



*Oral
History
Program*



*Oral
History
Program*

Deloy Spencer

Interviewed by Alyssa Kammerman
26 February 2019

Oral History Program
Weber State University
Stewart Library
Ogden, Utah

Deloy Spencer

Interviewed by
Alyssa Kammerman
26 February 2019

Mission Statement

The Oral History Program of the Stewart Library was created to preserve the institutional history of Weber State University and the Davis, Ogden and Weber County communities. By conducting carefully researched, recorded, and transcribed interviews, the Oral History Program creates archival oral histories intended for the widest possible use.

Interviews are conducted with the goal of eliciting from each participant a full and accurate account of events. The interviews are transcribed, edited for accuracy and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewees (as available), who are encouraged to augment or correct their spoken words. The reviewed and corrected transcripts are indexed, printed, and bound with photographs and illustrative materials as available. The working files, original recording, and archival copies are housed in the University Archives.

Project Description

Hill Aerospace Heritage Foundation oral history project is a series of oral histories documenting the life stories and experiences of the board members of the Hill Aerospace Heritage Foundation. Board members recall their time in military service, as well as their memories of starting the foundation in 1983 and opening the Hill Aerospace Museum in 1987. Each interview begins with a brief life sketch of the individual board member, then moves onto their memories of the early days of the Hill Aerospace Museum. They discuss ongoing efforts to make the museum the premier location for preserving Utah's Aviation and Air Force history and name important figures on the Board of Directors, base command, and museum staff who helped to make the museum an important influence in the community.

Oral history is a method of collecting historical information through recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of preserving substantive additions to the historical record. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account. It reflects personal opinion offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

Rights Management

This work is the property of the Weber State University, Stewart Library Oral History Program. It may be used freely by individuals for research, teaching and personal use as long as this statement of availability is included in the text.

It is recommended that this oral history be cited as follows:

Deloy, Spencer, an oral history by Alyssa Kammerman, 26 February 2019, WSU Stewart Library Oral History Program, University Archives, Stewart Library, Weber State University, Ogden, UT.



Deloy Spencer
26 February 2019

Abstract: The following is an oral history interview with Deloy Spencer, conducted on February 26, 2019, by Alyssa Kammerman. Deloy discusses his life, his memories of the Air Force, and his experiences while serving on the Hill Aerospace Heritage Foundation Board. Reagan Baird, the video technician, is also present during this interview.

AK: Today is February 26, 2019. We are speaking with Mr. Deloy Spencer here at Hill Aerospace Museum. My name is Alyssa Kammerman and I'll be conducting the interview and with me is Reagan Baird. Thanks for meeting with us today. I appreciate it. We're going to start out with when and where you were born.

DS: I was born in Escalante, Utah on the seventh of September 1932.

AK: Tell me about what that was like, living in Escalante.

DS: It's down about forty miles east of Bryce Canyon. It's rocks and hills and dirt and desert and mountains and lakes. And that's where God lives.

AK: How long did you live there?

DS: I graduated from high school there. Went in the Air Force in December of 1950. I got discharged in 1954. Went to school for a while and went broke then went to work at Geneva Steel and then I finally went back into the Air Force for four years. I got out the second time in 1959. I went to school and became a school teacher

AK: Ok. Let me have you back up if that's ok. I'd like to get to know a little bit about your childhood. So what was it like being a kid in Escalante?

DS: Well, I had horses and guns. I chased cows, I herded sheep. I helped farm. I just did things that typical boys of that time period did. It was a great place to grow up. Great childhood. I would give anything if my grandkids could go down and just have six months of it and learn how to chop wood and carry coal and shovel manure and all of the things that country kids get to do.

AK: Was your dad a rancher in Escalante?

DS: My dad was just a common laborer. We share cropped for a farm that produced feed for cows and horses, and he worked at different jobs.

AK: What was his name?

DS: It was Garn.

AK: Garn Spencer?

DS: Yep.

AK: Ok. And what was your mother's name?

