Senior Officer Oral History Program

An Oral History of

General Donn A. Starry

Edited by - Dr. Lewis Sorley

U.S. Army Military History Institute

FOREWORD

This oral history transcript has been produced from an interview with General Donn A. Starry, USA, Retired, conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Matthias A. Spruill and Lieutenant Colonel Edwin T. Vernon, USA, edited by Dr. Lewis Sorley, as part of the AY 1986 US Army War College/US Army Military History Institute's Senior Officer Oral History Program.

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RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

of

DONN ALBERT STARRY, General

YEARS OF ACTIVE COMMISSIONED SERVICE Over 35

DATE OF RETIREMENT 30 June 1983

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED
The Ground General School, Basic Course
The Armor School, Basic and Advanced Courses
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Armed Forces Staff College
United States Army War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES
United States Military Academy - BS Degree - Military Science
George Washington University - MS Degree - International Affairs

RECENT MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

FROM	TO	ASSIGNMENT
Aug 66	Jun 67	Chief, Plans Branch, later Operations Branch, Operations Division, G3, (Mechanized and Armor Combat Operations in Vietnam Study Group, 3 Jan 1967 to 21 April 1967), United States Army Vietnam
Aug 67	Mar 68	Operations Research Analyst, Weapons Systems Analysis Directorate, Office, Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army, Washington, DC
Apr 68	Feb 69	Staff Officer, later Military Staff Assistant, Directorate of Organization and Management Planning, Office, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Administration), Washington, DC
Feb 69	Nov 69	Chief, Combat Studies Branch, Research and Analysis Division, later Deputy Chief, Operational Plans Division, Office, Assistant Chief of Staff, J-3, United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam
Nov 69	Jun 70	Commander, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Vietnam
Jul 70	Apr 71	Deputy Director, Operations Directorate, Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, United States Army, Washington, DC
May 71	May 73	Director, Manpower and Forces, Office, Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, United States Army, Washington, DC

DONN ALBERT STARRY, General

RECENT MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

FROM	TO	ASSIGNMENT
Jun 73	Feb 76	Commanding General, United States Army Armor Center, Commandant, Armor School, and Commanding General, United States Army Training Center, Fort Knox, Kentucky
Feb 76	Jun 77	Commanding General, V Corps, United States Army Europe
Jul 77	Jul 81	Commanding General, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia
Aug 81	Jun 83	Commander in Chief, United States Readiness Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida

PROMOTIONS	DATES OF APPOINTMENT Temporary	Permanent
2LT		8 Jun 48
1LT	21 Dec 49	8 Jun 51
CPT	8 Jun 53	29 Oct 54
MAJ	27 Jun 58	8 Jun 62
LTC	18 Feb 63	8 Jun 69
COL	19 Dec 67	8 Jun 73
BG	1 Apr 71	15 Sep 75
MG	1 May 73	21 Mar 77
LTG	6 Feb 76	
GEN	1 Jul 77	

US DECORATIONS AND BADGES

Defense Distinguished Service Medal
Distinguished Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster)
Silver Star
Legion of Merit (with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters)
Distinguished Flying Cross
Soldier's Medal
Bronze Star Medal with V Device (with Oak Leaf Cluster)
Air Medals
Joint Service Commendation Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster)
Army Commendation Medal
Purple Heart

SOURCE OF COMMISSION USMA

As of 30 June 1983

Interview with General Donn A. Starry

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Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Vernon

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U.S. Army Military History Institute

USAWC/USAMHI SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
PROJECT NO: 1986
INTERVIEWEE: General Donn A. Starry, USA Retired
INTERVIEWERS: Lieutenant Colonel Matthias A. Spruill
Lieutenant Colonel Edwin T. Vernon
INTERVIEW DATES: 15-18 February 1986

[Begin Tape S-196, Side 1]
INTERVIEWER: Sir, we'd like to ask you to relate to us where you were born and grew up, and bring us up to the time that you came in the Army.

GEN STARRY: Okay. I was born in New York City. My dad was employed by what's now Kraft Cheese, Kraft Foods. They moved from New York when I was, I guess, six months old and went back to Kansas, where my mother had been born and raised. According to my dad--in his later years--because he didn't want to raise a kid in New York City. So they went back to my mother's home. My father was born and raised in Iowa, in a little town near Cedar Rapids, and he was an orphan. His mother died when he was two, and his dad died when he was six. Mrs. Starry adopted him. She was a widowed lady who had lost a daughter when the daughter was about 19. So there she was, without a family of her own, and the Lacock family, of which my father was a part, was now without a mother and father. So the townsfolk, as was the custom in country farm communities in those days, took in the kids. Some of them were old enough to fend for themselves, like 15 or 16. The younger ones they just took in and raised as members of their own family. Turns out, my dad was the only one who was formally adopted by the people with whom he stayed. So Mrs. Starry adopted him, and his name was changed. There was nothing for him to go back to, there was no place to go home. In World War I he served in the Tank Corps. When he came back from World War I, he went back to Iowa, and spent--he was a graduate of

Cornell College--a year or so teaching school in a town in Iowa. I guess he decided that wasn't for him and was lured off to Boston by a Tank Corps buddy, named Bill Helms, who was the son of an elder Helms, the founder of Goodwill Industries of America. The idea was that my dad and Bill Helms--who had been buddies during the war--were going to go to work in Goodwill Industries of America, which Dr. Helms was just starting. My dad went to Kansas City and married my mother, whom he had met in college, and took her off to the East Coast with him. Eventually, he decided he didn't want to stick with the Helms organization and went to work, first for Marshall Fields, then as the Export Manager for Kraft. In spite of the fact that he should have stayed with Kraft--it would have been a good job in years to come--after I was born they decided to go back to Kansas. I think he always regretted, really, that he never either stayed in the Army or accepted a commission during World War I, because he had an affinity for the military. So he joined the Kansas National Guard in about 1926, whenever it was they got back to Kansas City. He became a company commander in the Guard until they mobilized in 1940. He went to World War II with the 35th Division in 1940. As the division mobilized, most of its officers, considered too old, were reassigned someplace else. The division that went to war in Europe had in it few of the people who had grown up with the division. Some of them stayed, but a lot of them went on. He wound up serving in Washington for much of the war. I guess my desire to be a soldier started with my affiliation with Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry, which my father commanded for years, as long as I can remember, between the wars. And, as kids will, I was the company mascot, went to summer camp with them, and went on their weekend marches with them. I suppose that was what started my interest and whetted my appetite for military service. Somewhere along the line somebody described West Point to me. I decided I wanted to go there. I grew up with that notion, and about the time I was a freshman in high school I started taking the Civil Service Commission examinations that members of the Congress could use to select appointees to West

Point. There were no SAT [scholastic aptitude test] scores in those days. There were no college entrance exams to use as a standard, so the Civil Service Commission created these exams and then Congressmen--a lot of them just to avoid the image of political favoritism--would give the examination, and then allege, of course, that they were giving the appointments out on the basis of who did best on the exams. They were tough and comprehensive examinations and, if you didn't have some experience in taking that kind of exam, you were apt not to do well. So most of us who competed in those days went and took them several times before we actually took them for record. I wasn't even old enough to go to West Point when I took it the first time, and I think I took it twice before I finally took it to try to get an appointment. Meanwhile, the war came along, and I graduated from high school--in 1943. The war was going on, and I felt like I was shirking my duty to my country if I didn't join up. So, I went down and turned myself in to the draft board and was inducted into the Army. Meanwhile, I spent a couple of months going to one of the preparatory schools in Washington to cram people for the exam. I took the exam and was awarded an appointment by Senator Capper from Kansas. Somebody beat me out for the West Point appointment, but I was the second high man in his scoring list, so he offered me an appointment to Annapolis. I didn't want to go to Annapolis. So, I called the guy who had the West Point appointment on the phone, and found out that he wanted to go to Annapolis. So, the two of us approached Senator Capper and told him, "Have we got a deal for you. I'd like to trade. This gentleman wants to go to Annapolis and I don't, so we would like to trade appointments." So, that's what we did. That all happened in a matter of weeks, during which time-- shortly after that I guess it was--I went out and turned myself in to the draft board in Kansas City. I joined the Army at Fort Leavenworth in August of 1943 and, before we could complete any substantial amount of basic training, it was decided that all of the folks who were going to go to the military academies needed to be sequestered from the Army as a whole. So, they organized training units at Lafayette,

Cornell, and Amherst so that we could get out of the military training environment and study for the entrance exams, because you still had to take an entrance exam. So I went to Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, and spent the winter of 1943-1944 there. I took the entrance exams in the spring of 1944 and passed. So, I entered in 1944 with the Class of 1947--the curriculum was three years long at that point. Subsequently, when the war was over in 1945, West Point resumed a four-year course, so the Class of 1947 was split. At Annapolis, they simply split the class by academic order of merit. They took the top half and graduated them in 1947, and took the bottom half and graduated them in 1948. At West Point, they wanted an even split, but they didn't want to do it as it was done at Annapolis because there would always be that perception of the "dumb guys of 1948" and what not. That still hangs over that Annapolis class, incidentally. So, they offered a lot of inducements--among them flight training, amphibious training, and a lot of academic inducements to those of us who were willing to stay for the fourth year. By then we had completed, you see, two-thirds of the hundred and some odd number of hours required for graduation, but we were chronologically really only halfway through the curriculum. So, the last two years were really, from a lot of standpoints, pretty enjoyable. We did a lot of different things. I had a lot of time to read, and do a lot of things that I would never have done otherwise, in a curriculum where the workload was spaced out, particularly the third year. I really enjoyed that. And the only problem was that my girlfriend, who is now my wife, was hanging on at that point, and I had to strike a deal with her that it was all right to wait another year. That was the only awkward part of it, but it turned out all right for us. The flight training was really the fun part of the extended course. They had stopped flight training--that is, the commissioning of people out of West Point into the Air Corps--when the war was over. But they had the instructors, instructor pilots, and airplanes up at Stewart Field, so one of the things they did while they were phasing that training out was take our class -- now 1948 -- and teach us to fly. We

spent a whole summer up there in what would have amounted, I suppose, to the equivalent of primary training in the Air Corps. In the end we got a check ride and a flight physical, and those who were eligible on the basis of the flight physical and the check ride for service in the United States Air Force, which was then forming up as a result of congressional legislation that separated the Air Force, were posted on this list. I was among those who were going to graduate and be commissioned in the Air Force. That was two years away from graduation, and in those two years no one thought anything more about the matter. We were eligible, and we all went along with the idea in mind that we were going to be commissioned in the Air Force if we were on that list. So, in the spring of our senior year, they passed out a list asking what branch we wanted to be in. You listed them in order of preference. So, I wrote down Air Force in the first three blanks and left the rest of them blank because I was going to be in the Air Force according to the previous work that we had done. I took the flight physical again, and about two weeks before graduation I received a notice that I had been disqualified for flight training based on a piece of cartilage out of place in my nose--the result of a high school football injury. So we had a squabble between doctors. One doctor said, "It is disqualifying," and the other doctor said, "It is not disqualifying." While the doctors were squabbling, the administration at the Military Academy made out its list about who was going to graduate in what branch, and they'd taken those of us who were foolish enough to do what I had done and just ignored the process and put us in branches to fill the quotas. By the time the doctors got through with their squabbling and said, "Okay, I guess it's all right for him to go in the Air Force," the Adjutant at West Point--a tough lieutenant colonel--had made up his list, and he really said to me, "I'm not going to change my list just for some cadet like you. You're going to graduate in the Transportation Corps." So, I was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Transportation Corps. They also decided that those who were going to serve in service branches needed some combat arms training, so you spent two years in combat arms, then you reverted to your

basic branch, went to that branch school, and served in that branch. But you had to do this two years of combat arms training first. So I said, "Okay, I'll take the cavalry/armor as a two-year assignment," and then immediately began trying to figure out how I was going to get transferred, because I really didn't want to serve in the Transportation Corps or anyplace else, for that matter, having been somewhat less than happy about my friend, the Adjutant at West Point, deciding that he wasn't going to listen to my entreaties about the Air Corps. I decided that dream was gone--there's no sense in me going to fly airplanes now. What I had to do was get a branch of the service that I wanted to serve in and see what I could do with that. So the first year went by, and everything was fairly smooth, but it was just a little too early to seek a transfer. During the second year I really started working on how to get transferred to armor. We sent in several papers, and they all kept coming back indicating that it was too early yet. And then there was a squabble over whether or not you had to serve two years in a combat arms branch, and then two more years in your real branch, before you could transfer branches, or whether you could just do your two years and then transfer. So by that time, of course, I was in a battalion in Germany, in the 1st Division. It was the 63rd Tank Battalion which, at the time, was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Creighton W. Abrams Jr. George Patton, the younger, was in the same company. George would eventually become the company commander and I would be his executive officer. So Colonel Abrams is endorsing my great letters about how great it would be to have me in armor, and we're getting these non-responsive answers from Washington. Mrs. Patton--George's mother--came over to visit and we had dinner one night and I was telling her my story. So she said, "Well, I think we can do something about that." To this day--I don't know, and George doesn't know, because I asked him--I don't know what she did. I had orders to the 122nd Truck Battalion in Nuremberg, Germany, and was on the verge of--I didn't know whether to desert, go AWOL [absent without leave], or both, but, I was not going to the 122nd Truck Battalion in any way, shape, or form. Well, ten

days before that order became effective, I got a set of orders from the Department of the Army changing my branch and reassigning me to the 63rd Tank Battalion. To this day, I don't know who did it. Well, I do. Senator Cabot Lodge, whom Mrs. Patton contacted, bore in and got it done. So that began my career in armor.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back to high school for just a minute. Did you participate in class government there? You mentioned playing football. How many years did you play?

GEN STARRY: I played football for two years. I swam for three years and lettered in both sports. I was active in class government. I don't remember at the moment what offices I held in the class. I think I was the vice president or maybe the class president, I don't remember now. I played football, not very well, on a team that had some awfully good football players on it, one of which was not me. But they were a good bunch of guys and some of them, several of them, are friends of mine to this day. Good crew, super coach, and a good bunch of guys, but, they were out of my class. At that time in our city some of us had gone to junior high schools, which meant that you really only spent three years in the high school. But there were others, who did not have access to a junior high school, who went four years to the high school. So the big varsity athletes were all the four-year guys who started as freshmen and played their way through. If you came on in your sophomore year, from a junior high school, you were really not looked on as a big contender for the varsity, because they're only going to get maybe three years out of you. But there was no football, for instance, in junior high schools. So they didn't get ready-made football players, which meant that you spent your sophomore year making your way on the third string and, if you were really good, you might play second string in your junior and senior years. But it was a tough, really a tough row to hoe. So I came out of that junior high school environment and spent my sophomore year off and on the football field

trying to decide whether I wanted to hang around the third string or I really wanted to be on varsity. I played varsity my last two years, but I was behind a couple of pretty good guys. I played a little, not as much as I wanted to, but it was quite clear to me that they were a lot better than I was.

INTERVIEWER: After graduation from high school, how long was it before you actually entered West Point?

GEN STARRY: Well, I graduated from high school in June of 1943, spent a couple of months in the cram school, took the exam for West Point, and we went through the appointment business that I described and then I turned myself in to the Army in August. So I was inducted into the Army on something like the 13th of August 1943 and then entered West Point in June of 1944, the summer of the following year. Most of that winter I spent at Lafayette, involved in the academic program they had to get you ready to pass the entrance exams. I took the entrance exams in April, as I recall, and in May we knew that we were either going to go or not go. Those of us who did not go because we didn't pass the entrance exams, or for whatever reason, went back to the ranks of the Army, and those of us who had passed the entrance exam were given a couple weeks of leave and then we turned ourselves in at West Point on the first of June.

INTERVIEWER: So, all this time at Lafayette, you were considered to be on active duty?

GEN STARRY: Yes, I was a private in the Army. We took basic training, essentially, there in our spare time, but the bulk of the exercise was to go to class and get yourself ready to pass the entrance exam. We were all ranks. We had some lieutenants in that class who had come in from the field, but because they had an appointment, you see, the Army wanted to get them free from their military duties and let them study to take the

entrance exams. The entrance exams were far more difficult than the appointment exams, as a matter of fact, and it's a good thing they let us study because I don't think any of us would have passed had we been doing something else, focused entirely on something else, particularly something as rigorous as military training in those days, getting ready for war. None of us would have passed the entrance exam. It was a real good opportunity.

INTERVIEWER: In those days in 1943, you apparently felt a compulsion to join the Army because of the war going on. What did you feel about not getting into the war? Or was it the general consensus that the war was going to last long enough for you to get through West Point?

GEN STARRY: I don't remember. Someone asked me that question not long ago, and I don't remember ever giving it that much thought. There were some of us who did. One of my good friends, who was a super guy, was a young Jewish fellow from New York who did not have a principal appointment. He had a first alternate and the principal got in--that is, the principal passed his entrance exam. My friend's father went and somehow drummed him up a principal appointment for the next year, for which he did not have to take an exam, and he turned it down because he felt that, being Jewish and with the war going on, he really shouldn't do that. If you hadn't made it the first time around, for whatever reason--whether it was because you didn't pass the exam or because you didn't have a principal appointment--his view was that he wasn't authorized a second chance. So he went off to war. Unhappily he was killed the winter of 1944 in the Ardennes Offensive. And there were several people like that, but their reasons were more related to something like, "I'm Jewish, so I can't appear to be shirking," than anything else. I'm sure you saw it when you got to West Point--there were a lot of people who were there because their parents had gotten them appointments. Not everybody had to take an exam for the appointment. Their parents had

gotten them an appointment because they wanted to keep the kids from going to war. The kids themselves, I don't think, ever gave it much thought, and while I never thought of it quite that way, it was not easy to see in 1943 where and when the war was going to end. There was certainly no perception that it was going to end in 1945, and I thought to myself, "You've got to go to some kind of training. This isn't exactly an OCS [Officer Candidate School]. It's better than an OCS," and I really wanted to be a career Army officer. So I had the problem of how I was going to be a career Army officer if I didn't go to West Point--which was where all the career Army officers come from, or so I thought at the time. Not all of them, but in those days the perception was that's where they all came from. So how am I going to be a career Army officer without this as a background? And so it seemed to me that, in spite of the fact that I'm probably going to miss some of the war, it was better to do that then than to wait and try to do it later. But, as far as giving serious thought to it, I don't believe any of us really ever sat down and thought about it. Most of us were motivated, I think, a lot of us, by the notion that, "Hey, I want to do this as a profession, not because there's a war on, but because I want to be an Army officer." Given that, you then have to weigh it all out. In those days, of course, the perception was, if you didn't go to West Point, you weren't going to have a successful career in the Army. It wasn't true then, and it certainly isn't true now, but that was the perception.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that some of the people got into West Point on a political appointment, so they didn't have to take the exam. Did you notice a difference in example, motivation, dedication, attrition rates between the political appointees and the ones who had to work to get in?

