

U.S. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Transcript of National Archives History Office Oral History Interview
Subject: AJ Daverede
Interviewer: Jessie Kratz
Date: May 14, 2019

[START RECORDING]

MS. JESSIE KRATZ: Today is May 14, 2019. I'm Jessie Kratz, the Historian of the National Archives and today I'm in the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, interviewing AJ Daverede. He is a senior archivist at the National Declassification Center. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. I also just want to put a note in the file that you did do an [interview](#), I guess, three years ago, with Erik Moshe, one of the interns, about your time in the Navy.

MR. ALEX DAVEREDE: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: So we can cross-reference that. But I thought, well, since we started talking about the Archives—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Laughter]

MS. KRATZ: —can you talk a little bit about how you ended up at the Archives?

MR. DAVEREDE: [Laughter] I ended up in the Archives out of despair. [Laughter]. I had gotten out of the Navy in the beginning of March of 1996, and I had been the information systems officer for Naval District Washington in the Navy Yard. And I thought that was my future, I was going to be doing IT work. Was not really looking forward to that, because I was not really into IT work, but since that was the most recent job experience. So I started throwing job applications out—federal job applications—I knew I wanted to be a Fed. So I started throwing job applications out, and as spring stretched into summer, it—I ran into more and more difficulties. I threw out over 60 job applications. And—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] And this was in '96?

MR. DAVEREDE: —and this was in '96. And I became more acquainted with the civilian hiring process, because what I found happening is because I was a vet, I was not necessarily some agencies' choices. And so I had announcements canceled on me, because I was not the one they wanted. And so back in the day—I guess nowadays it would be called an illegal hiring practice, but back in the day, not so. And so they would go ahead, and I would get the announcement cancellation notice and say, okay, well, I

just wasted another application. And so that happened a few times, and then I saw this thing talking about declassification at the National Archives. And it was an archives technician position, and I applied for it. I didn't know anything about it. I had stopped by College Park doing research, of all things, on a tank. I build models, and so you look for accuracy in your builds, and I had gone to College Park to get a picture of a tank. And that was my only knowledge, this was a place to visit for research. And I didn't have any idea of any of the underlying jobs that went with it, what various people did. And so I just, you know, threw in the application, got an interview, and I ended up being chosen by the Initial Processing and Declassification Division Director at the time, a lady by the name of Jeanne Schauble.

And Jeanne took a chance with me. Not all veterans had a great reputation with her. But she took a chance with me, and she hired me as a GS-5 archives technician. And you just start learning the business of declassification. The very first thing they do is they gave me a set of guidelines that basically define what's still classified and what's not. And your very first job, at the time, as an archives technician, is to make a copy of these things. So you're given a stack that's about the better part of a foot high, and you just go over to the copy machine, and you make your own copy of State guidelines. And what was nice about the State guidelines was that they were historic.

They gave you a time period, they gave you a region, told you what's going on, told you what's still sensitive. And I miss that kind of directness, because agencies who create classified documents today don't really provide that clear guidance anymore. It's just—it's much fuzzier, to use a term, much fuzzier way of determining it. But that's how you got broke into the declass business, was making a copy of the State guidelines and then reviewing it. So I did reviews of a variety of different records. What comes to mind—I've done State Department records, and Immigration and Naturalization Service had classified records. So, it was kind of a variety like that. And I worked with civilian records primarily for a year and a half or two years. And during that time, you have to wait about six months to get your clearance.

So we are in a situation where technicians have had to wait the better part of two years to get clearances, and hopefully that's on the mend. I just—I don't know. But I waited about six months. So by February of '97, I had crossed over to the dark side and started working with classified documents and learning the trade. And at the time, we were all co-mingled in spaces up on the sixth floor.

It was us and it was the agency people. And we were all co-mingled in the same space. And declassification was kind of simple, because you'd go through documents and you'd read documents, and then if you saw something suspicious, you'd go over to a representative of an agency and say, hey, you guys worried about this? And they'd come back and say, yeah or nah or whatever. And you would process it accordingly. And of course, the more times you do that, the smarter you get. I mean, you see similar things in other records, and you just start getting a knack of understanding what all that stuff is. And that's, in essence, how training was done. It was just one big oven, and the technicians and the

archivists and the agency reps were all kind of thrown together, and everybody learned from each other. And that's how it came to be. And so, shortly thereafter, I was able—like '98, I guess, they were hiring for archive specialists. And I was able to go to my true love, which was military records there to stay. And I just started working on military records. I became a team leader. I had technicians working with me to handle stuff. And I was kind of teaching them if they could stand the lessons, because as you can tell, I can tend to dominate a conversation if I need to. And learning how to censor oneself so that it doesn't overwhelm took me a while to figure out. So, yeah. I tended to—you know, the firehose effect is—I'm there.

So I was doing that for a while with military records, primarily Navy records, because it came from the Navy, and I could work that, but I could switch channels fairly quickly, and once I got into a record series, I got a good sense of what the records were. And from there, you can kind of say, okay, this is going to be sensitive for this time period and whatnot.

Kind of an extension of the State guidelines. Once you got into the ballpark, it was easier to figure out what seat section you were in with regards to equity, which is the information agencies wish to protect, is generally known as equity. Not necessarily stuff that's in your house. It can be classified information too. And so once you get into the ballpark, you can get into the seat section, and then to the seat and actually start to be very specific about what's a concern. And so that went on for a couple of years, and then I was chosen for what was known at the time as the Career Intern Development System, or CIDS, which was a GSA construct, I understand. GSA originated that, so when NARA was a part of GSA, the agency inherited that. And, you know, in most bureaucracies, processes tend to stick around for a while. And so the CIDS process was around. All the archivists that came in in the '90s, '80s, '70s, they were all processed through the CIDS program. And CIDS—have you heard of CIDS?

MS. KRATZ: I've heard of CIDS. And I'm glad you said what it was because every time somebody asks me what CIDS stands for, I always forget. But you did say it, so—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] I spelled it out in there, didn't I?

MS. KRATZ: —you did, yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: All right.

MS. KRATZ: But yes, you can talk about the CIDS program.

MR. DAVEREDE: And CIDS was a unique program. Once you were selected for it, it was two years. It was a two-year program. And you basically, for lack of a better term, interned with a variety of parts of the agency. You just went around the horn. And you set up rotations, and it would be specific assignments with the units you were with.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: Some of them, you could kind of call job equivalents to elective courses. So occasionally, you were allowed to pick one. But normally, the rotations were assigned. And so everybody had to come down here to do a round in the research room. Everybody had to do the research room at College Park, everybody had to go to Suitland. Everybody had certain things, and because it was a two-year program, you kind of had a junior session and then a senior session.

And so you'd do those rotations twice. You would come down here twice, you would go out to Suitland twice. You would do—so the first year, for example, you did research room at, say, College Park. So you're doing a face-to-face thing. And they'd figure out whether you're good with people or not. [Laughter] The second year, you would take a turn in the back, so you would be doing research letters and stuff like that. And you would just do the reference requests. So it kind of balanced like that. So you'd do special media, you'd do—I did a couple rounds back with declass, because that was part—
of the thing, but there were more focused lessons—or work products that were involved there. And it was coordinated by a senior executive. In our case, it was Gerry Phillips. I don't know if that name rings a bell.

MS. KRATZ: Yep.