DS: My mother was Norma Bucklar. She grew up in Circleville, and that was a fun place too because they raised potatoes and I got to go harvest potatoes in the fall every year I was in high school and that's hard work.

AK: Did you get paid for it?

DS: Oh yeah. A couple dollars. You never made much money in those days.

AK: How many siblings did you have?

DS: I have one sister.

AK Older or younger?

DS: Younger.

AK: Ok. Did you guys get to play a lot among the rocks and everything you were mentioning earlier?

DS: Oh yeah, but we usually fought. But I was usually with my dad, she was with my mother. At that time, why, that's the way it was when you were kids, you know? In those days you went to work as soon as you were old enough to do things. I remember I had to take the milk cows up and let them graze when I was 5, 6, 7 years old. After that, it seems like I was always working in the hay fields, or in the shearing corral or riding, chasing cows or horses or sheep. I hate sheep, they stink. But it was just a good, good childhood. And I did a lot of hunting, a lot of fishing, and a lot of camping.

AK: So you would have been about nine years old when World War II broke out.

DS: Mm hm.

AK: Do you have any memories of that?

DS: I think it was probably Tuesday after the, or before the-I mean we didn't have radio reception, very few people even took the newspaper down there because they had to come out of Salt Lake and it took two or three days to get down there and you just didn't-I mean we were almost at the end of the road. There's a trail that led to the little town of Boulder, and other than that just a dirt road. You didn't

go beyond Boulder. And to get in and out you had to go over the mountain and in wintertime it was tough; Snow and such, so you're pretty well isolated

AK: What elementary school did you go to?

DS: Escalante Elementary, then Escalante High School. There were eighteen in my graduating class so you can see how big of a town it is. It's the same size now as it was then, except now it's become a tourist area at Grand Staircase Escalante.

AK: So you mentioned that you didn't hear about Pearl Harbor for a couple of days after it happened then?

DS: Hmm mmm. [Shakes head "no"]

AK: Do you remember where you were when you did hear about it?

DS: Probably home.

AK: Ok.

DS: I think dad came home and told us about it. And then all my boyhood heroes disappeared. There was a bunch of older teenagers that let me tag along with them--cousins and friends. They were the guys that played basketball in high school and worked on the farm. They got to drive the teams and do things I always wanted to do, and then they all ended up going in the service. And some of them came home, some of them did not. I used to sit on the mountain top fishing and watch these airplanes fly from Denver to LA. In those days the old C-54 airplanes would fly low and I'd sit up there and I'd think, "Someday I'm gonna

fly those suckers.” Then when the Korean War started I jumped at it, but it never happened.

AK: Tell me about that. What was that like? Was that right after high school?

DS: Well no, it started in June. We got out of school in May, the war started in June. And I remember a friend of my mother was on the draft board and we went to Panguitch with her one day to a meeting and they talked about a draft. I said, ‘Well they’re not going to draft me.’ I didn’t want to get drafted into the Army, I always wanted to get in the Air Force. So a friend of mine’s, A cousin, was leaving, they came down home for Christmas and I got a ride with them up to Salt Lake. So I joined the Air Force. And went in on the 27th of December 1950.

AK: Where did you do your basic training?

DS: I went to Lackland. Everybody went to Lackland. And there was so many people there that I did part of my basic training there and then they shipped me to Fort Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming, where I finished up. We went on to OJT, "On the Job Training" and we took over the hospital from the Army, who was running it at that time. We basically wore Army uniforms for the first few months because the Air Force just didn't have enough for everybody coming in and so we wore Army uniforms with blue belts, black shoes, blue ties, and blue hats. But other than that, it was Army Green for a while.

AK: What were some of your duties at the hospital?

DS: Well, the Air Force gives you a choice when you go in: "Ok, what do you want to do?" And I said, "I'm going to be a hero, I want to be an Aerial Gunner." But by

that time they were just getting almost ready to get rid of their aerial gunners, so I said, "Aerial Photography, camera repair." They said, "Fine, we'll make you a dental assistant." So I went to Cheyenne as a dental assistant and I worked with some fantastic doctors that kinda kicked my butt to college and to get more education. Then I was sent to Korea and the day I landed in Korea, the dental surgeon said, "My lab technician is going home. How would you like to be him?" And I said, ok. So I went from being a dental assistant to a dental lab technician. And that's what I did the rest of the time I was in service. Made teeth and crowns and bridges and inlays.