GEN STARRY: Those of us who took a competitive exam for appointment had been to some kind of a school, some kind of a preparation course or a cram course. It was a Congressman's choice in those days whether he used the examination system or not. Those who had not been forced to

take the exam, of course, hadn't done any training at all, no preparation at all. My perception was, and still is, that those of us who had gone through the agony of that cram training were more highly motivated than the others. There were a lot of people in the ranks of those who just had political appointments who fell into the category of, "Dad got me this thing. I really don't want this. I want to be out doing what I was doing before. I was happy with that. I don't want to go to West Point." And you saw the effects of that, I think, in the numbers. Not so much in our class, although to some extent, but in classes which followed, when the war was over. There was an exodus. I'm not sure of the statistics. But, if you look at the statistics on those classes which entered during the years when the war was on, I think you'll find a greater number of them, at least during that time period, who left after the minimum amount of service, even after they got a commission, rather than staying on. The thing that struck me most about that whole process, I guess, was that among the people I was with in that training at Lafayette were some really good guys.
[End of Tape S-196, Side 1]

[Begin Tape S-196, Side 2]
GEN STARRY: But a lot of the good guys didn't go and, by and large, there were--some of the outstanding people, truly outstanding people--guys who did not get in. And that always bothered me, because my childhood image, I guess, as with all of us, was that West Point was where all the good guys go. In any group of guys, if you pick out the best ones, those are the people who are going to get into this place and become the officers for our Army. I guess that was my first of a long series of continuing disappointments about the place. Subsequently, over the years, I followed the careers of a lot of those people. They're successful lawyers, doctors, businessmen and what not, and they all did, almost without exception, what everybody expected them to do. They were great successes at what they were doing. They would have been very

successful Army officers, and the Army needed that kind of talent. Among people who went, there were some awful good guys in that group, too. But there were some, if you compared the lower half, let's say, of the group that got in to the upper half of the group that didn't get in, you would have had to exchange those groups and say, "That's not fair. We ought to put the good guys over there, put all the good guys in that place." Now, obviously, that's not going to happen.

INTERVIEWER: Of those that got in and graduated with you, do we have any more who achieved what you did?

GEN STARRY: I've forgotten the class numbers. I think we were fairly successful. We wound up being a small class. We were 600 in number when the class was split, so we graduated at 300, 301, as I recall, which is a very small class. I guess I'm the only Army four-star, but we had several Air Force four-stars and three-stars. We had several Army three-stars, one of whom, of course--Willard Scott--is the Superintendent at West Point now, still on active duty. Somebody will have some percentage numbers about that. I guess, percentage-wise, we were fairly successful with regard to the number who made general officer. Why there were more who got to the top in the Air Force than in the Army, I can't say. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Over the years, have you seriously regretted not being chosen to go into the Air Force?

GEN STARRY: Not really. It's a different world and, in retrospect, I grew up as a kid with soldiers in my father's National Guard company. They were as dedicated to their job in the National Guard in those days as were soldiers in the Regular Army. As a matter of fact, some of the best soldiers I've ever known were those National Guardsmen, looking back on it. They were really dedicated. My dad and his officers and most of his

NCOs [Noncommissioned Officer] would spend their weekends in that armory because they only had one of every piece of equipment needed for training--so it wasn't possible on drill nights to train everybody to use the one or two of everything that they had. They trained with wooden rifles and wooden crates painted to look like radios. They were really a dedicated bunch of people. A lot of them, because of the Depression, joined because of the money. It wasn't much, but it was something, so they joined because of the money and they stayed with it because of the money, but it was a very professional organization. And they spent an awful lot of their own time working. I grew up in that environment--with soldiers. In the Air Force, the officers do all the fighting. The airmen are technicians. It's a different world. It's one of things that's hard to explain to the Congress and other people in Washington when you try to explain the difference between the Army and the Air Force. The soldiers fight in the Army and the officers lead. The officers fight in the Air Force and the soldiers support the officers, and it's a totally different environment. I don't think, certainly in retrospect, I would have been nearly as gratified and satisfied with a career in the Air Force, from that standpoint, as I have been with my career in the Army, because I have a feeling of comradeship with the ranks, the soldier ranks and the noncommissioned ranks, of the Army, largely because I grew up with them, I suppose. You can't do that in the Air Force. Different relationship, totally different relationship.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose it was hard to discern this as a second lieutenant.

GEN STARRY: No inkling of it as a second lieutenant.

INTERVIEWER: Then the Air Force was just being formed about that time, and probably a person like you could have written your own ticket in there and helped form it the way you wanted to.

GEN STARRY: You know, I loved flying. Flying is really great fun.

INTERVIEWER: Have you done any flying since then?

GEN STARRY: Oh, yes. I've learned to fly helicopters and I've learned to fly the Army's fixed-wing aircraft. I have a thing about weapons and vehicles and equipment. It sort of goes like this: If I'm going to issue orders to people who operate that equipment, I really have to understand what it is they have to do to obey my orders. Therefore I have to fire it, or drive it, or shoot it, or fly it, or dig with it, or whatever it is that that thing does. So I tried to spend enough time going around just operating equipment so that I understood what the environment was in which those people would have to operate when I issued instructions. In the larger commands that I had, of course, that included such things as--when I had TRADOC [Training and Doctrine Command]--I'd go over to Langley and fly in F-15s. When I had REDCOM [Readiness Command] in Florida, I'd go out in the F-16s every once in a while--didn't have F-16s at Langley when I was there, because the people that I commanded in TAC [Tactical Air Command] as a REDCOM Commander were going to fly those things. So I wanted to know what kind of an environment those people were operating in, what the odds were for them and against them, given the instructions I had to issue them as a commander. I think that's essential. So I've had kind of a curiosity about equipment, but the curiosity stems from concern that I really had to feel comfortable, in my own mind, with the fact that the guys and the equipment could do and would do what I told them to do, and that it was fully within their capabilities. And, if there were risks in that, then I understood the risks before I issued the orders.

INTERVIEWER: How did you acquire that philosophy, sir?

GEN STARRY: I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Did somebody point you in [that] direction when you were a young officer?

GEN STARRY: I really don't know. I always admired the cavalry, the United States cavalry in the years when I was a mascot in my Dad's National Guard Company. Fort Riley, of course, was the place where they went to summer camp, and while my Dad was an infantryman, in an infantry division in the National Guard, Fort Riley was the home of the American cavalry during all those years. My father had some good friends in the regiments that were stationed at Fort Riley in those years. The thing that always impressed me about the cavalry was the officers. One is, they always spent more time, at least as much time, taking care of their animals and their weapons as they did taking care of themselves. Most units had a rule that you had to take care of the animals before you could take care of yourself. So the equipment and the weapons and the animals, the mode of transportation, if you will, were always of more concern than the individual soldier. That made a big impression on me as a kid even. I couldn't figure out why they were doing it that way, and then some sergeant explained it to me and I said, "Well, that makes a lot of sense." The other thing that impressed me was the officers took great pride in being best in their unit at whatever it was they did--horsemanship, marksmanship, stablemanship, if that's a good word, at whatever it was. I'm sure this was true in the Regular Army as a whole. I just happened to see it in the cavalry, but subsequently some people pointed out that it was probably truer of the cavalry than elsewhere. I'm not able to say. So they have those long cavalry rides, which were essentially individual officer, horse, weapons, equipment performance tests really, competitions, and stakes, cavalry stakes, plus the officers competed in the horse shows and so on. And I think those two things: one, they took care of their equipment and their animals before they took care of themselves; and the fact that the officers always, at least aimed at being better at everything the unit did, individuals in the unit did, than the individuals themselves. I

think those were the two things that I can remember impressing me early on, and when you got into the armored force, Lieutenant Colonel Abrams was an absolute nut about that sort of thing. The officer tank commander had to be the best tank commander in his platoon, or his company, or his battalion. When you went down range to fire, he went first, and there was never any argument, there was never any question about it. It was assumed that the officers went first. He went first, the company commanders went first, the platoon leaders went first because the officers were supposed to be out in front doing better than anybody else could do the things that soldiers were supposed to do, setting the example. He did it all the time, and I think that simply reinforced my perceptions as a kid growing up, that those are the important things.

INTERVIEWER: Give us your thoughts on the curriculum during your time at West Point and how it may have prepared you to be an officer. Was it adequate? I know it was condensed in those days. Have you looked back in the years since, and is it doing a good job now preparing people?

GEN STARRY: Well, of course the curriculum today bears no resemblance to the curriculum when I went there, which is probably a good thing. It was an engineering school in those days, which was a hangover from the 19th Century when somebody said West Point produced more railroad company presidents than it did generals, or words to that effect. The engineering culture continued, and I guess it does to this day to some extent, although in recent years I notice that, academically, the top guys go out in some branch other than Engineers, so it may be that we're getting away from that. But it was strictly an engineering school. The first liberalization of the curriculum came after World War II, and I guess that's why I enjoyed my last two years there as much as I did--because it was not strictly engineering. The social sciences got started. The political science department grew under Colonel Herman Beukema, and we were exposed in that third year, when

essentially we really had finished the course of instruction the year before. We were exposed to a lot of things that were a lot of fun, that were not in the engineering world, which have continued to grow over the years in the curriculum. West Point's problem, to me, then, and has been ever since, is, in a word, relevance. West Point is only useful to the Army if it can be relevant to the Army's problems and to the challenge of providing leaders for the Army. And if it doesn't do that, if it isn't relevant, then you have to wonder why you have the place. And, to the extent that you water that down by letting women into the student body, graduating into branches other than, as in olden times, the hard-core combat arms branches and so on, to the extent that you fragment all that stuff, you lose the general thrust of the thing in the first place. I've always maintained that, particularly in recent years, a young man who goes to a good college, that has a good curriculum and a good Professor of Military Science--who has been taken in by the college administration as a senior member of the faculty and treated that way--that young man, or woman, in today's world has an awful lot better chance of coping with the world in which he or she finds themselves when they join the Army than does a West Point graduate. And the place has always been isolated. It is even more isolated now, because they took that special regiment away. They don't see soldiers except when they go out in the summertime. Many of them have said to me that they have a hard time relating the world of soldiers that they find in the training centers and units that they go to in the summertime to the world at West Point and the tactics that are taught at West Point and so on. I believe now, and I have believed for the last 15 or 20 years, that the place is in a state of crisis, and the crisis is one of relevance. Should we disband it and abandon it? I don't think so, but at the same time, to the extent that we preserve that isolation, which is so easy to do up there, to the extent that we let the Academic Board and its overbearing influence on the kids' presence up there deprive it of its relevance to the rest of the Army, then we're doing ourselves a great disservice. I've been a critic of the place for years. It's not that I'm critical of West Point or the purpose of

it or anything else. I'm critical of the fact that it's lost its relevance, by and large.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about the admission of women into the Point?

GEN STARRY: Well, it wasn't breaking tradition so much that bothered me as it was that it just reflected a further deterioration of what the original purpose of the place was to be, whether that was right or wrong--training leaders essentially for the combat arms, and that, of course, was the basic argument against women at West Point. Being a public institution, I doubt that we could have staved off the admitting of women, but to all of those who went around saying, "Well, that's a terrible thing to do, to have to do," I just say, "We did it to ourselves," because over the years, first of all, we started commissioning people in all branches. There was a time when Military Intelligence was a high contender. I have nothing against Military Intelligence, but that just tells you that the warrior image is gone from the perception that the kids have up there--why they're going there, what their goals are. And, if the purpose of the place was to train warrior leaders, which it started out to be, then every time you degrade that image you've done yourself some harm. Given the social context of the times in which we made that decision, the decision was made, and we had no choice. We had a social revolutionary as the Secretary of the Army [Clifford Alexander], and that woman in a high position in the OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] staff who was a vocal militant gender activist. So, you know, there was no way to prevent it. If the purpose of the place is what we started out to have, women don't really belong there. But if you want it to just be another place that trains people and commissions them in any branch, then you've got to let girls in, and you've got to consider the issue of whether or not you want to have it at all.

INTERVIEWER: Would you like to see it go back to just being for the combat arms?

GEN STARRY: No. Having said what I just said, I have to admit that, to do that, you're trying to create an anachronism, and we have to live with it the way it is.

INTERVIEWER: How about women in the combat arms? We have women in Field Artillery in the missile units. In fact, when I was in Pershing, we had women soldiers and women officers. How do you feel about that?

GEN STARRY: It's a tough problem. I really believe that we have not tackled the problem. Women are a resource, a manpower resource that you should use in your armed forces, particularly with declining cohorts of 17 and 21-year-old males, which is what we're confronted with now. So you have to figure out some way to use them. Unfortunately, we introduced women into the military in a big way at a time when that was not the driving force at all. The driving force was equality--racial equality, sex equality, and so on, and that is not the proper basis on which to make the decision about how much of your military work force is going to be women, or anything else for that matter. So it was unfortunate that we had to make the decision at that time because the motivator, the societal motivator behind it was the wrong one. The Israelis, for example, have women in the Israeli Army; they have a lot of them. The girls are drafted just like the boys. They don't stay in the service quite as long. They have a specific set of jobs laid out for them. As a matter of fact, there are about ten women in every Israeli battalion, but they do specific jobs, and when the battalion goes to war, the girls go somewhere else. They know exactly where they're going to go, and exactly what they're going to do and who's going to supervise them; that's an organized system. They go to a division, essentially. If they're in a division, they go to division

headquarters, and there are jobs that they do there that are necessary to have done in time of war. It's a very well organized enterprise. But, if you go to the Israeli training camps, women are not mixed up with the men in the training. Women have a special training environment, specially tailored for the women, run by women, and they're trained to do the things that they do in those units. There are a lot of communications personnel and a lot of administrative people, but no cooks, because the cooks go to war with the men and the Israeli position on the matter is that war is a man's business. The war fighting part of it is a man's business. They've got a much cleaner establishment as a result of it. I was at Fort Knox when all of this was coming upon us, really. We went through the MOS [military occupational specialty] thing. I never will forget. We had two female generator mechanics in the air cavalry squadron that we had at Knox at the time. They were happy and everybody else was happy because generators, I don't need tell you, are a terrible problem. On a smaller scale, that's the biggest problem the Army has, all of those little field generating kits out there. Both of these ladies were very good at that. In fact, they were better than any man I had ever seen at maintaining the generators, and there are a lot of generators in the air cavalry squadron. Then someone decided, "Well, we can't have women in these units." We had the argument about being forward of the corps rear, forward of the division rear boundary and the brigade area, and all that argument was going on at the time about where the women could be on the battlefield. So someone decided that those girls should not be in that squadron because it was a category so-and-so unit and was deployed forward of the division rear boundary. So these women couldn't serve in it. They were both sergeants, and they came to see me. They said, "We want out." I counseled and argued with them a lot, and they said, "We want to stay in this unit. We're not combat Soldiers, that isn't the problem. The unit isn't really up there where the direct-fire shooting is going on, even though we may be likely to get blown away in the FARRP [Forward Area Rearm and Refuel Point] someplace. The FARRP is sure to be the point of attack for

someone, we understand that, but we do not understand why you Army fellows can't figure this out better." The unit wanted them to stay. People liked them and they were good soldiers, but we had to take them out of there, so they both quit. And I supported their request to resign from the Army because they were doing something they wanted to do in a place which they thought wasn't involved in combat at all, and the Army couldn't get its act together. We spent about five or ten years trying to get our act together, and I'm not sure we've got it together yet in that regard. I think the thing that saved us was when this administration got elected. The day after the election I called my friend General Shy [Edward C.] Meyer on the phone and suggested to him that we begin that reevaluation of how many women we should have and what jobs they should be in, which resulted in the present circumstance. But, I'll just tell you, we're only a democrat away from having that whole situation come back to us again. If the liberal democrats get back in office, all the things that we have staved off for the last several years, under this administration, will come back.

INTERVIEWER: Most of the opposition to women being in combat arms, other than the lifting requirements and the upper body strength and everything, appears to be a fear of mass casualties of women in combat and you would have demoralized male troops because of this. It appears to me that the chances of mass casualties are very great.

GEN STARRY: You're going to have casualties . . . .

INTERVIEWER: So I'm not sure that we've solved any problem, if that is the problem.