MR. DAVEREDE: I did it for Gerry, and then they just monitored progress and saw how you went. I learned a lot of things. Learned how not to be confrontational. For example, at one of the rotations, I didn't score well. And I didn't understand why, and I couldn't get the manager to explain to me why I got the grades. In fact, he went out of his way to avoid me. And I guess, based on my successive management experience, I sort of get how some people would be gun-shy if they did not have good experiences in their own background about debriefing, evaluations, and whatnot. I certainly can understand it. At the time, though, I was very puzzled. I didn't know what I did wrong to try and fix it. And perhaps he didn't like my approach to find out why. So it was good things, bad things. At Suitland, I remember the first year—the first rotation at Suitland. You've been out to Suitland?

MS. KRATZ: I've been to Suitland, yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: Okay. So in one of the stacks—I forget which one—in the corner of one of the stacks, evidently, some boxes had broken down. And there was just a pile of index cards. And so—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Oh no.

MR. DAVEREDE: —fix that. [Laughter].

[Laughter]

MR. DAVEREDE: And I get that. That's your free labor to whatever unit gets you. And you just make the best of it. Sometimes it's paying dues.

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: That's just the nature of the biz. I've known people who've not had good experiences, because they wouldn't necessarily react well to assignments of that sort. But after dealing with the Navy—you know, show me something hard to do. If you want me to be sorting index cards then so be it. I was with cartographic for a period of time, and one job they had me do was sorting US geological survey quad maps. Now, if there's anything more boring—I mean, it's just these quad maps, and there were piles of them everywhere. And they just get them by the pallet-load, and they just need to be dealt with, and I was there to do the dealing. So you do that. But the next year, I was dealing with ship plans and ordinance plans. And so it just comes around. You wait around long enough, and, pardon the expression, your ship comes in.

MS. KRATZ: [Laughter].

MR. DAVEREDE: And so you just got to work through the system and the time will come. Part of it is just judging how you react to the assignments you're given. And if you have—act like a prima donna, that every assignment has to be of equal quality to you, then you're not exactly selling yourself well to the various units. And that was—part of the CIDS thing was to expose you to as much organization as possible and shopping around. I mean, you're taking a look—do I want to do this work? Or hells no, I'm not ever doing that ever again kind of thing. And fortunately, I never had to make that call. I'm one of the few people that I'm aware of that got to stay with the same unit for their entire NARA career. That's just—most people rotate. And there's good reasons for that. A lot of times, it's just chasing the jobs. Because my family situation didn't really press for money much—I mean, we're dual-income, no kids, dinks—

MS. KRATZ: [Laughter]

MR. DAVEREDE: —and so I didn't need to be running a ladder at breakneck speed. I certainly understand a lot of folks who get young families. They need to get some bread in the family quickly, and you just can't wait around for those better-paying opportunities in the same unit. And depending on the streak, may not be available for months or years. I was able to pace it and was able to stay in the same unit. And that has really helped, because I have become, along with—a couple of others have done the same, but you're the corporate memory now of things that have gone before. And of course, that's also French for, this is screwed up, how did this happen this way? So that kind of goes

hand-in-hand with it. And I was part of it. And I'm glad to be still part of that. Although when the problems appear, I don't have much of a place to hide, so... [Laughter] And I have to admit, a lot of stuff has my name on it. So it's hard to avoid. But the hard part is just going back and saying, what were we thinking? And then trying to come up with that answer. But I was able to work through the different CIDS experiences and was sad to see it go away. But at the same time, I understand why, because two years is a long time.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: And the attrition was horrible. Of the CIDS class that I went through—and I'm trying to remember the numbers to give it some sense of—10 or 12 people who were hired into declassification, I'm the only one who really stayed with it.

MS. KRATZ: Oh?

MR. DAVEREDE: Everybody else is pretty much gone. There are others who went to other organizations within the agency, but even among them, there's only three or four of them left. So the attrition rate was horrible. And that's a lot of investment and not a lot of return because they just didn't stay long enough to contribute. They had just learned things and weren't in a position to really get some of the work done. And then they're gone. So I can certainly see why senior management would look down on continuing the program. And the archivist at the time was John Carlin, enough controversy attached with that name. This was one of the things that he did, and the other piece that was not appreciated at the time was—and probably even now—is the subject matter expert label, because as Carlin was in there, there were a number of people who got senior grades based on their SMEs. And that, in essence, disappeared.

MS. KRATZ: Mm-hm. It has.

MR. DAVEREDE: It was just—it was deemphasized. And I think the agency is less for it, because we need that expertise and stuff. And they tried to substitute and get more generically trained people to assist in some of these roles. But given the specialties associated with this stuff, especially with certain topics, you needed to have a World War II army guy or a Korean War Navy guy, or you needed to have a State Department 19th century guy or gal. And you needed to have that kind of expertise, and it's just no longer there. And the difficulty that we have now is, especially on the military, political history side—not a popular area of study these days. You are hard-pressed to find military history courses anywhere out there. It's just not deemed valuable. But when interpreting these records and trying to understand these records and trying to declassify these records, you absolutely have to have people who understand them. And since we're not getting the scholarship from this—and I consider myself an amateur historian. My master's is from distance education. The University of Maryland didn't want to touch me. They said my academic credentials were stale. So—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Stale?

MR. DAVEREDE: —they did not want me for their history postgraduate program.

\

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: So in order to get the archivist rating, since that job description is still based on a 1960's OPM job description, and it's hooked to American history I needed to do the American military university courses just to get the US history courses to line up. I had fun doing that, and since NARA was picking up half the tab, it worked fine. And what I loved about it was being able to write papers without having to leave home. 'gCause I could just—I would write the papers, and then I'd go look up my books to see the citation so I could put it into the paper. So I didn't have—I reversed the normal process—research then write. Well, I could write and then justify the research. And so that was fun. I liked having to go through all that. My wife helped me a great deal. She's the engineer in the family. She's the right side of the brain and I'm the left. And so I would show her things that I wrote, and my favorite three words from her are not, I love you—

MS. KRATZ: [Laughter]

MR. DAVEREDE: —they are, what's your point? And she went ahead and instilled in me some discipline on the writing side, because gee, I—you think I might ramble a little bit in my writing? [Laughter] Well, no. My thought processes definitely go that way.

MS. KRATZ: [Laughter]

MR. DAVEREDE: And so I needed to focus that stuff, and so she helped a great deal. And that helped in my professional writing, especially when I would be bombarding poor Jeanne with memos of various types of stuff. And so the academic side helped me from a very pragmatic side along with the knowledge piece that went with it. But the fact that I had to take such a route, there's not a lot of people who are going to follow that route. I mean, if you take a look at—it's incredibly boring stuff. In a lot of cases, it's dead white man history, which is not a popular topic these days. And it's a lot about campaigns, battles, weapons systems, weapon systems development, all of this stuff. And who's interested in that? I mean, there's just not a lot. I've tried to gin up interest within NWMD and the NDC over the years. And people have come and go, but it's never been a sustained effort. And I totally get it. I mean, it's just not something that's promoted at the undergraduate level, and so it's not surprising that at the graduate level, you're not going to find a lot of people involved with it. So it's self-taught. There's lots of information out there. It's just winnowing out what's good and what's bad. And then being able to apply to the records—in some cases, reversing it, the records inform.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: And I get a lot from the records; some neat stuff that I've been able to share in the NDC blog.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: That's been a lot of fun to write. And that's just little exposés, little tidbits that come through that I need to share. But if you're trying to light a fire in somebody else, it's just—people get intimidated by the writing piece or the research piece, or they feel overwhelmed by it or whatever. I've been striking matches but not able to get a fire. And it's understandable, but I don't know what else to do about it. I'm doing the best I can. And the leadership's doing the best they can.

