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USAWC/USAMHI SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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INTERVIEWEE: General Paul F. Gorman, USA Retired

INTERVIEWER: Sir, if we may, I would like to start with your early childhood. What in your childhood, your family life, your hobbies and interests, or your secondary education, inspired you to serve in the military?

GEN GORMAN: I can say immediately there is nothing in my family roots or history that would have led anyone to believe that I was going to enter the military. I believe it is true that I am the first member of my family, either side, to have served in the military since the family progenitors emigrated to the States [from Ireland] back in the 19th Century. Of the two slight factors that were material [in joining the military], probably first and foremost was the Depression. During my childhood, my father who was in the nursery business - that is to say, he grew and sold trees and shrubs for landscaping purposes - was wiped out by the Depression. Because his firm folded, he had to take up selling insurance for a living. The family went through a period of time in which income was very uncertain, and therefore, one of the uncertainties that was impressed on me as a boy was that it was a distinct possibility that I was not going to go on to college.

I don't know when or how I got fixated on the notion that maybe the government would pay for my education. I do remember getting a book for Christmas, about the time I was 9 or 10 years old. It was written by a man by the name of Kendall Banning, and it was entitled West Point Today. That book was very powerfully motivating to me, and I just decided then and there, after reading it, that I was going to someday do that [attend USMA]. I think that virtually throughout my adolescent years, I was striving toward that end. For example, when it became evident, sometime around time I was in my first or second year of high school, that my eyeballs started fading. I underwent a course of treatment with the local eye doctor, an optometrist I guess, who claimed that he had exercises that could increase visual acuity

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in cases of myopia, just a matter of getting muscles of the eye toned up. In order to pay for my course of exercises, I hired out to him as a landscape gardener, plus some sort of help from my parents. I don't know if the exercises worked or not, but the fact is that I eventually did pass the physical to West Point after, I think, at least two attempts. It was not easy, but I eventually did. Probably got in with a waiver, I don't quite remember it that well.

I think to summarize -- that [a military career] is just sort of what I decided to do, and I'd been pushing that way since I was about 10.

The key aspect re secondary education was that I won a scholarship to a private prep school [St. John's Preparatory School, Danvers, MA].¹ It was a competitive scholarship, and wasn't worth a great deal. I think the total sum of money involved was \$400, but it certainly led me to believe that I could take exams competitively and prevail, and it put me in a very good school. It turned out to be one of the greatest strokes of good fortune that I ever had. It was a school taught by the Xaverian Brothers, so I had male teachers. The discipline was, as you would expect, stern. The Brothers were academically demanding of their students, and they had a method of proceeding where they subjected brighter kids to extra rigorous treatment. For example, I got pulled out of the stream and was required to take, in my freshman year in high school, a course in German with a brother who was a native speaker. I think it is worth recording that, although I subsequently learned Russian, French, and Spanish, I can still score higher in a German test than I can in any other just because of the drilling that guy gave me back in 1940 or so when I started in. I am eternally grateful to the Brothers for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was that they required us to memorize long sections of Shakespeare, and the Bible, and other poetry. I also read Latin through Cicero. So, I have a lot of that in my head and my craw too.

The school was small enough so that, although I was not a very big frog, the small pond enabled me to sort of do what I wanted to do, and get a sense of satisfaction in doing it. I think it was probably as good a preparation as you could get for the Military Academy. There was certainly nothing military at all about it, but in terms of meeting a demanding regimen, and high standards and constant production -- not bad at all.

¹ See Remarks by Lt Gen P. F. Gorman, USA, Fathers Club, St. Johns Preparatory School, Danvers, Mass, 24 October 1982. [82eUSSR_ThreatsSJ24Oct.pdf.]

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One of the techniques of the Brothers was to use those who "do well academically" for peer instruction. That is to say, they would double them back on a course, and rather than having the Brothers work on slow guys, they had us work on them. I ran a regular "help" section, for example, for spherical trigonometry, plain geometry, and advanced algebra every noontime. You were allowed 20 minutes to eat your sandwich and then you went to work and drilled the slow guys for 40 minutes. The method of instruction that the Brothers used was blackboard recitation. That is to say, you assigned a problem to the students, they put their solution up on the blackboard, and then they were required to explain it orally. Again, I don't think that the Brothers ever gave a thought to the relationship between that form of recitation and what was going on at USMA. But it is identical to the mode of operation of the Mathematics Department up at West Point. So again, I was sort of advantaged by all of that.

Now you have to remember that I went to high school during World War II. The Depression colored the years of the 30s, but the war colored my high school experience in the early 40s, It did so in a variety of ways, not the least of which was that the Brothers were under some pressure to turn their graduates out, so they adopted an accelerated program, and I was graduated a year or so early. The idea was to enable youngsters to get a start in college on the general assumption that they would be more useful to the government with that kind of additional schooling, and in addition they might qualify for one of the officer training programs that required being accepted to college as one of the prerequisites.

In any event, I was graduated early, and again I got a scholarship, competitive scholarship, to MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. I took the examination in chemistry and the fellowship that I got was in chemical engineering. I am not sure why chemical engineering, except that I had recently taken a course in chemistry from a very good teacher who had really turned all of us on - it was my last science course, and my choice was one of those that seemed like a good idea at the time, if not since. So, I signed up for chemical engineering and that put me into MIT, I would say in the fall of '44. Now this is, of course, after the invasion of Europe; the war is in full swing. Here for the first time in my life, being enrolled in the ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps], I was given a uniform, a rifle, and was introduced to close-order drill and all of that kind of business. Not an experience calculated to make anybody want to repeat it, I must say. The ROTC unit at MIT was like most ROTC in those days, in a sad state of disrepair. Nonetheless, there we were, soldiering after a fashion. I began to have a sense of participating in the war.

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Having been in a small school with all sorts of careful handling, I was of course subjected to very severe cultural shock when I found myself in this huge factory-like, industrial-style operation. Not the least startling aspect of all of that was the fact that I was surrounded by contemporaries who were much, much better prepared for MIT than I was. They had never been required to memorize Shakespearean sonnets. They were never asked to take a foreign language. They didn't have to sit through hours of Thomistic philosophy or other liberal subjects. They had been focused on MIT or engineering throughout their high school years, and they were way, way ahead of me in understanding that game. I just simply didn't know what in the world to do. I recall, for example, we were all required to take mechanical drawing, and though I had taken an introductory course in high school, I was adrift. They [fellow students] could whip through a problem in about a tenth of the time that it took me to complete a drawing. In one particular case, we were required to draw a bridge, a timber trestle bridge. I don't think I ever finished that thing. I would turn in a sheet, the instructor would say, "that's wrong." He'd show me why I was wrong, and I would go back and try to do it again. I don't think I ever got the bridge done.

I was thrown into a calculus class in which you would be given an assignment to prepare, problems to run through, etc. The instructor would come into class and talk about what he damned well wanted to talk about -- didn't have anything to do with the assignment or the problems. The student never knew whether his homework problems were right or wrong or indifferent; there was no feedback mechanism. You were just sort of left to work it yourself. I subsequently discovered, of course, that for most people, those freshman courses were a repeat of what they had done in high school. What the instructor was telling them about in class was what the real work was going to be when they got into serious applications of calculus.

As the months wore on, it became increasingly evident to me that sitting around doing the college student sort of thing while the world was going through the convulsions of war, was not all together really swift. I was coming up now on eligibility for enlistment. There was a Navy recruiting campaign under way to enlist youngsters who had some background in science or engineering for what was referred to as a radar technicians course [Eddy Program]. The Navy, in particular, was vastly expanding the application of radar to its ships and aircraft, and there was enormous demand for repairmen

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and operators. One of the things that I had gotten into in high school is radio repair and construction. Those sets were relatively simplistic radios, super-heterodyne circuits. All analog of course. I had on my own, kind of mastered enough of it so I actually built some radios, phonographs, and that kind of stuff. I would design my own circuit, and then go buy the pieces -from the original Radio Shack, matter of fact- and solder it together. In any event, one day kind of on a lark, I went down and took the examination for this [Eddy] program and got a very enthusiastic response from the United States Navy. They were prepared to offer me, upon raising my right hand, the august rank of Seaman First Class. It seemed like an offer that I couldn't refuse. I believe I was sworn on the 1st of May, 1945.

So, before VE (Victory in Europe) Day and certainly before VJ (Victory in Japan) Day, I enlisted in the Navy and was shipped off to Great Lakes, Illinois. Now in the mean time, I had applied for West Point. I took the physical, flunked it, and did not get an appointment to enter in 1945. So the Navy training seemed like a good option. I was out at Great Lakes in boot camp when the nuclear weapons were dropped on Japan in August that summer, and the end of the war came about. Well, the services started immediately to demobilize, and here was the Navy with all of these radar trainees on their hands. The Navy admiral that was in charge of the program, a man by the name of Eddy, honored his commitment to us to send us to school, etc., to the extent of saying, "Look, you will get special consideration for discharge, and you will be discharged earlier than you might have been otherwise." The special consideration was that they sent us to the Separation Center nearest our home, and we became the menial labor there for a period of time, probably 9 months, and then after that got discharged. He was exactly right. We were discharged earlier than might have been the case if the normal Navy bureaucracy had taken its course.

In the meantime, while I was in the Separation Center, I applied again for the Military Academy. I took the competitive examination and this time connected. It might have helped, that when I made my appearance this time, I was in uniform. For whatever reasons, Senator Saltonstall of Massachusetts saw fit to make me his principal, and I got my appointment to enter USMA in July 1946. My Navy discharge came after it was fairly clear that I was going to go to West Point, so I had maybe, six weeks at home after discharge from the Navy and before I packed up and set off to the military academy.

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I would describe all of that as simply a youngster scrambling with the conviction -- here I was the eldest of a large family -- that what I had to do was to find a way into a college without being a financial burden on my parents. And I succeeded.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, what stands out in your mind about your experiences at West Point, the nature and the quality of the experiences?

GEN GORMAN: The academy in those days had a fixed curriculum. The only options one had were the choice of foreign language [I selected Russian]. The academic system, however, provided for sectioning, that is to say, they divided the class in accordance with demonstrated academic ability, and you were re-graded and re-sectioned periodically every month or so. The upper sections were permitted to branch afield from the straight and narrow stuff of the course, and I spent most of my time in the upper sections, so I kind of thought the academic experience was exhilarating.² I kind of enjoyed it.

What I remember most vividly would fall into these categories: One, I became active on The Pointer, the cadet magazine and ultimately became its editor. I did a lot of reading and writing, and learned about layout and publications in the course of doing that, and that was good fun. I came to know very well the printer, George Moore of Newburgh, New York, who was one of a few very people outside the institution that I was close to back in those days. And in that era we were kept confined to West Point most of the time, but when we did begin to get privileges to go off post for short periods of time, I had in George Moore and his wife, a nearby family that I could go to, and that was a very rewarding kind of contact.

The second thing that is worth reporting in this respect is that I was chosen to go on a trip to Europe in the summer of 1949, between my second and first class years, I was a new first class cadet in other words. There was a group of a dozen or so cadets chosen to accompany Colonel Herman Beukema, Professor of Social Science, who took us on a trip to Europe. And because Beukema was very broadly known throughout the Army, he was given access to the highest reaches of the command over there. General [Maxwell D.] Taylor was one of the commanders who entertained us. Every place we went, from Berlin on down to Greece, we were literally given royal treatment. In Greece we were the

² General Gorman graduated 135 of 546 cadets in the class of 1950.

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guests of General [James A.] Van Fleet, who was the commander there during the war as you recall. He enabled us to go up to the front and talk to commanders on the ground. In Athens, we got not only a good dollop of Grecian culture of yore, but got to meet the royal family. Altogether, the trip was just an eye-boggling set of experiences all the way around. I took my summer leave over there, I stayed over and continued touring, this time sort of going from riches to rags, lived on the other end of the scale for 30 days, but had a marvelous experience.

The third experience that I remember most warmly, was teaching rifle marksmanship at Camp Buckner that same summer. All first class cadets were given an assignment training the younger cadets. Mine was training third class cadets out at Buckner through their course in rifle marksmanship. I think that was my first experience with military training other than the sort of courses that we had during the year on how to give a class or how to conduct training. I really liked that work, I was good at it. As a matter of fact, I was a good shot so I didn't have any difficulty in identifying with the problem, and I learned a good bit about what works and what doesn't work and how to deal with the motivation factors in the business. I became the remedial instructor on the committee. When they had a guy they thought was going to bolo, they would remand him to me and I would coach him into a frame of mind where he thought he could get out there and shoot. More often than not, we succeeded in bringing them through.

Beyond that, of course, USMA was a very crowded, intense, 4 years, and I formed a lot of associations that I still treasure today. As near as I could determine, face down, comparing my schooling and my experiences with those of contemporaries in other schools, like Harvard, civil schools, we really had a marvelous opportunity, a great education. Even compared with former Navy buddies, guys who had gone to boot camp with me, who were down at Annapolis, I thought we were particularly well advantaged. I had opportunity at West Point I simply never would have had anywhere else.

So, I kind of left West Point pretty high. I can't say that I had thought much about being an officer, that was just sort of a given, that is what you were there for. I don't think I spent a lot of time trying to think through what that really meant. I can't remember any studied effort on the part of the faculty or the tactical officers, to prepare us for officership beyond meeting the requirements to graduate from the academy. One of the things that strike me, going back there since, is maybe too much

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emphasis on where cadets stand in terms of officership. I am not sure that kids of that age are terribly receptive to thinking down-stream 5, 10, 15 years. It would have been uncharacteristic for kids of my generation. In any event, I came away from West Point very favorably disposed toward the Academy, and thought it was educationally and socially about the best I could have done.

INTERVIEWER: What were the best and worst times which you can recall while you were a cadet?

GEN GORMAN: Why I guess the first class summer would be easily the best time, it was just a series of straight wins the whole summer. I guess the worst time probably would have been the winter of plebe year when you are at the nadir of hope. I had become bored, I guess is the word. I figured I had done all that and was ready to move on to something else, but it just kept going and going. It was entirely tolerable, wasn't very bad.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, did any of your classmates really surprise you as officers when compared to your opinion of them as cadets?

GEN GORMAN: Well, of course. The surprises go in several directions there. There are a lot of guys who matured very rapidly after they left the academy and developed a great deal of enthusiasm for their profession. They turned out to be remarkably good officers. Then there were guys who were very well regarded while they were cadets, got high rank as cadets in the corps, and it was accepted that they would go on to great things in the Army, but who turned out to be busts [as officers]. There were people that you put a great deal of personal trust and confidence in, who subsequently turned out to be unreliable or who, for other reasons, faltered and fell by the wayside.

I had a [friend] who was later discharged from the Army for reasons of mental health, and who is probably today a confirmed alcoholic, and I wouldn't have suspected that of him as a cadet. Well, if someone had told me this was going to happen, I wouldn't have believed it back then. I think the point to be made about that is one ought to be very, very careful about judging 20 or 21 year olds, particularly in a system such as West Point, where there not given much compass, not much latitude. The system is such that if you kept your mouth shut and did what you were told, you'd do very well. People who got in trouble, or who ran higher risks, often were seeking a broader range of activities, particularly those that

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permitted self expression of one kind or another, than the system readily proffered. Frequently those guys didn't do very well as cadets, but were often exactly the kind of person that would succeed out in the Army. I think too, as I said earlier, that a lot of us just grew up, and grew up very rapidly after we got out, once confronted with responsibility. I worry a good bit about the propensity that I think I have observed at West Point today to try to draw certain definitive conclusions about how the individual cadet is going to perform in the service. I don't think you can do that very well up there.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, are there any other interesting issues concerning your formative years which we think you should include?

GEN GORMAN: All my years have been formative. My pre-commissioning years went up to 1950. No, I don't think so. But note that, from high school on, I was trained in all male institutions and they tended to be authoritarian. I don't think it hurt me a damn bit. Maybe different judgments brought to bear on that, but I readily accept the proposition that sexually particular education has a place. I personally rejoiced in it, and I think that the United States ought to preserve or at least allow some schools to preserve that particulars. I, for one, would regard it a loss if VMI were required to take on women. And while I understand in spades what led to the government's bringing women into West Point, I think I agree with General [Sidney B.] Berry, the Superintendent at the time, that it is not good for the Academy, for the Army, to have done that. Ultimately we will get over it, but I think, when those decisions were taken, something was lost that is un-regainable.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I would like to go into your assignments in military schools, including when you were a student, and when you were assigned as a staff officer within the "school house". I believe that after receiving your commission, you were assigned directly to a unit which ultimately supported institutional training at Fort Benning. From your perspective as a platoon leader in the 82d Airborne Division in supporting institutional training, what were your impressions on how the Army trained officers?

GEN GORMAN: Let's first deal with the unit to which I was assigned. I joined the 325th Infantry, was assigned to G Company, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry. The 325th had just gone

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through conversion from glider infantry to parachute infantry, and the method used to bring about the conversion, was to allow units from within the 82nd to send over fillers to the 325th. Those soldiers "volunteered", and you can imagine the kind of soldier who would be sent from the 502d, or the 504th: you "325d", as they said, you "325d" your eight balls. We ended up with a group of soldiers who were, in the parlance of the day, genuine hoods [said like "food"]. We had a group of NCOs who were similarly selected, and I suspect were chosen because, for one reason or another, they were considered less effective. But, we got a pretty good cut of company commanders. In fact, I think one of my best memories of that battalion were the quality of the company commanders.

