

Listen my friends and you shall hear a tale of woe and a smattering of fear. A story from a former multi-animal. A career of 4 stations and some hundreds of flight hours for the sake of Loran.

So you called them LORANIMALS. I guess that could be a fitting title for most of them. Taking a good solid two and a years and then some out of a young mans (or boys) life could sometimes have regrettable side effects on him. Some could not handle it but most fought it and hung in there although it changed their life styles, temperaments and attitudes on some. Numbers not to be announced since they are probably not known.

There were at least five different categories. 1. Lighthouse with fog horn; 2. Lighthouse with fog horn and radio beacon; 3. Loran A stations; 4. Loran C stations; 5 Monitor stations. A few were a mix.

Some of these stations were not much better than solitary confinement except for the company and you did your very best not to anger or create animosities. That could be bad, very bad.

Part 1. I was on Robbins Reef, a light and fog horn (hard sleeping). It was a nice little two man round tower out in the water with no land connection. Sounds bad but not really. You had a motorized skiff for the five minute run from the lighthouse , dodging the Staten Island ferries to the base at St. George C.G. Base on Staten Island. Was not a bad tour. I learned a lot. Many a Ferry skipper looked over to see if I made it. Sometimes for humor I would tuck in and hide under his stern because at this point his engine was shut down for docking.

The fellow who ran the light was an original elderly light house keeper. This was in March of '49. He'd been there I forget how many years, talked very little. I never new what language he spoke cause it was so little. Maybe just enough to get by. I guessed him to be Sweed or Norwegian. He was always polite, quiet, friendly. This was his life. I'm sure he is long gone now. I think of him often. Only wish I could remember his name.

Part 2. From Sept '47 to Dec '48. My next story is a lighthouse, fog horn and radio beacon. Just the four of us. 15 months, 6 on and 12 off watch. As I was leaving there, it was being converted to a nice modern Loran A station. A few stories here. It was called Cape Sarichef on Unimak Island on the NW tip of the Unimak Straight, the first sea passage through the Aleutian chain between the Pacific and the Bering Sea. Never saw a ship. The island was WELL inhabited with Alaskan Brown Bears, Caribou and wolves the size of younger Caribou. These were nothing to mess with. The bears were huge and fast. The wolves were always in packs and not afraid to charge in packs with a big buck leading. Some time before I got there a young kid cracked and abandoned the station and went on foot with no weapon and walked the 20 some miles to Scotch Cap hiding from wildlife all the way.

Prior to the C.G. taking over the island there were 3 identical houses on the beach. Each house had a family. A man and his wife. One man died of I know not what and is buried on top of the bluff. I had his name but lost it over the years.

Sometime prior to my arrival at Sarichef, a surname wiped Scotch Cap off the map. It was on the SW tip of Unimak Island whereas we at Cape Sarichef were on th NW tip of the island. The first the District knew was the loss of signal. Then ships reporting no light. So the C.G. sent a ship out. The ship radioed back, "Where is the station supposed to be?" A boat ashore found nothing but a concrete slab a power unit had been on. Nothing else, no station, light quarters, men, nothing. Nothing was ever found.

One night at our station at dinner (?) waves splashed on the windows. We were not that close to water. So we forgot about food and spent a hasty retreat up the hill to the lighthouse for the night. Next morning we went back down to find part of one house gone, the beach gone and we

were now on beachfront property. Another night I was coming down the hill for coffee. I never made it. That bear crossed my path. I CAN outrun a bear. That was fear of the worst kind. I made it into the lighthouse.

One mail delivery time, a [Dec 10th](#), a rogue wave flipped the mail boat. A gunnel must have hit him in the head, it was so quick. He was too far out and he was lost. A week later he washed ashore. A sad [Christmas](#). The odd thing was the boat and all its contents came ashore right after the incident. Why didn't he?

One period of time, the water was so rough we could get no food ashore. Two of us went out for meat. We brought down a young buck. We realized we had only 1 bullet left between us. We flipped and he stayed to skin the animal. I ran to the station to get some more ammo. When I got back, he had left the carcass. 3 wolves were closing in on him. They really wanted the carcass tho. A couple shots and it was ours again. The thing that got to you was that it was risky up there but you seemed to get used to it. HaH!

One time we ran low on water. Shoveled snow into the cistern and it all turned to mush so we had to draw slush, heat it and poor it back in. The trials and tribulations.

Finally the construction crew arrived. We had decent meals and I left after 15months. The assignment officer in Seattle asked if I wanted my 72 days leave or to see the - I said 72 days, please.

Part 3. Nov '50 to Jan '52. And so I advanced to Loran A. As a good start I flew in a B-24 from Hawaii to Sangley Point in the Phillipines where I got into a C.G. PBY and flew it to Tarumpitao Point, Palawan Island and had my first crash in the lagoon there. I landed in the bilges the AL landed on me and the chart table on him. Salt water in my face said get up and we did. The plane was totaled but I was through with it anyway. Some A stations had a fairly good population so each crewman who wanted to do so had his own hut off the base complete with a caretaker, cleaning, laundry, cook and social friend. Our station was fairly isolated so none of that stuff. While I was there they built a runway on land to do away with the water landing. The landing strip was carved out of the jungle. As most people know, trees have a tendency to keep growing (up) so over time the usable runway got shorter. They found that out one flight where the plane could just make it in and out. A fairly dull year as years go. No problems. Except for the Borneo pirates that visited the station one time. They were in pursuit of new women to capture and take back. They wanted no part of us with our few weapons against their blow guns. So I left for the States for awhile. Left Hono, flew all day to San Fran (I thought). We landed, I got out and I was still in Hono. Headwind, not enough fuel so we turned back before we reached that point of no return.

A couple of days wait and the winds were in our favor so we made it. This was a fairly common event back in those days of gas driven aircraft.

Part 4. After a nice time at E. City, I had a friend(?) somewhere that sent me to Cape May to SPN 29 and SPN-30 school. Very interesting. Sooner or later I found my way to Adak in the Aleutians for a two year tour. Adak was a Loran A Master and a Loran C Monitor combined. The Chief ran the Loran A and I ran the Loran C Monitor. Very interesting events and discoveries.

Back home again only to San Fran A.S.

Part 5. Then I started touring again looking for station

locations in the Aleutians, all over the Pacific and even the North see(hmmm).

That resulted in a nice stay in Copenhagen (oh dear). It seemed the U.S. and the Soviets were haggling over why we wanted to land in France to barter a Loran C site on this French

island in the Black Sea which is mostly Russian turf. So the French blinked and we flew back E. City.

After a spell back home in E. City, it was fate to go to the Med for 2 years on Rhodes of all places. It was called Loran C monitor. At one point the Greeks and Turks got unfriendly. We were just a few miles off Turkey, very close. Rhodes being a tourist island, more than a few tourists came to the station and offered their help if the Turks came. These were mostly women who said they were good with a rifle. We had to refuse politely and not tell them that all we had was a sling shot and spit balls. Then stations in formerly friendly nations started getting booted. So I once again came home to stay and retire at San Fran A/S. Much more detail such as Portugese Macao, Hong Kong but so boring unless you were the last ferry out of port before the other guy took over the country.

Due to age, time, space & events, the exact accuracy of events and stages may be a little out of sequence. But I tried. There was a short spell in Viet Nam of quick in & out. Seems there was a war on.

And of course, it goes without saying, many things had to be left out or unsaid. Sorry about that. But each part led to another directly or indirectly. They were the building blocks of our technology.

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