It's providing opportunity, because they're willing to have people be exposed to me [laughter] for the period of time to learn this stuff. And it just hasn't caught fire. And I'm pretty sure that that's a problem that's reflected elsewhere in the agency. But where it's really critical is the flipside, because the relationship between the agencies that create the classified materials and then we who, for lack of a better term, curate it afterwards, after we assess the records—the creators are going to be all on the side of security. It is very difficult for them to come in and say, oh no, we can let that go. Seldom—it happens. It has happened. But, in a lot of cases, you have to make the case to say, that's no longer sensitive. We don't need to protect that. Let it go. On the agency side, they're hiring fewer people who know this stuff. In a lot of cases, especially if they use contractor workforce to do declassification review, they don't know. A lot of these—they're kids. Maybe their first real job out of college, and they've got to start paying the bills. And so they qualify to be a junior analyst at CACI or any of the other big companies that do this work.

And so the agency puts them through some sort of training, and then they set them loose on the records, and the agencies are going to err on the side of caution. And so you tell them, you hold on to all this stuff. And it doesn't have an expiration date. And so, on our side, they're saying, oh, you bet your sweet bippy it has an expiration date. But the people that they're able to hire are generally people not exposed to this kind of information. They don't have an intrinsic interest in the history, because that's not what they went to school for. They need a good-paying job to start paying off their debt, and if it happens to be in declassification review, so be it. But that doesn't mean that they understand the history behind the documents that they are reviewing. And so instead of pushing the envelope on declassification, they're going to hold the party line when it comes to holding the equity. And NDC's job, and its predecessor organizations, has always been to kind of push the envelope, because we're the advocate for the research public. If not us, who? And so that's why our motto has been "release what we can, protect what we must." As we have to walk that line. The agencies are always going to err on the side of protect everything. And they don't need to. And when you have educated conversation, you can make the point. And I've had any number of knock-down drag-outs with those folks over the years. And I won a couple. I've lost far more than I won. But that's an

important part of the NDC's function, is being that advocate. And the only way we can really advocate well is to be educated. You need to be able to call them on what's in these records. And even then, I lost some of them. Had them dead to rights on a couple of things, and they just—they didn't trust me or they didn't want to believe, and so they would hold onto things anyway. There's a great sea story, but I'm not going to inflict that on you.

[Laughter]

Or anybody else who might have to—because it would take about 15 minutes just to set up. But it's one of those things that you have to go head-to-head with them on the advocacy issues, because nobody else will. It'll just stay closed, and there's enough records in circulation. When's it going to come back around for consideration once again? When's it going to have the chance to be looked at again? I mean, I've seen some record series in there that have been reviewed three or four times over the last 25 years. When's it enough?

MS. KRATZ: Can you walk us through the declassification review process, just to get an overall sense of what it's like?

MR. DAVEREDE: Okay. Under the current Executive Order 13526, the way we have it set up and the way the NDC is set up to function at about the 25-year point of the age of the records, agencies are supposed to do a systematic review of the record series that they created. This is prior to accessioning. And so they go ahead and do the review, put it back in the Record Center, and at the appropriate point, they're offered for accessioning. So what we get, right outright, is a set of reviewed records. These records will have a telltale tab that the reviewing agency will place, and the tab will either exempt some information, because the agency feels it will refer other information that doesn't belong to the creating agency but the creating agency thinks belongs to somebody else, so they'll refer it there. Or if the information falls under the Atomic Energy Act, then it is what we term excluded from review and it's not looked at. There's a separate process for dealing with that. And so that's how we get it. So you get a box with more stickers on the front of it and these tabs sticking out of it. And it enters the NDC—and I said, we've got to the point where we accession one year, and then the following year, it goes through the NDC process. Back in the old days, it just built up into a backlog and we ended up with a 400 million page backlog of records. It eventually got computed down, since we weren't very good at stats, it eventually distilled down to more like 360 million pages but it's a bunch of paper that needed to be processed. And the NDC was pretty much set up to eliminate that backlog. So to make sure a backlog doesn't happen again, we now have a process where, the year after accessioning, it enters our process, and we do a quality control check to see, did the originating agency do a good job of reviewing the records? We have parameters of sampling those records to see, okay, did they miss things or not? If the quality is not there, we actually have an interagency evaluation team that does that.

So it's not just an NDC thing that determines the quality, it's an interagency effort. If the quality's not up to snuff, then another interagency branch, the Kyl-Lot evaluation team, will go ahead and basically re-review the records and they do this in the stacks. So they'll look at it again, and then if they've added any—or missed anything, tabs would be added at that point. And following that, it could be sent to the processors, because we have to determine—well, we have to capture information about the tab documents, because they're not going to stay. The documents that have to be referred, or those that are exempted or excluded, need to be withdrawn from the record series. And so our data entry people do that whole bit of processing. So they go ahead and capture salient information about the document, and that results in the creation of the red-stripe sheet. And that's the remnant. When we withdraw a document, we put in a—what we call a withdrawn item notice and that lets a researcher know that yes, there was something here. It was removed, and if you wish to FOIA it, this is the information you need to make that FOIA request.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: And so they're just substituted. We then set up separate boxes just with the withdrawn material. They're stowed separately and they're periodically re-reviewed, or they're requested under FOIA. And we have a FOIA mandatory declassification review shop under Don Mcilwain and they go ahead and they process those research requests. But meanwhile, the original boxes from which the documents have been withdrawn now become available. They can go down to the research room and people can look at them to their heart's content. So that's, in essence, the process. The items that are withdrawn for referral are then sent to a place called the Intra-agency Referral Center, and that's the clearinghouse. So we have all these agency reps, and they would go ahead and look at this stuff. We have a classified database that sets up queues and they can go head, look at the actual document, then they make a decision on whether classification should be retained or not. Those things that are declassified are then re-filed with the original series. So yeah, a convoluted process, but there you go. That's the essence of declassification work.

MS. KRATZ: And since you started, have you been doing that similar sort of work—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] Yeah, yeah.

MS. KRATZ: —since the very beginning?

MR. DAVEREDE: I mean, the NDC iteration is new. The big change is metrics. We didn't know what we had. I have heard the previous process that I did for, you know, from a decade—or more than a decade as kind of a boutique work because you would handcraft the reviews and they never seemed to get out.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: They would just keep going in. And for a period of time, up until 2008, the agencies actually had free access to the stacks. So they could go in there and do re-review work on their own, and we wouldn't know anything about it until the series had been pulled and then you say oh, we've got a new sticker and a new set of tabs in there. And it wasn't until Michael Kurtz went ahead and shut the door on the agencies in 2008 that we started to get control again. And understand, the NDC didn't get set up until 2010.

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: So—I mean, at the end of the 2000s, you started to see some change in how things were done, and so that was significant. But what setting up the NDC allowed us to do is to focus on eliminating this stuff, and to do that, we needed to track what we had. And I had done metrics for Jeanne Schauble. We would have meetings with Michael Kurtz, and we would laughingly share these stats because I have—you know, I'd had numbers, but whether they actually reflected reality? You know, NARA is a liberal arts place.

I mean, we have our niches in the business side for—and on the Records Center side for dealing with business metrics and whatnot. But when you're dealing with a bunch of archivists, archive specialists, archives technicians, it's about liberal arts. You're not dealing with numbers. Oh, God forbid that you deal with numbers. So we were—yeah, we had stats—

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: —but they just weren't [crosstalk].

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Meaningful?