By and large these were West Pointers, Class of '46, many of whom were commanding their third company. They had been overseas, and most of them had been to Europe, commanding companies over there, had come back, and were now in an airborne infantry outfit. These guys were in one sense, real pros, they knew what they were doing, and they knew how to coach young lieutenants. I think some of my best lessons on how to be an officer, were simply the role models these young regulars provided us brand new raw lieutenants. They were particularly considerate of us in knowing that we had not been to any Army branch schools, except jump school. They were tolerant, to a degree, of mistakes and careful to explain when we would screw up. I guess we made most of them. I can vividly recall that one of my duties was keeping the company fund. The company commander called me in one day, and he said, "I just got four checks returned from the bank for no money. I know that you say here in your records that you deposited funds more than ample to cover that. I want to know where that money is lieutenant." I said, "Sir, I do not know where the money is; I put the money in the bank." The company commander looked at me and then he said, "Okay, get your car." We got in the car and he said, "Now, take me to the bank." We drove over to the Main Post. Maybe this isn't true any longer at Fort Benning, but then there were two banks back-to-back. The company fund was in bank A, and I had been depositing the money in bank B. The Company Commander introduced me to the managers of both banks and he told the manager of bank B that, if this guy ever comes in here again, throw him out. That was about it. I can think of company commanders that I have had since, given that kind of experience, who would have made an object lesson of me for all of mankind. He was stern; I had ample time to regret my stupidity, but he didn't make any official record of the business.

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My battalion commander was a fellow by the name of Clyde M. Dillender, a regular, not a West Pointer, but a superb officer and a real teacher. He too did a lot to see to it that we lieutenants got proper guidance in doing our thing. His executive officer was an old style officer who, I may be exaggerating a little bit here, would come in the morning and have a cup of coffee, and then nip out of a flask. Then he would have breakfast, and then nip out of a flask. Then he would have another cup of coffee and nip out of a flask. I can recall going with soldiers as defense counsel to his summary court. You sat on a soldier-made bench outside of the major's office, and he would call the miscreants before him one at a time with a loud, "Send the next guilty bastard in." The hapless soldier would go in and salute. Then the major would say, "What have you got to say for yourself?" The soldier would barely start to speak when the major would shout GUILTY and the soldier would be ushered out, and then you'd hear the clink as he opened his drawer to nip his flask again.

Our unit, 2nd Battalion, 325th Infantry, was sent from Fort Bragg, down to Fort Benning when the 3d Division, which had been stationed at Benning, was sent off to Korea. The Third Division, when it departed, took the 29th Infantry, which had been the infantry regiment supporting the school. The Division took the 30th Infantry, which was out of Benning as well, then I think they picked up another regiment, the 7th, probably out of Fort Devens, Massachusetts, and they went off to Korea to fight as a division. Where the Infantry School had a regiment plus a division in back of it to call on, the Department of the Army provided this airborne infantry battalion.

Now, the question that you put to me was how and what did I learn about being an officer. Much of what I learned had to do with the fact that this battalion was by itself. We did not have all of the supports and constraints that might have obtained had we been at Fort Bragg surrounded by other regiments, and subject to supervision of the division and division staff. We were all by ourselves, during those periods of time when the unit was free to do its own training, which time was significant, because much of the school's work was done inside the "school house." I think that as the school accelerated its output to meet the demands of the war, it cut back, in the interests of time, on field exercises. It probably would have had to in any event, because our one battalion could not have supported field training in the style to which they had been accustomed with the 29th Infantry. Therefore, we did have a significant amount of time to do our own training, and that was particularly rich time for me. If we wanted to fire any kind of weapons imaginable, there were ranges, ammunition,

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facilities available for the asking. Nobody else competing for them, so one could do anything one wanted to do.

My memory of that period was one of really learning weapons, and learning weapons by shooting weapons, not talking about weapons, but shooting weapons and shooting at realistically placed target arrays. We would go out and put in our own pits, and put in our own target arrays, and set up our own exercises. We took the 60mm mortar, used it for overhead indirect fire. We ran exercises with live ammunition that I am confident would have turned the safety officer's hair gray if he had known what was going on out there. I will cheerfully confess that I have been hit a couple of times with fragments from mortars, getting too close in to them, but nobody hurt. When I said hit, I mean I got pinged with them. We really were teaching ourselves a lot about what soldiers and armies are supposed to do. It had great good effect on the soldiers. By and large, what impressed me was that for the most part, this was the first time these kids - Regular Army volunteers all, being airborne soldiers - had been doing that kind of thing. Although many of them had been in the Army 3 or 4 years, this was the first time any of them really had gotten out and done this kind of business [tactical fire and movement]. What this did, was to pull out of many of them totally unexpected talents and capabilities. I learned an enormous amount about soldiers and soldiering just because of that atmosphere.

I also learned a lot about the depravity of man, if you will, because right across the river from Columbus, GA was the famous Phenix City, Alabama. This was back in the days before it was cleaned up; it was wide open then. Each night the battalion sent an officer, two NCOs, and a 2 1/2-ton truck, over to Phenix City, and the name of the game was to go through the various dives to pull out soldiers who were incapable of making it home under their own steam, or who were in a state of obstructiveness that indicated they were headed for a night in the poky. Of course, that brought me in contact with a whole side of life of which I was, up until that time, largely ignorant.

I guess I would say I was also brought up hard against the culture of the officer corps in unexpected ways. For example the Prop Blast. I don't know what goes on these days in airborne units, but in those days Prop Blasts were pretty rough initiations. Ours went something like this. Orders appeared. I announced that I was not going to comply with the orders. I wasn't going to get involved in a drunken revelry. I was above that kind of stuff. Finally, one old first lieutenant took me by the collar and said, "Listen you fool, you show up there. If you don't, they will make life so blank miserable for you

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that you'll try to transfer out of this outfit, I guarantee it." So, I showed up, along with all my contemporaries. The place of reporting was over on the Main Post of Benning, a place called The Polo Hunt Club, out on that parade field up against 1st Division Road, where they still have rings for riding horses and jumping. It was a low, rambling building. There was a Board of officers behind a table, and each of us came in, and reported formally to the Board, and were then handed a water glass full of whiskey, which we were required to consume, and then sign in. Then we were taken out to the kitchen of the Polo Hunt Club. The kitchen of the Polo Hunt Club was a small room, and my memory was that there was a large pot belly stove in the middle of the room. It was an autumn night, and it was cold, so the stove was hot.

Among my contemporaries was an officer who did not drink, had never consumed alcohol and he was, to put it mildly, shocked by the whole experience. I guess, I could feel the water glass full of whiskey, but this guy was giggling, he was in the silly mood. There was also among us a newly appointed warrant officer. In the fall of 1950, there was a big activation from among the enlisted ranks of guys who had had previous commissions or reserve warrants. One of the guys going through the Prop Blast was a warrant officer who had been my platoon sergeant when I had first joined the organization. He too was feeling his whiskey. His mood, however, was the opposite of the guy who was giggling. [The Warrant Officer] was one of those people who, when they drink, they get mad. He was really getting nasty, and he started picking on the giggler. The long and short of it is that I intervened and words were exchanged. My story is that the warrant officer swung at me; his story is to the contrary, but it does seem clear that I did knock all of his front teeth out. In the course of this, the giggler sat down on the stove, burned his behind to a fare-thee-well, stood up screaming, and in the course of doing it, knocked the stove over and set fire to the building. Whereupon the Fire Department came, the police came. It occurred to those of us who were in an advanced state of inebriation that it would be a great good idea to take over the hoses and have a water fight. So among the other things that the firemen had to contend with in putting out this fire, which turned out to be relatively minor, was a bunch of us turning the hoses on one another, and otherwise disporting. Naturally the party was tamped down, and the warrant officer was taken off for medical care, my giggling friend was likewise. When they got everybody else back together, the Prop Blast business resumed, and we got more whiskey.

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I don't remember much about the rest of it, except that at some point in time, they brought us out before the Board one by one. One of the acts that they then went through is that you are going overseas so you have to get a shot. There is a scar right here [on left arm] -- these guys had a huge needle, I assume it was a training aid, a hypodermic syringe with a needle on it about as big around as your little finger. I said something to the "medic" to the effect that, "You wouldn't dare stick me with that you S.O.B.," whereupon he did. I got my whole arm opened up with the damn thing. I still carry that scar where that thing went in. It was an indecorous evening.

I don't know how we got home. I can remember, however, two things that happened subsequent. I was in my BOQ [Bachelor Officer Quarters] and in bed, and became aware that there was loud talk out in the hall. It was the Warrant Officer with a bunch of his buddies. They were coming to find me to beat out my teeth. I can recall having enough presence of mind to roll out of the bed and get under the bed. These guys came in, they were all drunk, and they stumbled around the room. I obviously had been vomiting because they were appalled at the condition of the floor. They left and in the wake of these guys, comes a captain of the battalion who found me under the bed, got me up in bed, cleaned up the room a little bit. Then the son-of-the-bitch tried to kiss me, and I apparently decked him too. I have only a vague memory of this nightmarish situation. In any event, things were pretty tense around the battalion for some time thereafter. No action was ever taken against me. I never heard of that warrant officer again; he just disappeared off the screen. The captain disappeared shortly thereafter too. Again, not a very edifying experience. What that taught me is that the Army has to be pretty careful in letting such "customs" [Prop Blast] grow because they will very rapidly get out of control if somebody doesn't sit on them. This was a clear case where someone was going to get really hurt sooner or later, and I gather that in subsequent years people did.

That particular night, incidentally, one of my fellow platoon leaders never did get home; he spent the night under the bushes outside the Club. He was involved in the hose fight, had gotten drenched, knocked down, and just rolled over under the bushes and went to sleep. They found him the next day and he was encased with ice. The doctor said that [the ice] probably saved his life. Another guy drove himself home but had the presence of mind to know that he couldn't make it all the way. So he stopped, got out of the car, and proceeded toward his abode. He was a married officer, and he made it home. His wife described to me hearing scratching at the door that she thought was a dog. She went to the door, and there he was on all fours, with the knees of his trousers worn out and hands and knees a mass of

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blood because he had crawled pretty near a mile of gravelly roads. She had no idea where he came from, or why he was in this condition, but she got him in, cleaned him up, and put him to bed. The next morning they found his car sitting in the middle of the road with the door open and motor running. He had just gotten out and moved off. But, like I say, we were just fortunate we didn't have someone killed that night. It also taught me something however, about my own nature under heavy drinking. Subsequently avoided that; in fact, maybe that was one of the purposes of the initiation, to see to it that lieutenants didn't drink at all for a while.

Now we come to the Infantry School. I guess I would report three impressions. First, the School was largely show biz. I mean that what we did in the way of "demonstrations" was as carefully managed as a high school play. It was all designed to convey a specific series of impressions to people sitting in bleachers. We were performers, and whenever I tried to say [to an instructor], "Well, you know we don't do it that way in this outfit," I immediately got stepped on by a high ranking, field grade type that wanted me to understand that I would do exactly what I was told, and see to it that all of my people did exactly what they were told, when they were supposed to do it, because that is the way the School does business here.

My second impression, was that there were a few guys on the faculty who were genuinely interested in troops and training. However, they were so few as to be exceptional. But sometimes an instructor would come down, and explain to my troops what was being taught, in an effort to get the troops to understand what they were doing. This was so rare that I treasured that kind of moment. I can still recall the individuals who took that time and trouble to ensure that the troops understood what it was that was supposed to be happening, or that I understood so I could explain to the troops. But more often than not, it was a matter of me reporting with the troops, and then the instructor would one by one, individually, put the soldiers in the places they wanted them. Bad news from my point of view; not a good way to establish proper rapport with the troop unit.

The third general impression was that because we were the only troops on post, we were general purpose infantry. One of these exercises I got to put on frequently because I liked doing it, was the armored infantry show. There I had a particularly good instructor, one of those people I can remember.

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We really had a lot of fun doing that armored infantry exercise. He let us change routes and play around with the "attack". He was this good: once, when my platoon was arrayed in front of the class, he told the class that he was going to give us an attack order, and he was going to allow me, the platoon leader, to select the route to the objective, and to lift the supporting fires. He said, "Now I am going to remind the platoon leader that these vehicles, [we had the M39, which was an open top, full tracked personnel carrier] have a number of limitations, one of them is it is not very good on steep sided hills, that is to say, if you get the vehicle canted up with a lot of weight on the downhill track, will throw the track off the drive sprocket. You must pick your route (and he talked about what would be a good choice and what would be a bad choice). We are going to let these troops go where they want to, we will watch them and talk about it." And by gosh, one of my vehicles succeeded in throwing a track because I had swung up a hill side to take advantage of some concealment. I think that this guy anticipated we would do it, and he had the presence of mind to talk of that as a staged example. He also said, "Okay, the vehicle did get into trouble, it lost a track, but you noticed what they did: the squad immediately dismounted, and continued the attack on foot. The platoon leader compensated for the squads absence by moving his machine guns, and he had that squad follow up onto the objective." Then he came down afterwards and congratulated the troops for carrying it off well. Now, that was kind of a freewheeling demonstration that was unusual at Benning at that time. Most of them were very rigid, had to be done just exactly this way, and just exactly in this spot, so it would look just right.

One other example of what I am talking about. We were issued the 57mm recoilless rifle in the rifle platoons. In the course of one of what were referred to by the Infantry School as "problems" in infantry platoon in the attack, the instructor wanted a 57mm crew to come up abreast of the bleachers, take aim at a sandbag parapet foxhole up on the hill to the front and hit it, to make the point that among the covering fires for the platoon were its own direct fire weapons. I expressed a lot of gas pains with that, because, I said, first of all my trooper could not fire 57mm from there because he was exposed on a bald hill. I said I wouldn't send the 57mm squad there, but would take the 57mm squad with me, and fire from a concealed spot on the flank. Moreover, I didn't think the 57mm was a very good weapon for suppressing that kind of a target. I would much rather go after it with artillery. The instructor said, "Shut up. Get that gunner out there, and be sure that he hits." He gave us, I think, three rounds during the practices, and my gunner hit three times running, so he was very pleased with all of that.

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Then we ran the demonstration for the class. It turned out on that day that General Mark Clark unexpectedly showed up. He was in the bleachers when the attack went. And son of a gun, if I didn't get a message when I was up on the objective going through my reorganization drill, to report to the bleachers because General Clark wanted to see me. I went at a dead run all the way from the objective to the bleachers, got there and Clark put my heels together and chewed my tail up one side and down the other for stupid use of that recoilless rifle. "Why in the world did you think that this was a good weapon against that kind of a target? He was exposed in firing up here on top of a hill. The back blast flagged the position of the crew, and could get them killed. Besides, he missed. Don't you know any better than that lieutenant?" The son-of-a-gun instructor stood there, and let all of that happen without saying one bloody word. So I said, "Yes, sir, it won't happen again, we'll hit it next time, we'll do it right." That was the last time they let me run that particular show. What did I learn? Stand up for your people. Series of little lessons, these are the kinds of things that lieutenants learn, I guess, in anybody's outfit. But it seemed to me, at least from my very parochial view, that the opportunities to learn came faster and more poignantly just because of the strange circumstance in which we [of the 2d Bn, 325th Inf] found ourselves.

I really got a lot of professional mileage out of those months and years. One last anecdote is also instructive. Eventually the entire 325th Regiment was moved down to Benning. As the Korean war ground on and the school expanded, they brought down the entire outfit. I was out on an Infantry School rifle range with my platoon. The platoon was being used mainly for road guards, ammunition detail, and target pullers. There was a detail from another post unit in the target house pasting targets. My guys were pulling targets, and my platoon sergeant was up supervising the pit detail when I got a telephone call on the firing line. I was up in the tower running the range, and I got a call from the platoon sergeant saying, "You better get down here, there is trouble in the target house." I went down there and discovered my soldiers on one side of the target house, and the pasting-detail on the other side. My soldiers had their jump knives out, switchblade knives, and the troops from post had those big thick paste handles. The confrontation was over the fact that, as my troops said, these guys were mere legs, and had the effrontery to wear jump boots, Corcorans at that. Several of my soldiers had decided to cut those boots off. I succeeded in separating the two groups without violence. I told my Platoon Sergeant to take my soldiers to replace the road guards. I said take these guys out double time, to replace all of the road guards, bring the road guards back to take their place in the target pit, and I would deal with the knife wielders later.

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I then turned to the still armed post guys and told them to lay down their clubs. A couple of them refused to do so, so I remonstrated with them a little bit, and I eventually did get them lined up outside at a position of attention, and talked to them a bit about good order and discipline. I am prepared to admit that they may have been there for as long as 10 minutes, but I didn't think much about the incident at the time. All of the guys on our side of the thing got some extra duty out of it, a good talking to from the company commander, and we relieved them of a lot of knives and other stuff they were not supposed to have on their person, Afterwards, I went on leave.