AK: Were you on a base out there in Korea doing that?

DS: I was at the base in Korea. I just learned how to do some of the basics then I went back, I shipped back to Kansas. Again, three choices: Ok, never been to Florida so that's my first choice; Never been to New York, second choice; Only been to California for a little while, third choice. They said, "Fine, we'll split the difference and send you to Kansas." So I went to Kansas [laughs].

AK: [laughs] That's a funny story. Let me just back up a little bit. You mentioned that when you were in Korea you made teeth and crowns. Was that for—

DS: Well when I was in Korea I didn't do that. Because in Korea I did pretty basic dentistry. I did repairs and jaw splints and at least learned how to do that stuff, so pretty basic but I found out I was the only one on the base that did what I did. But I also did other things because I didn't have a lot to do, so I was Mail Carrier and I ended up guarding prisoner a time or two and I helped with some body

identification and was just kinda the handyman for the squadron for a lot of things. We had a very small squadron; It was a medical group and I actually think there was seventy or something odd in that group. And it was ok; Crappy food, crappy quarters. [laughs] Crappy life. But it was a good experience.

AK: How long were you in Korea?

DS: A year.

AK: One year. Ok and then from there you went to Kansas.

DS: From there I went to Kansas.

AK: And were you a lab tech in Kansas as well?

DS: Mm hmm

AK: Ok. So as a lab tech, would you mostly be helping with just dentistry checkups and such or would it be for combat—

DS: The dentist took an impression, and we would pour it up in stone which is kind of a hard plaster of paris, and from that we made plates, like the upper denture plate. That would form over the gums and then we'd use wax and wax up virtually a denture and they'd try it in and see how it fit and then we'd put it in a mold that you could separate. We'd separate it then burn the wax out and take the acrylic and mix it and put in the mold and seal it, pressure very tight so there's no air bubbles. At that time you had to cook it. Now today they don't do that, but we'd have to cook it and take it out and you'd sit down at the lathe with polishing equipment and finish the denture and shine it up. We used to basically

do the same thing with a gold crown or an inlay; You'd take an impression and you'd pour it up and get your model and you'd wax it up and cast it in gold. We used gold at that time. We'd polish it up and hope it worked because it's a very exact job because inlays go in with no margin or else you're going to get a cavity. Same thing with a crown—if there's any place for air to get in or food or anything else it's not going to work so it's very exacting and its nerve-wracking a lot of times. Today things are different. They've got so many new techniques and so much new material that it's not even the same world. But of course a lot of things aren't the same world. You know, I never had a telephone even close when I was a kid, and now I can't live without one.

AK: [laughs] So true. So was that dentistry strictly for the Airmen on the base?

DS: It was just military.

AK: Ok.

DS: But at that time we did work for military dependents as well. They don't do that anymore. But when I got out, I went to BYU for a couple of semesters and went broke, went to work at Geneva Steel, they went on strike and I went back into the Air Force.

AK: What were you studying at BYU?

DS: Uh it was pre-dentistry.

AK: Ok, so you did enjoy your dentistry stint a little bit then?

DS: Well I kinda knew I didn't have the money to finish the program, but I went back into the Air Force for four years. I went to Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. Then I went to school in Montgomery, Alabama, and then to Arizona and from there, I went to Japan for two years, and by that time I had a wife and two little boys. When I came home from Japan I had three little boys.

AK: What were you doing in Japan?

DS: Same thing, Dental Lab.

AK: Ok, with the Air Force?

DS: Mmmhm.

AK: Ok. Tell me about meeting your wife.