MR. DAVEREDE: So when we got Sheryl Shenberger from CIA—I mean, she was key in their declassification process. I had met her, actually, when she was working for CIA and she had led the CIA group at College Park for a couple of years. And we didn't necessarily get on very well, but—you know, when she came over, obviously, I was one of her managers. We were going to get along well. But her thing—she wasn't into history, she wasn't into anything but metrics. She got into metrics. And when she brought in somebody that she had used at CIA to just wrestle with the number issue, we didn't know what we were talking about. In terms of numbers, we would use the standard okay, if it's a Hollinger box, it's 833 pages. If it's an FRC, it's 2,500 pages. And that's the only thing we knew, and that's how we came up with a 400 million page backlog. Well, when we brought in somebody who's specialized in metrics, we found out oh no, no. We have a lot more container types and the page counts are a lot different than that. And so when we started actually capturing accurate container and

page information, that was like the first victory on the step, so we could understand all the things that happened to the records. That was a very convoluted process I explained to you.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: And because it's so convoluted, nobody really knew what was at what step at what time. And so the—bringing in metrics allowed us to segregate stuff. We did a business process reengineering, broke it into steps, and then we tried to assign—okay, what's the state of the records in those steps and how did you define those steps? What qualifies a record to be in this bucket as opposed to that bucket? Those kinds of questions, we never asked. And so it was a key victory for us to get our hands around it. Jean Schable just never—she was a classically trained archivist. And she had specialized in declassification, but we never looked at stuff that way. And sometimes it's kind of painful to think, oh my God, look at all the years we did this and that. But honestly, you're limited by the knowledge of your leaders. And so you have to—sometimes in starting anew, you get a fresh eye on things—and the thing about the business process reengineering that we did to set up NDC, it involved other agencies. We had to be open to other ideas. Now, we'd been in—we're in constant tension with the agencies all the time.

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: That's just the way it is and that's the way it should be, because they have to advocate on their side, just as we have to advocate for ours. But having them in on a business process reengineering was a critical thing because we—we just need to hear that from somebody else. And it worked. I mean, we have something in place where we're not going to have backlogs like we did before.

We have educated people and processes. We took archivists who were traditional processing archivists and they were able to retrain so they could be shepherds in this process, to manage both the agencies, the records, and the process themselves and keep track of the state of all that stuff. And that's a remarkable achievement, especially if you know archivists.

I mean, this is totally out of the box thinking and they did it. We have a number of people who made that transition. It may not have been easy at times, but they made that transition and they made this thing work, so that was something I'm very proud to have been associated with.

MS. KRATZ: Well, I was going to ask you to talk more about the creation of the NDC.

MR. DAVEREDE: There was some rumbling about the quality assurance issues. I had done some preliminary work that was initially called the National Declassification Initiative. That was in like, 2007. And that was our first dive into seeing, what was the result of all that agency review work? All this—the

modern—what I termed the modern era of declassification was based on the Clinton Executive Order 12958 that got signed in 1995.

And it originally set up a deadline that all the stuff, not only that the agencies themselves owned that was at Suitland or in their own spaces. They had to look at all the stuff that we had by December 31, 1999. They had that deadline and some of them didn't take it seriously. We had an election in 1996 and there was a sincere hope in some circles, especially in the Department of Defense, that Bob Dole would be the President of the United States in 1997 and that he would rescind Executive Order 12958. And so a lot of agencies sat on the sideline and they said we're going to wait this out.

And then, by gosh, Bill Clinton won. And they said, oh man, we actually have to do this. And they had two years to do it—two and a half years to do it. And so you could see a scramble in 1997 of agencies trying to sort out how to get all of this stuff done. And what a lot of them did, it turned into a time/volume equation. We had X amount of records, we had Y amount of time for the deadline, and so we need to review at this rate. Well, it was never really that simple, and they took shortcuts. They made some questionable decisions independently. They didn't bother to talk to us. So they—you know, this is where the contractor reviewer came in. In years before, it was actual members of that agency. So, for example, the Army declassification activity used both active duty and reserve and retired people to extend what was originally known as the Gulf War Illness Project, because they—we had the Gulf War illness syndrome. And the Army had started a comprehensive declassification program to review Gulf War records to see about releasing them to help these veterans.

And when the Executive Order came out, they just transferred that effort from—or expanded it from Gulf War illness to a general declassification review. When they got the word though, that this thing's really happening with 12958, it's not going away, they had to expand to a contractor operation. So it had civil service leadership and then contractors operate out of Reston. And at one point, there were over 200 reviewers doing this work. And they had to run the records from College Park to Reston and return. So this was the days before holding security was really an issue.

And there was no way we could accommodate that number of people at College Park to do this review. So the records kept going—it was a shuttle run from Reston to College Park and back and forth. And that's actually how some of those Army records got their identification, because we had not bothered to put on our traditional archives box labels for the stuff that had been reprocessed, then it's in Hollinger boxes. They didn't have any of the traditional identifications on them, like finding a type and entry number and all that. That wasn't on there. You would end up with just a plain textual box label.

So the Army, using a database, realized that there was no way that they could do this. So some of the boxes had—they had put barcodes on the boxes, and some of the boxes had numerical designation. And in some cases, it went full circle. The Army identification ended up being in the Holdings

Management System, HMS. And so, ironically, NARA is using an Army identification system for undesignated NARA records. So I—you know, any port in a storm. You're in the middle of trying to get, in essence, a factory going. And the volumes involved, it's a factory. You have to use factory methods, and the Army was one of them that had to figure out how to do that. And each of the other agencies did their own kind of thing as a result of this fallout. But what we found out by the mid-2000s is that it sucked. I mean, there was really bad reviews and they over-tabbed, they held too much. And in other cases, they missed equity and they—it just wasn't done right. And then what really kind of set this off was the 2006 reclassification incident. Does that ring a bell?

MS. KRATZ: What was that?

MR. DAVEREDE: In 2006, there was a researcher, and damned if I can remember his name now. He had come to College Park for State Department records, and he found that records that he had previously requested were now no longer available.

MS. KRATZ: Oh.

MR. DAVEREDE: So if there's any way that's going to raise a red flag, is that. And so what was found out is that—and this is a story that appeared in the *New York Times*, that there were secret memoranda between CIA, Air Force, and NARA that allowed their people to go into the open stacks and pull stuff that had been available to the public.

MS. KRATZ: And were there slips?

MR. DAVEREDE: Well, no. There were no slips.

MS. KRATZ: Okay. Oh.

MR. DAVEREDE: There was nothing. It was just—the records were just not available.

MS. KRATZ: They were just not there.

MR. DAVEREDE: They were not available. So there was a little fallout from that.

MS. KRATZ: Yes, I can imagine.

MR. DAVEREDE: And this is where Weinstein showed up in the midst of all of that. We had to transition from Carlin to Weinstein. And so—of course, Weinstein, full of outrage—we're not doing that again, let no more classified memorandums amongst agencies anymore, stuff like that. And part of the fallout with that was to take a look at what agencies were—really had done. And so I was part of that pilot to

try and figure out—so we started to take a look. I set up a process—an intra-agency process, because everything we had to do had to be interagency in order to have the buy-in from—once we started to do stuff unilaterally with just NARA assets, we would lose credibility. So we had to have the cloak of interagency cooperation and we began to see with our own eyes and we had to set up mathematically sound sampling processes to allow us to go into these previously reviewed things. And go see—and by those sampling standards, make a call as to the quality involved and what fate would fall those different series. And so they started to get a look into that, and I think at that point, between 2006 and 2009, you started to see an impetus towards we need to revise how we did business.