I came back to discover that I was the subject of an investigation preliminary to general court-martial, as I recall it, an Article 32 investigation. All of the post guys [the paster-detail] were black, and the local NAACP [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People] Chapter had a civilian lawyer who brought the charges. The Post Commander had appointed an investigating officer to go through the pre-court-martial business. My goodness, depositions were taken and testimony heard. You wouldn't believe the story that these guys had concocted about me. I had used racial slurs, I had forced them to stand in the sun for an hour, and so forth. All of which, of course, was nonsense, because I had a class full of students out on the range there, and I don't think we interrupted the firing on the range more than, at the most, a half hour. In any event, the investigating officer apparently recommended no trial, but that I was to get a counseling. The commanding officer of the 325th, known fondly to the troops as "Mother" called me in. He held up a piece of paper and said, "You have never seen this, but what this is, is your promotion to first lieutenant." He tore the paper up. He said, "Don't you ever bring disrepute upon this Regiment again. Let this be a lesson to you. Dismissed."

Well, shortly thereafter I was posted to the 508th. I assume that the 325th was doing to the 508th what had been done to it, and guess who was foremost on the hit list to go out to the 508th? The 508th was being formed in Benning as an independent airborne infantry regiment. General Joe [Joseph P.] Cleland, known as the "the Great White Father", because of his big mane of white hair, was to command the 508th. It was stationed out in Sand Hill, Fort Benning. I went over there, and I again had the marvelous experience of going through advanced individual training and basic unit training with a group of new soldiers, new sergeants, and new NCOs. By this time, I really got my training act together, so that we were doing just great.

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My battalion commander believed in night operations, he believed in traveling light. He had us stripped down to the point where he took away all of our mess gear except our spoon. I can vividly recall going through the mess line with my soldiers with my entrenching tool held out which the cooks loaded up with fried eggs, bacon, potato. Then you sit down with your spoon and eat off your entrenching tool. I learned a lot from all of that about how to do the airborne business, night jumps, forced marches, the whole nine yards. A lot of it was pretty easy for me, as those guys believed in live fire exercises. You know what I knew about live fire exercises, I was ready to go with it. Then I got sent back to the Infantry School as a student to go through the Basic Course.

That course was a pretty satisfying experience because I knew why the school was doing what they were doing, and I was able to kind of kibitz as a professional, or to look over the instructor's shoulder, because I had enough of a grasp of what was going on. I even got to watch critically some of the demonstrations that I used to put on, this time from the bleacher point of view. But there was a war on, and I was increasingly impatient with preparing.

I had been importuning the Department of the Army for 2 years to get to the war. I'd been up to Washington, I went in to see General Taylor who was by then the DCSOPS [Deputy Chief of Operations for Operations and Plans] of the Army. I said, "You know I was at your house last summer, I want to go to Korea." He gave me a pat on the shoulder and sent me back down to be a platoon leader in the 82nd, and said, "We need them too." I went back repetitively any time I could, trying to get on orders to Korea, but couldn't do it. Well I was flabbergasted when, coming out of the Basic Course, I was put on orders to Germany. Seemed to me to be clearly a mistake at the Pentagon; they just didn't have it right. So, I got on a plane and flew out to that replacement camp which was near San Francisco, Camp Stoneman. I reported in, and the Adjutant of this replacement center said, "Gorman, we don't have anybody of that name on our list." I said, "You will. It just a matter of getting the orders through." I then went to the nearest pay phone and called the Infantry Branch and said, "This is Lieutenant Gorman and there is a problem out here at Camp Stoneman, they don't have my name on their overseas orders." The guy at branch says, "Well, we will get that fixed right now." I said, "Would you be good enough to call Captain so and so at such and such number, and just tell him that orders are coming?" I went back, and the captain said, "I just got this call from Washington, yes, your orders will be in, you are on draft

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such and such, so get ready to go." You know, I am confident that somebody who wanted to go to Korea was so exceptional that not only were no questions asked, but all concerned were sort of delighted.³

But we are getting away from our discussion of schools. The main point is I probably was among the most fortunate of my contemporaries. When I arrived at my troop unit in combat, I had had probably the best preparation that anybody could have gotten at that point of time in the war.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, a couple of quick questions about the Basic Course when you went through it. Seeing what was done from the perspective of supporting the program of instruction during the curriculum, do you think that the school was sensitive to integrating tactics and techniques, which were emerging or developing in Korea, into an accepted body of doctrine which they were teaching at the time, or was there a reluctance on the schools part to incorporate new ideas and new ways of thinking?

GEN GORMAN: When you read [G.C.] Marshall, you will discover that he makes the point that schools change very, very slowly, and very, very reluctantly because of the elaborate mechanisms that have to be adjusted to take in new ideas. At the time I was in the 325th, there weren't any lessons from Korea because the only people that had come back were in hospitals or body bags. It wasn't until, really, about the time that I got to the Basic Course, that we began to see people on the platform that actually had been in combat. I can recall a number of instructors saying, "Now, the school has been teaching this, but you should appreciate that in Korea this obtained and there will probably be an adjustment of Army doctrine in time." I got the distinct impression therefore, of a doctrine in transition. I recall a lot of debate at the School over whether the book is right or not. Do it by the book was one enjoinder, one bit of advice that many senior officers gave to students. And there was a school of thought that the problem with the units in Korea that had trouble, was exactly that the people didn't know the book, didn't understand the doctrine, therefore, could not apply doctrine properly. Then there was, of course, the third view, that Korea was a totally different war than any we ever had to fight, and these were totally different enemies, so we needed a totally different way of fighting.

I suspect that all of those views are correct. There were some people that didn't know what the book was, therefore, couldn't throw the book away because they never had it. There were people that were doing it by the book and succeeded, and there were people doing it by the book who failed to deal

³ The resulting series of orders and counter orders are in Folder Korea: Feb '52 – Feb '53.

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with the situation on the ground, and got waxed for their pains. I think probably examples could be cited readily for all of those. There was a propensity for instructors who had been teaching down there for a long time, to read through the reports coming out of the theater for examples to prove what they had been teaching was right all the time. Probably a great deal of circumspection is warranted when it comes to dealing with application of combat experience in the School. General Marshall makes the point that at Benning one of his greatest problems was combat experience. The veterans would get on the platform and insist on teaching October 1918 again and again and again. He had to keep making the point that circumstances of October 1918 would never be repeated, so there was no point in going back to that. I think that is probably good advice to anybody that is worried about our school system. But Benning in 1951-52 was in [doctrinal] transition. For example, the issue of the organization of the squad, and the role in the squad for the BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle], and related matters. It took Benning almost half a dozen years, from the start of the war until the mid '50s before they really got that squared away. And even then many people would tend to think that they had now come upon a new formula, a new cookbook, a receipt that was going to work in all circumstances -- war is not like that.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I believe your next assignment was as a history teacher at the Military Academy. When you returned as an instructor, did you find many changes from when you were a cadet?

GEN GORMAN: I came back from Korea in 1953, I think I probably got back in the States in February. The battalion was up on Hill 347, Old Baldy, Pork Chop Ridge, that region. And as I left Pork Chop, as a matter of fact, we were mortared; things were getting pretty tense. Of course that whole thing blew up after I departed, I think it was in March that we lost Old Baldy. In March and April, the battles for Pork Chop took place. I had to go back in the hospital because of my hand, in which I had a gunshot wound the previous spring. The hand had become clutched up; the tendons had collapsed on me, and I couldn't open my right hand. So, they sent me back to the hospital to have an operation to cut those tendons, and to restore a grasp — successful by the way. I was told I would have to be on convalescent leave and limited duty for some period of months, so I sought out an academic assignment. I went up to West Point, and I went in to see Colonel [George A.] Lincoln, who was Colonel Beukema's successor, and he offered me a chance to go up to Harvard to prepare for assignment as an

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instructor at USMA. I cheerfully signed up for that. I was still a lieutenant, you understand, and I would be one of the junior officers at West Point when I arrived. But, undaunted, I went up to Harvard for a year, then went to West Point. So my experience at West Point is directly after Korea. I am still a very junior officer, and was promoted to captain probably in '55, or '56, somewhere in there. The question, was did I find many changes? Well, being an instructor at West Point is very different from being a cadet at West Point. Did I find many changes as far as cadets were concerned? No, the courses were not all together different, there was no big shift in academic policy, but it was a wholly different position to be an instructor from what I had been in as a cadet.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned earlier while you were at West Point as a cadet, that there was very little discussion of this idea of officership and what it meant to be an officer. I was wondering, if when you went back as an instructor, did you find that situation to be the same or was there now beginning to be more discussion about officership and what it meant?

GEN GORMAN: Well, the answer to the question is yes. I suspect that was a function of the war, the questions over nuclear weapons, the use of force, is there a need for an Army, a whole raft of issues that were on everybody's tongue those days. Indeed there was a lot of talk about the obsolescence of infantry, would we need infantry anymore because we have these marvelous weapons; they would do everything and The U.S. wouldn't need infantry. There was a lot of concern therefore about which branch should the cadets interest themselves in, which branch would get the best and the brightest.

I can recall three things about that. First, there were groups of us instructors that used to meet for the purposes of discussing professional issues. I can remember those being some of the most educational kinds of experiences that I had as an officer. For example, it was there in those seminars -more often than not we were sitting around in someone's quarters with beer for a late-night, college-student sort of debate -- but it was there that I first heard articulated the idea that being a commander ought to be a professional specialty, and that being a commander was not for all officers; good commanders were very special and rare people, and the Army ought to find them, select their jobs, and treasure them. I had not thought about that much, but readily agreed. The guys that were making these points to me were relatively senior field grade officers, many not from the academic faculty, but from the so called Tactical Department, meaning the officers who were supervising discipline and the military training for

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the Corps of Cadets. These were experienced officers, with good combat records, and I hadn't really taken that idea into account until I heard it espoused and defended ably by some people who I really respected. Also, this was the first time I began to hear complaints about centralization, and began to hear complaints about lack of integrity at the top. At least by some of us, those discussions were carried over into the section room with the cadets. There were a number of cadets who got intrigued early on with professional issues. Now I suspect that may also have been the case when I was there as a cadet, although I don't remember it, and it certainly didn't involve me.

One thing though, that did come up which I would cite you in this context. The issue arose over the difference between the faculty at West Point and the faculty at Annapolis. You may recall that at this point in time the Air Force Academy was just being formed, so the issue was how to do that, what is the right way. At Annapolis, most of the instructors in most of the departments are civilians, full time educational professionals. The military officer is relatively rare, maybe reluctant to opt to study English, to come back to be an English professor. If there were Naval officers on the academy faculty, they would tend to be on the engineering side, or tend to be in supervisory positions. Whereas, at West Point, the notion was that USMA wanted junior line officers in the section rooms as role models for the cadets.

Just because of my natural mind set, I tended to draw my cadets into discussions of military science and tactics. I taught a course in European history and I ran a course in Far Eastern history. I was eventually appointed the assistant professor of Far Eastern history. As I taught the subjects, they were courses in the military history of the region. What we talked about in the classroom, was more often than not, how did the phenomenon that you read about in your reading assignment manifest itself in military affairs? What was the military reaction to these events; how did soldiers go about coping? I was well supported in my history program by one of the guys over at the West Point Museum who would pony up for me weapons from each era and we would talk about the ideas that were implicit in the weapons. They are sort of an expression of the societies that they represented and the military organizations and the forms that they took. It was good fun and I was always grateful for the Museum for making that happen.

Just last week, a professor from Washington and Lee University was sitting right on that sofa where you are sitting, and he looked over at that bayonet [Springfield Arsenal 1908] and said something

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to the effect that he hadn't realized that bayonets were so long. I said, "Well, bayonets are fundamentally symbols, they are an incitement to infantry soldiers to close with and destroy the enemy, and they once were made as dramatic a symbol as possible." He said, "You mean to terrorize the enemy?" I said, "No, to encourage our own troops. Few of the enemy could get close enough to be impressed by a bayonet's length, and I think up close he would have a few things to worry about beside the length of blade in any event. But the bayonet is [the embodiment of] an idea, a romantic idea at best. I doubt if very many men have been killed in the modern era by a bayonet, but it once was considered absolutely essential to being a proper infantryman to have that long instrument on your rifle. Here we are approaching the turn of the century, the bayonet is atrophying, it is shrinking, it is almost vestigial now. It probably will disappear in the next set of wars." I said, "I would hope professor, in your courses that you get into issues like that." He said, "Well, I just never heard anyone talk like that." I then took him through the history of the bayonet, a walk up through the centuries with this weapon, and what it has meant. I dwelt on the attempt by the U.S. Army to make a multipurpose device of it; on the grounds that the soldiers must carry both a bayonet and an entrenching tool, it seemed logical that one could probably devise a bayonet that was also an entrenching tool. A great idea. The professor said, "Brilliant." I said, "No, because you'd end up with something that was neither a bayonet nor an entrenching tool, good for neither the one nor the other. Does that sound like any fighter airplanes you know of?" The long and the short of it, he wants me to come down and talk to his course.

Teaching at West Point was pretty much what the instructor wanted it to be, and again I had a lot of latitude, and enjoyed rapport with those young men. I guess that I should report that my department head kept me away from the lower sections because they thought I spent a lot of time on things that weren't really germane to passing the course, which is probably true. Nobody was prepared to give the cadets points toward graduation for being expert in the difference between the Swiss long sword and the Scottish claymore, and being able to discuss that and the differences between those and the Roman short sword. I really enjoyed that whole experience.

I made the point that I got a great deal out of my contemporaries who were teaching up at West Point. One of them, for example, was a lieutenant of artillery, veteran of Korea, who had been an infantry soldier in the 442d Infantry Regiment Combat Team in Italy and in Europe during World War II. That's the Nisei outfit. Chap's name was Tim Osato, and he and I use to get into knockdown, drag outs about tactics and strategy.

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We cooked up a scheme to publish a set of books for the military profession, and we got that far enough advanced that we compiled a publishing list. We went and found a guy who was at least willing to talk to us about putting it out. What I learned from that experience, was how vacuous the professional literature really is. That project got me to go back and read in some detail, the so called classics of military literature. You know, it is pretty hard to find much to get your hands on. As we got further into it, I got less and less enthusiastic about pressing ahead with the program. Then it turned out that this publisher was more interested in lurid novels than he was in military publications. Eventually he just told us there wasn't any money in it. So, we let it drop.

Just in talking with Tim Osato, I learned a lot that served me in good stead in future years. Tim was my predecessor as the assistant professor of Far Eastern history. Tim, who was bilingual in French, went to a place that at that point of time few Americans had ever paid any attention to: Indochina. He spent a summer with the French Army in Indochina, and came back prepared for a series of lectures supported by color slide transparencies about what he had observed. This was, by the way, 1955. We were teaching that this was the place where there was going to be trouble in the foreseeable future. He had brought back a very convincing description of the Vietminh as a force with which to be reckoned, an estimate, which I think, has subsequently been demonstrated to be more than apt. We were trying to discuss every place where there was a possibility that the U.S. would subsequently be involved in military action. So, as early as then, I was aware that we had hundreds of officers out there in our MAAG [Military Assistance and Advisory Group], that the first U.S. officer killed by the Vietminh had been killed there in the fall of the 1945, and that there was this very significant doubt that the partitioned country was going remain so without war. Korea was a precedent. The seeds of violence were sown in the U.S.-British accords toward the end World War II, strategic line drawing.

Another set of issues that came up, again with Tim, had to do with the viability of the Soviet-Chinese Alliance. Tim and I agreed that tensions between the two countries were culturally and geographically promoted and sustained to the point that it was difficult to believe that the two would remain in agreement in perpetuity, that there had to be at some point in time, a kind of renewed standoff between them . Of course, again I think we were on the right course. We did cause a lot of debate and a

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lot of argument. There was contention within the faculty, and with cadets in the section room, over these issues, because this was the time when the monolithic communism and the containment business were at the fore. We kept asking the question, if you did see the development of such events, what then, what should the United States be thinking about and how do you think about this region in terms of its strategic importance to the United States? I'm not arguing here, incidentally, that we predicted what would happen, these were just sort of discussion issues. I think that you would be hard pressed to find any other faculty that was looking at South East Asia or Asia, in general, in the terms that we were, or with our kind of first hand appreciation of the issues. Most of us were veterans of Korea, Tim with firsthand experience in Korea and Vietnam, and so on. It was a good professional experience.

INTERVIEWER: I believe the next school you attended was the Marine Corps equivalent of the Infantry Officer Advanced course. How well did that school prepare you, and what were the differences between the Marine Corps approach to training young officers, lieutenants and captains, and the way the Army did it at Fort Benning?