GEN STARRY: No. The real problem, you know, the first girl you put in the body bag is going to be a tear-jerking experience, that's the perception. I'm more concerned about the world of infantry soldiers, and the world of armor soldiers, the world of crewmen, the world of artillery

gun sections, the world where the living conditions are miserable and the nights are long and the days are longer, or vice-versa, and you've got problems with simple-minded things like keeping people clean, the disciplines that are necessary to do that in all kinds of weather, you get the latrine problem, the privacy problem. The further forward you put the girls, and the lower down you put them in the echelons of the fighting troops, the more those things become problems. That's a man's world. The girls don't belong out there. There are some girls who could make it out there very well, just as there are some men who don't make it very well out there, but that isn't the general rule and I just think we've got to keep them out of there. Should they be in brigade headquarters? I doubt it. Should they be in division headquarters? Certainly not in the division TAC [tactical command post]. Rear/Main, okay. Now, how you draw the lines on the battlefield to allow that to happen, I'm not quite sure, because, as you quite properly point out, you're going to have some casualties. It isn't the casualty part of it that bothers me as much as it is the world of the fighting soldiers. The militant gender activists want to put women in fighting crews. I think so many times of the miserable conditions under which those crews have to live in battle. You're going to put girls out there in that world?! Not on your life you're not. You just can't handle them. All of the privacy problems, the social problems of people living and working together in that environment, you just can't have the sexes mixed up out there in that world. You just can't.

[End of Tape S-196, Side 2]

[Begin Tape S-197, Side 1]

INTERVIEWER: Do you think women should be in separate units? For example, when they're taking basic training, should we put them in separate companies?

GEN STARRY: Well, I think that was necessary. We went too far, pushed by the social pressures. My complaint about the whole thing is that we never sat down and worked it out on the basis of how many people we needed--in the Army, particularly, and the services as a whole. We never examined how many people we needed, what jobs they could do, and how many we ought to take in as a resource problem as opposed to a social problem. The military forces of the nation are not, and should not be, used as a test bed for social reform.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned the Israeli example. It seems that any time you talk about women in the Army, or the military, the Israeli example always comes up. Unfortunately, the fact that the Israelis draft women in their Army is not presented.

GEN STARRY: Well, yes, I would argue that, if we're going to do it at all, we ought to do it like they do it. But you're quite right, what people normally perceive of them doing is not at all what they do. As a matter of fact, I have looked carefully at the Israeli female training program, and it probably lacks a little here and there. My wife was even a little bit upset about it because she knows basic training systems rather well, having lived around them most of her adult life, and she really didn't think they were doing enough for the girls, particularly in the case of simple self-defense kind of training with weapons. When we were in the old 63rd Tank Battalion in Europe in the early 1950s, we were--talk about being outnumbered now, my God, the odds then were enormous. I mean, the Russians didn't have as much good equipment as they've got now, but they had a lot of it, and the odds were, as far as we were concerned, overwhelming. We were the lone tank battalion in that whole European theater of operation. You look across the border, and, my God, as I said, the odds were overwhelming. Colonel Abrams got into a big argument with the administration one time about the evacuation of noncombatants. We had plans for that and, in those days, we had to have ten gallons of

water and two cases of C-rations and a bunch of blankets and whatnot stored in a closet inside the front door. You loaded them out every once in a while and you went someplace with them. I guess they sort of fell off that during the Vietnam War, but we used to do it all the time. We were over there when the Korean War started and President Truman made a decision to leave the dependents in place. It was a big thing to move them out. As a matter of fact, we even went so far as to ship home our excess household goods. We were told to get our belongings out of there because they were liable to have to take us out in the middle of the night. Once that was done, Colonel Abrams decided that the women and children might not get out of that place. So, if they didn't get out, then some of them might want to fight and they should be taught to use the weapons. So we took the wives out, and the older kids, those who wanted to, and taught them to be tank drivers, tank gunners, and fire the machine guns. As a matter of fact, for a long time on some models of tanks, my wife was one of the better tank gunners I've ever met. We had plenty of ammunition left over from the war, so we would go out on Sundays and put the wives and those who wanted to--those who didn't, we could give them something else to do--through a training program.

INTERVIEWER: We don't want to belabor the issue, but by the time that we had a substantial number of women in the Army, you were already at least a major general. Do you think that we are, or are we always going to have the same problems?

GEN STARRY: Well, I think we are. What you have said is that the young people will figure out how to make it work somehow, regardless of what us old folks say about it. The young folks, if they're there, will figure out how to make it work, but what you're describing is a situation in which we have said, "Okay, they can serve in these MOS's ." It's like my example with the air cavalry squadron. We never sat down and laid out the support train chain to demonstrate to ourselves where that really put

them. For example, we awakened one morning when I was the V Corps commander to discover that there were women in the 2nd Squadron of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. They were in the DSU [Direct Support Unit] which, because of the nature of that squadron's mission over there, and the fact that it's in another corps' sector but comes back home to fight the war, had an ordnance direct support unit right with them which had women in it, even though the squadron itself had no women in it. The same thing is true with medics and so on. You lay that corps support system out on the battlefield--as we tried to do when I was a corps commander--and you've got them up in the battalion field trains, tank battalion field trains, not artillery battalion field trains. So, as you say, the kids will accommodate, but some question is always raised that when casualties begin and the women get wounded, are the guys going to spend more time worrying about the girls that got hurt than they are about doing the mission? I don't think that's too much of an argument. I think you'll find that same problem with men, particularly in good units where there's a lot of cohesion. Your buddy gets hurt, there's always that tendency to--as a matter of fact, I got wounded in Cambodia, and I was still coherent enough to go around and kick them all in the ass and make damn sure they were going on with the mission and not worrying about me and the guys that got wounded with me.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm sure you're aware that the Israeli study bore out exactly what you are saying.

GEN STARRY: They'll stop the whole damn thing to take care of the wounded and completely ignore what they were out there to do in the first place. You can't have that. And I don't think that's necessarily an argument about women alone; it's just an argument about military units in general, but it's a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Well, let me pin you down on one aspect of that subject and then we'll leave the area unless you've got some more questions on it. It appears that you have a problem with the women in the Army. What you've said is that they don't belong with the warriors--the tank crews, the artillery crews, and the infantry. Is that merely tradition speaking, sir, or is there another reason that's much deeper than that?

GEN STARRY: No, I honestly believe we could use a lot more women than we presently have in the Army . . .

INTERVIEWER: . . . In support crews?

GEN STARRY: In positions and jobs and activities, if we could ever figure out how to draw the dividing line, doing things that women, in some cases, in many cases, do much better than men do.

INTERVIEWER: Why should we have that dividing line? That's my question.

GEN STARRY: Well, they certainly don't belong in the fighting crews and the fighting teams and so on. How far forward you put them, I don't know. I've argued about that with myself, particularly as a corps commander, when we had a lot more women coming in, and I found out the medics were up there, the girls in DSU and all this stuff. Do you want to make them take them out of there? I fought for those two gals in that air cavalry squadron because I believed they should have been left there. There's nothing wrong with that, but the thing I couldn't, and I still can't, figure out is how do you legislate or regulate the dividing line? It's not that clear. It isn't possible. That's why I admire the Israelis' system. They're the only people who have thought it through logically and have said, "Here are the dividing lines." They're sharp, they're cleanly drawn, and everybody understands them.

INTERVIEWER: But you see pictures on TV of the Israeli women with weapons on the front lines or in fighting positions. I don't know whether that's propaganda or not, but you made the statement that women should not be in the fighting crews and, again, why not?

GEN STARRY: Well, again, I will admit that there are women who can do those jobs, probably as well as or better than some men. There are also some men who cannot do those jobs very well, but I think the women who can do those jobs fairly well are in the minority, just as are the men who cannot do those jobs very well. So we're arguing about a minority thing, but the thing in my mind is that it is an experiential thing with people and war, and the miserable conditions that war generates, living conditions, for people, and all the living together problems, social living together problems--simple cleanliness, hygiene, latrine problems--that the presence of women in tank crews, for example, or artillery gun crews, cavalry crews or whatever, causes. The second thing is, I do not believe that you can establish the same kind of bonds in a unit--that is, a fighting crew that has women in it--that you have to establish to be effective, and that are established in good units that stay together for a long time. The bond between men, in those circumstances, is something in which no woman can be intruded successfully, in my opinion. I could be wrong, but I don't think so.

INTERVIEWER: Could they form that same bond if you had a unit of just women?

GEN STARRY: Probably. I don't know. Somebody ought to experiment with that.

INTERVIEWER: A very interesting subject. As you can probably tell, I'm reluctant to leave this issue. General DePuy says that only ten percent of the soldiers in combat fire their weapons.

GEN STARRY: He's taking his ten percent from S. L. A. Marshall, and I think that's true. But at the same time, you know, one of the great battalion commanders in the Korean War was a guy named Gordon Murch, who came back from Korea and ran the leadership battalion of the Third Armored Division at Knox, where it was then as the training division. Gordon Murch had a theory about units and, were he here to tell the story, I think it might be about the same with women. It goes something like this: If you've got 20-some-odd guys in your platoon, your infantry platoon, there are probably six or eight who are real doers and six or eight who are non-doers. Everybody else is in the middle. The battle turns on whether or not one of the heroes happens to be there where the crisis is, and the guys in the middle see him and do what he is doing, or follow him, or observe him, and go and do that. If none of these guys are there, and one of the six or eight non-doers is there, then the battle falls apart. He used to tell that from the experience of many, many battles in World War II and Korea. It's an observation he made. Whether or not it's borne out by the statistics, I don't know, but there's a lot in S. L. A. Marshall that sort of tells you that. I think from experience that I could say the same thing, almost. Some guy takes charge of the thing. He could do the wrong thing. I mean, if you sat down to figure out what you ought to do, and said that that's what he ought to do, he may not do that, but he does something. And, as General Patton used to say, "Do something, even if it's wrong, and it will turn out right more often than not." He was right. But, if you do something that's clearly wrong, or you get one of that coward group in charge, you've got a problem. And, that goes back to the cohesion problem. The Israelis have a liturgy that they go through about this. Battle today is a complex activity. The solution to complexity lies in thinking. Thinking out in advance what needs to be done solves

complexity. In battle there is no time to think, so you must think out ahead of time the most complex situations that you're likely to encounter so that, when the time comes, you will automatically do something, you'll be doing something that's about like something you've already thought of. Whether or not you went through that exact scenario doesn't make any difference, but you're not taken by surprise. And that tends to dampen out what happens with this bunch of non-doers, as Murch called them, and it makes everybody think, "Well, here's something we've thought about before." Not a bad rule. General Abrams used to do that all the time in our bivouac areas in the old 63rd Tank Battalion. We never sat around and chewed the fat. We sat around the map. Company commanders and platoon leaders would get the maintenance going under the sergeants, then they would go and sit around the map. And he, in effect, conducted a tutorial, but he did it by asking questions: "Now, here we are, and here's the disposition and the situation as we know it. What are we going to do if the enemy does this?" And everybody would kick in a little bit and he'd come to a place in the conversation and he'd say, "All right, let me give you a set of orders here. A Company's going to do this, B Company's going to do this, C Company's going to do this. The battalion's got an objective up here, and here's where we're going to do that. Now, I want you to go out, reconnoiter the area, come back with a tentative plan about how you would do what I just told you to do, and be back here by 1400" or whatever. And, we'd go away and do it. Then he'd say, "Okay," and the S-3 would be sitting there writing this down, and we worked out a plan. And, if time permitted, he'd say, "What if they come over here? What if they do this and this happens? What are you going to do? Here's what I want you to do. Go reconnoiter it." We drilled all the time, mentally, and he left time for us to go back and talk it out with the sergeants. We even took some of them with us on reconnaissance, and he did it all the time, to the extent that it almost became second nature with us. We were always thinking about that "What if?" I did that as a lieutenant in his battalion, and I did it as a lieutenant colonel commanding my own battalion. I did it with

the 11th Cavalry when I commanded the regiment in Vietnam. There wasn't as much time to do it, because we were fighting all the time, but at least the squadron commanders and troop commanders and I were always working "What if's?" I tried to do it as a corps commander. That's really what terrain walks are -- “How are you going to fight the battle, and what happens if the other guy does this?” -- to make them think through the problem. I don't think I've ever encountered a situation in battle, certainly not in combat, and tactically anywhere--combat or not, as a battalion commander or whatever--that I hadn't at least given some thought to something like that before. So it wasn't a new situation, and it wasn't a surprise. You didn't have to stop and start at the bottom left-hand corner of the board and build yourself a situation. There's always something you could relate to.

INTERVIEWER: I think you'll be happy to know that the terrain walks are still alive and well in Germany.

GEN STARRY: It's an absolutely marvelous and essential training vehicle.

INTERVIEWER: I agree.

GEN STARRY: And you've got the greatest training aid in the whole world. I mean, the GDP [General Defense Plan] and the terrain and the whole thing, you're just foolish if you don't take advantage of it.

INTERVIEWER: I think we probably need to regress a little bit. Let's go back to West Point and talk about another controversial subject for a minute. About the time you were graduating, of course, is when the Army was supposed to be fully integrated. West Point had had a number of black candidates prior to that, of course, but that was supposed to open it

up more, along with the rest of the integration of the Army. Do you have any thoughts about blacks in West Point?

GEN STARRY: Well, we had a black cadet in the company that I was in and they treated him like shit, what with the bias and the prejudice. He was a good man and graduated in the Air Force as a fighter pilot. He was later killed in a training accident, but he was a hell of a good man, and they treated him like shit.

INTERVIEWER: The cadre or the cadets?

GEN STARRY: The cadets. I never could figure that out, because he was good guy. They tried to get him in trouble. They accused him one time of a violation of the honor code, which you just knew they ginned up on their own. They were trying to get rid of him. We had a bunch of hard core southerners. You know, it's the old Civil War thing. We had, you know, the leadership tradition in the South, the military tradition in the South, and so we had a lot of southerners in that company that we were in at West Point, and they just were very bad. I never could understand, first of all, why the other cadets put up with that, the classmates and the cadets in charge.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have sort of a division between those cadets who treated him decently and those who did not?

GEN STARRY: We had a number who treated him decently, but they were passive about it, whereas those who didn't treat him decently were active about it, and I could never understand why the passive ones--who were, in fact, in charge of the organization as cadets--weren't more active in trying to prevent the things that these guys were obviously doing to this fellow. Nor could I ever understand why the administration, his tactical officer and so on, was not more active about it. The blacks should be, if

it's possible to do it, afforded absolute equal access to the place. That's not an issue as far as I'm concerned, and never has been.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that, in those days and shortly thereafter--for the next five, six, eight or ten years--one of the feelings was that the blacks were not adequately prepared--such as adequate high school preparation and that type of thing--should have, let's say, special treatment to equip them to come into West Point and be a viable candidate there?

GEN STARRY: Well, whether they were afforded equal advantage in terms of their educational background to get in or not, I don't know, but I doubt it, just based on what we know about the way they were treated in the society as a whole. It would be hard to argue that they'd had equal opportunity to prepare themselves for getting in, but of course that's changed dramatically in the last 30 or 40 years. I honestly don't know what the circumstances at West Point are these days. All the things I saw as a cadet, I'm sure, have gone away. But don't forget that we didn't integrate the Army until after I had graduated. In fact, I was a lieutenant in the 63rd Tank Battalion when they issued the great integration order and we started breaking up units. We had a couple of mech infantry battalions in Germany, where I was at the time, that were all black, and we split them up. We put the white soldiers over there and brought the black soldiers into the white units.

INTERVIEWER: With regard to earlier attempts at integration you may have had a regiment, for example, that was integrated, but battalions within that regiment would be pure white or pure black.

GEN STARRY: Yes, and I think that's a bad idea.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think it was an attempt to not fully integrate. The first unit that was really integrated was in Korea when the division commander issued an edict that when you had casualties or whatever, you would replace losses with whoever came in. And there was to be little attempt to maintain all black or white battalions. Is that the case?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I was in Europe when the Presidential decree came about. We just flat integrated them after that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you experience any turmoil during the integration part of it?

GEN STARRY: No. We had more trouble, in those days, with the Puerto Ricans who came out of the slums of New York and Chicago as a result of the draft starting up again, due to the Korean War, which increased the need for manpower. As a result of the draft, they dragged them up out of those ghettos down there, and we had a horrible time. Our division got, all at once, an infusion of God knows how many Puerto Ricans, many of whom couldn't speak English. In our battalion we were issued about a company-size cohort of those guys, a couple of hundred of them, and the battalion commander said, "We have got to train these people. They have been through basic training, but some of the sergeants who speak Spanish and have talked with them don't believe that they're adequately trained." So we went out and gave them a test, and they were not adequately trained. It turns out the reason they weren't is that they hadn't understood about half of what was said to them in basic training. I mean, there was a total language disconnect. So I was the assistant battalion S-3 at the time, and I was given the task of forming a training cadre to train these guys and make up for their lack of basic training and do some small unit training--tank crew training, because they hadn't had much of that. I got all the Spanish-speaking sergeants in the battalion together, and we went at it. They came out of that exercise pretty well trained

soldiers, but every once in a while you had to wonder, "Well, if the tank commander doesn't speak Spanish, how is he going to get along with that guy if he is a gunner?" So we had to work on the language problem. The language problem was one of a much longer duration. They made good soldiers; they were good soldiers! The poor guys simply hadn't understood what was being said to them during their initial training.

INTERVIEWER: Was Colonel Abrams still the battalion commander?

GEN STARRY: No, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Fitzpatrick was the battalion commander.

INTERVIEWER: Same battalion?

GEN STARRY: Same battalion.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back to West Point again, and another question. In stating your preferences, you stated Air Force as your first, second and third preference.

GEN STARRY: Well, you had to list 13 branches, and I just put Air Force in the first three blanks and left the rest of it blank.

INTERVIEWER: Many of us do that kind of thing.

GEN STARRY: Arrogance. Overconfidence.

INTERVIEWER: But, since you didn't get Air Force, and you didn't mention armor in your preferences, it appears to me that you were very fortunate in getting armor. Was armor what you wanted if you didn't get Air Force?