Under Jeanne Schauble, the declassification and initial processing shop did exactly those two things. We did declassification of classified records. We also did initial processing of classified and unclassified records. Now, as sort of an apprenticeship for those without clearances, especially if it was going to take a while longer—and we found, as time went on, that it was taking longer and longer for people to get their clearances. So it was good to have unclassified work for them, but we were also being diverted. And when you had split responsibilities between initial processing and declassification, we just weren't—we were falling between two stools. The processing folks, the research—what's now Research Service's side, were coming into conflict with trying to process classified and unclassified stuff. And so they needed to impose an order in there, and they finally decreed okay, well, initial processing and declass, you're just doing declass. You're no longer doing initial processing. Not a core function anymore, because we steadily attrite people anyway on this. We had a hard core of people that would stick through it, but we would have terrific turnover, especially in the archives technician.

Because—I mean, data entry is just not everybody's cup of tea and nobody wants to stick at doing that for a long period of time. So, you know, how do we go ahead and jazz this thing up? And so we tried to intellectualize it as being more than data entry. There was the agency interaction piece and all this other stuff. And so what started as the NDI, it then rolled into the NDC precursor, business process reengineering. Our current deputy is David Mengel and David led that business processing reengineering. I don't think there were enough chairs around the table for that, because everybody and their grandmother just wanted to be a part of that. But over many months, they hammered together a process that everybody could agree to. And that sort of became the source document for how the NDC would do business. And so Jean Schable was deputy; Sheryl was selected as director and that gave us a different level, because as a division, we sat fairly deep in the NARA organization, and Jeanne was just a GS-15. By elevating it to an SES position, it gave us a lot more visibility. Sadly, that said, Jeanne was ill with terminal breast cancer at that point, so we lost her not long after the establishment of the NDC. So David fledged up to be deputy and Sheryl ran NDC and got the factory rolling.

I mean, those early rocky days in 2010 where we didn't—we couldn't even estimate what the backlog was, because we just were not sure about any of the numbers. But we had well-established

relationships with the agencies though, and were working to redefine those relationships. And that was a big part of what I did. I did the interagency liaison business.

And so I'd be the front-man for a lot of stuff, or I would sit with the leadership on stuff that would involve the more senior people from the agency and just kind of work—I was the day-to-day grunt guy because I—you know, if they had clearances that needed to be passed, ID badges, moving of records, hey what are you doing, that kind of thing. So I was the day-to-day kind of person, and David and Sheryl would deal with the much higher level stuff and I would get dragged in as appropriate.

MS. KRATZ: And so that was created in 2010.

MR. DAVEREDE: Yeah.

MS. KRATZ: Can you talk a little bit about the successes of that program, and maybe some of the challenges that NDC has faced in these last, I guess, nine years?

MR. DAVEREDE: [Laughter].

MS. KRATZ: It's almost been 10 years. Is that hard to believe?

MR. DAVEREDE: Well actually, President Obama set the deadline to eliminate the backlog by the end of 2013, and we met that. We went ahead and you kept chopping and dicing. I mean, you just keep doing it. We would have murder boards where we would actually take a look at our processes, and if people saw that there were issues, they could bring it up to the senior leadership and say hey, this ain't working, how about that? We were trying to encourage a lot of critical thinking, that just because we proclaimed it this way doesn't mean it has to stay that way. And so we were able to get a lot of teamwork out of what was going on, and that allowed us to declare victory at the end of 2013. And so after that, it was more a question of sustainment, where what I mentioned before, we were able to get reviewed accessions in the building and were able to start the NDC process the year following the accessioning. And so that has allowed us to avoid buildup of the backlog. Now that we're in danger of that again because of the Presidential Libraries business, with all the classified records coming into the Presidential Library, classified coming here. And so that's going to cause a bit of a—we're trying to figure that one out still.

MS. KRATZ: And all those records will come to College Park?

MR. DAVEREDE: All the classified ones.

MS. KRATZ: And when is that scheduled?

[Laughter]

MR. DAVEREDE: You're asking the wrong person. I—probably later this calendar year and into next year. And that's just going to be a long and painful process, mainly because you're dealing with the differences between presidential and federal. And as agency historian, you are no doubt aware of the tensions that have gone on over the years between the Presidential Libraries and the Federal Records side, because we went through those years where we're the only important records there are, so the resources should come our way kind of thing. And this is not the solution that anybody envisioned. It's just kind of complete capitulation, but—and those people aren't coming with the records.

MS. KRATZ: I was going to ask—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] [crosstalk].

MS. KRATZ: —so no additional staff? And they're—that will certainly be a challenge.

MR. DAVEREDE: [Laughter].

MS. KRATZ: Do you have any idea how much the volume—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] No. Don't even have that. Don't even have that. I've been poking at that. I'm the NATO guy, and so I need to know because they've got NATO stuff.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: And nobody's ever put anything out there about the volume of records involved. But the NATO thing's special because you need segregated storage, and we don't have a lot of classified storage to begin with, much less segregated classified storage. So there's a lot of stuff still in play. Have no idea how it's going to unfold. We'll—it will get figured out. I'll probably—if this phased retirement thing goes in, I will be dragged in on some of that and I'll be happy to participate, because it's a conundrum.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: I mean, that's just something we didn't quite plan on. But, you know, what we've been suffering from of late has been a de-emphasis on the creating agencies' parts—what we've seen over the last—and it predates the current administration. It goes back to the tail-end of the Obama administration. It's—we're seeing retrenchment with regards to classification and declassification. Some agencies are de-emphasizing and it doesn't seem to hold the same meaning, and there's rotation of people. So people we have worked for decades with are now rotated into other positions,

and so you see declassification issues being de-emphasized and we don't have the same relationship with the newer folks as we did with the older. And it just—it just suffers—it's all a big cycle, you know?

We're just happening to be on a down-cycle now, where declassification is being downplayed and resources are being diverted elsewhere. And what other agencies are priority—prioritizing, we can't really do anything about, you know? And so if they have the wrong people set up in places and they reduce the resources they're doing for declassification review and all this other stuff, all we can do is kind of hang on and hope for better days to come. Or is there going to be some sort of trip at some point down the line where they say oh no, we need to fix that now, and so on and so forth. I don't envision that happening over the next couple of years. However, stranger things have happened. I mean, that's kind of what we've been suffering from since. We used a couple years after reaching—eliminating the backlog to refine things, and we've kind of gotten to a steady state. It's now crisis control, because you find stuff is out that shouldn't be out.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: A great example is when we deal with the bulk moves from Suitland, and stuff that has been treated, say, as unclassified for decades comes in, and all of a sudden, you find stuff with classified markings on it. And so we have a process to deal with that. And some cases, you have to spin things up a bit depending on what you find, because it was improperly handled—NARA didn't do it, but nonetheless, you have a violation of sorts that you've got—there's a process for dealing with violations. You try to hang on with the other agencies to help. There's one agency program in particular that I've seen—you know, built the program, let it run down, start it over again. I mean, we're now going through cycles of this stuff with some of these agencies, because it—they have their own bureaucracy, their own personalities, and it just—the cycle seems to repeat and it's up and down. It's a sine wave. Well, I just have been around long enough to see it.

MS. KRATZ: Since you need buy-in from the agencies, do you have any programs that you established to get agency buy-in? Or—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] It's—

MS. KRATZ: — is it just rapport? It's...

