction plans for both the Canadian/Greenland and Alaska sites were much the same, the difference being that Alaska stations were designed to remain in place while the Greenland stations had legs that allowed them to be jacked up about a foot per year because of the accumulation of ice. It was Carl's belief that the DEW Line stations became obsolete after artificial satellites came into being.

Carl served 28 years with the Corps of Engineers before retiring. He and his wife lived first in Australia and then in the Lower 48. They currently lived in Chugiak, Alaska to be close to their married daughter. Carl's granddaughter is seriously thinking about attending UAF.