DS: Well, a friend was getting married and he asked me to be the best man. They were having a bridal shower and so he said, "Let's go see a movie." Then after the movie he said, "Let's sneak in the back door and see if there's a piece of cake left." My wife was the last one to leave the bridal shower and she was very young looking. I told my friend's mother-in-law, "You know, she'd be cute if she were a little older." And she laughed and she said, "How old do you think she is?" I said, "Oh, fourteen, fifteen?" She says, "No, she's 20." [laughs] And that was the beginning of my downfall. [laughs] But I had her for a little over 48 years and we had a lot of fun. Had a lot of troubles, a lot of fun.

AK: When did you get married?

DS: We were married the day after I got discharged for the first time on December the 5th.

AK: How many kids did you have?

DS: We had 6 and adopted one.

AK: So did she get to best stationed with you as you traveled around with the Air Force?

DS: I was lucky enough to take her and the boys with me on the ship when we went to Japan so we were always together. You had to pull CQ once in a while but I was gone at night but maybe a half dozen times in all four years. She would have stayed in the Air Force, but the Air Force at that time was consolidating a lot of dental labs and the career field was kinda closing up and I just felt like, 'Well, I'll get out and go to school.' So I did. And I taught Junior High for six years and then I taught at Weber High School for twenty-two years.

AK: What did you teach?

DS: Social Studies. Basically History, but everything else that goes with it--Economics and American Problems and World Government and everything they teach.

AK: Ok. And where did you finish your degree up at?

DS: I graduated from BYU, and then I got a fellowship at Utah State University, and I got a Master's at Utah State.

AK: Ok and what schools did you teach at?

DS: Vernal Jr High and Weber High School.

AK: Oh you did say that.

DS: Yeah.

AK: Awesome. And how long did you say you were teaching again?

DS: A total of twenty-eight years.

AK: What are some of your favorite experiences with teaching?

DS: The kids. I loved the kids, and uh I don't know, I wonder weird but history is the story of people and I concentrated on people. I had different class rules. I got along great with them and I said, if you want to chew gum, bring enough for everybody; if you want to eat candy, bring enough for everybody; if you want to drink coke, bring enough for everybody. They did! You know, kids at Weber had money at that time—I assume they still do—they had better cars than the teachers did! We even had ice cream Sundays. In the winter time, the kids would bring a bucket of ice cream in and hide it in the snow out the back door and we'd sit in class and have a Sunday. We were doing that once when the principal came in. So we gave him a Sunday and set him down. He was my neighbor though so I knew I could get away with it. It was fun to meet the kids. I still meet them all the time, but the sad thing is now women come in and say, "Oh this is my grandson. He just graduated from college." You know all this stuff and I think, I'm not that old! You're not that old! But they are.

AK: [laughs] Do you feel like your time in the Air Force helped shape the way that you tried to influence those kids?

DS: Oh yeah, I still line my shoes up, I hang my clothes up the way I was taught. I make my bed the first thing I do when I get out of it in the morning. Yeah I think everybody should go through basic training. You learn things that stick with you.

AK: Well backing up a little, would you tell us a little about basic training and some of the things that they would have you do?

DS: All I remember is a lot of marching.

AK: [laughs] Ok.

DS: And it was all done at night because there were so many people at Lackland at that time that I think the mess halls ran literally 24 hours a day and the Air Force was growing so fast that they'd just bring people in for a few weeks then ship them to another base to finish their training. But all I remember is just a lot of marching and processing. We got into San Antonio at Midnight on New Years Eve. We sat there on the train and listened to that reveling in San Antonio and watched the fireworks, then we went out and processed the rest of the night. I think after that first day if they'd have showed me the way home I'd have left.[laughs] I mean you're so confused, and it's not the same Air Force. In those days sometimes they'd use language on you that would turn your ears blue. They don't do that anymore but a lot of the guys were involved in training or you know, they'd been in World War II and just the old, yeah. But it was a good experience. I'm glad I did it.