MR. DAVEREDE: Exactly. You have to sit there and—what I thought was successful for me is just getting some mutual respect. Part of the issue we have with some of the agencies is, as they are creators of this classified information, they think they are the only ones who know its value and know its sensitivity. And what I've had to demonstrate repeatedly, and thanks to—thanks to my dear bride and my library, has been able to go back and co-op them and say I know that this is important. And what about this? And you start throwing some facts at them and you start getting into a dialogue about

their program, their system, their history. And once you can get it on that basis, you know, now you're on a level playing field. And now you have some mutual respect that they see your point, and if they can do something about it, they will. But it's gaining that respect, and that was the—an important thing for me was I'm not just an archivist at the National Archives. I get what you do. I get what this did or what that event meant, but here we are 56 years later. Does it seem to have the same sensitivity? And pick up something from the internet or just use whatever I can use in a bag of tricks to get them to just say well, maybe you have a point, you know? Or something like that. Does it result in a document being declassified? I don't know. What it does do is enhance the respect that we have for each other, and allows dialogues in other directions that may pay off better. So that's what I found important.

MS. KRATZ: So, not sure there is a typical day, but—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] [laughter].

MS. KRATZ: —is there a typical day in...

MR. DAVEREDE: No. No, no. Each day is different—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: —Because it's what the young'uns bring into the office sometimes, because they're going through this stuff. Sometimes they know my interest in things and they'll say hey, what about this, and bring me a box. Or there's something that a real stickler of a researcher has and—you know, I—they want me to re-review something that had been reviewed three or four times. And I'll go back through it, and if the last time it had been looked at by a reviewer was, say, 2003, then yeah, it needs to be looked at again. I'll take a look at what the agency did and what tabs they added. If needed, I will add tabs myself because they missed things. And if some of the tabs they added were incorrect, I'll deal with those and just get a clean product back to that FOIA person or to that data entry person, and we'll go ahead and just make it a better product overall. I can't do that all along. I can't do it systematically, but I can help people as it appears. On another day, it may well be somebody finds recordings, World War II recordings from wire recordings. I don't know if you've heard of that technology. At one point—and that's what kills me about these things—at one point, recording—sound recording technologies would use a metal wire. And there was a recording machine—big thing—and so somebody had a bunch of the stuff—wire recordings, and they actually had classification markings on them. And so even at World War II, you just can't take any of this stuff for granted, and there's a process to follow. And so I'll be in on trying to do research on that stuff, on what it might be, what might be on it, and give background that others can take and work the more technical side to actually come up with a transcript or something that's usable and saying yeah, that's what I think is on here.

Another time I can go down—it'll be NATO stuff and I will deal with the Nixon people. And I have to go listen to a recording, because somebody and somewhere says NATO. And so—hey, can you come take a look at this? And in a lot of cases, especially if Henry Kissinger is involved, the assumption is it's classified and I will get thrown in for that. So I'll have to really bear down and try and understand what they're saying, because a lot of that—have you ever heard some of the—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Oh, yes. I have. It's hard.

MR. DAVEREDE: — [Crosstalk]—yeah. Oh, it's...

MS. KRATZ: I'm amazed that they can understand...

MR. DAVEREDE: So I can—I can do that. In other cases, I have helped—in fact, it's the group that's meeting now upstairs. They have the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel, AKA the ISCAP. They're in charge by—per the executive order, they keep track of how the agencies actually manage their declassification functions. And one of the things they do is they look at the declassification guides that each agency uses. And for the services, it's been my privilege to advise the ISCAP on the declass guides, and I'll actually get those guides and I'll look at them myself. And this last batch, I will go ahead and assist in editing those things and getting back to the agency and saying, you need to fix this because that ain't right. And you need to add this, and you need to think about that, and all that stuff. So it's just using some—what I've got stuck up here and going and working with them to make sure that their guides are the way they should be, they're usable and accurate. Or I could go stand in front of a crowd and start talking about declassification review procedures. I'll be doing that for the camera tomorrow.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: I'll have to put on a coat and tie, which I can't stand, and I will get up on the stage and they'll record me and they will have it in the can, and I can—people can look at it to their heart's content. In other cases like—currently right now, deck logs—Navy deck logs—you know what they are?

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: Okay. Navy deck logs, classified ones may be impacted by some pending legislation on the Hill. There's been this thing going on with Agent Orange and veterans and this tussle between Blue-Water Navy and Brown-Water Navy. Brown-Water Navy were the river and in-shore guys, and their exposure to Agent Orange in—of course, in the Vietnam War, is well documented. And so if you are a veteran of a unit from the Brown-Water Navy, you can apply to VA for the benefits. Blue-Water Navy, not so. And they've got a very comprehensive list of the ships—Blue-Water Navy ships that they'll allow to do that. There's pending legislation on the Hill to change that, and it involves some of

the classified deck logs that we have. Some of the ships who are tagged Blue-Water Navy have logs in there. And, of course, to document this stuff, they need to be able to have the record. And so I've got a project rolling right now to review those deck logs and see how many of them can be busted loose.

MS. KRATZ: So has technology played any role in this process of...

[Laughter]

MR. DAVEREDE: And that's ironic, because I started out that way. When I started as a technician, we were recording stuff in a database that was written in FORTRAN, okay? And we had monochrome monitors and ancient keyboards. And the company that created these units went out of business, and so every time you fried a monitor—and they came either in the green or amber variety. So that's how old that stuff was in the mid-1990s. And ironically, I had suggested to Jeanne, we need a modern network with data—modern database to handle this stuff. And ironically, just a couple years before, David Mengel had suggested the very same thing. The only difference is there was no money when David put his proposal—and it was a CIDS paper proposal that he did. I didn't have a CIDS paper proposal on that, but when I pushed this up to Jeanne, they found money. And so it's all in the timing, you know? And so we ended up with the Archival Declassification Review and Redaction System, or ADDRRES. And that helped streamline the data entry process and allowed a much more friendlier process, because working the old mini-computer system, which we call Prime, after the company that made the mini-computer was the Prime company. And it was not a very tolerant system.

So if you were looking at data to analyze and say you always have to type in the agency that you were holding something for, well, there was no standardization. People would type in State, State Department, Department of State. And so all those data variations would be in there, and there's no rigor in enforcing data entry standards at the time. And so what I advocated for, what David Mengel had advocated before me, was just a modern database system where we could enforce some rigor in data entry, and it would be a lot easier to manipulate the data. And that laid the groundwork for the eventual success that we had with the NDC. But the rest of it is what I would term the Mark 1/Mod 0 eyeball and the brain that goes with it, because it's all about reading the document, understanding the equity and acting on it, or getting a better read on it or trying to get agencies to bend on it or whatnot. We've not been at the forefront for electronic records. Part of that is because of the magnificent failure that was ERA. I was in on some of the initial efforts for dealing with ERA back in the early 2000s and just saw that whole effort crumble. And there was supposed to be a declassification component for it, but they ran into so many problems with what they ended up that it—we just never got that far. That's why agencies are creating classified electronic records and we can't do a damn thing with them, because you need a system that we can ingest and scan, and be able to scan reliably. Now, it's not that the problem's been ignored. For example, the CIA had partnered with the University of Texas for a number of years to come up with kind of an AI solution that—it would be self-learning on what the equity is. It just—they never generate the reliability figures that the intelligence community

or Department of Energy would trust, because if they come back with a number like 95 percent or 96 percent, they won't do it. I mean, it's got to be like 99.98 percent, because what you're trying to do is, you're trying to use a system to queue human eyeballs. So it's going to take this mass of data that—and filter all of that, and then you're going to end up with some hits. And out of the—those hits need to be looked at by a person, and that way you cut the odds down. But you can't rely on a system that passes by things that may need to be looked at. And so they just—they've never developed the trust factor involved on that. And how much are we willing to spend? Because there's some obscure IT technology rule that what you would spend to get like a half-percent efficiency—you know, it's some obscene number. You spend \$10 million to get to 95 percent, and you would need \$20 million to get to 97 percent, and nobody wanted to lay down that much money or take the leadership. And, of course, NARA taking leadership on any IT related anything would be looked at suspiciously these days, and rightfully so.