GEN STARRY: I never thought it out, honestly. Here was this list, signed by the Commandant of Cadets, which said these guys are qualified for flight training--passed the physical, passed the check ride--and I even had wedding invitations printed, "Lieutenant, United States Air Force," calling cards printed. I was gone. I really hadn't spent the first month's flight pay yet, because I didn't know how much it was. That's the only reason. It was a result of that summer training, I think; it was fun to fly, great sport. It was a new branch, a new arm of the service. They'd achieved their independence from the grubby old Army, and there was an air of excitement about it all. Something new was going to be done, and no one knew where it was going to go, but obviously up, so I just never gave any thought to serving in armor.
[End Tape S-197, Side 1]

[Begin Tape S-197, Side 2]
GEN STARRY: As I recollect, subsequent to the Air Force disaster, I was forced to make out the rest of my preference sheet, and I filled out cavalry first. Why, I don't know, really. I'd known my dad was an infantryman in his National Guard service. On the other hand, he was one of the first members of the Tank Corps in World War I. We had a lot of Tank Corps artifacts around the house that I'd grown up with, and I really think I was impressed by the cavalry guys at Fort Riley, the cavalry troops at Fort Riley, and the officers and that whole environment that I described a while ago. So, I put down armor when I had to choose a branch. Of course you could not have been a part of Colonel Abrams' tank battalion and not be in love with the armored force. Once you'd done that, you belonged. You had a big investment in it.

INTERVIEWER: You then went to the Ground General School, with which we're not familiar. I don't believe we have anything like that any

more. And then you attended the Armor School at Fort Knox. How were those experiences?

GEN STARRY: The rationalization for the existence of the Ground General School went something like this. It was an opportunity to bring together all newly commissioned second lieutenants in the Army for a given year and put them through a common course of schooling, since they had come from a variety of commissioning sources – OCS, West Point, and college ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] programs. That was the official rationalization. The real reason behind it was that they had the Cavalry School sitting out there at Fort Riley and didn't know what to do with it, because cavalry was a thing of the past. And the Armor School was at Fort Knox. So they back-filled. They were going to close Fort Riley somewhere in those years, in the late 1940s, but they were able to keep it open by doing two things. First, they put the Combat Intelligence Schools out there, that is, Air Photo Interpretation, Interrogation of Prisoners of War. And don't forget, Aggressor began at Fort Riley. The whole Aggressor idea was ginned up by a couple of colonels out at Fort Riley. And they created the Ground General School, for lieutenants, all on the framework of the Cavalry School. In fact, at the time the Assistant Commandant there was an officer who had been a life-long friend of my father. He'd been the Regular Army advisor to my Dad's National Guard Company for a long, long time in the 1930s. He'd been General George Patton's G-2 in World War II. Colonel Oscar Koch, a super guy, was the Assistant Commandant. It really was a good school. And that's another thing that impressed me about the cavalry, I guess, going back to what I said before about it. That's one of the best schools for training individuals that I've ever been to, bar none, or that I've ever seen. As a matter of fact, a lot of the things that they did there I tried to clone in training systems in my battalion, in my own units, and when I got to Knox as the Commandant. They were extremely good at individual training, using all kinds of little gimmicks. Not gimmicks, they weren't

gimmicks, but techniques. One of the things they let you do is--and think about this in today's environment -- check out weapons from the arms room and take them home. What they did was go through the instruction with you. Pieces were on the board, the names were on the board, they showed you the examination you were going to have to take -- with regard to naming the pieces and parts, putting them together, assembling and disassembling them, nomenclature, functioning, you had to describe the functioning in great detail--and the training would end up in a live firing exercise. So, for the first part of that, they said, "Since you folks are lieutenants," -- I found out later they did this with everybody except the recruits -- "you may check these weapons out and, when you're ready for the examination, come around and we'll give you that part of the examination, everything up to, but not including, live firing." So we had a .50 caliber machine gun on a tripod sitting in the living room of our apartment in Junction City, Kansas, for about two months one time, and our friends would come over -- I checked out the gun, took it home because we had a place that was fairly secure, more so than anybody else apparently did--so we gathered in our apartment, had a beer, and we'd go over the weapon. We'd do it blindfolded, and backwards, and all kind of tricks that the younger folks like to do, so that by the time we got through we were pretty good at it. So we learned on our own. When you thought you were ready for the exam, you went and turned yourself in and they'd give you the exam. Then they'd take you out and you'd do the live firing part of it. They were absolutely meticulous in demanding detail, and the officers, that's officers, now, the officers had to be better. They would show you the same exam that they gave the sergeants, and the one they gave the enlisted men. The officers' exam was tougher by an order of magnitude.

INTERVIEWER: They had enlisted in the school also?

GEN STARRY: Well, no. This just cut across what had been the Cavalry School as a whole.

INTERVIEWER: This was just for armor or cavalry officers?

GEN STARRY: No, everybody. All second lieutenants, regardless of their source of commission.

INTERVIEWER: Sort of an officer basic training type of course?

GEN STARRY: It was officer basic training, a common officer basic training course, and it was probably the best school like that, at that level, that I've ever seen.

INTERVIEWER: Could we afford to do something like that now, or integrate it, at least, into OBC [Officer Basic Course]?

GEN STARRY: That's an awfully good idea.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I've often felt that our OBC graduates, especially in the last few years--and I saw a lot of them as a battalion commander--were not very well grounded in weapons systems or anything. They were not really trained; they went to the unit to learn that type of thing.

GEN STARRY: Now, you see, we went from the Ground General School --which was just that, basic tactics, basic weapons, basic everything -- to a branch unique school which, in those days, was five months long, almost six months. So you had five months of Ground General, and then you had five or six months, five-and-a-half months, whatever it was, of branch specific. This is an officer, now, who goes to a unit with a year of that kind of small level, low level, small unit kind of tactical training behind him. Now, you compare that to what our officers have today -- our newly

commissioned officers only go through branch unique training today -- and you can see how much better prepared we were. I still had a lot of unanswered questions about what went on out there when I got out of the whole course, but we were a hell of a lot better trained than today's lieutenants are. So it's the resource problem with officer training, as well as with enlisted training. The resources are restricted, so we cut back and cut back and cut back. When TRADOC started, we cut the advanced courses back from 39 weeks to 20-some-odd weeks, and there was some talk of cutting them to 19 weeks so it wasn't a permanent change of station. The second thing that happened was that all sorts of other interesting things, some relevant and some non-relevant, got inserted into that curriculum by people at all levels, starting with the Department of the Army, even the Congress, which further added to the time problem in that course. I really believe that, despite the fact that the young people get a lot of good basic level information in summer training when they're in West Point, or summer training when they're in the ROTC programs, and so on, that basic training for an officer, particularly in our system, should be something on the order of nine months to a year. It's not at all too much for that, and we probably ought to try to afford that somehow.

INTERVIEWER: When you were TRADOC commander did you investigate doing this?

GEN STARRY: Oh, yes. When I came to command TRADOC, we had just finished cutting back under General DePuy, for good and sufficient reasons, all those courses, and I started all the moves trying to extend the length of the officer course. We finally wound up in armor and artillery adding three weeks under my tenure at Monroe, and we held the line on the advanced courses. We had to trade off some things to do it. One of the ways we paid the price was to go to one-station unit training for the enlisted men, and got rid of the distinction between [BCT], Basic Combat Training as we called it, and Advanced Individual Training, [AIT] as we

called it. Some of the money saved out of that we put into officer education, as well as revamping the whole NCO education system. The personnel managers will tell you that a year out of an officer's career is not affordable from the manpower standpoint. But there's no substitute for that kind of training for the officers. Let me just add something to that. Talking about officer training, I think the most valuable training I had, the thing that was of most value to me as an officer, particularly in the first few years of my service, was service as an enlisted man and my association with my Dad's National Guard unit. I found that I had a perception of enlisted people, and NCOs in particular, that most of my contemporaries didn't have. I say this because, looking at officer education, it may be that the Israelis have a better system than we do; it may be a system that's better suited to the demands of our needs today than is the system we currently have. In their system, in the Armor Corps, for example, a soldier is drafted for three years when he's 18, then he goes to something like 19 or 20 weeks of basic individual training. Through tests, they pick the best of those soldiers and send them to Tank Commanders' School. That's another 20 or 30 weeks. Then they serve six months in a unit, and again they pick the best, by tests and evaluation, and send them to officers' school to become platoon leaders. After two years, I think it is--this model may have changed a little bit, but this is the way they were doing it between the Yom Kippur War and the war in Lebanon -- after two years in the unit, if he's going to be part of the regular establishment as opposed to going off and being in the reserves, he goes to Company Commanders' School, and again he's picked by tests. So the platoon leader is the best tank soldier in his platoon. The company commander is the best tank soldier in his company. So the officers in the Israeli Defense Force grow up in an environment in which, at every step of the way, they are experts at that level; they're so good at that level that they're selected out of that layer to become those who go into the next layer. Some of them don't make it; at every layer the pyramid narrows. Now, if you look at that system as opposed to ours, you'll see that it breeds tremendously qualified

small unit leaders. I won't comment on their ability to be national strategists and go to the war colleges; that comes later in their system. The Israelis have thought that out, and they have a unique way of providing advanced education for their officers later on. But, as small unit commanders at platoon, company and battalion levels, those officers are, in terms of weapons, equipment, maintenance, and tactics, the best trained soldiers around. That's all they have done since the day they entered the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Does that have an effect upon the perception of or expertise of their NCOs?

GEN STARRY: Well, they use officers for things we use NCOs for. There's an officer for every three tanks. They have NCOs, and they're good, but they don't put nearly the load on the NCOs that we do. Our NCOs, in olden times at least, if you followed my “Sergeants’ Business” tape made some years ago, looked upon one of their most important tasks as training lieutenants. "Well, here he comes. I have a new lieutenant to train." I was certainly a product of that experience. As a lieutenant I was a product of that year of schooling, but I was also a product of a couple of years of very tough schooling by a very good platoon sergeant who simply picked up where the Armor School or the Ground General School had left off. In effect he said, "Okay, lieutenant, here is what you need to know if you're going to be a platoon leader in this outfit with me as your platoon sergeant." They were hands-on kinds of things. He issued me a tool box. We went to the motor pool every night at seven o'clock; there we took tanks apart and put them back together again. He and I knew more about that tank than the mechanics in the motor pool did. We had great disdain for the motor pool mechanics, which probably wasn't fair or well-founded, but he maintained that the tank commander was supposed to be the guy who did the troubleshooting and most of the subsequent maintenance on his tank. Since I was a tank commander that included me!

INTERVIEWER: Isn't that what the Army hierarchy depends on today, with our present junior officer training program?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is it more expensive to take the time to train an officer in a unit, or is it more expensive to train him in a school environment such as you went through? Can we measure that?

GEN STARRY: I think you've got to give them the basics, and it's a question of how long it takes to do that. There's a certain amount that is valuable to give him in the unit, because in the unit he also learns the people. So you build a little bit of unit cohesion in the process of teaching the lieutenant. But not all lieutenants are teachable by a sergeant, and not all sergeants are capable of teaching the lieutenants. In the case of the crusty old soul who was my platoon sergeant, we didn't debate the issue. He just said, "The lieutenant, sir,. . ." very respectfully, "the lieutenant, sir, is going to become proficient at being a platoon leader, and I am the principal instructor," or words to that effect. But not every platoon sergeant can do that, and not every lieutenant is going to accept it. In fact, that was the exception rather than the rule, I would argue.

INTERVIEWER: I had the same experience, but I think we lost that in the 1973 to 1980 time frame.

GEN STARRY: We lost it in Vietnam; Vietnam just ate up that level of experience in the NCO corps. I think we're just beginning to get it back now; the tradition of having the sergeants take great pride amongst them as to who the best platoon leader was -- for the sergeants in the 63rd Tank Battalion, a matter of great pride. Platoon leader, not platoon sergeant, because they weren't worried about themselves, it was their

platoon that was important. They were concerned about who the best platoon leader was because the excellence of the platoon leader was a reflection on the ability of the sergeants to train the platoon leader, and they were very good at it. They all worked very hard at it.

INTERVIEWER: And, during those post-Vietnam years, I think we found that we didn't have the NCOs who had the training and dedication.

GEN STARRY: The older sergeants got promoted, a lot of them retired, and a lot of them became casualties. I remember that we worked with the 1st Cavalry Division for a large part of my tour as a regimental commander in the 11th Cavalry. The Sergeant Major and I would land at least every other day or so, in one of those rifle companies, and what we saw was appalling. There would be a lieutenant as the company commander. He might be a captain, but if he was a captain he was a two-year captain, and he didn't have a long tour as a lieutenant. Then you had some very junior sergeants. They, too, might be E-5s and E-6s, but they also had been promoted very rapidly. So you really had no experienced sergeants. You had absolutely no experienced leadership, and there they were, out there groping with a problem of some enormity. As a regimental (brigade) commander, you just had to look at the situation and say, "What have we done to ourselves? It's not fair." And it wasn't their fault, it was the Army's fault. We did that to ourselves.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the noncommissioned officer candidate schools were at fault? Would you lay a lot of the blame on that doorstep, or was there an alternate course of action that we should have taken?

GEN STARRY: I don't know what I would have done if I had to make the decision. You know, there's no substitute for experience, and experience is what we're talking about with regard to those sergeants. In a situation where you're training up the NCOs at the same time you're training up the

officers, you still have the unpleasant circumstance of that inexperienced sergeant and inexperienced officer, and it would be hard to say which of the two is least experienced out there trying to put together an operation. We wound up in that war with officers doing a lot of things that sergeants should have been doing. And there were a lot of sergeants not doing things that sergeants should do habitually. General DePuy tells a story about relieving a couple of sergeants major during his tour as a division commander. That's where I got the ideas for “Sergeants’ Business.” I asked him one time, "Why did you relieve that sergeant major?" He described for me the things that the sergeant major hadn't done in the unit. The unit hadn't done things that he called sergeant's responsibility. I thought about that for a while, decided that there's really a distinction between sergeants’ business and officers’ business. While I was in the process of thinking that through, I was asked to go to the Sergeants Major Academy and talk to the class. I hadn't written this down, but I went there and just said, "I want to talk about sergeants’ business, what you are responsible for, and what the officers are responsible for." Out of that emerged the tape "Sergeants' Business." Somebody transcribed it, and eventually I wrote it in an article that was published in Military Review. That tape is still around. But that was the genesis of it. I wish we could be clever enough to structure a course of instruction for the sergeants that would teach sergeants' business in that context, and show the same thing to the officers, because there's a lot of overlap. You talk about the excellence of the officer with weapons, you teach that officer to be so good with that weapon, and if he sees that the sergeant is not quite as good as he is, then he's going to take that teaching task over and do it himself. But you have got to hang back on that, which is hard to do. So you're always going to have that dichotomy; if you teach the officer to the level of excellence that, as a cavalryman, I would believe the officer ought to have, then he is probably better qualified than most of his sergeants to do what they're out there doing, but you have to, at the same time, teach

him to stand back from that and not do what the sergeants are supposed to do.

INTERVIEWER: I guess we had the same problem in Korea, too, with younger NCOs having to work their way through it.

GEN STARRY: Same problem in Korea, that's right. I'm not able to say it statistically, but my sensing, my intuitive sensing, is that it may have been more difficult in Korea and Vietnam because of the tour length. You see, in World War II you'd put the units in the line--which I think was a mistake, but that's another subject -- and leave them there. Then you'd keep feeding in individual replacements, which I also think is a mistake. So what you wound up with were the survivors, the experienced hard core of people who taught the new people what needed to be taught. Don't forget we cadred both the Regular Army and National Guard units to produce the NCOs for those units we created during the war. In the units that were created from whole cloth (that is, not mobilized), I'm told that that was a big problem. I don't know. I observed a couple of them, but I would not be able to say statistically how big the problem was. But tour length definitely affected that in Korea and Vietnam.

INTERVIEWER: It's been my perception, and perhaps you can clarify this for me, but I think that the problem that really hurt us most in officer and NCO professionalism was the length of our involvement in Vietnam and, of course, all of the wrong things that we taught our people in Vietnam. As a result, we lost that corps of hard core professionals, both in the officer and in the NCO ranks. The officers had moved up to where, by the nature of their job, you couldn't associate with the soldiers as much as you could have had you been a company commander or battalion commander. It appeared to me that our NCOs left the Army after Vietnam not in any greater numbers than before, but those NCOs who had grown up in the Army prior to Vietnam, and had become very professional as a teaching

NCO, got out either during or after Vietnam. And the people who had become NCOs during Vietnam and remained in did not learn those lessons.

GEN STARRY: They weren't very well trained, that's right.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't have anyone available for years after Vietnam to do the teaching for either group, officers or NCOs?

GEN STARRY: That's right. That was quite apparent. That's why, following the terrain walks in V Corps when I was corps commander in 1976-1977, I'd go to each battalion commander, after we finished with his terrain walk along his General Defensive Position, and have him tell me how he was training his battalion to fight the battle that we had just described out there on the ground. He and his Sergeant Major gave that briefing. He would explain what he was doing with his battalion training program to get ready for the war we described on the ground, and the Sergeant Major would then say what he was doing to train the NCOs in that battalion. That was the back half of the terrain walks. The front half of it was fun. The back half of it was a little bit nitty-gritty, because we were forcing the Sergeant Major to lay out a program about how he, the Sergeant Major, intended to train the NCOs for the leadership job, and forcing the battalion commander to say, "Here's how I'm going to use the resources you're giving me to get ready for the battle I just described for you out there on the ground." That is equally as important as going out on the ground and figuring out how you'll fight the battle.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I don't think we're anywhere near back to where we should be.

GEN STARRY: I'll tell you what, we're a hell of a lot better off than we were ten years ago.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir, we certainly are. Having seen this problem twice in your lifetime, in Korea and again in Vietnam, other than the tour length, what other thoughts do you have on how we might prevent these problems from recurring?