There were times when I was scared to death and most of the time I was just bored, but I never once worried about getting killed. Pretty safe, but

accidents do happen. Some of the things I was involved in just kinda all by myself--kinda scary to be in Korea all by yourself in the middle of the night, but I was one of the few people in my medical group that was weapons qualified and I got to pull some—they had alerts and all the lights on the base would go out and your first job was to get to the supply room, get your gun, and get to your station. And you stayed there until the lights went back on. I remember sitting in a ditch across the street from a Korean community, praying they wouldn't shoot, they were praying that I wouldn't shoot. But you're young, and you're young and you're stupid. You heard all those stories about World War II because your friends came home and told you about their experiences in combat and things you knew what was going on up on the line. And I don't know, you were twenty years old! I came home at twenty years of age, my church was having a party once where they came around and wanted pictures of their young men in military uniform.

So I dug one up and handed it to this little girl and she said, "You were so young!" [laughs] Yep, I was young. But I met some great people. They shaped my life. Great leaders. We had an old Master Sergeant in Korea that was our first sergeant and he'd make sure every morning his first two questions were, "How are you?" And his second question was, "Have you written to your mother?" Yep, 'have you written to your mother?' You can't believe how valuable a letter can be. Today you've got a telephone, you've got Skype. It's not the same world. I live with MASH. I know every MASH episode. It wasn't quite the same, but there's a lot of similarities.

AK: You mentioned how you felt like it impacted the rest of your life, what was the biggest thing that you felt like you carried away from your military career? What impacted you the most?

DS: I don't know, I guess cleanliness. I learned to clean. I mopped lots of floors. I washed lots of windows. I learned how to clean a dental unit to the point that you could take a white cotton swab and go over it and never dirty it. I worked in surgery for a while and I saw things that most people never see. I worked with some great surgeons and just some nice guys. I think they were all draftees and just all young dentists. Except for the colonel who commanded the dental surgeon. But, uh, it was ok. But I hated Wyoming though. [laughs]

AK: So what did you do after you retired from teaching?

DS: Well I had a heart attack in 1987, I went in and had a triple bypass, so I decided I was going to come out here and volunteer. And so I did. Larry Anotti was the director and Carole Comeo was the assistant or curator I think. My first job was writing signs at this place. Carole later became Carole Nash and she was one of the director we had here. But after I retired my wife said, "Go find something to do. You're not going to stay home and drive me crazy." So I did. I come out here and I remember we were washing the 101 on the black top behind the museum and I've been here virtually ever since. There was a time when the volunteers ran it on the weekends and I was one of the four that took turns, so there were times when I was here seven days a week. But it was fun because you come out here on Saturdays and every airplane had a crew chief assigned to it and they were working on the airplanes. They were scrubbing them and they were putting in

instruments and doing things, putting on fairings and literally putting on screws and putting these things together. And that was a time when we made this museum what it is today. When you look at a pretty airplane it's because those guys came out here and did it. If you go out here in the hall there's a little silver plaque that's got a bunch of names on it of men that worked on that particular airplane. I've even seen guys sit with toothbrushes and scrub wheel wells. One winter Don Collett and I spent the whole winter up in the other 1919 working on engines and propellers and we sandblasted them and painted them and made 'em pretty so that we could put them on the B-17. We spent what seemed like three months working on painting the B-17.

We'd come out in the morning and tape a section because we couldn't spray when the wind's blowing because of the irrigation pond over here and so we'd tape in the morning when the wind's blowing, then when it went down we'd paint, then when it started to get hot we'd have to get the tape off so it wouldn't stick to the airplane. It seemed like it took us forever to paint that 8-17. And then we started to clean the inside of it and that was another chore that took us a year or two. I mean, it was so full of crap that we had vacuum cleaners in the bomb bay and radio room. And the windshield was coated with a plaque that we couldn't get off. We tried everything, everything in the world and finally one day we tried some hair spray that a gift shop director had and it cut it! It cleaned the windows off! About the time that we started on the nose, Leslie Peterson who was an education director here was able to come up with a new nose for the B-17 and so we put it on and that was a good day because we knew we didn't have

to clean that thing anymore. But it's been fun. I've done a lot of things around there that have been fun. One summer my grandson and I cleaned out the C-54. It came in with plywood up the sides and plywood on the bottom and it smelled like they'd been hauling pigs in it. We spent all summer cleaning it out and cleaning the Styrofoam out of the cargo bay. One year we put fairways on the A-10. The guys that brought the airplanes in would put them together and a lot of the fairings that would have to go on, they'd just leave. And a lot of the little parts and things that have to go on, they'd just leave them for volunteers and so we did that. It was just something that you did but it was fun.