GEN GORMAN: First of all, the school I attended was called the Junior School and most of the people in my class were field grade officers. In the Marine Corps, you got to the junior course after you had been a company commander, and you were promoted major. In any event, most of the Marines I remember were either majors or fairly senior captains, about to be majors. There were some exceptions, but clearly the bulk of the class were paunchy majors. Most of these guys I would characterize as beefy men who had once been athletes, but who were literally going to pot, they were putting on weight faster than they could cope with it. Most of them made their own beer. Seriously, we talked a lot about what is the right recipe. Most of them smoked cigars. The class was almost entirely lecture and these took place in one hall, a sort of a big auditorium. I can vividly recall that as the day would go on, the smoke up in the top of room would accumulate to the point that it would lower. By mid afternoon, you couldn't see the top of the vu-graphs because the smoke pall had descended to the point where it obscured the top of the screen -- everyone thereafter peered under the smoke. I remember also that each lecture almost always began with a dirty joke, and the raunchier, the bawdier the story, the better. One instructor would be sort of vying with the others to tell a particularly odious kind of a joke. I can recall further that the

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butt of those jokes -- no pun intended -- was more often than not, women Marines. The kind of stuff that today would clearly be material for courts-martial, to those guys was simply humor.

The focus of the course was amphibious operations, and the amphibious operations we had drummed into us were inherently a matter of preplanning. Everything had to be planned out to the last iota because they had to go on the ship in the right order, so you can unload the ship in the right order and get across the beach in the right order. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps had allowed this emphasis on thinking through logistical contingencies to filter over into their tactical thinking. Their approach to tactics was exactly to try to anticipate every contingency. It was the kind of schooling that [G.C.] Marshall objected to so strenuously, as we discussed. I remember well three incidents:

One was in the late fall of the year; it was cold and the leaves were off the trees. The Junior School classes had been taken out to join the class of the Marine Corps Command and General Staff College [the Senior School] in a command post exercise. The command post exercise involved tents set up in the woods connected by EE-8 telephones, representing the several echelons, organizations within the Marine division, with students playing the role of commanders and staffs at echelons down to battalions. It was a master incident list, scripted, map drill. One was permitted to do a modest amount of reconnaissance on the ground, and the map we were using for the exercise was the map of the area, so there was some attempt made -- in fact, as I remember it, we were taken out several times on reconnaissance before the exercise began, maybe the previous week to sort of work on this, and then we all went out to run the "war". This was 1957 mind you, and I was flabbergasted to discover the way that they operated. Everybody was issued the old message book, the World War I message book, with the flimsies and carbon paper. When you wanted to send a message to higher or lower, you wrote it out on your message book, and you gave it to the sergeant who filed a copy, then gave it to the message center, who then had somebody, some private, read the message over the telephone to another private who copied it at the other end. I watched this, and it boggled my mind. I finally went over to a member of the faculty, a lieutenant colonel, and said, "Hey Sir, do you guys do this for real?"

He said "Oh, no, not exactly. We send telephone or radio messages, then we write them up for the record." I said "Holy smoke, I can't imagine fighting with that kind of procedure." Some of these messages were, for example: "Company A move from position X to position Y," signed Duflicks,

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Cmdg. I then said "Why wouldn't the colonel or the operations officers just get on the radio and tell the company commander to move?" He said, "We have learned in the Corps that you have to encrypt these messages, and so we have this written system so the messages can be encrypted. On the islands, the Japanese were all over our telephone lines." I replied, "But if the company is moving from A to B, and you both have A and B plotted on your map, the Japs couldn't get any useful information-- why do you need this written procedure?" He opted out: "You don't understand, get back to work." I still consider that [Quantico CPX] a good example of how not to run a war.

Another incident. We were watching a demonstration, with the Marine Corps Junior School doing the same sort of thing I used to do at Fort Benning for the Infantry School. In this instance, the demonstration platoon was in an LCVP [landing craft vehicle personnel], full track, big gismo. There are three of these per LCVP platoon, each of which carried 40 men, so we were watching these three panjandrums wandering over the ground. They were to attack a low-lying hill on which there was supposed to be a defending enemy platoon. The situation was such that the enemy had just pushed forward, and this LCVP outfit was the lead company of the counter-attacking battalion of the regiment. These guys went through this drill where they bring these vehicles up into a draw and they discharge the platoons, and the platoons spread out, and they get into an attack formation, and they advance to an assault position, then the artillery comes in and then they did the same thing that the Army did, all get up and assault the objective using marching fire. We got all through this demonstration, and the instructor said, "I'm glad to take your questions."

I put my hand up and said, "Did you give any consideration to not dismounting?" He looked at me like I was nuts, and said, "What do you have in mind?" I said, "Well, if the enemy had, in fact, just arrived up on this hill, they haven't had any time to dig any fortifications so they are going to be very vulnerable to your artillery. Why wouldn't one solution be just to drench that hill with artillery and go right up over it with your armored vehicles, keep your troops inside your armored vehicles, and continue on to the next terrain feature that you want to occupy, instead of punching him in the nose, and having to take conceivably his artillery defensive fires and his counter-attack. We would just have a lot of blood expended for a meaningless piece of ground. The hill is so low, it is hard to understand why we are fighting for this thing."

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His response was, "Okay wise guy, you come down here and you tell us how you would run this." I said, "Well, the first thing I would do," I took out my message book, "is get rid of that thing. Now we are going to have to understand that we've got radio-communications with this LCVP outfit. I would pick up the radio, and I would give the commander the following kind of an order. You are to attack and seize Hill 432, which was the next superior terrain feature. You are going to do so by traversing the low hill to our front, and then follow the road up Hill 432. I am going to deliver VT [variable time] fires on the low hill until you have gotten beyond it, then I am going to move the fires with you until you are approaching your objective, Hill 432. The fires will work the objective over and then on your command, we will cease the fires. But we are going to keep you under artillery fire, so speed is in order. Don't worry about any of the enemy that you may leave behind you, we will take care of them later on."

The instructor, to his credit, said, "Yeah, that may work." He said, "But suppose you had miscalculated. Suppose for example, they had put out just one mine. You know, one mine exploding under one LCVP loses one platoon." I said, "Right, I'll still back my scenario, and bet losses are less. If troops attack on foot against an enemy with any presence of mind, they will pay heavily, unless they are extraordinary quick about getting back into their armored vehicles, and moving onto the next objective. The LCVPs could take as much of a beating from mines, yet be useless in accomplishing the mission." We had this long exchange, and when we got through, I drew a round of applause from my colleagues, my class.

Another incident that's worth discussing came when the class was learning about defense of an amphibious lodgment against attack by airborne troops. The enemy tries it, and of course in the description, gets whumped. Sort of inevitable [given who drew up the situation]. I was getting hot under the collar listening to this, and finally, at the end of the class, I put up my hand. "Of course you are going to win against that kind of stupid airborne commander, but how about a guy that does it right? What would you do about him?" Again I was invited up on the stage to teach. They had those kinds of mikes that hung on wire frame down on your chest, so I went through a big pantomime of opening the wire out so I could get my head through the opening vice the pin head that had preceded me. Then I went on to describe what a proper airborne attack of this lodgment would have looked like, and

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therefore, how much more difficult the lodgment would have been to defend. My point was not that you cannot defend against airborne, you just got to be prepared for considerably different kind of tactics than was portrayed. Well, again I got a lot of favorable response from my Marine colleagues.

There were only five Army officers in that class. One of them was General Volney Warner, who went on, of course, to be CINCPAC [Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command], 4-star and a great commander of airborne troops. I saw him recently, and it reminded me of that class. By and large though, my memories of the year were mostly centered on the social aspects of the business --Marines are great people. The Corps is a marvelous institution. I have a great deal of admiration for them as such. I did not think much of their tactics and techniques, but you would expect that. I don't think I would have thought much of the tactics and techniques then presented at Benning either. There you are.

INTERVIEWER: In 1960 and 1961, you attended the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. What were your expectations for the course before you arrived and what was the educational psychology of the school and did it meet the standard of being the Army's senior tactical school?

GEN GORMAN: What were my expectations? I guess, to be honest, they were not very high because, for reasons I tried earlier to make evident, I had not had a very encouraging experience with service schools in general. When I left the 4th Armored Division to go up to 7th Army, in my interviews with the Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff of the 7th Army, I got the word very clearly that they were taking me on with a great deal of trepidation because I hadn't been to Leavenworth. It was impressed on me again and again the importance of having been through C&GSC at Leavenworth. An officer couldn't really be expected to function on a staff unless he was a graduate of Leavenworth. So, one expectation was that I would get that behind me. Another was that, of course, Leavenworth was advertised as the Army's senior tactical school, and now I was going to get my nose up out of the mud. I was going to be taught how to fight on a large scale and really find out what makes armies and corps and divisions function. Meaning function in war. But I discovered that the word function, as was taught at the Army senior tactical school, really had to do with function almost in the sense of the word applied to human viscera. Leavenworth spent a lot of time on the internal processes of divisions, and the intricacies

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of task organization and subordination, and of communications, of logistics and of personnel. But, very rarely did we focus on fires and maneuver at divisional level. That was a great disappointment.

I found that the year sort of divided itself into two distinct parts. Up until Christmas I thought that the course was useful, instructive, even maybe enjoyable. By and large, instruction moved along briskly, new topics were being introduced and new sets of issues were being raised. Never mind that the issues were related to organization more often than tactics, never mind that focus was on writing the orders, as opposed to whipping the enemy, never mind that we only rarely came to grips with the gut issues of why have an Army in the field. It moved along quite briskly. Then, in January, the calendar year started off with the same map problem that we had been presented in September. The only thing changed in it was the friendly force had transitioned from the Pentomic Division organization to the so-called ROAD or Reorganized Army Division organization. In other words, we had a different TOE [table of organization and equipment]. Same situation, enemy, same ground, same map, but a different organization. Well, the course went downhill from there. I mean we literally went back over the course, and we revisited all of those administrative points. What was going on, of course, goes back to how slowly schools change and adapt, how difficult it is for them to do it. I think that the Commandant had probably made the difficult decision, that rather than wait and try to change during the summer, he would just make it happen during the school year, and my class happened to be the guinea pigs that he used to instruct his faculty in how to handle the new ROAD organization. I think he was trying to make it happen fast, so never mind issuing new maps, just change the overlay and the order. But, Leavenworth was a scarifyingly boring experience thereafter.

Let me give you two vignettes to show you how I was reacting and why. In 1959, the 1st Armored Rifle Battalion, 54th Infantry, 4th Armored Division was deployed to the border of Czechoslovakia in the Cheb region, astride the Hof Gap as it was called, to protect nuclear artillery that had been forward deployed by President Eisenhower as part of the U.S. response to gathering tensions over Berlin. What was done was to throw forward a large caliber artillery piece, which was 220mm, a big nuclear-capable cannon. The division artillery commander of the 4th Armored Division was the task force commander. There were several artillery batteries, nuclear weapon detachments, and our armored rifle battalion reinforced with a company of tanks, and with a troop of cavalry. Our mission was to provide security for this nuclear artillery outfit. The long and short of it was that I spent a lot of time up at the Hof Gap, walked that ground, did a lot of war gaming about what we would do if we had to

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defend, and how we would create the requisite delay so they could fire their nuclear weapons and get out of there. At Leavenworth we had a map exercise set on the same ground, and I turned in a solution on an examination in which I used my knowledge of ground, and did poorly. I wasn't flunked or anything, but I didn't do very well in the examination. My classmates pointed out to me that I had made the serious mistake of getting myself bemused with such questions as whether you can attack with armor through a particular corridor, because we had been given in the situation that this was an armored avenue of approach. And yet I knew it wasn't, and I knew why. I nevertheless didn't carry the day in my arguments because the instructors weren't informed of what I knew about the ground.

Example 2 came up in a course in unconventional warfare. The setting was Poland, and was an example of a military undertaking without any kind of consideration of the political ramifications of the hypothetical UW operations. I guess what really set me off, was that they had a situation in which it was clear that there was an informer within the Polish partisan organization that they were supporting. The Polish commander himself executes the informer. The Polish commander himself is the trigger man in this happy event, which incidentally is masterminded by the special warfare guys, the A team. The trigger man is the village priest. I got up and delivered a diatribe against waging war using women and children, that we really have to think through what we are doing here, because about what we are talking about is a situation in which it is clear that the bad guys would react by simply rounding up the village, and doing what the Nazis had done: just wipe everybody out. Did we really want a village priest to be involved with UW operations in the first instance? Did we want to transform this man of the cloth into a man of violence? Did we want him to go beyond directing violence, to actually becoming a trigger man in the execution of an informer? It just blew my mind that we would even be sitting there in Leavenworth talking about this kind of skullduggery. I got a U on that course; the instructors came down on me hard.

I truly believe that particular UW problem or exercise or block of instruction could have been used to counter the unhappiness that General Abrams had to deal with a few years later out in Southeast Asia. There is a frame of mind which holds that any means is justified by the end, never mind who gets hurt or whom you have to use. What really turned me off, was that the whole thing at Leavenworth was put together perceiving Poles as automatons. Poles were just pawns that the U.S. could manipulate, they

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weren't real people. In fact, they were spent in a callous fashion, much as the United States later spent tribesmen in Southeast Asia. I didn't endear myself to my Special Operation Force colleagues, and certainly blew the examination by taking so contrary a position.

When George Marshall was at Benning as the Assistant Commandant, he encouraged instructors to take a student with the wholly different solution and have him present it to the class. Give Quantico and the Junior School all the credit that they deserve for their willingness to put me up in front of the class, and let me present my view of the matter when it was different from theirs, and indeed, for supporting me in doing so. Not the guys at Leavenworth; they just didn't want to hear a different story. They seemed totally unwilling to entertain a different approach.

Now, I need to make the point, there were instructors at Leavenworth that were excellent, highly professional. Our airborne instructor, was a good case in point. He was very open to different solutions, and while aware that the school had a kind of consensus solution, agreed that there had to be other ways to go about doing it. And he was moreover quick to point out that no airborne operation to that date had ever been executed exactly the way it was planned. He was the exception, and there were several others on the faculty that were similarly exceptional.

When all is said and done about that year at Leavenworth, it was 4 months of work stuffed into a 9-month package, and I was just young enough, and brash enough, and egotistic enough to think that there ought to be a better use of my time than that drill. I also thought that if Leavenworth is the senior tactical school, God help the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Of your National War College experience in 1965 to 1966, you wrote, "I cannot condone so elaborate an institution for the promotion of private contemplation nor can I say with certitude that the 38th year of my life was productively spent on behalf of the United States." Could you explain what caused you to feel that way?

GEN GORMAN: The paper that I gave you really explains it. The National War College, was then a very gentlemanly program which revolved daily around one or possibly two guest lecturers, followed by some discussions of what it was that he said, or what it was that we were asked to read on

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the topic that he was discussing. The reading materials were almost exclusively magazine articles, speeches, or other public domain materials. The lecturers were rarely professionally stimulating. I'm sure that they were entertaining and possibly informative, but they were not the kind of people that were calculated to get a bunch of professional military people on the edge of their chair. The entire course tended to get down to the individual research paper and the reading and writing associated with it.⁴ As far as academic achievement was concerned, and I think my reference to "private contemplation" has a lot to do with the fact that I spent a lot of time on my individual research project. That was fun and I did, in fact, undertake a lot of useful reading and thinking. Didn't get much help. Faculty seemed prepared to let me do what I wanted to do in that respect, but weren't prepared to offer assistance or suggestions. As a matter of fact, the faculty guys that I interfaced with -- we were each assigned to a faculty guy -- were civilians who didn't know a hell of a lot about the government.

I came to the National War College course after 4 years as a staff officer in ODCSOPS, Army, under General Harold K. Johnson most of the time, where I was in International Policy Planning Division of Plans, and did a lot of work directly with and for the DCSOPS and Chief of Staff. In the War College, the faculty guy is an economist from Ashtabula University. Kind of wondered about that. Okay. It got right down to the fact that if there was going to be any learning that took place during that year, it was going to be me that laid it on myself. But there I was, in full possession of my physical powers and mental energies -- there is a war going on -- there I was in Washington twiddling my thumbs. It just didn't seem to me to be a useful way to spend the year 1965-1966. A lot of socializing and a lot of good times with the students, but the school itself was not very productive.

I can't remember any occasion where we actually worked with the sort of materials that one in a policy position would have to work with, such as messages from field commanders, from CINCs, from ambassadors, or with war plans, or the sort of papers that would come out of the service staffs on structural issues, or strategy issues. So there were none of the adversary proceedings that I had observed in the Pentagon in 4 years. These were simply not addressed at the National War College. The College replicated none of the interagency tensions. In fact, there was a deliberate attempt at creating a sense of camaraderie, a deliberate suppressing of interagency or inter-service rivalries, a deliberate attempt to avoid that kind of competition that I regarded as the "sin qua non" for proceeding in Washington. Nobody succeeds in Washington unless someone fails. Somebody is going to take a knocker.

⁴ Paul F. Gorman, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army. REVOLUTION IN THE SOUTH – A NEW PROFESSIONALISM? National War College, 1966.

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I just couldn't understand why the National War College should get away with ignoring that Washington is A zero-sum game.

Now the National War College, like Leavenworth, had a very grand view of itself. The Commandant used to remind us of the fact that umpteen percent of NWC graduates had gone on to become generals, admirals, or senior officials of the government at comparable rank, implying that the school was responsible. He seemed entirely impervious to the argument that maybe they were promoted despite the school. There was a sense of self importance that was generated by the site [Fort McNair] by the building [Roosevelt Hall], by just being the National War College. I have to tell you that I was not impressed. In fact, it got to be very depressing as the war wound on, and heated up, and divisions were deployed while I was sitting on my 38-year old tail enjoying myself.