GEN STARRY: I honestly believe that the military system of the United States--the "Military Policy of the United States," as Emory Upton called it, which was later styled "A Proper Military Policy for the United States," … ["Statement of a Proper Military Policy for the United States." Prepared by the War College Division of the General Staff. In: "Report of the Secretary of War." Washington: Government Printing Office, 1916.]
[End Tape S-197, Side 2]

[Begin Tape S-198, Side 1]
GEN STARRY: …reflects the period of history through which we were going when it was generated. It's essentially an industrial revolution mentality, and it says that the factories of this great industrial country that we have are going to turn out the tanks and the bombs and the airplanes and the guns in great proliferation. The training factories of the country are going to train up the individual soldiers that we draft out of this great pool of manpower, and someplace out here they're going to get together and go to war. Now, if you read General Marshall's book, Memoirs of My Services in the World War, 1917-1918, he talks about the amount of training that they had to give the soldiers coming out of the training base after they joined their units in the AEF [American Expeditionary Forces] because they didn't have the proper unit training to produce cohesive units to fight the war. So it was a problem from the beginning. However, no one was clever enough to understand that and so, between the wars, we simply improved on that system, and we went to war in World War II with the same system. I remember especially the National Guard units that

were mobilized, in the division in which my father commanded a company--the 35th Division--when they mobilized in World War II. I seriously doubt that in his company there were more than five or six people who went to war and fought with the group that had been there in the first place. Where were they? Mostly cadre. The officers and sergeants all got promoted and went away to do something else at higher levels. Who was left in this company? What kind of a company is it? Is it a well trained company that goes to war with people who know one another, who have been together for ten years or more in the National Guard, and then trained together after they mobilized? Hell, no. It's an "ad hoc" outfit in which the experienced people have all been siphoned off to do something else, cadre new units or whatever, and all the newly drafted people are there trying to learn all over again from the beginning. So the only thing that was left was the flag and the unit designation. At the end of the war General Eisenhower, as Chief of Staff, testified about this before the Congress in rather derogatory terms and suggested that this was not the best way to do it. After Korea, General Collins, who was then Chief of Staff, testified about this before the House Armed Services Committee saying to the effect, "I hope we never do it again." We have years and years of experience in this thing, and after every major war when we do it we recognize that it isn't the best way to do it. It has deprived us of the very thing we need the most, which is cohesion in units, had by training them up as units and sending them off to war as units, then bringing them back and refurbishing them, like the Germans did. And yet we continue to do it. Well, it's 70 or 80 years old now, and it's hard to change something that deeply embedded in the culture. There's a big chapter in this book that talks about that. This is the Savage and Gabriel book on Vietnam [Crisis in Command]. However, it's a mediocre attempt to prove something they had already decided upon. With every one of their statistical analyses, one can take the same numbers--their numbers--and prove exactly the opposite if you're a clever statistician. What we deprived ourselves of in Vietnam, and in Korea as well, because of the rotation

policy, was any hope of ever having units in which the soldiers had trained together long enough to become really honest-to-God cohesive units. Now, battle sharpens up that process, and it speeds up that process, by its very nature. You have to do that but, at the same time, the system just doesn't allow for it to happen, because 30 of your people, or twelve percent, are going away every month or something like that, and then there are always the casualties--wounded and so on. The system, the individual replacement system, just deprived us of any hope of ever doing that. When we started the redeployment from Vietnam, I ran the task force for General Abrams that drew up the plans and redeployed the first 150,000 or so, 200,000, and then I went to command the 11th Cavalry. But, when we started that, we had 549,000 people authorized in Vietnam. We actually had about 538,000 or 539,000 in country, and as we started taking people out--the first increment was 25,000--our proposal was that we take out a whole division. We wanted to take the 9th Division out of the Delta, and our proposal was that we pick the 9th Division up out of Dong Tam and wherever else it was, bring it home, march it down the streets of Seattle or Los Angeles or San Francisco, flags waving, bands playing, welcoming the boys home from war. The personnel people got hold of that and said, "You can't do that! That's not equitable. Here we have a man who has only been in that unit three months. He owes us another nine months of combat. Here's a soldier who's been in that unit nine months, and he needs to come home, but over here in the next unit is a soldier who's been here nine months, so he ought to come home, too. So we're going to take the new man out of this division, replace him with the old man from this other outfit, and send them home as individuals. All we'll have to do is increase the airplane traffic and so on. We'll send a token detachment home, half a dozen men carrying flags." Well, after half a dozen messages from General Abrams protesting this process to General Westmoreland, who was then Chief of Staff, the Army decided to do it the other way. Now, when you had 540,000 in country, that wasn't so bad, but what you did, you see, was increase the turbulence level in the

units that were left. When you had 500,000 it wasn't all that bad. When you got down to about 300,000 it began to tell. What you had then, in addition to your normal turbulence rate, was a situation in which officers were standing up in front of their platoons, and sergeants were standing up in front of their squads every day, and almost none of the men out in front of them had they ever seen before, and none of them had ever seen the leader, and they're going to go off and fight a battle. And they're expected to do it successfully. Well, the history of battle just tells you that that doesn't happen. So, I tackled this at TRADOC. It was the genesis of the proposed regimental system. But we lost--couldn't get the Army to change. I couldn't even get them to consider changing the rotation policy, which is the basis of how often things turn over. When Lieutenant General [LTG] Frederic J. Brown did a training study for us in TRADOC about the training system, he found essentially that where the turbulence rate exceeded 20 percent a quarter--a new face in the job every quarter--that not much meaningful training got done. Yet most Army units, particularly Pershing units and some of the special purpose artillery, had turbulence rates that were two and three times that number. Pershing units were particularly bad, as I remember. So it starts with the rotation policy. I couldn't get the Army to change the rotation policy, so we studied how to form up regiments. The original scheme was that there would be regiments and there would be some battalions on active duty, some in the Guard and some in the Reserve. We decided to form a regional recruiting base. We talked with more than half of the state governors about it. They thought it to be a good idea. The proposed regimental system therefore was a system in which we would replace by battalion. We'd essentially send battalions overseas. There they would get down to some level through attrition, just as you would in combat, we'd bring them home with the officers and the NCOs that were left, train them up again, and send them back. And you rotate them through the training system (that is, through the training base in the United States) and, if you had a war, you'd form up new units. But, before you formed up the new units, you mobilized

the battalions of that regiment, which had a home, a badge, a cap, whatever. Well, that was a little bit too rich for the Army's blood, so the Cohort system was introduced at a level that really was inappropriate to rotate units--at platoon/company level. Unit rotation had a bad reputation because of our experience with [Operation] Gyroscope in the 1950's; we tried it at too high a level and it didn't work. After a lot of study at TRADOC in the 1970's, we decided the battalion was about the right level for unit rotation. The whole purpose was to reduce the effects of turbulence so that, no matter where the soldier went, he was back in this same general area he was in before, more likely than not in the same unit, so he was always back with some soldiers with whom he had soldiered before. They weren't new faces, and it wasn't a new circumstance or a totally new learning experience for him. So, in the end, it was a modest attempt to get at this 80-year-long tradition concerning our mobilization system, which I think is an anachronism today. If you read the testimony of the Marshalls, the Eisenhowers, the Collins, and so on, through all that 80 years of experience, it's been basically dysfunctional. It's just that today the circumstances in the world have made it even more so.

INTERVIEWER: Should we have increased the tour length in Vietnam? It was too late at that point to form a cohort system or a battalion or a company rotation system, but should a standard tour have been more than a year?

GEN STARRY: Well, I don't know whether it should have been more than a year or not. You see, what I'm against is individual replacements. I'm for unit replacements; I am against individual replacements. Now the answer to your question is, I don't know whether it should have been a year or six months or whatever, but what we should have done was deploy by unit. Let's say that the 26th Infantry Regiment has three battalions in Vietnam, or two battalions; other 26th Infantry battalions are at Fort Riley or elsewhere. So those battalions deploy; we send over a

well trained battalion; it suffers attrition down to some level, either pre-determined or made on the basis of judgment, then we redeploy that battalion.

INTERVIEWER: No individual replacements at all?

GEN STARRY: No individual replacements! You send it over there as a unit and you bring it home as a unit. That's what the Germans did in World War II, although they had some individual replacements. I've forgotten the levels now; it's in the literature someplace, but anyway it was a very low-level thing. They simply let the units attrit. I have some German friends who went to war six times under that system, but every time they brought home whatever was left, back to the training base. They went away and got some leave and rested up, then came back, put some replacements in the unit, and then they trained up as a unit and went back to war.

INTERVIEWER: But they're going to be less effective than they should be for some period of time.

GEN STARRY: I would argue they're not going to be any less effective at that level of attrition than they would be if you just kept putting new people in there as individuals.

INTERVIEWER: That could be true.

GEN STARRY: I don't know the thresholds. Somebody needs to study that problem and decide what it is. It may be, as I said, that you just have to put a situational threshold on it and say we're going to make a decision at that time. In the interest of good order, I suppose you should program it at six months or whatever, but I don't know whether or not the right combat time for a battalion is six months. I think that the combat time in

that environment for a good battalion commander, a really good one, was probably eight months. At that point you begin to ask--and it's in this book--how long does he stay that good before I have to bring him out? Don't forget they fought every day. We didn't come back to the base camps and mess around back there; we fought every bloody day.

INTERVIEWER: Was the eighth month the period at which he was the most effective, or was that when he started losing it?

GEN STARRY: He'd reach some kind of a peak and, at that point, you'd begin to see him thinking about things that he shouldn't have been thinking about. The best one whom I knew was Lieutenant Colonel [LTC] Grail Brookshire, 2d Squadron, 11th Cavalry, 1969-1970. He was probably the best battalion/squadron-level commander I ever saw, particularly in that environment. He came out at eight months and admitted to me, when it was done, that it was time for him to leave. As far as brigade and regimental commanders, some could be effective for nine months, perhaps a year.

INTERVIEWER: How long did it take them to become effective after taking over the job?

GEN STARRY: It depended on whether or not the individual had been there before, and whether or not he had been there for some period of time before he took command. I was in command about nine months, and I had been wounded, so it's hard for me to judge. I probably should not have gone back after I was wounded, but I did.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a difference in this effectiveness level, for example, between squadron commanders and regimental commanders?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I think the squadron commander has a shorter stay period than a regimental-level commander, and a division commander a longer stay period than a brigade-level commander.

INTERVIEWER: Just as an aside, what happened to Brookshire?

GEN STARRY: He made brigadier general and was the Inspector General in the European Command [EUCOM], where the J-1 has that job as a second duty. Then he was the ADC [Assistant Division Commander] of the division at Fort Carson, where he got crossways of his division commander, who claimed that he was too tough on the brigade commanders. Now, I'm not just saying this in his defense--it's not necessary to defend him, because he has a marvelous combat record and a marvelous record beside that. I've known him for a long time, and he's probably the best small unit commander I've ever seen. He had his hands on everything, but he didn't dabble in everything. He knew what was going on, and yet he didn't try to run everything. Still, he had absolute iron standards, and they were very, very high, and you just did it that way or you didn't do it at all with him. And that's what he was saying to these brigade commanders, "The standards are not high enough, and I maintain that in training you can't have standards that are too high."

INTERVIEWER: Did he translate this to a large unit command?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I think you've got to insist on high standards. Two or three of my favorite people in the whole world are coaches I've had. One was my high school football coach, and two others were my college swimming coaches. They were the meanest, toughest--and General Abrams, he too was a coach, that's really what he was. Lieutenants, for General Abrams--then Colonel Abrams--couldn't do anything right. Nothing! To the best of my knowledge, I never did anything right in his battalion as a lieutenant. But I will also tell you that, with all of those

coaches, particularly when we went to play the game, it was a lark, because the preparation for that game had been so miserable that it was fun to go out and play the game. There was nothing to it. The football team I played on in high school won 26 games, then we lost one night in the mud to a bunch of toughies who simply stayed on their feet while we slid all over the ground. But those games were fun because the practice during the week had been so miserable. You went out and, you know, after about the first three or four plays you thought, "Boy, have we ever got this sucker made." We thought that one too many times, because we were playing under conditions that we had not practiced under and, even though we talked about it a little before the game, the mud was bad and we just laid down.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't practice enough in the mud, I guess.

GEN STARRY: That's right. So they'll do exactly in combat what you let them get away with in training, and that's why in training the standards have got to be high. If nobody meets the standards, that's just fine. When we organized the National Training Center--I was the instigator of that, along with General Bill DePuy--we sent the first few battalions out there and everybody fell on their asses. They came back to me and said, "They're all flunking the test." Out of the first 20-some-odd battalions we put through there, only one did it right the first time, and that's just exactly right, because that has to be so damn tough that it gets their attention. But the only way it'll get their attention is for you to flunk them the first time. I remember in General Abrams' battalion, he took us up to use the British ranges at Belsen, now called Bergen-Hohne, where there was a company-level combat course. We lined up our platoons and ran down that course. We had good targets coming up, and a full load of ammunition. It was a miserable day, the weather was bad, and Sergeant Lucas and I stood out there and looked at that and said, "Are we ever going to blow that son-of-a-bitch up?" Well, we blazed away at the targets

and about halfway down range the ammunition was all gone. We missed some and we hit some, but we didn't do very well. So I called time out, we coiled up the tanks, and the battalion commander came over, chewing on his ever-present cigar, and said, "I want to have a little talk with you about that." So we had a little talk. After we got through talking, the company commander and I talked about it, and then the platoon sergeant and I talked about it. That afternoon we did it again. The second time we got all the way down range before we were out of ammunition, and we hit most of the targets. We had another talk with the battalion commander. If the lieutenant fell on his ass, did he relieve him or throw him out? No! He chewed his cigar, chewed on the lieutenant, and sent him out to do it again. The third time we went down range we hit every target, and we had half the basic load left. At that point we knew what we were doing, but still he made us do it over and over again. Some guys never figured that out. The ones who never figured it out he got rid of, but he was willing to give everybody three or four chances at trying to figure it out.

INTERVIEWER: I guess we're getting a little ahead of ourselves, but you just mentioned that second lieutenants got another chance. However, it appears that the generals don't get another chance, such as General Brookshire, whom you mentioned earlier. He got sideways with his division commander--and I don't know who that division commander was, and I guess that's not important, but it appears that sometimes one disagreement can ruin the career of a very promising general officer.

GEN STARRY: That's right. Sometimes it's a little thing, too.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know where you were at that time. You didn't happen to be at TRADOC, did you?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you try to do anything about the situation?

GEN STARRY: Well, I took him off the hands of his division commander and put him in charge of CDEC [Combat Developments Experimentation Command] which was part of TRADOC.

INTERVIEWER: Was that too late? Was there nothing else that you could do?

GEN STARRY: I was not on a board at the time when I had a chance to influence it. I tried with a couple of board presidents to influence his selection for major general and so on, but to no avail.

INTERVIEWER: What happened to the division commander involved?

GEN STARRY: He's a three-star general today.

INTERVIEWER: He still is?

GEN STARRY: Yes. He's a good man, has a Distinguished Service Cross. He was doing some testing for us. We decided to test the Bradley when he had the division. I went out to visit him and observe the testing, and it was a disaster. I made a speech out there on top of the hill, now non-affectionately referred to, even to this day, as the "Sermon on the Mount." They were down there testing the Bradley as a scout vehicle, and the tactics were wrong. The lieutenants, the captains, the majors, and the lieutenant colonels were all screwed up, yet the division commander was standing up on the hill thinking it was great. Meanwhile, Brookshire was telling him that it was all screwed up and that they ought to be doing something about it. So I had a tutorial for all the generals and the brigade commander right there on the top of the hill about tactics--simple-minded, elementary tactics. I said, "You're supposed to be evaluating the weapons

system in the context of a basic set of tactics. You can't evaluate the weapons system because you don't even understand the tactics. How are you going to have a decent evaluation against any sort of a baseline when the baseline obviously isn't even there? You can't tell if you're looking at a dumb lieutenant or a screwed up vehicle. We're never going to sort this out." And we never did, and part of that's coming back to haunt us in the big controversy about the Bradley today. We can't make a convincing case for it because we didn't test it under circumstances where the baseline was quite clear, all because the people who were doing the testing didn't know their tactics and techniques, and I'm talking about the generals and the colonels. This happened in the great active defense revolution after publishing the 1976 edition of FM [field manual] 100-5. The problem wasn't with the captains, the lieutenants and the sergeants, because they had been taught active defense in the courses they'd gone through just recently in the school system. The problem was with the lieutenant colonels and even more so with the colonels and the generals because, "God damn it, they didn't do it that way when I was out there." No, that's right, and we're not going to do it that way any more. There's a lot of that in this Fort Carson incident that I just recited. That is always a problem. In this case, I cannot understand a senior officer judging a guy in a position like the one I just described as being too tough on the brigade commanders. My perception, after watching the brigade commander in this exercise, is that General Brookshire wasn't tough enough, and I spoke with him about it afterwards. He said, "Hey, the guy just wrote on my efficiency report that he turned in last month that I was too tough on this guy, the brigade commander."

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure the brigade commanders perceived that they were backed by the division commander, so they didn't bother to listen to the ADC.

GEN STARRY: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Let's go back in history just a moment. You mentioned earlier that, prior to your entry into West Point, you felt that that was the primary source of officers' commissions and that was the only way to go. During your years as a lieutenant, did you perceive major differences between officers from West Point in contrast to other methods of receiving commissions? And how did your opinions change over the years?