Right after I got out here, John McClarry who was the director said, "I need an education department. You're a teacher, why don't you set one up?" So we started doing crosswords and word search and scavenger hunts, and things that kids could do when they got here. I got the idea because they're World War II guys that came in and told their story: pilots, prisoners. Some were kinda humorous, some were very sad. But we've got a great collection of history that somebody that wants to do a Masters or a Doctorate, we've got the stuff. But there have been some great people. Colonel Mazer I think was the first director of the foundation and General Hadley, General Reynolds. General Reynolds and I spent years in that little office there and we'd sit and we'd talk and tell stories about our boyhood and different things.

I think if you go back and check the records, the foundation was called at that time the Hill Air Force Base Museum. And they came down from the base and told us, "You cannot use 'Air Force' in your name." And so General Reynolds

and I were in there one day wondering, "Ok what are we going to name this place?" I said, "Well, aerospace is a good name." He said, "That's it. This is the Hill Aerospace Museum." So he had Colonel Holmes who was a lawyer on the board do the paperwork. We had to go down to the state and reregister us as the Hill Aerospace Foundation and that's what we became. But yeah I met some great people—Colonel Mazer and General Reynolds, General Hadley, Don Pantone, Dick Quimby, Russ, a lot of them are long gone. Colonel Mazer was great. He knew everybody in the world. Jack Price knew everybody in the world. We were able to bring in speakers from all over the country. We had some come in from Washington, we had a Medal of Honor winner come in from Seattle, we had several people come in from Washington DC—retired four-star generals and pilots.

We had General Robert Scott, who wrote, *God is my Co-Pilot*, as one of our speakers. He brought the doctor with him who was the flight surgeon on the crew who went up on the glacier and melted the ice and got the P-38 airplane out of it. And so we heard his story first hand. We had the pilot that was flying the commercial airplane over Iowa when the engine came apart and destroyed all the controls. They flew the airplane by adjusting the speed of the two engines working and they crash-landed in a field in Iowa and I think something like fifty-six of them were killed, but eighty-something of them survived and we heard his story first hand. So we've heard some great stories here and we've had some great volunteers. Most of them are gone too. I mean, we are into the Vietnam War guys now. World War II guys are all gone and as far as I know there's only

two of us that are left from that Korean War time period. There is one World War II veteran I don't know if you've interviewed Kay Stowell or not, but Kay's the only World War II guy we've got Virg Carter is the other Korea guy, but he was in the Navy. He was on an aircraft carrier. But you need to talk to Steve Hatch and Scott Creaqon. Steve was the driver for a lot of the stuff that we brought into this museum, and he and Creaqon did a lot of maintenance and reconstruction of airplanes. Larry Bell is another one that spent a lot of time restoring aircraft, but uh I don't know if you could find Don Collett or not. He was General Hadley's mechanic for his car collection and then he got out here as a volunteer. Like I say, he and I did the engines on the 8-17 and painted it. I wonder what ever happened to him. A lot of them I don't know what happened. Scott Crosgrove, I haven't seen him in years. I don't know, they may move away. I don't remember seeing their obituary, but.

AK: So when were you put on the board?

DS: I don't remember, but it's been a long time ago.

AK: Do you remember when you first started volunteering here at least?

DS: Yeah, I've been here as a volunteer since day one, 1987.

AK: Ok. 1987 then?