I must, however, interpolate further. In 1964, I was put on orders to the Armed Forces Staff College and I went into the Army Planner, and said, "I cannot understand why the Army thinks I have to go to a 6-month course down at Norfolk to learn how to be a joint staff officer. I've been carrying joint actions since I joined this staff in 1962. I think I understand the fundamental issues before the JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff]. I have handled everything from fleet deployments and the war plans for Cuba to arms control issues. Now the Army wants to send me off to teach me how to be a junior officer on the joint staff." The Planner replied that the Army had a quota that had to be filled, wanted to send its very best officers, etc. I said, "I just don't want to do that." The Planner [Gen. Don Bennett] was good enough to see to it that those orders got changed, but again I had the distinct impression when I talked to the guys at branch, that they were surprised -- their clients seldom turned down going to school. They said, "We have guys lined up that want to go to Norfolk." "Fine," I said, "Send them, for heaven's sakes." I would have been in Norfolk when I got my orders to the National War College. If the Army had been allowed to do it, I would have spent half a year sitting on my butt down there, and then gone on sequentially for another year reposing at the National War College. Part of my reaction to the War College was occasioned by that. Looking back on it, I would have rather had the 6 months sentence to Norfolk and skipped NWC.

In any event, what I remember most about the National War College year was that I decided that I had to get assigned to a line command in Vietnam. I didn't know how else to proceed, so I just wrote a

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letter to the Commanding General of the 1st Division. I didn't know him from Adam, but I wrote him and said, "I have been a lieutenant colonel of Infantry since 1964, and I would be very pleased to command one of your infantry battalions. Please give me whatever consideration you can." I got back, very promptly, a very nice letter saying, "You're on. Report for duty as soon as possible. We have in mind your commanding the 1st of the 16th or 1st of the 18th infantry." That made my year. I began to focus on the war out there. That changed the whole complexion of the business. In time I was graduated. I think I left virtually the day after. My memory is that I sat at the graduation exercise, then sat on a plane, then arrived in the 1st Division two days later, and stopped sitting for a long time, because I assumed command the day I got there.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, what did you do to prepare yourself for command?

GEN GORMAN: Not much. After all, I'd been thinking about commanding a battalion of infantry for years. I had been in combat as a platoon leader, and I had commanded a company in an armored rifle battalion in Germany. I'd observed up close good commanders and bad commanders. I knew I could do the job, and I was impatient for the War College course to end so that I could get on with it. The one thing I did that was specifically oriented on Vietnam was to help form a self-study course in the language at the NWC, using some booths and audio tapes at the top rear of the building.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, was your battalion what you expected?

GEN GORMAN: Well, yes and no.

I arrived at Tan Son Nhut Airport in the early morning hours of 9 June. After daybreak the G-1 from 1st Division headquarters picked me up, and we drove across the Saigon River to Di An, where Division Rear was located. He told me that as soon as I finished, I was to assume command of the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, that the unit was then under the OPCON of Div Arty, and that the battalion CP was nearby in Phu Loi.

The G-1 was very solicitous. He told me that the Division Commander had removed the previous battalion commander, and that a Major was temporarily in command pending my arrival. He offered to

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help in any way he could to obtain key personnel for me, and told me to call him personally as soon as I knew what I needed. That put me on the alert, so I listened carefully to the talk as I was passed among the staff principals. The general attitude of my informants when they learned that I was the new DOBOL 6--that was to be my call sign on the Division command net--was doleful sympathy, as if they had been informed that I had a fatal malady. I was given to understand that: first, relief of battalion commanders was not uncommon--the CG was particularly hard on infantry commanders; and second, among infantry units, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was lowest in the CG's regard, and had been assigned a "pacification" mission guarding the Division rear because it was not considered capable of hunting enemy main force units.

It was a classic introduction to a new unit. I was picked up by an ill-maintained jeep, driven by an unkempt sergeant from the 26th. He chose to drive me past the division's mortuary unit at Phu Loi, and to comment lugubriously that it had been busy of late. But when we reached the nearby battalion CP -an indifferently erected, cluttered squad tent-- it was like coming home after a long stay away-- familiar people were there: company commanders, staff officers, NCOs, soldiers. With most of them, I was instantly comfortable, and they were responsive.

I arrived expecting to take over a savvy outfit, since the unit had been in Vietnam for nine months, was a veteran of a number of battles, and should have known the enemy and the terrain. I was sorely disappointed. What I found was a pretty run-of-the-mill leg infantry outfit, not too sharp professionally, inclined to be pro forma rather than proactive. When we drove up, I noted that the CP's 292 antenna was missing ground planes. More importantly, the staff was kind of down in the mouth, conveying to me in their briefings a consensus that the battalion had been dumped on. Throughout the unit, I found few who were upbeat about the current mission. I figured that I would have to work on that, and decided to put out periodically a written review of what the unit had been doing so that soldiers could read about their achievements, and mail it home if they wanted to.

I soon appreciated, however, that the Blue Spaders were willing to learn, and eager to do the job right. Also, they had a great cadre of NCO's and lieutenants. We learned together. My time in command was one long learning experience.

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INTERVIEWER: Sir, when you took over, did you get any command guidance from division or brigade?

GEN GORMAN : Yes. As I remember it, Colonel Sid Berry flew into Phu Loi and we talked at my CP. He was preoccupied with the battles up north, and did not have much to say, aside from stating that he was working to get me returned to his operational control. He told me that the CG did not pay much attention to the usual alignment of the battalions with the brigades, and that there was no telling when our current mission would terminate, and to which brigade we would then be attached. I had worked for Sid before, and was mighty glad to see him, but his news was, I admit, a bit unsettling.

INTERVIEWER: What were your first impressions of General DePuy⁵?

GEN GORMAN: You can bet I was apprehensive when we first met. He flew in, unexpectedly when I was out on patrol, walking with a rifle platoon. I had a radio call from DANGER 77 saying that he was inbound. Then the helo landed, and we talked. He asked me what I was doing, and I told him -he seemed to approve. Then he said that he wanted me to know that we had an important mission: maybe, he said, the most important mission of any battalion in the whole division. He said the division had to learn how to secure its rear area, and that I was to work with the Revolutionary Development Task Force that he had set up, call sign HELPER, to discover the right mix of force and persuasion to eliminate the VC local forces, and to persuade the people to cooperate with the government. To do so, he said I would have to make the 26th Infantry more mobile, and to make it more lethal, and to insure that it would perform in combat. He said that the infantry's job was to find the armed enemy, and then it was up to me and my company commanders to apply the right mix of maneuver and firepower to kill or capture them. If we ran into a big VC unit, the full resources of the division stood behind us. Our operations would have to provide the secure environment within which the Viet Revolutionary Development cadres could operate. He knew that it was hard doing those military jobs when civilians were all around, but he knew I would take care that we wouldn't do anything dumb.

He told me that the 26th had to be ready for action at any time --he looked around, and pointed out that the sun was out, the temperature was moderate, the flowers were blooming, the birds were

⁵ Then Major General William E. DePuy, Commander 1st Infantry Division. General DePuy rose to full general and became the first commander of Training and Doctrine Command. Henry G. Gole, *General William E. DePuy: Preparing the Army for Modern War* (University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

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singing, and everything seemed peaceful. But if any of us in the 26th believed that, he was making a big mistake, because even as we spoke some enemy was watching us with murder in his heart. Then he left.

On that first occasion and thereafter I usually found myself in instant agreement with every point he made. He told me he wanted the 26th to be fast, adaptable, and hard hitting. He wanted us to maneuver swiftly, and to use all available fire power. He drew a distinction between tactics and techniques: tactics had to be left to the leader in command at the scene of any combat; but the techniques of getting into contact with the enemy, of fires and movement, these could be trained --I remember him saying rehearsed-- in advance of combat, and should be embedded in every soldier's mind. He told me that he'd drop in to see us from time to time, but that if I needed help, especially in battle, I was to call him. I really liked his approach.

I want to emphasize that my initial impression was consistent with our relationship over the nine months I served under him in Vietnam, and the nearly four years I was with him at TRADOC. He truly gave me both complete freedom and assured support. He was an ideal commander. Above all, I learned to respect his instincts for finding the enemy, and anticipating his next moves. He knew the larger aspects of the war, and its finest details, right down to the rifleman's level. I consider him an authentic military genius.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, what kind of action did you get involved in during that "pacification" mission? Could you describe a typical operation?

GEN GORMAN. There was no such thing as a "typical action" in LAM SON II--that was the name the division gave to the pacification campaign. Every day and every night brought new challenges, and we had to keep learning how to deal with these. We really did make it up as we went along.

But I have some pictures here of one incident, a small dust-up involving Company A on the 20th of June. ⁶

It was around mid-day, and I had been walking with a rifle platoon, when DOBOL Alpha 6--the company commander-- reported that Alpha was in contact, and that the company had taken casualties. My helo, an H-13 was inbound to pick me up, so I got airborne and flew to where the action was. I

⁶ [Paul F. Gorman], *Blue Spaders: The 26th Infantry Regiment, 1917-1967* (Wheaton, IL: Cantigny First Division Foundation, 1996), 142-146.

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found Company A in a long column, with considerable distances--around 500 meters-- between platoons. The commander had apparently been with the lead platoon, which had been fired on from a trench line under some scrub on the north edge of an open field. Our troops returned the fire, and succeeded in getting into the trench, but the enemy had successfully withdrawn southward across the field, and were firing from the opposite wood line. A6 told me on the radio that the field was mined, and that one of his soldiers had been wounded by a mine or booby trap. The VC were firing automatic weapons at them from what appeared to be another trench line, and had them pinned down. I asked Alpha 6 what he was going to do, and he said that he was bringing up the rest of his company, and he intended to attack around to the left when they came on line. I told him to get some fire on the enemy to fix them in place, and that I would try to hasten the arrival of his platoons.

Well, it was a hot, bright afternoon, and the next platoon was plainly visible some 500 meters north of there, moving slowly along a trail in two columns. They were in the open, and the grass was low, so I could see that they were ambling--a very deliberate walk, not a forced march. I landed and talked to the platoon leader, an NCO. I told him that his commander urgently needed his platoon forward, and showed him on the map what I knew of the situation. I then got airborne again, and the platoon resumed its march. I could see no difference in their demeanor, just more ambling.

I then called my FAC (Forward Air Controller) and told him what we were up against. Within minutes I could see him flying off to my left. I asked Alpha 6 if he had called for artillery, and he said he had, but that his FO had not yet received clearance to fire. The FAC broke in to report that he had an aircraft on station with CBU (cluster bomb units) and napalm, so I directed Alpha 6 to throw smoke, and the FAC to mark the target for an east-west run along the tree line. The FAC fired a white smoke rocket exactly where the VC gun flashes had been seen, and the fighter rolled in and laid the CBU right along the edge of the trees, then turned around and delivered the napalm in the same place.

The enemy fire stopped, and Company A advanced. These pictures show you what they found.

Here's the diagram of the VC positions: this is a well-built local force base camp. Each was different from the others, but they usually featured narrow trenches, and neat, sod-covered, nearly invisible bunkers and tunnels. This one sure had those features. In the aggregate, there was enough

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overhead cover to accommodate a battalion, but probably the place was used from day to day only by a guard detachment of local guerrillas.

That detachment was what Company A had encountered. Its members all got away, but not without loss: Company A found pools of blood and fresh bloody bandages. Here are pictures of the mines and booby traps that the VC had emplaced out in the fields of fire in front of their fighting positions. Here is a sign in broken English they had erected on a tree at the edge of the open field, saying, in effect, "If someone aggressed in your country, what would you do?" My Vietnamese colleagues told me that those signs served the purpose of warning local people of the booby traps and mines, as well as unsettling Americans. Whether the sign figured or not, DOBOL Alpha 6 was clearly shaken.

Just walking through that VC base camp taught me some powerful lessons. If we were going to outfight these peasants, we had to upgrade our field craft. The VC were masters at building trenches and bunkers. We had to match or surpass them. I had always believed that the Army's standard, open front foxholes were exactly wrong, and that the sandbag castles of bunkers we built in Korea—or that I later saw at Phuoc Vinh— were disastrous. It turned out that General DePuy believed, as I did, that our troops should dig deep, invisible holes with overhead and frontal cover, and with ports for firing across in front of flanking positions. In that kind of defense, teamwork and interdependence was as important in the defense as it was in the attack. I resolved then and there to make DOBOL a premier defender as well as an effective predator. During Lam Son II we didn't need to defend often, but afterwards we had ample opportunity.

The next day General DePuy flew in, and asked me about the action. I described what happened, and told him that I had decided to remove the company commander and the platoon leader. He replied simply that he would get me replacements. I asked him also to get me authority to clear fires, so that we could avoid delays in using artillery. He said he would --and he did, that very day. We discussed the implications of VC defenses. Again, I found him understanding, supportive and responsive.

INTERVIEWER: Did you remove many leaders like that?

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GEN GORMAN: If you mean after a fire fight, no. But I did eventually replace all the company commanders. I would say that they were each relieved to be relinquishing command.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, why do you suppose that was so?

GEN GORMAN: They had been in command in Vietnam for nine months or more. They had been in a base-centered, road-bound, three hot-meal outfit. They were used to riding around in jeeps, and to sending platoons off to do their bidding. Now they were being required to lead on the ground, to walk all day, and frequently all night, for days at a time. They had to carry their creature comforts on their back, and while generally that region was very pleasant, sometimes it could be very wet, and often very hot. It was plain hard work.

I had a major tussle with them over their practice of calling for medevac helos (DUSTOFF) to extract soldiers who had succumbed to heat prostration. Finally, I just flat forbade such helo missions. I told them that if they enforced the disciplines of force-feeding salt tablets, and of carrying sufficient water to support drinking on demand, they would not incur such casualties. And even if they did, I said, a medevac was dangerous, because the arrival of a DUSTOFF would signal their location to VC for miles around, putting the whole company at hazard for one man. Rather, I said, their choices were either to halt in place while they revived the victim, or they could carry him, but there would be no DUSTOFF except for combat casualties. They did not like that, individually or collectively, but I was relieved to note that the incidence of "heat prostration" dropped off to zero within a week or two.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I'll bet you had a lot of volunteers to command companies, didn't you?

GEN GORMAN: As a matter of fact, no. The division G-1 lived up his promise, and sent me five captains, but only one volunteered to take a company. I gave him the job instantly, and later on he got promoted to Major and became my Executive Officer. The other captains told me they wanted a staff job so they could observe and learn before they took command. I didn't hire any of those. Then I lucked out: two more captains came into the division, both requesting rifle companies: one was Jim Madden, and the other was George Joulwan. These two had been platoon leaders together in the 30th Infantry Battle Group, 3d Infantry Division in Germany when it had been commanded by Colonel William

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DePuy. They were knowledgeable, and hot to trot, keenly competitive with one another, and a pleasure to command. They were both the sort of officers that needed no prodding, and required only an occasional word of guidance to lead a rifle company in a thoroughly outstanding way. I was just delighted to get them. Their spirit was contagious, and the whole battalion took on new life.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, did you operate at night often?

GEN GORMAN: Yes. In fact, I tried to deprive the VC of the advantage of concealment offered by darkness. Here's a summary of our operations that I published so the troops would appreciate what they had accomplished. I think we fulfilled our mission of finding out how to perform the LAM SON II mission, which we turned over to the 2d Battalion, 2d Infantry in late July. Incidentally, the commander of that battalion was Lieutenant Colonel Jack Conn, with whom I had served in Korea, back in 1952-1953.

INTERVIEWER: What was your mission after Lam Son II?

GEN GORMAN: As I remember it, we were attached to 1st Brigade, and positioned to secure the road designated Route RED, which ran from Phuoc Vinh south toward Bien Hoa, while truck convoys carried supplies north to the brigade's base camp. That was not unlike LAM SON II: I had a very good NCO killed trying to defuse a VC booby trap, and we had a few trucks damaged from command detonated claymore mines. I resolved that the next time we had a similar mission we would take more active countermeasures.

Then we were sent back to Phouc Vinh, and I got my first good look at that place. I didn't like what I found.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, what was wrong? The defenses?

GEN GORMAN: Oh, sure, they were bad. But more important than the ridiculously vulnerable bunkers and washed out trench lines, there were the shanties that had been built by officers. I found out that individuals or groups had paid out substantial sums--up to hundreds of dollars--to buy wood and

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sheet metal to fashion these, and to equip them with lights and air conditioners. The expectation was that as each "owner" left, his "turtle" or successor would recompense him for the original investment. This cost would then roll over to the next arrival, with no depreciation, and in more than a few cases, some plus up. That bred more than few arguments. I became aware that this practice was causing significant trouble; I even got a formal letter from a departed officer complaining that an officer had failed to honor a debt, and demanding that I take official action. Well, I wrote him that I had taken charge of the post, and that from my perspective all within structures within view were government property, so there was no debt. I had copies circulated to all officers. There was a particularly elaborate hut that had belonged to the former commander. This I converted into the 26th Infantry Room, and had the unit colors displayed there, together with a map of the division area where new arrivals could be briefed. I set up my office and a cot in a hex tent.