GEN STARRY: The first battalion that I joined had a lot of combat-experienced lieutenants and captains in it, people who'd been platoon leaders and company commanders as lieutenants in World War II and were OCS graduates. I went to that battalion with, I think, eight lieutenants out of the Ground General School training. In fact, we'd been through that whole course together, went from there to Fort Knox, and then went from Knox to this unit in Europe. George Patton was there when we arrived. I think, if I'm not mistaken, he was the only other--except for Colonel Abrams--Military Academy graduate in the battalion. The rest of them were all combat-experienced officers. We took a lot of hits from those guys just because they had a lot of combat experience. One lieutenant used to pull the “ring-knocker” business on us to the extent that, for a long time, I didn't even wear a ring just to avoid the argument and this guy's obvious bias. They were good at tactics, they were good at gunnery, and they were good at maintenance at the small unit level because they had fought a war and they'd survived. That meant that they had to be fairly good at it. Some of them were social derelicts, and some other aspects about them were not all that acceptable. On the other hand, several of them were just very, very good officers and leaders. They stayed in the Army and they did very well. So it was a mixed bag. Over the years of my service I really believe that the ROTC system has grown up. We bailed it out of oblivion after the Vietnam War. We almost lost it. But I remember that we almost lost it once before, in the late 1950s after the Korean War, for about the same reasons. So I guess after every war

you have to resurrect that system. Its strength has grown due to the fact that, when we started the rejuvenation at TRADOC when I was there, we insisted on putting the good people in as Professors of Military Science [PMS] and Assistant PMS's. Helping us was the fact that society's attitude toward military service turned around in the late 1970s. It really turned around in the mid to late 1970s. So you had college administrators who were glad to have ROTC back on the campus and were willing to give the Professors of Military Science a lot more clout than they had before. Some of the change was on the basis of the money that the ROTC system put into their universities, but at the same time society's attitude had changed.

[End Tape S-198, Side 1]

[Begin Tape S-198, Side 2]

INTERVIEWER: Back to the source of commission question, sir. When I first came into the Army back in 1963-1964, people told me that the difference in your source of commission was that a West Point officer had to come into a unit and prove that he was bad, whereas an ROTC officer had to come into a unit and prove that he was good. There was a great deal of bias in those days: West Pointers versus other sources of commission and the other sources of commission versus West Point. And, of course, then OCS came in and, in my opinion, in the early years they were by far the best because they had the experience.

GEN STARRY: Well, they had the experience of having been enlisted men.

INTERVIEWER: Right, but they didn't have the social graces, protocol, knowledge, and this type of thing. But, over your years, was there a difference in quality of the officers by source of commission?

GEN STARRY: I really don't think so. I suppose you could argue that, because of the screening process that's necessary to get into West Point, even though I've already commented that some who go there are not what they might be, you tend to eliminate the bottom five percent, whatever that bottom five percent is, and that isn't necessarily true in the colleges and universities. We have a set of colleges and universities in the ROTC system that traditionally don't produce good products, and when we began to try to revitalize the ROTC system in the late 1970s at TRADOC we tried to weed out those colleges and universities. Anyway, I was in the same brigade in Friedberg, Germany, for four years, from 1960-1964. I was the Brigade S-3 for almost two years, and in the 32nd Tank Battalion for the rest of the time, first as the executive officer and then as the battalion commander. How many officers do you put through the system in that period of time? Probably a couple of hundred went through that one battalion, and I can count the bad ones on the fingers of one hand. I would argue that there were as many West Pointers who couldn't make it as the others, even though their numbers were, percentage-wise, lower than the others. I said it before, and I really believe it, that the young fellows or females who come from the good universities--good education system, good PMS's-- especially where the PMS has been given some stature with the administration of the college or university as a faculty division head, are a hell of a lot better equipped to take their place out there in the Army than the average West Point graduate, and for a whole lot of reasons. Some of them are social, others are just from having had to live in that isolated environment and survive. College is a lot more broadly based education. If anything, I have a bias in favor of the ROTC graduate, particularly the good ones.

INTERVIEWER: Could we make West Point that broadly based and still maintain the inherent discipline and regimentation in West Point that many feel is necessary?

GEN STARRY: The way the place is run now, I don't see why you couldn't do that. I would argue that the way the place was run when I was there, I don't think so. I just didn't think it was appropriate. I had trouble discovering the relevance of the plebe system, or a lot of the other things that went on there, to what I knew went on in the real Army. It was the thing I've always objected to in the drill sergeant system and basic training. The philosophy was that they were going to tear them all down to the common denominator level of dirt and then build them up in their own image. Bullshit! They go there as human beings, individuals who have backgrounds, cultural biases, perceptions, and good traits and bad traits. The training experience at a Military Academy in basic training or whatever initial entry training is called is what Dr. Morris Massey describes as a significant emotional event. The challenge to the training system is to construct that significant emotional event so that whatever goes into it comes out the other end with the values, traits, perceptions, attitudes, and all those other things that you want them to have to become an effective soldier--officer or sergeant. College is a significant emotional event. It isn't as significant as it should be in some cases, but it is an emotional event. Military training is also a significant emotional event. So you've got to construct the training system to produce the output you want. That's why I complain about relevance at West Point. The system is not designed against those criteria, in my opinion, and it never was.

INTERVIEWER: Even now?

GEN STARRY: Even now, and certainly it wasn't when I went there. I just take violent exception to the notion that we're going to tear them all down and build them up in our own image. That's wrong! I tried to change that in the Army training system as the TRADOC commander. As you may remember, the drill sergeants rose up in righteous indignation when I cross-leveled the drill sergeants system over their loud protests. I didn't do it, my Sergeant Major Frank Wren did it. He and I sat down and I said,

"What is wrong with this system? There's something wrong out there, philosophically wrong. The bias is wrong." Immediately, he said, "I'll tell you what it is. We've got too many 'tear them down and build them up like me' guys out there." I said, "You're exactly right. Now you tell me how we're going to fix that." So he went away and got all the sergeants major together and they produced a series of recommendations, most of which I approved. So I was guilty by association. I didn't do that, the sergeants major did it, because my sergeant major and most of the drill sergeants who worked with him on the thing fundamentally believed that the idea that you're going to tear them all down and build them up in your own image is wrong. That began a long time ago with me.

INTERVIEWER: Apparently they're still doing that. For example, one of the theories I've heard often in the Army and about West Point is that in the "tearing down and building up in my image process" it takes four or five years after graduation for a graduate to start to think for himself again because he's been conditioned not to for so long.

GEN STARRY: Right.

INTERVIEWER: It appears to me that it could be a rather simple process to adjust that system, yet there doesn't seem to be much progress going along those lines.

GEN STARRY: I don't know if they've ever focused on it like that. Not everybody believes what I just said. I happen to believe it very strongly, but not everybody believes it. Each one of those people, I don't care who they are or how shaggy their hair is or how grimy they look when they walk in the door, is a resource, an asset. It's something that you can do something with if you can figure out how to do it, the way to do it. By and large, the way not to do it is tear it down and build it up in your own image. It is the excellence of the way you construct the significant emotional

event that makes the product in the end, and in doing that it isn't necessary to tear them down. They're going to go through that significant emotional event, and it's going to change them. So you look at that event to see if the values are there, and if the institution acts like you want the institution to act, so that when the soldier comes out the other end he has adopted the values of the institution. It changes their value system, that's what Massey says. That's the ideal thing about that whole set of Massey tapes. What he's talking about is changing the value system, and what you're talking about is creating a system that changes the value system of the input product so that the output product, in this case a person, takes on the value system of the experience they have been through. That's what basic training is for officers. There are a lot of significant events. Battle is a significant emotional event. If the battle is run right, the guy comes out the other end. If he survives, he comes out the other end with a set of values that says, "That's the way it's run right." Now, that's where people like Grail Brookshire come to the idea that the standards can't possibly be too high because that's what keeps people alive in battle. We had a soldier in our regiment--he was my orderly--who had been wounded, badly wounded, and when they sent him back to duty he didn't complain. Instead, he said, "I want to go back on my track. I'm a gunner, and I want to go back on my track." The surgeon came to me and said, "I don't think we ought to do that. Let me just go over this kid's record with you." So we went over the record. I arranged to talk to the soldier, and I said, "Why don't you come work for me for a while? You work on some special things where I need help and when you get back on your feet a little better and get your strength back, then we'll talk about your going back out on a track. But I need to remind you that it's a tough world out there, and you're not as good as you were before you were wounded." "I'll try it," he said. So he became my orderly. Now we got mortared a couple times, and he bailed some people out of holes and got them doing what they were supposed to be doing. He did go back out on track for the last couple months of his tour. On his way home, he came back to say good-

bye to me, and he said, "You know, Colonel, the thing that I would like to do is thank you." I said, "What for?" He said, "For keeping so many of us alive to go home." When I took command of that regiment, nobody was digging holes. I made them all dig holes. I told them, "I dig in, you dig in, we dig in. We live in the ground because, if we don't, we're going to get blown away when somebody mortars these places." Sergeant Major Horn came around and said, "There's a lot of resistance to digging holes." I said, "What do you think about it?" He said, "We should have been doing it a long time ago." I said, "Fine, keep them digging." We had a hell of a raid on one of Brookshire's firebases one night, involving a hundred and some odd rounds in a matter of a couple hours. Still, because they were all in the ground, we only lost one killed and four wounded. An artillery piece took a direct hit and was on fire. Brookshire had damage squads established; they put the fire out and kept on firing the howitzer without ever losing a stroke. After that, there was no more conversation about digging in or not digging in. But my orderly said to me in our farewell conversation, "I thought you were the baddest guy in the world when you came in here and started making us dig in. After that attack on that firebase, I realized what was going on. Everything you do is that way. Half of us wouldn't be here today if you hadn't come in here when you did and made us start doing things that we should have been doing all along." So the standards can't be too high. It's interesting that that's the thing that should impress that soldier. You could just tell that he'd thought about it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that your opinion on the standards and everything came together, more or less, under General Abrams?

GEN STARRY: Yes. It was a discouraging experience. I don't remember how many times I came home and said to my wife, "I got to get out of this Army. There's no way I can meet this guy's standards." It didn't persuade me that I ought to go off to the 122nd Truck Battalion, but it did persuade me that I had a hell of a learning problem. I just couldn't do anything right.

Sergeants always did things right, according to him. They probably did, and I kept saying to my platoon sergeant, "Sergeant, we've got to do this right." He said, "We're going to do it right." In the end, we'd do it right, and the Colonel would give him a cigar or a bottle of whiskey, and he'd kick my ass all over the kaserne because of something else he had found that was wrong.

INTERVIEWER: He never found the occasion to tell you that you did something right?

GEN STARRY: Nope.

INTERVIEWER: However, it is obvious that you did a great deal right. When did you find out how well you were doing?

GEN STARRY: When he made out your efficiency reports. I didn't read them at the time. You didn't do that in those days. Reading the efficiency reports later on, according to the reports I did everything right, and better than everybody else, but you sure wouldn't have known that at the time. I guess the biggest thing I learned out of that was when I was supply officer for our company, and supply in those days was pretty bad. We'd given the surplus equipment we had in Europe at the end of the war to the German government, and they formed a corporation and sold it. I'm talking sleeping bags, clothing, even trucks, to prime the economic pump. When the Korean War started, we bought that stuff back from the Germans. The American government bought it back from the Germans, and then we reissued it. But, up to that time, we really were struggling for parts, clothing, almost anything. The supply situation was a bloody disaster, and I said so one time, which resulted in the roundest ass chewing I have ever had from anybody. He took me apart, up one side and down the other. When it was all over, he says, "Let me tell you something, I'm not pissed off at you because you complained about the supply situation. I know it's

fucked up. I'd be the first one to tell you that. The trouble with you is, you don't have a solution." Well, I went home and thought about that, and I wrote that down for myself. And, ever after that, I made it a point never to criticize something for which I didn't have what I thought was a better solution. It may not have been, but I had at least forced myself to think through, beyond just saying, "I guess there's a problem, and this is a disaster, and this is not right, and so on," to say, "What is right, what would be right, what should be, how could we fix this?"

INTERVIEWER: Did you realize during this period what valuable lessons you were learning from then-Colonel Abrams?

GEN STARRY: I doubt it. He didn't give you time to reflect on things like that. My wife will tell you this more accurately than I, but for the first 24 months that I was in that battalion I was in the field--like Grafenwohr, Hohenfels, Vilseck, and Baumholder. We would come home just long enough to get our wives pregnant and then take off again. His story was, unless you're out there maintaining the tanks and shooting them, they're not going to work, and you're not going to work, and all this garrison living is for the birds. You learn a lot that way, particularly from a guy who fought a war as successfully as he did.

INTERVIEWER: Who else was in that battalion that we know about?

GEN STARRY: Well, let's see. Actually we were a fairly successful little organization in terms of what happened to a lot of the people. George Patton was in it as a company commander, and later as the battalion S-3. Ennis Whitehead, who retired as a major general, was in it as a platoon leader and a company commander. A fellow named Don Packard, who was a classmate of Ennis Whitehead's and mine, later became a brigadier general. Hap Haszard, who retired from Fort Knox some years ago as the assistant commandant of the Armor School, was also a company

commander. Hap had won a battlefield commission in the 1st Division Recon Company in World War II. I've never done a statistical count to see how many guys made colonel and whatnot, but it was a fairly successful group of people. That was largely because of the coach. All the guys on the team went on to do good things because the coach was good, and that's the story of good teams.

INTERVIEWER: Did you maintain contact with General Abrams the rest of your career?

GEN STARRY: I was in the 3d Armored Division as a brigade S-3 when he was the division commander, and I commanded a battalion in that division when he was V Corps commander. And of course I commanded the 11th Cavalry when he was COMUSMACV [Commander, United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam]. He picked the regimental commander. How he did it, I'm not sure, but they went in with a lot of recommendations and there were a lot of people, obviously, who were after the job. He posted me to command Fort Knox after they had given the job to somebody else. The other fellow was on the verge of packing his household goods and moving out there, as General DePuy was in the process of forming up the preliminary command structure of TRADOC; apparently General Abrams and General DePuy--I've never talked to either one of them about it--put their heads together and decided that the officer the DCSPER [Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel] wanted to send to Fort Knox wasn't one that either DePuy wanted or Abrams wanted. So they scrubbed him and put me in his place. General Abrams sent for me one time and said, "I want you to tell me what you're going to do at Fort Knox." We sat down in his office, and I sat there for a long time with him; he was quiet for a long period of time. This disturbed a lot of people, as he never said much, and a lot of times, if you tried to overcome the silence by talking, you'd almost always put your foot in your mouth. So I just sat there for a while. Finally he says, "Are you going to talk first or am I?"

"Well," I said, "you sent for me to talk about what I'm going to do at Fort Knox. I assumed you had some instructions." "No, Goddamn it," he said, "I want to know what you're going to do." And I said, "Okay, I haven't had long to think about it, but I know some things that ought to be done, so I'll lay them out for you," which is what I did. He lit another cigar, and didn't say anything for a while, and then he said, "All right, thanks for coming." I never knew whether the agenda was approved or not. I'm sure it was approved, because he would have said something had it not been. He sent me to Israel right after the Yom Kippur War. He asked me to go talk to the leaders, look at the tanks, and walk the battlefield, then come back and tell him what I thought about the war and our M-1 tank program. It was at this time that we were in the midst of reevaluating requirements for the M-1 tank. The Secretary of Defense people were trying to force the German-made 120mm gun on us at the time. So he said, "I want you to go take a look at that." In fact, I was in England at the time. I got a phone call from him in the middle of the night. He said, "I'm going to send a courier with a passport and orders for you to go to Israel. Here are your instructions . . . ." So I went to Israel, then came back and reported. Anyway, I think we had a pretty good relationship. He knew that we all respected him, me and all the others. I suppose it was like the relationship you have with the coach who coached your team. You sometimes idolize those guys. I guess the only way any of us ever had of determining what he thought of us was in the things he did for us.

INTERVIEWER: During the years between the battalion in Germany and the time you took Fort Knox, for example, and those periods in which you didn't work for him, did you often communicate with him?

GEN STARRY: Oh, yes, notes would go back and forth. Something would happen, and he'd send it to you with a "you ought to read this" note. Every time I went to a new job I'd go call on him just to check in. He had a kind of a network with many of us.

INTERVIEWER: Would you consider General Abrams to have been your mentor?

GEN STARRY: I don't know what a mentor is. I've watched that word with much interest as it's become popular. A mentor, by most definitions, is a guy who kind of teaches you some things and then is responsible for bringing you along to some greater heights of success or whatever. I don't think any of us ever looked on him that way. I like the coaching example better. In the case of the three coaches whom I played or swam for in my athletic years, I would say they were great coaches because they displayed a hell of a lot of the traits, attributes and characteristics of the good military leaders who fit that category. General DePuy is like that; so was General Abrams.

INTERVIEWER: I don't suppose there's a great deal of difference between coaching and mentoring, if you have a good coach. So I suppose the description would fit either one.

GEN STARRY: I don't know what mentoring is. I'm not being facetious; it's just that the coach thing fits better because most people can relate to that. Most people have done some athletic thing sometime. They know what that means.

INTERVIEWER: We'll discuss mentoring a little more at a later time.

GEN STARRY: You'd better give me a definition of it before we do. I was kind of surprised when it came into vogue because it smacks a little bit of some definitions of cronyism. I'm not necessarily against cronyism. The older you get and the more senior you get, the more there's a tendency to surround yourself with people whose qualities you know absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: I guess you'd have to define cronyism to me exactly. I think I know what it means, but I'm not sure.

GEN STARRY: You bring your cronies along with you wherever you go. You march into a new command and you bring a dozen or so people with you. I tried never to do that. On the other hand, I found myself in the 11th Cavalry when I had to relieve commanders, and in V Corps as well, even though the system works, doing something similar to that. Today it doesn't work that way; the system doesn't really allow you to do that. There are some ways around the system, and I always found myself, particularly in combat, falling back on those whose qualities I knew. I used to flush out some lieutenants and captains now and then in the 11th Cavalry. All things considered, I guess I replaced as many people early on in time as General DePuy relieved. I just didn't call it relief. I think if he were sitting here he'd tell you the same story I'm about to tell you. I did it because I was not willing to take a chance with other men's lives by putting a leader in whom I didn't have absolute confidence in command of them.