DS: I remember the first airplanes put into this place, I remember John Lindquist and the struggle we had to get money for the other gallery. I have great hopes that we get this new gallery, I do. But I gotta tell you, the C-130—I don't know whether you've seen the cargo Hull out there where we're attaching the

Educational Department. That C-130 sat out back for I think twenty-five years, and years ago I was in Texas at the Confederate Air Force Museum. They don't call it "Confederate" anymore--it's "Commemorative Air Force Museum" --and they had an old C-54 cut in half and they had part of it as a classroom. And I thought, 'Ok, why don't we pull that old C-130 up to the side of the building, clean it up, and just let the kids use it a little bit as a classroom ?' Well, the base engineer says, "You can't do that." Well, ok, the base fire marshal! says, "You can't do that." That was probably when John was in charge, I can't remember. But then Carol tried to get it done, and met with, "You can't do that. You can't do that." Sctt Worst tried to get it done: "You can't do that. You can't do that." And I don't know what strings Rob Alexander and those guys pulled, but they've got it up there on the side of the building, it's gonna be a learning center and I am so tickled! I mean I've been pushing for that for so many years that I just can't wait.

AK: It's beautiful too.

DS: And everybody wants to get into an airplane. Every little kid, every adult, wants to get into an airplane and just be able to get into it and walk around. So I'm excited. In fact, I think I'm going up North to get my girlfriend and bring her down for just that day. But that's 700 miles! [laughs]

AK: It's worth it [laughs]

DS: It's worth it, but yeah. Then maybe I'll quit. I've been here so long that like I say all my real friends are gone, all my old buddies are gone. But my roles have changed since I started here. I was the Administrative Assistant for over twenty

years with General Mark Reynolds. But I'll tell you a story about Colonel Nate Mazer: Right after I started here, I was doing some typing for him one day and I get down to the end of it and I said, "Are you a Lieutenant Colonel or you a Bird Colonel?" He kinda puffed up--you have to know Nate, he was just a neat little guy. He kinda puffed up, he said, "Well the Air Force pays me as a Colonel," He said, "If that's good enough for them, that's good enough for you." I looked at him and I said, "Oh hell, Nate. I can shake any tree around here and Colonels fall out by the dozen." He said, "Well, I guess you're alright." He never let me call him 'Colonel' after that. But, you know, the whole board of directors at that time were basically Generals and Colonels. There's I think Glen Noards, who was a retired chief, and myself, and Glenn was kinda the painting guru. He had a lot of ties on base so he was able to get a lot of painting done. And then he developed Alzheimer's and went away.

AK: Could you tell me a little more about what you remember of the early days of how they started getting the museum going?

DS: We did a lot of things that they don't let you do anymore. We had food drives. There was I think a flood in North Dakota and we had a food drive. We opened a bunch of airplanes and let people who brought cans of food inside of them. And then for a couple of years we'd have two open airplane days: one in the spring and one in the fall and the ticket was a can of food--of course you could get in for free anyway. We had way over 100 volunteers at that time so we could put two volunteers on every airplane at that time. We also had a VE Day commemoration. We had a VJ Day commemoration. We used to do Halloween

and we'd decorate the museum a little bit to have ghost stories. It depends on the staff as to what they want to do. But things were a lot looser in those days. I mean, they didn't shoot ya if you got into an airplane. Today I've got at least 500 hours of work on the B-17 airplane so I'm sure they'd let me get into it if I wanted to get into it. That's an interesting airplane. You get in there knowing you're gonna bump your head and you will. It's been fun to watch new airplanes come in, and new buildings being erected, and just seeing some progress. You either grow or you die, you know? There's just no such thing as status quo. But it's been great.

I've met some great people just walking through the door. I mean you never know whether it's going to be a Medal of Honor winner, an Ace pilot, a woman pilot. We had some WASPS from World War II. You get acquainted with some of those people. They're all pretty much all dead now too. But, you just never knew who you were gonna meet. You meet people from all over the world, literally. Australians and Canadians and Europeans. We've had tours of Chinese and tours of Koreans and tours of Isrealies. And I even got to take Russians on a tour back when they were having this disarmament of B-29s and missiles. We had a group of Russians come up once and they sent me out with this tour leader with them to take them around. And they'd always come with gifts. They come with these big pencils and pens and always had a gift for you. So kind. We still get a Russian once in a while. We get them from all over Europe, Asia. We get foreign exchange pilots who come in here. I guess that's why I come is because you get to talk to everybody from all over the country, and you get to talk to the

kids. There isn't a little kid in this country who doesn't know what an airplane is. They walk through that door in the Hadley Gallery and its, "Wow! Gee wiz! Look! Airplane!" But it's fun. I come out here I guess because I don't have anything else to do. I'm here three days a week now but that's because I don't have anything else to do. I keep thinking I have time to quit but then I think, 'Ok, what are you gonna do if you quit?'