That short period at Phuoc Vinh was useful in several other ways. We practiced airmobile operations, and worked out an airmobile SOP. Also, I caused a number of the battalion's trucks and other property to be turned into division. We were authorized 108 trucks--one for every eight men authorized. We hadn't been using most of these vehicles in our operations. Yet the battalion's practice was to leave a driver for each at Camp Weber, together with an appropriate number of mechanics and supervisors. I wanted to be wholly airmobile, and we needed to free up manpower for use in the field, so I got rid of wheels. I turned 71 trucks and 59 trailers over to division. I also stripped each rifle company of a squad's worth of spaces to build around the anti-tank assets a consolidated Base Defense Section in Headquarters Company. That put all the defense of Phuoc Vinh under one commander, so that rifle company commanders could focus on the out-of-base war. My intent was that the rifle companies and the Reconnaissance Platoon should be wholly dependent on outside vehicles, mainly helicopters.

INTERVIEWER: That suggests that the personnel system was letting you down. How bad was the problem?

GEN GORMAN: No, it was not the personnel system. We were doing it to ourselves.

Let's be sure you remember that August 1966 was the eleventh month from the date most of the troops in my battalion had left Fort Riley enroute to Vietnam. The "personnel system" had been trying to

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cope with a big turnover in the 26th Infantry, and had been offering rear echelon jobs to my riflemen so as to even out the flow of replacements into the line units. That did not work well.

I know from my notebook that on 29 July, when we were still in the field, the battalion had better than 100% fill--854 assigned against an authorization of 829. But on that date I had only 478 deployed in the field-- only a little more than half those assigned. That was frustrating to me, because I had really been pushing to get the field strength of the rifle companies up. We were taking better care of that base at Phuoc Vinh than our mission. Moreover, I was determined to be airmobile, and I couldn't imagine how owning trucks and trailers helped that objective.

Most importantly, I wanted the rifle companies totally free of responsibility for Phuoc Vinh's security. So I developed a modification to our Modified Table of Organization and Equipment, bringing the rifle companies down to 174 each, and setting up a Base Defense Section with Headquarters Company under one commander to look after security there. Of course, I did all that after getting approval from my brigade commander, Colonel Berry, and the division commander, General DePuy. Both approved, and eventually, the whole division adopted a similar scheme.

INTERVIEWER: General DePuy had a reputation for having a hair-trigger temper, and for relieving commanders at the drop of a hat. How did that reputation match your experience?

GEN GORMAN: General DePuy did not suffer fools gladly, and he could be brusque. He may have relieved around a dozen commanders in Vietnam, but the instances I know about were all pretty well warranted. Usually he simply moved the object of his ire out of the division without writing a report, so that most of them never even had an entry in their record.

INTERVIEWER: Could you cite an example of what you mean by "warranted"?

GEN GORMAN: Well, there was a case of a newly arrived infantry battalion commander who allowed his unit to dig in right in front of a rice paddy berm, so that the fields of fire were less than grenade range. As a matter of fact, that position was at Tan Binh where the 26th Infantry had made a similar mistake in February of 1966. That new commander had had the time to check those defensive

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positions, but when the CG asked about them, he could not even state what was wrong. DePuy waved him off the mound, and brought in another officer whose basic infantry skills were more advanced.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back to the 26th Infantry. What was the mission that they disliked so much? What did you do about that?

GEN GORMAN: In May of 1966 the CG had decided that the GVN (Government of Vietnam) could not provide for security in the immediate vicinity of the division's rear area, both because of ARVN ineptness, and the skill and efficiency of the enemy district and provincial units. So he worked out with the GVN authorities a plan for a combined pacification campaign to be called "LAM SON II," calling for the GVN to commit a Revolutionary Development cadre and elements of the 5th ARVN Division, and the 1st Division to furnish an infantry battalion and a task force equipped to provide psywar, intelligence, and other support. Beginning in mid-May, these launched a campaign to establish an "oil-spot" of security and GVN control in the vicinity of Phu Loi and Di An. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was brought down from Phuoc Vinh, and bivouacked inside the perimeter of Phu Loi and Di An.

Now this job was not glamorous, and plainly the CG's attention, and that of his staff and his brigade commanders, remained concentrated on the main force war well to the north, along Highway 13. We got scant help in figuring out what we were supposed to do, but I saw it as a great chance to raise the professionalism of the battalion, and I sold it to my company commanders and staff principals as a challenge to their soldiering skills. I also emphasized that ours was a mission that had to be successful if the division's support bases were to function without enemy harassment and interference--in short, we were as vital to the success of the division's campaign against the main force as any of the battalions operating up north.

It was grubby work: lots of patrolling, much of it at night. Small unit fights against handfuls of VC. Mines and punji pits, claymores and mortar attacks--the grungiest sort of combat. But it gave me an opportunity right at the outset of my command to spend about one half-day on patrol with each rifle

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platoon, observing its technique, and assessing its professional skills. Soon I had worked out my teaching objectives, and began, through the company commanders, to provide remedial on-the-job training.

INTERVIEWER: Could you specify some of those teaching objectives?

GEN GORMAN: Sure.

The main lesson was to think through each situation and deal with in its own terms. Time after time officers and NCOs tried to apply some procedure or tactic they had learned elsewhere in a circumstance where a moment's thought would have shown them it would be disastrous. They wanted rules or maxims they could invariably apply, and I tried to bring them to understand that there were few such rules or guidelines, and their first concern had to be for the urgencies of the moment. Our was a new form of war, I said, and so we had to invent new ways of fighting. I praised innovation, and lauded initiative, especially if worked. I preached that every leader had to think on his feet as he acted. In fact, that became our motto in the Blue Spaders, "We Made it up as We Went Along."

The concomitant of that motto was my maxim that "every day in combat is a day in training." I held that a leader ought to be able, at the end of every action, to recite what he had learned, and to describe what he had done to insure that good performance was praised, poor performance identified, and ameliorative action prescribed. I often called for such a review.

INTERVIEWER: I can see how that would apply to the Revolutionary Development mission. That must have seemed very new to most of them. But what about the main force war? Wasn't that pretty much textbook warfare?

GEN GORMAN: I think that innovation and initiative was as necessary against the main force as it was against the village guerrilla. I think the techniques we worked out applied to both, whether it was making a night approach march in column holding onto a rope, or digging foxholes to that were invisible from the front and to secure from overhead fire. There were a lot of small performances that in the aggregate made a significant difference no matter what the enemy force.

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For example: communications. In mid June, the 26th simply was not getting full measure from its radios. Companies did not routinely carry the 292 antenna, and I discovered that few soldiers in the battalion knew how properly to erect same. We eventually got every company in the field equipped with a 292 complete with carrying case and instructions. Many an officer and NCO had misappropriated an antenna section to use as a pointer--a practice I stopped by offering an Article 15 fine for anyone who used one in my sight. Field maintenance for radios was deplorable, but when I began demanding that companies stay in the field for a week at a time, commanders began paying attention to preventive maintenance and spares. We learned to wrap handsets in a plastic bag secured with a rubber band, and to change swiftly from blade antenna, to whip, to 292 depending on the movement posture of the unit. We learned brevity of transmission, and we learned to assure 24-hour continuity of communications. We learned to carry and to signal using air panels and pyrotechnics. In short we got serious about using what the Army had provided, and that made us better in any sort of operation.

Or as another example, weapons. I was thoroughly dissatisfied with what I found with the handling of infantry weapons and ammunition. There was a general practice of carrying machine gun belts Pancho Villa-style across the chest, and of diverting machine gun ammo cans to almost any use except to protect ammunition from dirt and wet. I collected examples of MG belts twisted and mired to the point that a stoppage was patently guaranteed, and when I could, I staged demonstrations of the difference in firepower that accrues to a unit that carries its MG ammo boxed versus one who does not: I simply caused two platoons to cross a rice paddy by fire and movement--almost invariably gunners with the cross-chest belts would jam up their gun, while the boxed-ammo shot reliably. Now that helps no matter what the fire-fight.

And there was the M-16, the rifle newly arrived in the 26th, and foreign to most of its officers and NCOs. On my initial checks in the field, I found no cleaning rods, patches, or lubricants. We eventually got that fixed, with assistance from the division G-4, and a lot of help from the mail bags -- the troops wrote home for help.

INTERVIEWER: Well, let's see: you have been in country nearly three months now, and it sounds like it was mostly small unit training and skirmishes. Is that right?

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GEN GORMAN: Pretty much. We fought a couple of stiff actions at the company level, and one battalion airmobile operation into a hot LZ along the Saigon River in mid-August. But there were no really big battles until 25 August, and that one was a really wild affair involving four US infantry battalions trying to encircle the VC provincial battalion --the Phu Loi Battalion.⁷

INTERVIEWER: Was that a result of intelligence?

GEN GORMAN: If you mean technical stuff, no, the 1st Brigade literally blundered into the enemy's base camp. My battalion was along Route Red, south of Tan Binh. I had two companies deployed along the road with elements of the 1st Engineers. My headquarters and Company C, in reserve, were south and east of Tan Binh. To the north of us, DRACULA, the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, was securing that portion of Route Orange between the Song Be and Tan Binh. Late on the 24th, DRACULA Charlie had sent a small patrol westward —I think there were fifteen in all— to scout the jungle beyond the rubber plantation. As I remember it, Bill Mullen,⁸ the company commander, had obtained some camouflaged fatigues --we called them "tiger suits"-- and formed his own Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol or "LRP". As far as I know, it was their first outing. They snooped a ways westward from the road, and then hunkered down for the night. The next morning they found that they had spent the night in a VC base camp of some size and that they were surrounded by armed VC. Sometime around 0700 they radioed Mullen, and told him the good news. Then the enemy discovered the patrol, attacked it, and there were the inevitable last desperate appeals for help, then silence.

Captain Mullen informed his battalion that he was going with his company to rescue his patrol, mounted his troops on vehicles of Troop C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, and started. 1st Brigade ordered me to dispatch my battalion reserve to assist Mullen. Division had declared a tactical emergency, which meant that all helicopters supporting the division were diverted to 1st Brigade, but 1st Brigade allocated only one H-13 to us. So I mounted Company C on whatever vehicles I could find, moved them

⁷ [Gorman], *Blue Spaders*, 159-175.

⁸ Later, Brigadier General William J. Mullen

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to Tan Binh, and, the vehicles finding the stream bed un-fordable, put the company on foot due south of the last reported position of the patrol. I steered the column from overhead in an H-13 helo, and landed to give Jim Madden a last minute update. As the company moved north, it was put under the operational control of DRACULA.

I hadn't paid much attention to DRACULA up to that time, because they'd been mainly operating up north against enemy main force units. They wore a black kerchief like I had in Navy boot camp. Their commander, Dick Prillaman,⁹ was a very experienced soldier, having been in Vietnam for nearly two years, but I don't think I knew that at the time he was on leave in Hong Kong, and that DRACULA was under the command of Major Clark, Prillaman's executive officer.

Well, Mullen crashed into the base camp, and immediately got enmeshed with a very determined and numerous enemy. The patrol was still missing. Major Clark went forward to take command at the scene of the battle, and was almost immediately killed. The brigade commander, Colonel Sidney B. Berry, went to the scene of the engagement to restore order. There he encountered Jim Madden, who had left his company just to the south in an attack position, and moved forward to reconnoiter the situation.

Madden had already been wounded in the leg, and remembers that he could find no cohesive unit on the scene other than his own. DRACULA Charlie had been fragmented and shot up pretty badly. There was a little clearing with a wrecked Air Force helicopter and one or more burning armor vehicles, but the whole area was being swept by enemy fire, including that from snipers up in the trees. Madden proposed to Berry that DOBOL CHARLIE would envelop the east flank of the enemy position, and seek to attack from that direction, but as they were discussing coordination, Madden was struck in the chest, and knocked down. Berry insisted that Madden be evacuated, and dispatched him, protesting, aboard an armored personnel carrier full of wounded. Berry then called me, and told me to disregard any previous instructions and to get up there with all my battalion as soon as I could.

⁹ Later Major General Richard L. Prillaman.

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INTERVIEWER: What were your previous instructions? Where were you and what was the battalion doing?

GEN GORMAN: We were attacking to the west, trying to cut off the VC at Ap Bong Trang. I had been monitoring the brigade command net, and concluded that there was at least an enemy battalion involved. Around 1000 1st Brigade ordered the whole 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, to reinforce Captain Mullen. Around the same time, division provided DEVIL 6 --Colonel Berry-- with two additional reinforcing battalions, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, and 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry. My estimate was that Sid Berry had more than enough infantry. The judgment appeared confirmed when, around noon, Mullen reported that the VC had broken contact.

Then Jim Madden's point element took a prisoner, who reported that the enemy wounded were being evacuated to Ap Bong Trang, and that the rest of the unit would rally there. Figuring that it was Berry's intent to surround and annihilate the enemy, I decided to head off his exfiltration. So I had called DEVIL 6 —Berry— and proposed that my Company B immediately move to Ap Bong Trang, to intercept what I figured would be a whipped and retreating enemy. Colonel Berry approved. I mounted Company B --George Joulwan's company-- on vehicles of Troop A of the Quarter Horse, which had just come up Route Orange, and had been attached to me.

Here's an eerie coincidence for you: as you may know, the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry was mounted on M-48 tanks and M-113 armored personnel carriers. Those APCs of Troop A on which Company B went into battle on 25 August had once belonged to the Blue Spaders when they were at Fort Riley. We knew that because on at least eight of them, the old 26-I bumper markings were still clearly visible. Anyways, Joulwan's company mounted up, and set off west from Route Orange where it turned south, into the underbrush, proceeding to Ap Bong Trang. That's a move of about eight kilometers from Route Red to Ap Bong Trang. I was again overhead in my H-13, helping the column to navigate. Company A was mounted on engineer dump trucks, and moved to a position north of Tan Binh, near Xom Bong Trang, then dismounted.

INTERVIEWER: Did you make contact with the enemy?

GEN GORMAN: Both places were dry holes. There was just nothing there. Not even a sign that there had ever been buildings, or a railroad, let alone VC wounded. No tracks, no trace of the enemy. Around two o'clock, when we were searching around Ap Bong Trang, I got an urgent order from Berry to "get up here as soon as possible" and I could tell from his voice that he meant it. I remounted Company B, turned it northeast on its armored vehicles, and told Company A to start marching on foot to the north, hoping that the battalion could converge on Company C. Bravo had about three kilometers of jungle to traverse on vehicle, while Alfa had to hoof it about the same distance.

INTERVIEWER: How long did it take to get there?

GEN GORMAN: I'd have to say that I am not sure. I do remember that I was personally in a time bind, because the H-13 in which I was flying was running out of gas, and I knew that without my being overhead to help steer the column from clearing to clearing, the going would have been much slower. You have to understand that this jungle, the Bong Trang, is discontinuous, that is, it was patched here and there with places where there were no tall trees, and where the brush was low enough for an H-13 to hover down without trouble. What I was doing was directing the column from clearing to clearing.

Sometime around three o'clock my helo landed me just ahead of the lead tank, and left to get fuel. I got out carrying a PRC 10 (radio), and as the helo took off, I became aware that a shadow to my immediate front was in fact the aperture of a bunker, built low to the ground and very nearly invisible. Fortunately, it was unoccupied, but I was mighty glad when that tank drove up.

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From then on we traveled through an extensive fortified zone, from time to time running into manned positions, but we pushed through hastily.

INTERVIEWER: Were you on foot?

GEN GORMAN: No, I had climbed on the back deck of the lead tank, and we pressed on. Once there was a loud explosion, and I tapped the tank commander on the helmet and told him that I'd appreciate being warned before he used his main gun. He said that he hadn't fired, but that a VC rocket had just struck the gun mantle. The sound of small arms firing was now very close. I told George Joulwan to stop in place, to collect his elements, to find Company A if he could, and to position them just to his rear. I would, I said, take my battle staff forward, and send further orders once I assessed the situation. I then advanced with one tank, and I think an APC with my S-2, my S-3, and our radio operators.

INTERVIEWER: Were you in the APC?

GEN GORMAN: No, I wanted that tank to lead, so I got on the rear deck again, and rode it right into the east edge of the clearing where the downed helo was. My guess is that it was around 1600. Colonel Berry ran over to me, reached up to shake my hand, and wished me happy birthday. It was a good thing I leaned over because, just then, some sniper started pinging the bustle rack right where I had been standing. I got down in a hurry, and the two of us ran across the clearing to a trench on the west side. My staff followed, but out in clearing some snipers wounded my S-3 and my radio operator.

INTERVIEWER: Who was your S-3 then?

GEN GORMAN: Captain Peter Boylan.¹⁰ He recovered well, subsequently served in the 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, and went on to become a Major General before he retired.

INTERVIEWER: What happened next?

¹⁰ Later Major General Peter J. Boylan.