MS. KRATZ: Well, if nothing exists, then how does this 2022 deadline for electronic records impact classified records?

MR. DAVEREDE: They've been trying to keep that separate. I mean, honestly, we've just not been talking about it.

MS. KRATZ: It doesn't apply to classified records?

MR. DAVEREDE: Well, it certainly applies. It's just that the stuff's going to get put into some sort of buffer, some sort of storage and just stay there. Or it stays with the agency and takes its chances when media migration concerns—you know, I just—I know there's been discussions at higher levels that the director and deputy director—David Mengel, I know has been involved with these discussions. But they just haven't amounted to anything that we can point to a calendar and say by this time, we're going to have a system to ingest and do something with, because there's no underlying anything to do review of the—no automated review.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: We have been able to use ADRES in weird ways, because we can actually load movies and sound into ADDRES and treat it similar to textual records, so that you can listen to an audio file in that classified environment and actually make decisions on that. But it's only in those cases of special media, not in general electronic records format. So that's what we're stuck with right now.

MS. KRATZ: That's really—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] It is. I agree, and it's going to require a totally different field and some of the young'uns are getting into that. And that's—we've got some digitization folks who are—who—we just don't have the tools in place to actually do the work we can do now with textual.

MS. KRATZ: So, how did you get involved with the blog?

MR. DAVEREDE: [Laughter] I enjoy writing and I—it was just a way to highlight things that we would release and, you know, we've developed a small—there's 120 followers now. And that's up a couple dozen from when I started.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: And it's just—we run into the most unique things. And being able to share that stuff is—and I enjoy doing the research and I just love sharing what we do.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: And so it's just a natural extension of the other things I was doing, and what—nobody else in NDC wanted to write, so I threw my hat in the ring.

MS. KRATZ: Do you have any interesting finds that you could share? Memorable, I guess?

MR. DAVEREDE: Memorable ones—well, they're all memorable. I mean, that...

MS. KRATZ: True.

MR. DAVEREDE: Don't get a lot of responses on stuff. I take a look at the comments and sometimes you get touched by some of the veteran stories, because I—one of the things—as a veteran, I like to think that our stories mean something. That the service means something. And in a lot of cases, people belong to classified things over their careers, and they don't feel that they can share that. I remember meeting a veteran who worked in the communications intelligence business for the Navy after World War II. And I met him at a conference and—somebody approached me; they knew me. And he wanted to know if he could share what he did with his family. So this is a man who's in his eighties, or maybe even nineties, and he still felt obligated to withhold this information 70 years after the fact. And while we've kind of let go of World War II finally, post-World War II, no. Not so much. And so in this case, with communications intelligence, you have the National Security Agency involved, and I had to come by and say no, no you can't really share that openly. You would need to contact the agency on that.

However, I know what you did and your service is very much appreciated. And because this was a young guy who was bringing an older gentleman to this conference—and so he's not independent

anymore, but there was a smile on his face when I was able to share that with him. That felt really good. And that's a motivator for me, is being able to share those kinds of stories. They don't need to be hidden anymore.

There's a story I'm working on right now that was dealing with a bunch of ships.

MS. KRATZ: [Laughter] Ships.

MR. DAVEREDE: It's going through these decks—it's dealing with these deck logs, the classified deck logs.

MS. KRATZ: Right, right.

MR. DAVEREDE: And there was a class of four ships that the Navy didn't have much else use for. They weren't successful at what the Navy has built them for. So the Navy found something for them to do. 300 foot-long, it was 175 guys on them. And so they would go out, be based out of Pearl Harbor, and they would rotate between Pearl Harbor, Midway Island, and Johnston Island. And of the three, Pearl Harbor was the best that they were going to come up with, because Midway was a fly-speck of an island, just like Johnston Island. And their job in between those little trips, they would hang out in the North Pacific and Central Pacific. And they would actually wait for a Soviet intercontinental ballistic missile test, and they would actually get warning of a launch of a Soviet ICBM. And their job was to catch the debris from the reentry vehicle when the thing came down, and they were close enough to hear the sonic booms of the reentry vehicle—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Wow.

MR. DAVEREDE: —which would have been the sound of Armageddon, had they actually had warheads on them. But they would—and they would triangulate—being in the proximity, they would triangulate where the thing went down and they would steam rapidly over to where that location was to see if there was anything in the water to pick up of intelligence value. And so nobody knows that. You're the first—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] That's so interesting.

MR. DAVEREDE: —the second person that I've told. Hopefully I will have the time to go ahead and get that in that article. And 175 guys and weeks—I mean weeks at a time on a 300 foot ship in the middle of the freaking Pacific Ocean. One time, the weather was so poor out there that the ship was rolling 30-45 degrees. And so when a ship is rolling that much, the intakes, the suction for the fire pumps—which are a very important part of a ship, because you need to have water to put a fire out. And when the suction for the fire pumps is out, they have to turn off the smoking lamp. So you can

imagine being in a small ship in the middle of a big ocean in a storm and you can't smoke, and it's 1967 and everybody smokes.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: So—that—and that's the part that touches me, is we're able to get that log out and it will be available to those veterans, and I will blog about this with that article that's in the hopper right now. But that's a story that would go unknown unless—you know, I saw it and I told it.

And I appreciate what that story means to 175 guys, and multiply by four. And it's being able to have an impact like that, uncovering the history for it and just allow it to be seen. I—whether to commemorate, celebrate or whatnot, that's not up for me. That's for the beholder to see, once it's available. But at least let's make it available, you know? Because I have been that guy. I was on a 600 foot ship and the conditions were never nearly that bad, but I know what it's like to be out in the middle of no place— —and just—with a thousand of your best friends and no place to run. And they're on something half the size with a fraction of that number of people—that's a motivator for me, is just making that kind of stuff available.

MS. KRATZ: So you're retiring soon. What do you think you'll miss the most about working here?

MR. DAVEREDE: Oh, the access. [Laughter]. It's getting to the good stuff. They can't allow you to retain—if that option opens up for me on the phased retirement certainly that will come in. But it's just being able to get to the good stuff. And because the reason my wife asked me on my earlier writings is what's the point, is because I'm the kind of guy that—this is neat stuff.

And the paper would just be about the neat stuff. And as Heidi correctly pointed out, there has to be a point to it. You have to present this information with some objective in mind. And that's what I've been trying to do with my writing ever since she gave me those famous three words. But it's just being able to work that—the other piece is being able to share. And I have accrued enough wisdom now that I offer my office guests the choice of long or short, you know? Because I know my own foibles and I know it's not for everybody. But some people will take the long version and others won't, and there's no—in my past, I have exposed people inevitably to the long, and that's not been appropriate. Sometimes they just want to come in, get an answer, and go back to what they were doing. They don't care about the other stuff and it's not my job to make them care. If they can't pick it up on their own, I'm not going to force them. And in a lot of cases, it doesn't matter. It's just—let's get the job done. So I'm—I know enough, at least, to offer the choice. And I miss being able to do that, because there are some folks who enjoy it. And even if they don't, they leave with a smile on their face anyway.

MS. KRATZ: And a good story, I'm sure.

MR. DAVEREDE: And my poor wife is the one who's going to have to deal with it in the future, so...

MS. KRATZ: Well, I know we've been—we're about an hour and a half now—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Laughter].

MS. KRATZ: —which I—this is fine. I just—I know you probably need to go—I know you wanted to go to the gift shop, but I just have a couple more questions—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] [laughter] No, no. That's all right.

MS. KRATZ: —and then we'll wrap up.