AK: That makes sense. Ok, well I have another question for you, and then if there's nothing else you'd like to share we'll probably wrap up. So I was wondering, first of all, how do you feel that your military service helped you as a member of the board at Hill Aerospace?

DS: I think having a sense of history.

AK: Ok.

DS: Sense of history. I mean, I see what's going on and of course with my background in history and some of the stuff I'm tickled with, but some of the stuff really gripes my rear end. I dont know, I'm glad I'm not a politician. I'm glad I'm not king. I was involved in school leadership and in teacher politics, I guess was the best word for it, for a number of years and so you know I've gotten a chance to lobby, and meet with governors and different things and they're just people doing the best they can. You know, they're a product of their environment. Their mom and dad made them the way they are, basically. But you and I are too. I mean, you can have all the education in the world but you still got roots back to who you are. I have thoroughly enjoyed my thirty-one years at this museum.

When my wife died, it saved my life because I could come out here and talk with friends. We have a volunteer who lost his wife just two weeks ago and we're friends. You know, we have things in common; Not the same war, but we have things in common.

AK: Final question for you: Of all the things that you've accomplished at the museum, which accomplishment are you most proud of?

DS: I think finishing the B-17. I spent a lot of time on the A-10, a lot of time on the C-54, a lot of time on the T-28, but the B-17 kind of stands out by itself. I'm proud of that. Proud of having helped paint it, and clean it. I think that airplane probably got more fame, more publicity in World War II than any other airplane that was ever built. But, like I said, I met great people. I became a good friend of Chase Neilsen, who was one of the Doolittle Raiders. He told some fantastic stories. I used to go up to his house and we'd go into his little room that he had for his Doolittle room and pull out books and maps and charts and pictures and he'd tell stories. He loved to talk to kids. Just some great people. I think that's probably the best thing that's happened to me out here is just the people that you meet. I'm just tickled that Aaron got this place going the way it ought to go. We've had some directors I've disagreed with, and got nowhere. There were principals I disagreed with and got nowhere. But life is good. Life is good.

AK: Well thank you so much, I appreciate it, is there anything else you want to add before we close up?

DS: No, except when I first started at Weber High School, we always thought Weber College at that time was just another step above high school. It's been interesting to watch it develop too and grow. But, life is good.

AK: Well, we really appreciate you letting us come interview you.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

This Interview Agreement is made and entered into this 26 day(s) of February 2019
by and between the Weber State University, Stewart Library Oral History Program (WSUSLOHP)
and Deloy Spencer, hereinafter called "Interviewee."

Interviewee agrees to participate in a recorded interview, commencing on or about 2:00pm (time/date),
with Alyssa Kammernan.

This Interview Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interview, namely the recording of the interview and any written materials, including but not limited to the transcript or other finding aids prepared from the recording.

In consideration of the mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereby agree as follows:

1. Interviewee irrevocably assigns to WSUSLOHP all his or her copyright, title and interest in and to the interview.
2. WSUSLOHP will have the right to use and disseminate the interview for research, educational, and other purposes, including print, present and future technologies, and digitization to provide internet access.
3. Interviewee acknowledges that he/she will receive no remuneration or compensation for either his/her participation in the interview or for the rights assigned hereunder.
4. WSUSLOHP agrees to honor any and all reasonable interviewee restrictions on the use of the interview, if any, for the time specified below, as follows: _____

Interviewer and Interviewee have executed this Interview Agreement on the date first written above.

INTERVIEWEE

Deloy Spencer
(Signature)

DELOY SPENCER
(Printed Name)

INTERVIEWER

Alyssa Kammernan
(Signature)

Alyssa Kammernan
(Printed Name)