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GEN GORMAN: Colonel Berry told me to take charge of all the units around the clearing, and he left to get the rest of the brigade under control. Mine was no small task, because right in my immediate vicinity I found soldiers from four different units: Troops C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; Company C, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry; Company C, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, and my own Company C. I could get no help from the brigade command post. So I brought Company B forward, and positioned them across the clearing from me, and told them to guide Company A in on their right (east) flank. At the same time, I got everyone on my side of the clearing to dig or to take cover in the VC entrenchments, and I started to prepare a sketch of who was where using radio messages, runners, and staff officers. There was mass confusion, particularly as to the whereabouts of the various parts of 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry.

Soon I was relieved to hear Colonel Berry on the command net, who directed me to contain the enemy during the hours of darkness, and to plan for an attack in the morning. We agreed that we would use napalm, as the weapon most likely to drive the VC out of their fortifications, or down into their underground tunnels, and then go in after him. He told me that we would have a flare ship overhead all night and that he would arrange for a rapid infusion of resupply and medical aid once we secured the VC base camp.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any thought given to a night attack?

GEN GORMAN: Not by me. The friendly situation was unclear at dark, and all night long Americans as individuals or small groups were milling around trying to find their parent unit. I was worried about firing on friendlies, and every time there would be a burst of fire we'd try to figure out who was shooting at whom. Soon it was apparent that the enemy was in fact moving, and while I assumed that they were trying to exfiltrate, I could not be sure. In fact, some of the reports would have supported the idea that they were being reinforced, or that they were assembling for a breakout attack. We had a do-nut problem: we were all around the enemy, but I never was sure whether the ring

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was complete, or indeed, where exactly in the hole the enemy troops were located.

INTERVIEWER: Did they get away during the night?

GEN. GORMAN: I guess that most of them did, but they left a rear guard detachment that was still shooting when the sun rose, around 0630. I remember it being clear under the trees, but with low clouds or fog above the trees. Around 0700 Colonel Berry was overhead, and we decided to go ahead with air strikes.

INTERVIEWER: Could you have used artillery?

GEN. GORMAN: The enemy position was in under tall trees, big ones, about one hundred feet tall. There was a secondary growth of brush and small trees. Visibility at ground level was ten meters, more or less, so adjusting artillery had to be done by sound or from above. Every time we'd try to put in a round --and I tried with eight inchers--we'd get a bleat from one of the units that the round was right on top of them. The trees were too tall, hole in the do-nut was just too small.

INTERVIEWER: Did the napalm do any good?

GEN. GORMAN: On the face of it, yes. The enemy was shooting up until the first strikes, then the firing died off. We put in twenty or so cans. When we assaulted into the do-nut, we encountered no resistance. We found only dead VC; no wounded. Obviously, they had managed to get out.

INTERVIEWER: I understand that you dropped napalm on yourself.

GEN. GORMAN: About half of the cans had gone in without incident. Then I looked up and saw one gleaming through the trees right above me, and the tree burst into flames, and started raining napalm. My map and my radio were literally burned up, and I got singed a bit. I asked that they keep laying

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it in, and they did. Some five or ten cans later, another can fell into our positions. Colonel Berry then decided to call off further strikes. I ordered my battalion to assault, but no sooner had we begun to move than we encountered a terrific blast of fire from the north. It was the 2d Battalion, 28th Infantry, much closer to us than I had imagined. I had to get them to cease fire so that we could resume our attack. By 0800 we had moved through the complex, and at 0800 the survivors of the patrol from Company C, 1st Battalion, 2d Infantry, walked into the landing zone to the east of the action --about half of the 15 lived, as I remember. That's about the end of the real story.

The problem was that the friendly casualties from napalm were misconstrued and blown out of proportion. One press report had 22 killed and 36 wounded by napalm, whereas the actual casualties from napalm, according to Colonel Berry were 3 killed and 9 wounded. I know personally of 2 killed and 3 wounded. My own guess is that reporters soon began arriving in the clearing where the dead from the previous day still lay, corpses charred initially in the explosion of the APC, and then burned by the napalm. The reporters immediately assumed napalm had caused the deaths, and in the confusion of reorganizing after the battle and evacuating the wounded, no one set them straight. I sure didn't think about that at the time, although I do remember stopping a video team from shooting close-ups of the dead. In any event, we did it to ourselves twice, once with napalm, and the second time with poor press-handling.

INTERVIEWER: What were casualties in your unit for that battle?

GEN. GORMAN: Relatively light: we had 6 dead, and 12 wounded, compared with 1st of the 2d, which lost 18 dead and 98 wounded.

INTERVIEWER: Looking back, what would you have done differently?

GEN. GORMAN: I'm not sure I could have done it much differently, given the information I had to work with, and my orders. But in Sid Berry's after action report, he observed that he had stopped the

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26th on two occasions from trying to flank the enemy, and directed us to remain confronting him head on. He thought that his best chance of crashing into the heart of the base camp would have been to allow DOBOL to attack with Company B and its armor after they broke through the outer defenses around 1630.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have many days like that?

GEN. GORMAN: No, thank God. As a matter of fact, I think the whole division learned a great deal from that experience, from top to bottom. We never again tried to hug the enemy the way 1st Brigade did that day. At the end of October —during SHENANDOAH— Sid Berry got another shot at surrounding an enemy battalion, and this time did it right. George Joulwan’s B Company found the enemy, a battalion of the 272d Regiment and the rest of the 26th converged on B, while Berry moved two other battalions to blocking positions, and used air and artillery with telling effect. He reported over 70 dead.¹¹

INTERVIEWER: You mean the brigade actually trapped a Main force battalion?

GEN. GORMAN: Well, not in the sense that we ringed them in and accounted for them all. The majority escaped the encirclement, but we hurt them badly while they were doing so: air observers saw their columns carrying the dead and wounded, and we found ample evidence of hasty departure.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that there was a lot of turnover in your unit, troops rotating after the first year. Did that slow you down?

GEN. GORMAN: No. You remember that I often told my company commanders that “every day in combat is a day in training.” We made it so, and every day we tried to get a little better. For example, the day before Company B went into the jungle on SHENANDOAH at the end of October, they trained at Minh Tanh, where the Special Forces had a firing range. They set up a bunch of targets

¹¹ [Gorman], *Blue Spaders*, 181-185.

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probably tin cans, like Teddy Roosevelt used in 1917— and practiced what we called “musketry,” in which they were trying to get across how a rifle platoon could deliver maximum aimed, sustained fire. The following day they got to repeat their musketry practice on the VC. I really could feel the battalion pulling together, and increasing in skill. The parts fitted together like those of a fine watch. Let me quote from some correspondence I received at the time: Colonel Berry noted that while the 26th had once been “ill-disciplined, dispirited, unaggressive, lack-luster” they were by November “disciplined, spirited, aggressive, proud.” He considered us “a battalion of high combat effectiveness which could always be relied upon to accomplish its mission with dash, imagination and a high degree of military professionalism.” General DePuy wrote about the same time that the battalion “undertook operations which ordinarily would require a brigade...companies operated and covered ground equivalent to a battalion...consistently...made contact with the VC in areas where other battalions did not.” That’s pretty heady praise, but I truly believe the battalion’s performance earned it. I give credit to the officers and noncommissioned officers. I had four First Sergeants who had fought in both World War II and Korea. I may have waived the baton from time to time, but the company leaders played the instruments, and they made the music.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you keep your command?

GEN. GORMAN: A little less than five months. We had had a terrific success during Operation BATTLE CREEK, or as some say, ATTLEBORO. I was really enjoying myself by then, because everything was easy. George Joulwan was a great S-3, and the rest of the staff was well teamed with him. Without warning, on Thanksgiving Day 1966—or at the least on the day we were celebrating same— General DePuy flew in and announced that I was to turn the battalion over to Al Haig, and to assume Al’s responsibilities as division G-3. I was thunderstruck. It was one of the most professionally devastating blows I had ever taken. I was literally in a daze for days.

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We were flown back to Camp Weber, where we had a change of command ceremony, and by the first week in December, I was the Division's general staff officer for Operations and Plans.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been a tough assignment. How did you and General DePuy get along.

GEN. GORMAN: By that time we knew each other very well. I guess that by that time he'd been in command of the division more than 9 months, was supremely confident of its capabilities, and quite relaxed in his job. He was easy to work for, and with. The only trouble with the assignment was that General DePuy left in early February, and Major General John H. Hay, who took his place, was not similarly confident or comparably relaxed. Moreover, Hay knew and liked Leavenworth-style staff work, and was uneasy with the free-wheeling that characterized DePuy's command style, and its associated staff response. In any event, he had a right to be ill at ease, because II Field Force was about to kick off the biggest offensive of the war: JUNCTION CITY, a massive foray into War Zone C, with the 1st Division in the van, seeking to destroy COSVN. The mood of the division headquarters when he took over was cautious optimism: during 1966, defectors from the Viet Cong never exceed 90 in any single month. In January 1967, in the 1st Division TOAR, we had 576. But General Hay was anxious that his units do well on Junction City, and was looking forward, not making comparisons with the past.

INTERVIEWER: Don't I remember that the 26th Infantry fought another big battle during that operation?

GEN. GORMAN: Indeed. It bears the inelegant name of "Ap Gu," an abandoned settlement near a large clearing, used as an LZ on 30 March 1967.¹² As the G-3, I was on the inside of the story. The 271st Regiment of the 9th VC Division was considered by U.S. intelligence the most dangerous combat force opposing them in War Zone C. Around 23 March, the 271st Regiment was tracked in a swift move eastward to the vicinity of "The Fishhook," and seemed poised to strike at FSB C and Sroc Con Trang. Then, on the 30th, the 271st moved rapidly to the southwest toward LZ George, with the intent,

¹² [Gorman], *Blue Spaders*, 213-226. *Lieutenant General Bernard W. Rogers, Vietnam Studies. Cedar Falls – Junction City: A Turning Point* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1989), 142-148.

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as it turned out, of decisively trouncing the Blue Spaders. The enemy plan was to attack FSB C with rockets and mortars to shut down its artillery, and then overwhelm the unprotected Americans in LZ George. But they apparently did not know about, or were simply unable to react to, the fact that on the 29th we had slipped three batteries of artillery into FSB THRUST, six kilometers southeast of Ap Gu, for while they successfully suppressed FSB C (and wounded the commander of the 2d Brigade, Col. Alex Grimsley), FSB THRUST was not attacked, and its batteries responded immediately and with telling effect to Al Haig's call for defensive fires. That, and the Dobil Defenses --the foxholes of the soldiers-- were main contributors to the Unit's winning a Valorous Unit Citation. They creamed the 27th Regiment.

As the G-3, I can testify that the Division set up a huge reception for the 271st. I talked that evening directly to Haig about artillery and air support of all flavors. We were cocked and loaded. But in the end, it was the Blue Spaders who had to do the fighting and the dying. They had to last until the full weight of our fires could be felt. They did it just right. They lost nine killed and 32 wounded, but the 271st left 609 bodies on the battlefield, and just 5 wounded.

INTERVIEWER: What happened after Ap Gu and Junction City II?

GEN. GORMAN: Well, I left shortly after the battle of Ap Gu for attachment to MACV headquarters. But I know that we subsequently learned that COSVN was sufficiently impressed by the series of costly disasters that befell its troops in late 1966 and early 1967 that it directed its commanders to avoid further regimental attacks, and to concentrate on small unit operations. Moreover, while we were congratulating our commanders, they were relieving and censoring theirs. COSVN had an unhappy time that winter-spring of 1967. You see, General Rogers was right, those operations — CEDAR FALLS and JUNCTION CITY really were a turning point.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let's return to stateside training. When you arrived in the Infantry School in 1971 as the Assistant Commandant, did you find the teaching environment different from that which you experienced as a lieutenant? What, in your view, were the problems that you found when you arrived and how did you try to fix them?

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GEN GORMAN: First of all, I arrived with a chip on my shoulder. I had been a brigade commander out in Vietnam for a year, commanding the 1st Brigade of the 101st. I had written the school repetitively pointing out that soldiers were arriving in my brigade who could not even zero an M16, let alone shoot it in combat. I wrote that I was having grave difficulty getting soldiers to hit moving targets. The elusive guys in the jungle were not in much danger from my marksmen. I wrote that the young officers and NCOs that I was getting out of their rapid production facilities were bereft of fundamental tactical notions of getting fire initiated to protect movement. Basic tactical issues just did not seem to have gotten into these guys heads. I appealed to the school for help, for example, in setting up remedial instruction in Vietnam. I was looking for help in what are the best kind of ranges that I could build. I would be answered something out of the instructional vault file referring to the fixed ranges at Fort Benning. I didn't get any help from the School. What I got was bunk, you know, someone send this crazy colonel a letter and get him out of our hair. Nobody back there took an interest in us out in the line, at war.

So, I arrived concerned about the lack of focus at the School on the line, where the pay-off is. I found an Infantry Officers Advanced Course that was almost wholly taught inside a modern air-conditioned building. I found that the Infantry School --supposedly dedicated to preparing infantry officers for duty in the infantry battalions of the Army, the majority of which were mounted had little by way of curricula content or symbology that would have suggested that graduates had to be ready for mounted warfare. To the contrary, the statue out front said it all. The guy with the rifle aloft, the "follow me" arm wave. I arrived there convinced that infantry soldiers existed to control ground and people. Yet tactical instruction at the Infantry School didn't take place on the ground. Now to go back to your question about change from when I was a lieutenant? Sure there was change, because in the years that I was there with school troops, there were more problems out on the ground where students did work with soldiers and things went bang, and mortars and artillery was fired, and some reality, some ground truth existed. By the time I got there, the advanced course student was chair bound. I thought that was just deplorably bad form. I don't remember the exact figures, but my memory is that something like 90 percent of the Advanced Course and 80 percent of the Basic Course were classroom exercises of one

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kind or another. I felt the proportions ought to be precisely the other way around, particularly in the Basic Course. I could not understand how the School expected to teach lieutenants platoon leading inside a classroom.

Well, I ran into most of the problems which [G.C.] Marshall had, but I had a substantial amount of difficulty that he didn't have to put up with. First of all, the Chief of Staff sent me down to Benning not to be the AC [Assistant Commandant] but to run the Board for Dynamic Training, and so the AC post at the school was an additional duty. The colonels of the school faculty made it known that they didn't need much help, they were doing fine. "Just go about doing your business, general, we will take care of that school." There was a room on the top floor of the building where the department head meetings were held, with the biggest table I ever saw. I would walk in there, a colonel, not even a real general. Here were ranks of colonels all around this huge, long table -- old guys, grizzled veterans, all of them deeply skeptical of anything the upstart new BG had to say. Tough kind of an environment to operate in.

Was the School at Benning doing its job right? No, those colonels were doing a bad job of it.¹³

I didn't get much help. The Chief of Staff [General Westmoreland] came down to talk to the classes, and he got off a speech which nearly created a mutiny, about how the Army had been, because of the rapid expansion in Vietnam, filled up with a lot of crud. A lot of officers out there didn't deserve to be officers, company commanders that shouldn't have been allowed to command platoons, etc. Well, he could have been talking about 9 out of 10 of the guys in the audience. Those officers really got angry that the Chief of Staff of the Army came down to insult them like that. The Chief said that the Army was going to cleanse itself and run the "crud" out. That wasn't the politic thing to say. Westie had a fixed idea, incidentally, that all of the woes of the Army came from the bottom. He was totally unprepared for contrary news, from his Board for Dynamic Training, that the problem was head space and timing at the top.

I had that Board on my hands through December. Then, right after the first of the year the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army sent me a message saying certain government lawyers were coming down to talk to me, and wanted me to know that the Army supported them. These government lawyers showed up and

¹³ Major General Paul F. Gorman, The Infantry Officer Advanced Course: A Case for Reform, 30 November 1973. [73a2InfAdv CrseNov.pdf] Major General Paul F. Gorman, Presentation, Instructional Managers' Seminar, Fort Benning, GA, 25 September 1975. [75b2InstgrMgrSemSep.pdf.]

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said, "We are going to prosecute Daniel Ellsberg and since you were his immediate supervisor, you are going to be the principal witness for the government." So I fired a message back to the Vice Chief.

INTERVIEWER: Was that General Palmer Sir?

GEN GORMAN: Yes. My message said that it was clear to me that I could not be the Assistant Commandant of the Infantry School, and serve in any other job at the same time. I had proven that to myself, with the Board for Dynamic Training, that I simply could not take on this prosecution assignment and still remain the assistant commandant. I said, "I haven't been promoted yet, so it is easy enough for me to take off the star, and I'll go out and do the trial thing as a colonel, but relieve me of the business here. As far as the star is concerned, I never wanted to be a general anyway." Well, my old friend, General Berry, who was a major general running MILPERCEN [United States Army Military Personnel Center], got me on the phone and said, "You fool, do you realize that message is all over the building." I said, "But sir, it was a back channel." He said, "That ensures that it is going to be all over the building. You have to know that General Palmer is hopping mad. You are very likely to get exactly what you ask for." I said, "Well, as far as that is concerned, that's great."