INTERVIEWER: Well, General DePuy made the statement that he didn't think he relieved an inordinate amount of people.

GEN STARRY: I don't, either.

INTERVIEWER: You don't think that he did or that you did?

GEN STARRY: I don't think that he did.

INTERVIEWER: Well, he said that he might have made a mistake in one case.

GEN STARRY: I found one case where I think he made a mistake.

INTERVIEWER: Of course I don't know if you and he are referring to the same one.

GEN STARRY: I don't know whether it's the same one, either. I've never talked to him about it. I was in USARV [United States Army, Vietnam] headquarters as a lieutenant colonel, and he was in command of the 1st Division. Now, the Office of Personnel Assignments head was a good friend of mine. One day I walked down the hall and said, "Let's do a little evaluation on this. He's relieved this fellow and he's relieved that fellow, and several of them came to work in the headquarters. Let's do a little evaluation as to why he relieved them." When we got through with our analysis of the 50-some-odd people whom General DePuy had fired, what I had to conclude was that he had replaced those people for reasons that were quite similar to the ones for which General Abrams had replaced commanders in V Corps in Europe when he was in command. When I was in Europe in the 1960's, in the brigade in which I commanded the 32nd Tank Battalion other two battalion commanders were replaced early.

INTERVIEWER: Did you say company commanders?

GEN STARRY: Battalion commanders. They were released early because they simply couldn't get it all together.

INTERVIEWER: This was when General Abrams commanded the 3d Armored Division in Europe?

GEN STARRY: This was when he was in command. He was the corps commander in V Corps. He, too, had his terrain walks. You probably heard my V Corps story. I claim that, as a result of my evaluation of the battalion commanders in V Corps, all 72 of them, there were ten--and I'm judging from the terrain walks, the training and the sergeant major

business that I described earlier--there were nine or ten who were clearly so good that it was probably a waste of their time for them to go out on these exercises. It didn't waste my time, because I learned something from every one of them. But, from the standpoint of their excellence at thinking through the battle, they really didn't need to do it. Maybe we did, but looking at it from my standpoint, it wasn't necessary. There were 15 who were clearly so unsatisfactory that . . .
[End Tape S-198, Side 2]

[Begin Tape S-199, Side 1]
GEN STARRY: . . . for one reason or another, they simply shouldn't have been posted to command. Everybody else was in the middle. So that says you've got one-seventh of the force at the top of the heap, slightly more than one-seventh of the people who should never have been there in the first place for whatever reason, and everybody else in the middle. It's like that Gordon Murch example I gave you a while ago with the platoon. The challenge to the leadership, to the corps commander, the division commander, and the brigade commander, is to get everybody in the middle up to a level of excellence like those nine or ten guys at the top. We don't have enough battalions in this Army to have average battalions. We can't afford it. You know, if we had ten times the battalions, you could say, "Well, some of them are average and some of them are below average." But we haven't got that many battalions. Every battalion we have has got to leave the gate running at a level that is somewhere near the top. You've got to know that they're all pretty damn good, and in most cases that's a function of the battalion commander. So you ought to get rid of the commanders who are not up to standard. We got rid of the 15 as quickly as we could. I didn't relieve anybody, I just got them out of there, and then we started working on those in the middle.

INTERVIEWER: Did they serve shortened tours?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did they progress any further?

GEN STARRY: Some did. Most didn't. You know, the system will keep a guy if it isn't relief for cause. He'll probably still make colonel.

INTERVIEWER: We're getting significantly ahead of ourselves, but this is very interesting. From what I've seen in my career, the corps commander, for example, often does not know how good a battalion commander is. He sees terrain walks and those god-awful statistics that are posted everywhere all the time, but he really doesn't know how good a commander is. How did you know?

GEN STARRY: Well, in my judgment I followed the disciplinary statistics just because they were recorded all the time. What I was looking for were trouble spots. If you see the same battalion out there with racial incidents in the NCO club once every two or three months, then you know that you'd better go take a look at that battalion. If you note a unit with a rash of vehicle accidents, it may just be that, a rash. They happen that way. But, at the same time, you might want to go look, to see for yourself what kind of an outfit it is. My judgment of them was made on the basis of the terrain walks. I don't know what the terrain walks are like now, but in my own case I had spent a lot of time in that sector. I was a brigade S-3 in that sector. I used to fly in a helicopter in that sector, and never used a map. I knew the towns so well that I could tell you the name of the town just by looking at the church steeples. Think of the German towns--that they're all different. The church steeples are also all different, and they're in different places in the towns. If you memorize the V Corps sector, you can go from one place to another without looking at a map, just by memorizing the way those church steeples are situated in those towns.

So my questions to those battalion commanders about the terrain and the weapons deployments were based on a considerable depth of knowledge of that particular sector; not just a "generic" sector, but that specific ground, because I'd laid out hundreds of plans on it, and had spent most of my years in the 3d Armored Division doing that sort of work. I had a standard list of questions. There weren't any new questions. You know: where are the weapons; what's your task organization; how are you going to organize for combat; where are you going to put the weapons; what's the enemy situation; how are you going to fight the battle; command and control; logistics; and where are the trains? It was a standard set of just the normal questions involving troop leading procedures that you should go through. You wouldn't believe how many people had never thought about that. I found a tank battalion commander, and I asked him one of the questions. I said, "How do you communicate with your brigade commander?" "Well, I call him on the radio." I said, "How do you get instructions from him? Do you have high frequency radios?" "Well, yes, but they're over in that RATT [radio teletype] rig." I said, "Who do you talk to on those?" He didn't know. The further I probed into it, the more it was apparent that the only thing he knew about was the pork chop mike in his hand. He didn't have any idea as to how his battalion was hooked into the rest of that. He really didn't. He didn't know about the log [logistics] nets. He didn't know about the admin/log [administration/logistics] nets. We did that three times with that one fellow, and on the third attempt he still was not much better at it than he was the first time around. You just have to make a judgment about someone like that. We were on the Fulda River one day going through this exercise with a mech battalion. Now, there were TOWs [tube- launched, optically-tracked, wire-guided missile] over here, TOWs over there, and TOWs were under the bridge, and the Dragons are here, there, and so forth. Well, I said, "Colonel, I don't quite understand what you've done here, but you obviously have a good reason for it. If you put the TOWs back up on the side of this hill in that little sunken road back up there about 500 meters, where they've got some

cover, you could probably get another 1500 to 2000 meters of a field of fire. Your field of fire is limited here because of the way you've got them located under the bridge and so forth, plus some of them are out in the open." We're standing on the Fulda River, the banks of the Fulda River, and he looked at me almost in dismay and said, "Why, sir, this is the FEBA [forward edge of the battle area]." He pointed at the river and said, "I'm supposed to defend the FEBA." Now, that's a true story. Now, let me tell you something, that fellow had been the Chief of Staff's aide. He'd been on the Joint Staff, and was highly thought of; now he had come out to get himself brushed with the battle dust a little bit so he could get promoted and go on to greater things. The man was incompetent as a war fighter. So you have to make a judgment about him. Incidentally, those who didn't do well on the ground, with one exception, were the same folks who didn't do well in laying out their training. They were not able to explain how the battle was going to be fought, and they were not able to explain how they were going to train to fight the battle. Nor were their sergeants major, with the battalion commander's guidance, able to explain how they were going to train the sergeants. I made my judgments solely in that way. I didn't look at the statistics except by exception. As I say, if a unit has a rash of vehicle accidents, a rash of rapes, or whatever, then you go look to see what's going on. But I was trying to judge them on the basis of their professional competence to do the things that they were there to do in the first place. This other stuff is housekeeping which should take care of itself. If you've got a problem, it'll surface and you could go see about it. But the reason we're there is to fight the battle and to train to fight the battle. If they can't do those two things, it doesn't make any difference what they do in other matters. I had one battalion commander bring me his statistics for the last year that he'd been in command. He said, "Look here, I've got the best of this rate and the best of that . . ." And I said, "That's not important. Tactics are important. Of course we've got to keep ourselves clean, orderly, well disciplined, and so on, but the reason you are here is to fight that battle, and if you don't know

how you're going to do that, and know how you're going to train for it, then how in the world can I keep you in command?"

INTERVIEWER: We'd like to go back a little bit, sir, to your first assignment in Germany. One of the questions we'd like to ask is about when General Patton was then a lieutenant along with you. Did it appear at the time that he had a cross to bear because of his father?

GEN STARRY: Well, I don't know whether it would be fair to call it a cross to bear or not. I think he has always been very conscious, at least my impression of him is that he has always been very conscious, of his father's record. But he has always been determined to make his own way, but at the same time concerned that he do at least as well as, if not better than, his Dad did, particularly in the important things like fighting wars. I don't know whether it's fair to call that a cross to bear, but I think he's always been conscious of that, and he couldn't help but be, coming from a family like that, with a father with a record like that. He couldn't help but be conscious of it.

INTERVIEWER: From my association with him, he appeared to emulate his father in mannerisms, conduct and things like that.

GEN STARRY: To some extent, I suppose. I don't know whether that was conscious or unconscious. He grew up in that environment, and I think when your father's a strong image, you tend to copy him and want to be like him. So, whether it was conscious or not, I'm unable to say.

INTERVIEWER: Have you associated with him very much over the years?

GEN STARRY: Oh, yes. We started out as lieutenants in that company in the 63rd Tank Battalion together. We were platoon leaders together, and

then he was a company commander and I was his executive officer. We corresponded, and saw one another, off and on, but we never served together again until we went to Vietnam in 1967 and worked on the Mechanized and Armor Combat Operations Study Group. He was the assistant commandant at the Armor School when I took command at Fort Knox. So we've been friends and served together off and on our entire careers.

INTERVIEWER: He retired as a major general. Did he have other aspirations or did he have a health problem?

GEN STARRY: Oh, I'm sure he had other aspirations, but he apparently got into an awkward situation over conflicts of interests. He was assigned to the headquarters of the Army Materiel Command at a time when there was a great furor over the fact that you couldn't own a nickel's worth of anything in stocks or bonds. Now, his family is wealthy by any standards. I don't know what their holdings are, but in a situation in which there's a witch hunt going on about holding stocks, bonds, securities, or investments in the military industrial complex of the United States, it's hard for someone like that to hang on. They'll appoint someone as Deputy Secretary of Defense, who's holding 20 million dollars worth of X-Y-Z stock, but they run off the Pattons and the Starrys because they have seven shares of this and six shares that. Of course George had a lot more than that. I commanded TRADOC when he retired, and I offered to put him in command at Knox. Then I offered to give him a couple of other jobs, one in my headquarters. However, he really didn't want to work in a headquarters. I offered the Chief to let him command Fort Knox, but there was, in effect, a witch hunt going on about people who owned a lot of stocks. We had to sell everything we owned. I didn't own anything. My wife inherited some stocks and bonds from her father. Not much, just twenty thousand dollars worth of this, that and the other thing--six shares of Exxon, seven shares of Shell, mostly oil stocks, but then he'd been in

the oil business. It was her stock. As the TRADOC commander, I didn't do business with any of those companies, or in anything that was related to those companies. Still, we were forced to sell every bit of her holdings--at a significant loss.

INTERVIEWER: You weren't allowed to put them into a blind trust?

GEN STARRY: No. We were forced sell everything.

INTERVIEWER: All of the civilians seem to be able to put their stocks into a blind trust.

GEN STARRY: Yes. Well, we sold it and took an enormous capital loss. As I recall, on what had been about twenty thousand dollars' worth of stocks, we took about a seven or eight thousand dollar capital loss. You should talk to my wife about that, but she really won't talk about it to this day.

INTERVIEWER: This occurred while you were at TRADOC?

GEN STARRY: Well, the rule was that if you were a four-star, and you wanted to be a commander or whatever, you had to divest yourself of every holding and every association you had with the stock market, bonds and so on. So we took that money, what was left of it, and put it into utility bonds, municipal utilities; there didn't seem to be any stigma about that. I tell this story because it was symptomatic of what was going on at the time. Jack Guthrie commanded the Materiel Command at the time, and he felt it necessary to go along in enforcing the policy.

INTERVIEWER: Who initiated this witch hunt? Was it the Secretary of the Army?

GEN STARRY: Well, no, it was part of the Carter administration. It was one of the things they brought to office with them. Who in that administration was specifically responsible for putting that kind of pressure on, I really don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Was General Patton given the opportunity to divest himself of his stock?

GEN STARRY: As I understand it, he offered to put it into a blind trust, but I don't have any firsthand knowledge of this at all. He offered to put it into a blind trust or some other arrangement, and for some reason or other it was decreed that proposal wasn't satisfactory.

INTERVIEWER: In doing some of the reading, and maybe this is an opportune time to discuss this, it appears that Army officers are expected to keep themselves poor for some reason. As you know, you reached the cap at about the major general level. That cap expands a little bit for the cost of living, but that's about it. And yet you talk about not being able to invest and own stocks. What is the solution to that?

GEN STARRY: Well, there are a couple of things that really grate and really get crossways in my grain. One is the fact that they'll trust you with the lives and fortunes of several thousand men, but you're not allowed to own five or six shares of this, that and the other thing, or invest in the great national industrial enterprise. There's something wrong with that. If you're an honest and trustworthy enough fellow to have the kind of command responsibility that we do these days, then why aren't you trustworthy enough to have ownership in part of grass roots America, investing in industry and so on? I just don't understand that. I don't know what the situation is now, but for some six or seven years, in my case and in the case of Generals Vessey, Kroesen, and some other so-called older folks, we lived under that level five ceiling on executive salaries. So, for a

time, what you were authorized to draw by the authorization bill and what you could actually draw by the appropriations bill differed by some $16,000 or $17,000 a year. I suppose that's all right; if the Congress wants to impose that kind of a limit, the Congress can do it. At the same time, for example, they give general officers a personal money allowance. For a long time that allowance was not taxed. Then some genius decided that it should be taxed. At the four-star level, it's $2,200 a year, so they immediately take away some part of it. At the time, the tax rates were such that it amounted to almost half of it. The whole thing is just one thing after another. Since I retired, I guess, the thing that's impressed me most about civilian industry is the enormous salaries that we pay people who are no better qualified, in fact not as well qualified in many ways, as the captains and the majors and the lieutenant colonels and the colonels whom I left behind in my military world. You could argue, "Well, it's their choice. The uniformed guys can get out and work in industry and take advantage of that if they want to." That's true, but the differential is so enormous that you have to wonder, and the benefit packages which we traditionally said were part of the military system are not just part of the military anymore. Every industry has "free medical care"--Blue Cross, Blue Shield, John Hancock, or some other kind of a program. The benefits packages in industry today, in the big industries, are in most cases better than those left to us in the military as the Congress and others have eroded them over the years. If I sound a little bit bitter about it, I am. Not just from my standpoint, personally, but what has happened to us, personally, to our family, is indicative of what has happened to Army families historically and is still going on. And, to the extent that benefits erosion continues, it's going to be very, very hard to attract and keep, persuade to stay, the good officers whom you want to run your military establishment. So, in terms of what to do about it, I can't answer your question. You've got a legislature in Washington today that does not have many people in it who have had military service. In it are a lot of people who--the younger ones, some of them, anyway--were a part of the

generation that avoided Vietnam by going to law school or by going to this school and that school, thus avoiding service. You have to wonder about their motivations. They're certainly not motivated to support the military in the sense that the generation before them was and, as a result, we see an erosion of support for the military establishment in the Congress. Another thing you see in the Congress, of course, is the enormous growth of the committee staffs. Not the individual Congressmen's staffs, although they have grown too, but the committee staffs. The committee staffs are motivated by who knows what, whatever the senior counsel wants to pursue, and they have no code of ethics. They're not sworn into office. They're an invisible legislature in their own right. They're unelected representatives. A couple of critics have written a book about that. We've got ourselves into a situation which some people describe as a divergent course to disaster. Part of the government is going off in one direction, while the other part is going off in the other direction. Either course leads to disaster. Congress has got to somehow become responsible again. There are 3,500 lines, or something like that, in the Defense Department budget, and they're going to legislate on each one of those individually to the "nth" degree. You wonder what their motivations are. I'm not blaming it all on the Congress or on the Defense Department. In spite of the clamor about fraud, waste, and abuse under recent administrations, and the Defense Department acting irresponsibly in many cases, I would still argue that the biggest change for the worse in Washington for the last ten years has been the enormous growth of the congressional committee staffs with each one on its own bent, pursuing its own thing, whatever that might be, and for whatever purpose, without any responsibility for the outcome of what they're doing, and without any need, let alone desire, to cross-level what they're doing and what everybody else is doing so that it makes sense in the end. What you end up with is a hodge-podge of legislation.

INTERVIEWER: We know that back in about 1968 there was a study conducted to look at salary compatibility between the service and civilian industry. I can't remember the name of that study, but you may remember it. It came out that for a major general commanding a division, if you considered his level of responsibility compared to a person in industry with the same level of responsibility, we would have to pay him about $250,000 a year. At the time, the end result of all of this was that we just couldn't afford it. Today, I think I perceive it as you do. It's not a question of whether we can afford it or not, it's simply the fact that we don't have a champion. Likewise, we also have problems in Congress with the committee.