MR. DAVEREDE: It's your job to focus this discussion.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. No, it's been very helpful. So I was just curious to see, how do you view your time here at the Archives?

MR. DAVEREDE: This has been such a neat experience, because I—my Navy experience was not the best.

MS. KRATZ: Right. I read your oral history.

MR. DAVEREDE: And it—sometimes a guy just ain't mature enough. You've probably met one or two in your time. And I was fortunate enough to be married to a woman who had the patience to work with me, to allow me to get to—what—that state of grace. And NARA allowed me to get to that state of grace, because I was not feeling very good about myself when I left the Navy. It was not the best circumstances. And in retrospect, there are lessons missed that I hoped to apply again if I had that opportunity, and I had that opportunity. And I was blessed to be able to get another leadership position. Most people don't get that chance. A lot of times, you're just gun-shy and you don't even want to approach it again. But I was given that opportunity to try again, and I think I was much more successful the second time around. God knows I made enough mistakes then too. But I survived long enough to get to the—get the mission done, be an asset to NWMD and the NDC over the years. That—I think I contributed to mission and was able to survive long enough for Sheryl to see—need to make him a SME and because what was happening to me was, I was a functional supervisor, a functional manager and SME at the same—I was just—I was not doing any of those jobs well.

MS. KRATZ: Right.

MR. DAVEREDE: And so she just said okay, you're just going to do the SME business. And business has been booming ever since. And they found another manager. M'Lisa Whitney—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: —had—has my job—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: —and so she and I have regular conversations, even to this day, about how to work things and stuff like that. So it's—that mentorship piece has really been helpful. And—which kind of leads me to—NARA has tried over the years any number of mentoring and it's really not taken off, mainly because you can't really regulate a mentoring process. That's a natural thing. A natural chemistry thing between two people, and it either happens or it doesn't. I was first exposed to the forced stuff in CIDS where I was paired with an archivist of some seniority, and it just didn't work.

MS. KRATZ: The relationship wasn't there?

MR. DAVEREDE: It just wasn't there. And so, you know, you have to build that relationship over a period of time. And one has to be willing to share and the other one's got to be willing to listen, and you just can't force—I mean, at some points, you had enforced reporting in the mentoring environment where people had to submit weekly reports and stuff like that. Saying—oh my God, no. No. The Navy does it quite informally. You—they just call it the Sea Daddy. You would have a Sea Daddy—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Sea Daddy. [Laughter].

MR. DAVEREDE: —one of the reasons why my career didn't work well was I didn't have a Sea Daddy. My wife had a Sea Daddy—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Oh, okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: —and was of some benefit to her—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: —and she maintains some of the—she still maintains some of those relationships. It just didn't happen for me, but that's the Darwinism that goes in a selection process. And as a Navy officer, it's up or out. So, Darwin, here you are. If you don't get selected, you're out. You're no longer a naval officer. And the same thing, just generally this should apply all the way around. You just can't

force people into mentoring relationships. And I don't know what the state is—I volunteered when it was a voluntary program a couple of years ago—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Mm-hm. I remember that.

MR. DAVEREDE: —and, you know, I just never got picked. I was available, just wasn't picked, mainly because I was an unknown in that awkward sixth floor up over College Park—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Yeah.

MR. DAVEREDE: —and nobody wanted anything to do with that. So when people voluntarily get into those relationships, I'm all into that. And so—and I finally have the discipline to regulate how long I take of people's time, how much time I take— so that the mentoring is not a punishment; it's something someone would look forward to and maybe want to repeat. So that's something that I would miss, and I'm trying to see how else I can do that on the other side, like with a museum or something like that.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. Well, I think I could talk to you all day, but I'm wondering if there's anything else you'd like to add that we didn't cover. Any antidotes or words of wisdom or anything that we missed?

MR. DAVEREDE: I have to put this on the record.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: And so that's—it'll be the last thing. I am the guy that put red turret tops on the USS *Arizona* on December 7, 1941. I found as obscure a piece of paper as anyone would find, not even looking for it because there's always been some unknowns about how the ships appeared on Battleship Row on that date. And it's only monochrome photography that exists, either on the US side or from the Japanese.

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: And so nobody really knows what the ships looked like, and there's still arguments—were they blue? Were they gray? But one thing I found that categorically establishes a color was a memo that the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet at the time, a guy by the name of Husband Kimmel, put a memo out in March of 1941 that mandate that the turret tops of the battleships were going to appear in a certain way with these colors, depending on what organization they belonged to. And for the *Arizona*, that meant that the front two turrets— it has four. So the front two turrets were colored red on top and the third one—or the fourth one, would be colored red as well. And that was to allow the ship to be seen from very far away, because that's how the guns were

being aimed. You needed to be up high in an airplane over the enemy, and you needed to be able to see 20 miles away at your ship to see if it's firing. That's how you corrected the fire. And you had to be able to positively—to identify it, and they did that through the use of turret top colors. And so, the *Arizona* now has three red turret tops. I needed to share because you can Google Arizona models, so when somebody wants to build one, and since I am a modeler—but I'm not well known for the models I build—but—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Yet.

MR. DAVEREDE: —yeah, I will have more time. But now, those exist. And so...we're...yeah. See, this is the instructions.

MS. KRATZ: Okay.

MR. DAVEREDE: That's the instructions on a model kit that's telling people to paint it that way.

MS. KRATZ: To paint it red. That's...

MR. DAVEREDE: So if—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] And you found this—

MR. DAVEREDE: —a modeler has to be famous—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] That's you.

MR. DAVEREDE: —and—well, it doesn't have to be. I—a lot of people don't know me. I shared it with a modeler who actually built the big one. It's a 196th scale, so it's like six feet long or something like that. So we're in Pearl Harbor at the visitor's center for Ford Island, and he built this. And I shared with him that piece of paper and asked, have you ever seen anything like this before? And his eyes just popped, and no, he had not seen anything like that before. And that's a claim to fame. I will—I'm happy about that one. I kept it low-key because you don't want that modeling community to be calling on you on a regular basis, because they—can you look this up for me?

MS. KRATZ: Oh, yeah?

MR. DAVEREDE: And all of a sudden—no. I didn't want to do that, but I—for this purpose, I want to go ahead and get that down on bits or whatever—

MS. KRATZ: [Interposing] Record it forever.

MR. DAVEREDE: —it is. [Laughter]. But, I mean, that—it's just neat stuff like that that really—it makes working at this place so neat.

MS. KRATZ: Yes.

MR. DAVEREDE: And even though you can go through some rough spots and have bad days, just like you can have bad days anywhere it's when these gems occur and you can do that, that's what I love about it.

MS. KRATZ: Yeah. Well, thank you and congratulations again on your retirement.

MR. DAVEREDE: Thank you.

MS. KRATZ: I hope your phased retirement—

MR. DAVEREDE: [Interposing] Yeah, well...

MS. KRATZ: —works out for you.

MR. DAVEREDE: We'll see.

[END RECORDING]



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

National Archives History Office
700 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20408
Tel: (202) 357-5243
Email: archives.historian@nara.gov

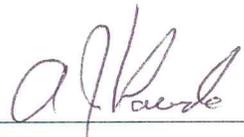
DEED OF GIFT TO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

I, AJ Daverede, do hereby give to the National Archives History Office the recordings, transcripts, and any associated materials of my interviews conducted on May 14, 2019.

I authorize the National Archives History Office to use the recordings, transcripts, and associated materials in such a manner as may best serve the historical objectives of their oral history program.

In making this gift I voluntarily convey ownership of the recording and transcripts to the public domain.


Agent of Receiving Organization


Donor

May 14, 2019

Date