

# Quinn Eskelsen oral history interview

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Oral History Interview with Quinn Eskelsen

Transcript of Oral History Interview of Quinn Eskelsen  
Interviewed by Kathy Bradford on April 10, 2007  
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Kathy Bradford: Today is Thursday, April 10, 2007. I'm speaking with Quinn Eskelsen at his home in Brigham City. This is a second interview I'm doing with Quinn. I want to ask him about his experiences working at Thakral, which is now called ATK, and also about his volunteer work at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Why don't you start with Thakral, how you came to be there and maybe a little bit about your educational background that relates to that.

Quinn Eskelsen: My education background really wasn't related to the defense industry. I was really trained as a geologist, and I worked as a geologist for about eight years.

KB: Well, that involved a lot of chemistry, math and physics -- a lot of the same things you needed at Thakral.

QE: Yes, that's right. I came to work for Thakral in July of 1961. We were living in Colorado, and I was riddled from the oil industry. There were no real jobs in the oil industry at the time because things were in bad shape, and so I ended up in the defense industry and went to work out here at Thakral in the test department.

KB: And this was closer to your home?

QE: Yes, and the job was all right. I thought it would be just a temporary thing until I could get back into the field where I was educated, but most of the geologist jobs are pretty tough with a young family. It involves a lot of travel and time away from home.

KB: Were you married with children at that point?

QE: Yes.

KB: What were your duties in testing?

QE: Well, most of the things we did involved the planning for the technicians to set the test article (usually the rocket motor) -- to set those up and instrument them and then test fire them. In the testing, we measured several parameters. Probably the most important thing was to measure the chamber pressure that was built in the motor while it was firing and then measure the thrust output. There were a lot of other things -- maintaining the temperature on the various parts of the motor. From that they would calculate what the performance of that motor would be.

KB: Were these all small motors or the booster motors?

QE: When I first went out there, most of them were for the first stage of the Minuteman. We tested a lot of those. There to start with, we probably tested over a month as the qualification motor. We got the contract for the third stage, and we tested several of those back in Tullahoma, Tennessee in the Arnold Test Center. They would use the motor in a vacuum so that they could get an idea of what the

## IDENTIFIER

07.22.1

## ARTIST

Eskelsen, Quinn