Fortunately, the AVCS [Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, Army, General DePuy] weighed in on the issue, and convinced General Palmer that the answer was to relieve me of the Benning AC job, put another guy in at Benning, send me out to Fort Carson, and let me be assigned as the Assistant Division Commander while I did the trial thing -- kind of have your cake and eat it too. The Secretary of the Army approved, so they did that. In any event, I physically departed Benning within 10 months of my arrival, so I never really had a chance to work on Infantry School issues.

Eventually I did. In my subsequent assignment to TRADOC, I convinced General DePuy, then commanding TRADOC, of what had to be done. The Basic Course was reorganized in tactical units around tactical officers, and put into the field for most of its instruction. And a substantial part of the Advanced Course was conducted in the field. I must tell you that there was staff agonizing. Fort Benning didn't want to cooperate. They just loved the pointer-podium-poop method of teaching. That's what they were good at, and they didn't want to waste the time --that's literally what they said-- getting out on the ground.

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INTERVIEWER: Sir, with your permission, I would like to aim the discussion at the Board for Dynamic Training because it was focused primarily in training in units.¹⁴

GEN GORMAN: But let's make a point right here. One of the findings of the Board for Dynamic Training, made quite independently of me I assure you, was that the schools were irrelevant to training in units.

The models or forms of training used in the Schools could not be used except in the school, and they were scarcely dynamic. You know, pointer, podium, and poop. If the Chief of Staff wanted dynamic training in the units of the Army, then the schools had to teach dynamically. If you want to teach officers how to train in units, you ought to provide them role models in their schools in how to go about doing that training. Why did we go to tactical officers, teaching on the ground in the Basic Course? Because that's the way officers ought to function in their units. We wanted lieutenants to see somebody functioning as they should in a unit, hands on, do-it sort of behavior. Don't give lectures on the maintenance of armored vehicles, maintain armored vehicles, use actual armored vehicles to teach how. Don't spend a lot of time agonizing over the principles of tactics, get them out and confront the principles on the ground, confront the realities of tactics. Then talk about the principles after the students screw them up. They will remember them that way. That sort of recommendation came through loud and clear from the Board, and it's directly germane to how the schools ought to do their business.

Further, I still believe that as a general principle that schools ought to be better linked with the force. That is still an unresolved problem for the Army. When I was down at Benning, I used to give lectures about the fact that the Army was going to change and change rapidly. That what we were teaching officers in 1971 was going to be outmoded by 1975, and that we ought to be looking for ways to update graduate Infantry officer memory banks, to show them the latest and best in Army infantry tactics and doctrine. We ought to be looking for ways to extend the power and influence of the Infantry School. Often I spoke on this theme to that long table of colonels, to those grizzled, skeptical faces turned up at me. I was getting nowhere. I use to cite the experience of the schools in England, the so-called universities without walls, where the students were distributed and yet the instruction met high

¹⁴ Continental Army Command, Reports of the Board for Dynamic Training, 17 December 1971. Vol. 1, Executive Summary, Vol. 2, Final Report. [Reports of the Board for Dynamic Training.pdf.]

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standards and credible degrees are granted. Why, I asked, can't we be doing this at Fort Benning, make this School a learning power house for the Infantry throughout the Army? That is one of the things that the colonels presented to me when I left [retouched picture of the Infantry School building without walls].

INTERVIEWER: Sir, is there anything that you would like to discuss about your involvement with the trial of Daniel Ellsberg? I was completely unaware of that and don't have it anywhere. We can ignore it and we can move on.

GEN GORMAN: Well, there have been books written about that.

INTERVIEWER: Yes Sir, there have. I did not research it, but if you wish to discuss it we can, if not, we can just continue.

GEN GORMAN: It doesn't have a lot to do with military professionalism. I guess the main thing about it is that when told to do it, I tugged my forelock and said, "Yes Sir," and went off and did it. But it was not a very happy experience in any sense, professionally diverting, and personally stressful.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, your next assignment in an academic environment was as the DCST [Deputy Chief of Staff for Training] at TRADOC [United States Army Training and Doctrine Command]. As with the issue on the Board for Dynamic Training, I would propose that we discuss at this juncture only your involvement with the changing of the school houses or the institutions, and reserve treating the revolution of unit training that also went on for the section on such training. Sir, while you were the DCST the service schools transitioned, as you have discussed, from a class-room based approach to a performance based approach. How much resistance was there with this concept, and again, how were you able to make this happen?

GEN GORMAN: Well, we mentioned a couple of times how resilient these institutions of ours are. They are just inherently resistant to change, conservative institutions in the best sense of the term. That is both their strength, in that they are not likely to lend themselves to the latest fads, gismos, and

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gadgets, and it is a weakness in the sense that if the question is modernization in any sense --equipment or concepts-- they are not very good at it. They are not useful change agents; they are better at confirming and preserving what is, than at changing, at modernizing. In an Army that wanted to modernize, an Army that wanted to move ahead conceptually from years of focus on counterinsurgency in Vietnam to issues in high intensity warfare, the schools were not very adroit. The Army was not well served by its schools in the early '70s. The Army of course, let's remind ourselves, was coming up out of Vietnam. It was going down in size quite dramatically, and it was shifting from a draft-supported force to a volunteer-supported force. It was attempting to come to grips with the severe deterioration of the Army in Europe that had been occasioned by the emphasis on South East Asia. And it was attempting to deal with the set of tactical issues that emerged from the 1973 war in Israel.

I am well aware that TRADOC has been accused of being overly focused on the Israeli experience in 1973, and not sufficiently critical of said Israeli experience. But before leaping to judgments like that, remember that the United States drew down its war reserves in Europe to keep Israel secure. Israeli armor and aircraft loss rates, in that war, were a very cold shock to American planners. Moreover, I think these were a chilling experience for the Israelis. What had happened before the war in Israel is that they had come to the conclusion that they only needed to have tanks and aircraft to win. The armor force, in particular, had ignored the proper development of infantry. Early in the war Egyptian infantry creamed Israeli armor -- first of all, Israeli air ran into a Soviet-style mobile air defense umbrella. Then Egyptian infantry armed with the Sagger did a number on Israeli tanks in the Sinai. There was some rapid scrambling within the Israeli armed forces to adjust. In our own thinking, their experience was a marvelous reminder of the validity of combined arms.

Did I ever tell you the story of the APCs out in front of the Infantry School building at Benning?

INTERVIEWER: No sir, not from you. I have heard General Livsey tell a form of the story.

GEN GORMAN: When I got down to Benning, I discovered that for all intents and purposes, near as you could determine, all Infantryman were in leg outfits or airborne outfits, but none were in the armored infantry business. I looked at the MOSs [military occupational specialty] of the people on

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the faculty, and I couldn't find many who carried a 1560 MOS [armored infantry officer] like I carried. Yet the fact was that most active infantry rode to war on an M-113. I decided we had to do something dramatic. The statue out front [of a dismounted infantry leader] was a symbol, so we needed other symbols. I caused to be positioned out there in front the first of the APCs (armored personnel carrier) - - the World War II half track -- the first of the covered APCs -- the M75, -- together with an M59 --the predecessor of the M113 -- as a kind of a visual reminder that beside the soldier afoot, there were other infantry fighting formats important in the past, and likely to be significant in the Infantry's future.

I must say that I was somewhat taken back by what happened when I said let's do this. I had the impression someone would drive up and park the vehicle, and I was therefore unprepared for the digging, the pouring of concrete, and all of the huge public works that I precipitated out front. I invited George Patton, an old friend, to come down from Knox where he was the Assistant Commandant, for the dedication. I got there in September; we had the dedication of these display vehicles in November. It was to be a big media event, television cameras, bands, bleachers for people to sit in. I got up and explained why we were there, and thanked everybody for coming, and then I asked my colleague and good friend from Fort Knox to talk. George got up in front of the podium, looked around right and left, and said, "There are only two [blank] branches in this Army. The rest of them are just hangers on. There are only two branches that can close with the enemy and kill." Here artillery officers turned red, and engineers and other branches began leaving. George larded his remarks with four letter words, carried by public television for downtown Columbus and the surrounding region. Some faint hearts had kittens right there on the spot. But, we got through Patton all right.

George Patton stressed exactly the right kind of point: in mounted warfare, it is the cooperation between the armor and the infantry that really gains the ground, holds on to ground, and defeats the enemy. You've got to have combined arms, or you don't win at modern war.

I guess it was only a matter of a month after I departed the Benning scene for Fort Carson, that the vehicles disappeared. I don't know who ordered them off post. The next time I came back to Benning, they were gone. The cement pads were still there, but the vehicles were gone. I began then, regularly in my speeches, to refer to this as an example of the mental inability of our profession to

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accommodate to the realities of the modern world. I'd go into a description of the Israeli experience. You know, it is possible for infantry to have the same arrogance -- read stupidity -- as did the Israeli armor. Well, after a few months of such speeches, the vehicles reappeared. I don't know whether they are there today. I suppose they are.

But in point of fact, you see, it was important to kind of get those points reestablished with the force, particularly since the Infantry School always insisted that it was its ambition to come out with an infantry fighting vehicle. They had the vehicle called the Bradley on the drawing board at the time. The Steadfast Reorganization, which put TRADOC into business, dismantled the Continental Army Command, and set up a Forces Command to command the troop units in CONUS, and be responsible for their training and administration. The schools were combined with the Combat Developments Command, the schools then assuming the function of combat development under TRADOC.

It was therefore important that the schools begin looking forward. In fact, one of General DePuy's ideas was to get each school out of its mold of focusing on what's past and turn instead to more of what's future. Here was the Infantry School wanting an infantry fighting vehicle, the Bradley, when it couldn't even in good conscience allow armored vehicles to be displayed at its doorstep. Not a school likely to succeed. I think, it was fortuitous for the Army that we had that Steadfast Reorganization. Whether the reorganization can persist is another matter, as is whether anybody else but General DePuy could have made it go. On the fundamental question, I thought Steadfast certainly was good for the Army upon implementation. I'd say it was the salvation of the Army at that point of time. The Army needed something like that, needed a forward looking, aggressive, progressive move, and it got it.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, during this period, how much change went on at Leavenworth at the Command and General Staff College as TRADOC and the Army were focusing on radically restructuring the Basic Course, moving to cut the Advance Course, and focusing on training vice education, and in the field rather than in the classroom? What was going on at Leavenworth at the time vice what the Training and Doctrine Command wanted to have going on?

GEN GORMAN: I guess the answer to that is not much. Leavenworth was the most resistant of the schools, and the one most difficult to manage. There was a lot of talk at Leavenworth

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about modernization, with a lot of emphasis on introduction of the computer, which was the thing that was going to modernize the course. Officers were required to learn BASIC so that they could do programming. Also, there was a lot of talk about modernizing the curriculum to add more electives. There was hype about making Leavenworth a degree-granting institution. There was a chatter about qualifications of instructors, meaning academic qualifications of instructors. In short, there was a lot of bumph that didn't have much to do with fighting the Army or fighting anybody. Leavenworth had a lot of tendency, it looked to me, toward civilianization. Leavenworth had struck me, and a number of other people, as marching boldly in the wrong direction. I don't want to be critical of any personality. The issues I think were bigger than any personality. I am not sure if I had been the Commandant at Leavenworth, things would have been much different because it is so tough an outfit to turn around. But, there were a lot of indications that we were in deep trouble out there.

There was, for example, a flare-up involving student reaction to some visiting lecturers. The students took the position that the Army was wedded to a policy of condoning dishonesty in senior officers. The affair was not unlike, incidentally, the kind of criticism that was manifest in that Army War College student report of 1971 or so. Something like that came up at Leavenworth, a sufficiently big brouhaha out there that the Chief of Staff got involved, and there was staff fluttering in Washington. To me, it represented a manifestation that somehow we were not meeting the professional expectations of officers in the C&GSC class. What was going on out there didn't make much sense to them as soldiers. What was going on out there was not, in their view, conducive to their professional development. In any event, it indicated that Leavenworth needed operating on. The question was what were some of the things that could or should be done.

I had my opportunity to take a close look at Leavenworth for the first time when General DePuy sent me out to head up the annual inspection of the post. I took out the TRADOC IG team, and I went along as the senior representative of Commander, TRADOC. Because I was the TRADOC program director for education and training, I spent most of my time inspecting the C&GSC itself. [I did learn on that trip that one of the activities at Leavenworth that TRADOC was responsible for was the Army prison there, and that the prison had a number of income producing activities, one of which involved its selling chicken manure. I caused there to be printed a number of paper sacks with the TRADOC insignia on it, filled with that product, and brought these back to Fort Monroe. What it said on the bag was

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something to effect, "you know we are in this business, but bet you didn't know we produced the real thing." I presented one of these to Bill DePuy and others to his general staff officers, but the Commander didn't think it was the least bit funny.]

In any event, I spent most of my time at Leavenworth inspecting the C&GSC. Interestingly, there was a lot of emphasis on information modernization: application of the computer to learning. But they meant learning in the sense of the individual, learning in the sense of word processing. There was no attempt to use the computer, let us say, for wargaming, no attempt to connect it to fighting wars. I was out there with the IGs late in the spring. The class of the Command and General Staff College was within a week or so of graduation. They then were involved in the very first war game of their year. Almost all students, when I called individuals in, said that "we should have been doing this all year instead of what we have been doing, because that is what I joined the Army for." The defense of the faculty, incidentally, was that the students weren't ready for war games. "We can't put students in unstructured environments until they have all the fundamentals mastered; you have to show them the procedures before you can let them fly, you know." Hence, the theory of learning at Leavenworth was no more elevated than the theory of learning was at Quantico, or at Fort Benning.

Interviewer: On 12 May 1988 you testified with Gen. W.Y. Smith, USAF, before the Panel on Military Education of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives. What was the purpose of these hearings and from your perspective, what was the focus of the panel?¹⁵

GEN GORMAN: I believe that the transcript of the hearings speaks for itself, and I have made a copy available to you [Reference is to H.A.S.C. No. 100-125, Professional Military Education, Hearings before the Panel on Military Education of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, One Hundredth Congress, First and Second Sessions]. But by way of background, certain staffers of the House Armed Services Committee --including former Army officers like Col. Arch Barrett-- persuaded Congressman Ike Skelton of Missouri that the officer schools of the armed forces were not serving the Nation as they should, particularly in their failure to educate "strategists." Ike inserted several speeches into the Congressional Record on the subject to herald an investigation of the shortcomings of education for military officers, and with the cooperation of the Pentagon, conducted a year or more of hearings.

¹⁵ House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, Military Education Panel, Washington, D.C., Thursday, May 12, 1988, pages 811-844. General Paul F. Gorman, U.S. Army (Ret), Joint Service: Plans and Operations, The Ira C. Eaker Distinguished Lecture on National Defense Policy, Number 8 (Colorado Springs, CO: United States Air Force Academy, 21 April 1986). Eaker speech is included in record of testimony.

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I am not sure how Bill Smith and I ended up testifying together. I suppose that the Staffers thought they were presenting a pair of former CINC's. But Bill Smith and I had been housemates at Harvard, and fellow-members of the faculty of the Department of Social Sciences at USMA; we were, moreover, close friends of many years --in each other's wedding, trading visits with family, vacationing together. It just happened that we agreed that one should not expect the service schools to produce strategists, and that most strategists were the product of self-development rather than formal schooling. In any event, one should read our testimony with the understanding that, while we in no sense concerted beforehand what we were going to say, we were pretty much agreed on most matters of interest to Ike and his Panel.

One aspect about which I believe Congressman Skelton had been grievously misled was the notion that George Marshall was an exemplary product of the Army's schools. I took issue with the Congressman during the hearings, and subsequently wrote a paper on Marshall and the schools. I will provide a copy of that paper as well (The Secret of Future Victories, IDA Paper P-2653. February 1992)

INTERVIEWER: What was the thrust of your testimony?

GEN GORMAN: Professional education is, and ought to be, a life-long process. If the service schools fall short of expectations, it is because of their present inability to remain relevant and useful to any officer as he matures in the profession, and assumes higher ranks and heavier responsibilities. Strategists are inherently joint staff officers or unified commanders; practical experience in joint assignments, in war or in exercises, is fully as important as schooling in developing strategists. But above all, strategists emerge from self-discipline and self-study.

INTERVIEWER: I believe that during the hearing a member suggested that you "undervalued" the Professional Military Education process. Do you believe that was a fair assessment?

GEN GORMAN: No, of course not. I believe firmly in the worth of institutional training for officers. But I worry about placing over-reliance on same, especially in a time of constrained service budgets when unit training and field exercises might be cut back, for like Marshall, I believe that officers need a leavening of experience with troops.

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INTERVIEWER: What can the Nation do to assure that we can produce competent strategists in the future?

GEN GORMAN: Support continuing education for senior officers. See what I said in my testimony, pages 839 ff.

INTERVIEWER: What are your feelings on those aspects of the Goldwater/Nichols Act which talk to joint service schools and joint service assignment requirements which are intended to support the CINC's?

GEN GORMAN: In my testimony (pp. 815 ff.) there is a copy of my remarks at the Air Force Academy in April 1986. I think my "feelings" are evident there. Incidentally, unknown to me as I talked to the USAFA Cadet Corps, I was being broadcast on Public Radio in Colorado Springs, and my comments on Senator Hart seem to have evoked a measure of contrary "feelings" in that city that night.