GEN STARRY: The basic question is what level of compensation would be satisfactory--would be adequate, I guess, is a better word--to pay someone to take on that kind of responsibility? The answer is, you can't put a price on that. I don't know whether that's a right number or not. I remember that study, and I thought at the time, "That's kind of foolish, because here you've got a man who's responsible not only for the conduct of the business of the division, particularly if it's a base, but he's also got a certain amount of the money to spend to keep the base running." He's a business manager in that sense, even though he's not responsible for making a profit. In the business world sense, he's responsible for staying within a limited budget. You've always got that problem. On the other hand, like a businessman, you can pay people to do that for you. Part of his responsibility is to get that division ready to go to war and, if war comes, take it out and fight it. So, you've got 15,000 or 16,000 soldiers out there whose lives, fortunes, futures, and everything else depend on the decisions that that commander makes. What are you going to pay a fellow for that? I don't know, I really don't know. So the point is there has to be other compensatory kinds of things in the military that make up for that. Some of that comes in just the association of belonging to the profession. To some of us, that's sufficient satisfaction to hang on in spite

of all the barbs that people keep throwing at us. Historically, some of it has been in the benefit package. But, as I pointed out, in the company I work for now the benefits package for people in my salary grade and below is every bit as good, and better in many cases, than the benefits package you enjoy at your salary grade. You know, it includes hospitalization, life insurance, prescription benefits, and so on. All of that is taken care of somehow. At one time the military led in this. In the beginning we kept the salary levels low, historically, and ostensibly offset low salaries with improved benefits. Today that's gone; it has reversed itself now. Salaries are a little better than they were. That came about in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Relatively speaking, you are better paid now than I was when I was in your grade, but at the same time the benefits have eroded to the point that I would argue that you probably are not as well compensated now as I was then, all things considered. I don't know if there's an answer to that. I suspect there is some kind of a practical limit to the attractiveness of the military profession to young people who see their compatriots--the grass on the other side of the fence always looks a little greener--out there doing extremely well in industry at a much faster rate than they're doing in the military. As we all go through that first ten years of military service, and we look around and see our friends from college out in industry making more than we're making, well, the grass does look greener on the other side of the fence and you say to yourself, "Why am I still here?" Those who decide to stay at that point probably will stay for a full career, but an awful lot of them leave, probably too many of them leave. Our oldest son is a major in the Army, and he went through the same sort of soul-searching that I remember going through myself at about the seventh and eighth year of service, when promotions seem a little bit slow, at least in comparison with your ambitions.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned that you are a little bitter about the pay cap. Now that you've had about three years in civilian industry, would you change anything if you had the opportunity to do it over?

GEN STARRY: Do you mean would I stay on active duty longer or what?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir. Or, would you have left active duty much sooner had you known what industry was like?

GEN STARRY: No, I don't think so.
[End Tape S-199, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-199, side 2]
GEN STARRY: I knew that vice presidents were making a lot more money than I was making, but that didn't bother me necessarily. However, I didn't realize that down through the ranks, even at the bottom, that the salary differences were quite so great. After I had six or seven years of service, one of my friends came around and offered me a job in a little company that he owned and operated, and I went through that period just like everybody seems to have gone through after about six, seven, or eight years of service. But, after that, it kind of went away. I decided that I was committed to the service, so I should stay.

INTERVIEWER: I think we've covered your period in Germany fairly thoroughly. Do you have any more comments that you'd like to make about that tour, about anyone who was in the unit or anything that happened there? Are there any "lessons learned" you'd like to discuss?

GEN STARRY: No. One thing I'd like to say about that battalion, the 32nd Tank Battalion, 3rd Armored Division, in the early 1960's: I include this in a general statement about both the battalion I commanded and the

63rd, which I was in from about 1949-1952. I have said several times in talking with people about this that I've been in two really good units in peacetime during my forty years in the Army. One was the 63rd Tank Battalion, and the other was the 32nd Tank Battalion, which I later commanded. And, the reason I say that is that in the 63rd, in the early 1950s, when the Korean War started, we cadred once, as I recall, maybe twice, but I think only once, to fill up some units that were forming up in the States, and then they stabilized everybody. When I left that battalion, after more than three years, we still had most of the same tank commanders, platoon sergeants and first sergeants. They had been there from the beginning. Now some of the sergeants had been promoted over the years, so you may have had a first sergeant who had been a tank commander when I first came aboard as a second lieutenant. But the fact of the matter was that the senior NCOs, from the squad leader/tank commander on up, and most of the officers had been together for more than three years. I guess the secret to our success was that we could do a lot of things and do them all very well. General Abrams commented on this one time. Somebody asked him the difference between the 63rd and the 37th Tank Battalion which he commanded in World War II, and he said, "The difference between this one and that one is that this one can do a whole lot of things and do them all well. That one could only do a couple of things well because we simply hadn't been together long enough, and didn't have time to train. When we went to war and landed in Normandy, it was a top-notch battalion; but the minute the replacements began to come as individuals, as opposed to crews or platoons, the quality of our performance, outside the initial problems of moving, shooting and communicating, fell off dramatically." In the platoon that I commanded, and later the company that I commanded, I never had to look around to see where they were. I knew where they were because we had worked together for so long that I knew they knew what we were going to do. We explained what we were going to do, but once you launched it, you never had to look around to make sure they were doing what you had told them

to do. You knew they were there, and you knew they were thinking like you were about what it was we were doing. This same thing was later true when I commanded the 32nd Tank Battalion from 1962-1964 in the 3rd Armored Division in Germany, which was at the time just after the erection of the Berlin Wall. As a result, we stabilized the people who were on station in Europe. As I recall, there was an extension to the stabilization, so we may have had a stabilization that amounted to as much as two years in individual cases. When I left that battalion, having been in that brigade for four years, there were still in the tank commander, platoon sergeant, first sergeant, sergeant major ranks almost all familiar faces. Now, commanding that battalion was easy because the troops had been there for so long and had worked together for so long. That's what we now call cohesion. It was all over the place. Now, if you had gone to war with those units, attrition would have taken its toll, and there would have been a decline in performance, particularly in the extra tasks that you'd like to be able to do well over what you needed to fight the war. That's going to happen to you. In the 11th Cavalry, which I commanded in Vietnam for in 1969-1970, there were a lot of things we couldn't do, and a lot of things I simply couldn't ask them to do because we hadn't been together long enough and we hadn't trained to do them. As a result, I was not sure that we had the capability to do them. Now, if you're talking about circumstances where people are likely to get killed, you want to make damn sure that you've got the capability to do what you started out to do. In the 63rd Tank Battalion we had a hell of a good battalion commander and, in the beginning, we had a lot of people in the officer ranks as well as in the NCO ranks who had fought in World War II. That meant that we had a lot of combat experience. But the secret was that we just stayed together a long time as a team. That made all the difference in the world in our performance.

INTERVIEWER: One last question--what was the atmosphere in Germany like at that time between the Americans and the Germans? It

was only a short time after the war ended. Did that cause any real problems with troops and officers and so forth?

GEN STARRY: No, it didn't cause any problems for us. There was a Communist movement in Germany in the late 1940's and 1950's time period. I don't remember whether the Communist party actually held any seats in the legislature or not. I believe they did, but I could be wrong about that. But, anyway, there was a substantial Communist influence, particularly in the industrial cities. For a while our battalion was stationed in Mannheim. There was some Communist influence in Frankfurt, and throughout the industrial Ruhr. Fortunately, there were no American troops in the Ruhr; that was in the British sector. There were some riots and demonstrations in that area. We had to go out and train ourselves to protect installations against rioting and against what today is called terrorism, or terrorist attacks. People raided our ammo dump, which was out behind the kaserne in a wooded area. It was fenced in, but they'd dig under the fence and tunnel into the bunkers. There were some attempts to blow the place up, but more often than not you'd discover that what they were doing was stealing ammunition. They'd take it out, take it apart, then sell the brass shell cases. It was a survival kind of thing. Still, there was enough of a Communist influence there to cause some alarm. But, out in the countryside, particularly in Bavaria, northern and southern Bavaria, you did not find that. That region was dominated by a strong Catholic, right wing conservative influence. The Communist movement never got into Bavaria at all, to speak of. However, in the Ruhr and the Rhineland, and in the industrial cities, you had a lot of it. The Germans had been bombed out of most of their homes in the large cities. They were poor. There were still people dying of hunger, even in the early 1950s. They were having a hard time existing in some cases. When we first went over there, we were not allowed to buy food on the German market because it would have meant taking food away from the Germans. Anyway, in the countryside especially, they were glad to have us there. They had no

army or any other military force of their own until the late 1950s, and most of them saw us as the only thing standing between them and the Russians. It may have been that they were more afraid of the Russians than they were of us. I don't think that's the case, but they were definitely impressed with the Russians, and we were the only thing that stood between them and the Russians. Now, you still find that today, on the border particularly. In that five kilometer border exclusion zone you find a lot of very friendly folks.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, sir, let's move on to the time when you went from Germany to Fort Knox. You were aide-de-camp for about a year, I believe. Do you have any revelations about that period?

GEN STARRY: Well, not particularly. I went to Knox to go to the Advanced Course. We got there in the fall of 1952, and I went to the Advanced Course in 1953 and 1954. The 3rd Armored Division was there as a training division in those days. All of the training centers had numbered divisions in them. The 3rd Armored was at Fort Knox, and deployed in the late 1950s to Germany, I guess as part of Operation Gyroscope. So I was in kind of waiting pattern there for a few months, not quite a year. I had been a tank platoon leader and a tank company commander, plus a battalion staff officer in LTC Abrams' battalion, so they were happy to have me come to Fort Knox. They sent me down to the 3rd Armored Division. They said, "We want you to take command of a tank company," and I thought, "Well, that's fine. I know something about that." So I went to this company and met the company commander, who was so anxious to leave that he was just about to hand me the key to the orderly room and say, "So long." I said, "Wait a minute. I've got to know something about this company." He replied, "Well, it's big. It has got 60-some-odd tanks in it." I said, "No, I mean the company, not the battalion." He said, "I'm talking about the company. We're in the rent-a-tank business. We rent tanks to the trainees." Then I said, "Well, take me

around, will you?" So we went around and looked. Well, in truth, they had 100-and-some-odd tanks in that company; about half of them were static on a range someplace. The other half moved somewhere and, because they couldn't keep track of the equipment--let me remind you that the Korean War was still going on--they took it all off of the tanks. So the tanks were stripped in the motor pool. Now, if you wanted to teach a gunnery class, you would go to this enormous warehouse and draw the sights and the fire control equipment out of the bins in the warehouse. You would take it out, put it in the tank, and go off and shoot. It may or may not have been the stuff that was on the tank yesterday or the day before. It was just stuff that would plug in the holes. Most of it didn't work very well because the maintenance was sporadic, I guess, is probably the right word. In fact, it was a disaster. I went around and looked at the tanks, and out of the 60-some-odd that they had in the motor pool, they did well getting 15 or 20 of them running on any given day in order to meet a training commitment. I really never had had any experience like that before. In LTC Abrams' battalion, if your tanks didn't run, you were standing nose-to-nose with his cigar trying to explain why they were down for something after the time they were supposed to cross the starting line. As I said, I'd never experienced anything like this before. So, when I was sitting around trying to figure out what to do about it, a friend called from the division headquarters and said, "Come up here. We'd like to interview you to be the aide-de-camp to the assistant division commander." So I went up there, and I asked, "First of all, what is an aide-de-camp and what is an assistant division commander?" It wasn't quite that bad, but almost. Well, I met a superb brigadier general named John Tupper Cole, who was one of the Army's great cavalrymen, twice captain of the Olympic equestrian team, and a super guy. I decided that, whatever the general did, it was better than worrying about those 100-some-odd tanks scattered all over the landscape. So I spent a very enjoyable year working for him. Now, going back to our conversation yesterday, part of my impression of the cavalry, with the excellence of the individual and the officers' ability to

do things well, came from my association with him. His method of inspecting the training was to go out on the rifle range and walk up and down the line until he found the soldier who was doing the worst. Every time the guy fired, the red flag would be waving across the target, so the general would lie down in the mud, or the sand, or whatever, next to this soldier and spend whatever time it took coaching him to the point where he was not a bad shot. He was a marvelous shot himself, and he had an uncanny ability to take some quivering 17-year-old and, in a matter of a few minutes' time, get the guy shooting through the middle of the target when before he couldn't hit it with both hands. He was really very good at that. You'd go to the machine gun range with him, and he'd do the same thing. You'd go to the tank gun range with him, and again he'd do the same thing. Not only was he good himself, but he knew all sorts of little techniques, all sorts of little things that you could use to teach the soldiers. Now, I watched him in rifle marksmanship and machine gun marksmanship, particularly, and he had a little pattern of things that he looked at. Most of it had to do with holding your breath and squeezing the trigger. A lot of it had to do with position, whether or not the rifle was in a steady position and so on, but a lot of it had to do with simple techniques like holding your breath, squeezing the trigger properly, and timing your shots. He was really quite good at that, probably the best I've ever seen. I was very impressed by that. I asked him about it one time, and he said, "Well, that's what we did in the cavalry. They did it in the infantry, too, but we thought we were a little better about it in the cavalry than the rest of them were." Now, I've met several people before and after him who were products of that same system, and they were all the same--excellent in performance of soldier skills. But, more than that, his ability to train the soldiers and correct their faults in a short period of time was just outstanding. Well, anyway, the Advanced Course was like all advanced courses. Most of us go to those courses having spent most of first two, three or four years, or whatever it is, serving in a unit. Well, you go back to the school, and you've got people teaching at the school whom you

really don't think know quite as much about it as you do, having been in unit. Also some of it is a little bit non-relevant. Well, we had all those problems. But it was kind of a fun year, and a necessary year. I went from there to Korea, hoping to be a tank company commander again. I was a captain, but not very senior. Promotions dragged on in those days, and here I'd been a platoon leader, a company commander, a battalion staff officer, and had been to the Advanced Course. I thought I knew enough about commanding a company by then that it would be a breeze. However, my assignment was to the Eighth Army staff, the G-2 section, which didn't please me very much. However, it turned out to be a good assignment. It was an interesting 16 months, because after a short period of being the commissioned telephone orderly, as we have in many such headquarters, I became the coordinator of the covert and clandestine collection program targeted against China, Manchuria and North Korea. It was run out of South Korea. The intelligence units in Japan phased their people and their activities through Eighth Army. We had to have a central focus for all those activities. Shortly, however, we phased the headquarters down and they took Eighth Army back to Japan, leaving an Eighth Army Forward in Korea. It was a minimal-size headquarters. I took over an office that had had five lieutenant colonels in it--mind you, I'm a captain--and I went around and listened to each one of them tell me what he did, and collected all of their papers and their logs and whatnot. Then the sergeants and the officers all went away. Then one day, as the remaining master sergeant and I were sizing up our work, I decided to see the Deputy G-2. To him I said, "How much of what those people did out there am I going to be allowed to get rid of, since there's only one of me and there were five of them, and they were all lieutenant colonels with combat experience and I'm a dumb captain with no combat experience? I've never been a G-2 before, don't want to be one, but need to know what I'm supposed to do." "Well," he said, "as far as I can tell, we're not going to stop doing anything we were doing before, so you're just going to have

to work harder." So, for the next year or so, that's what we did. We worked very hard, but it was a lot of fun.

INTERVIEWER: During that time there apparently was still a lot of conjecture that the war could start up again.

GEN STARRY: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: It seems to me that the G-2 section would be a pretty exciting place to work.

GEN STARRY: It was, particularly in the clandestine business, since we were sending agents north. In fact, most of our information came from agents. It was something that had been done during the war. Now it's 1954 -1955 that I'm talking about. There was an enormous amount of infiltration back and forth across the DMZ [demilitarization zone] into and out of North Korea, for our part both by parachute and by boat off of both coasts. The Korean Army, particularly, had a large organization to do that. Anyway, I got to look into all of the compartments and see what everybody was doing, which was very interesting. There was a big trade in dope, even in those days. In the beginning we were paying our agents with gold. You weigh the gold out and pay them off. Gold had a very high exchange rate. As the government of North Korea became more and more able to control the population, gold became a national monopoly; citizens couldn't own gold. If they caught you with gold, you were thrown into prison. So gold became a non-exchange item and we started paying our debts with outdated wonder drugs. Soon that proved unsatisfactory. We couldn't get enough of it to pay the bills. So we tried to start a program to counterfeit money. It would be printed in the U.S., and we'd pay our bills with counterfeit North Korean won. That fell afoul of some American official in Japan. He complained that it was economic warfare, and that we were not into economic warfare with North Koreans. So we

had to knock that off. I even tried to start a little business, in fact, several businesses, in North Korea. One of them was to be a house of ill repute--a high class house of ill repute, you understand. I figured that if, we could get that going, we could have a continuous source of information from government officials.

INTERVIEWER: This was in Pyongyang?

GEN STARRY: Yes, we were going to start it in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. We did start a little trading company, but I couldn't get the money to run it, so I had to give that up. The Koreans themselves had a large boat operation that began to intercept the drug trade, and I'm sure they kept a lot of it for themselves.

INTERVIEWER: So you paid South Korean agents going north, and North Koreans headed back north?

GEN STARRY: No, just South Korean agents going north. For a long time we used people who had lived in the North, but had been pushed South by the Chinese invasion and were left behind when we drove the North Koreans back across the 38th parallel. So essentially, for a long time, we were sending people home, in effect. We'd equip them with radios and other means of communication to communicate with us. We were trying to build an agent network up there, to assist downed aviators and parachutists who didn't get to the place where they were supposed to, and for moving agent traffic around inside North Korea. As the government of North Korea gained more and more control over the population, it became impossible to do that. As a matter of fact, it got so bad that we were sending a lot folks north who weren't very well trained. We would spend a year training them but, given the quality of people we were dealing with, you had to wonder how much training was possible, and whether or not it was enough. As the government got control over the population, in the

cities particularly, the block wardens (or block chiefs, I guess, is what you would call them) would take control. There was a little piece of wood posted on the wall outside the door of every house. On it were the characters--the names of the people who were authorized to be in that house. If you wanted to come and visit my house, you had to go out and cross the palm of the block chief with a little money and get an extra little plaque to hang up, which said that you were authorized to be in my house. You paid him for it. If the police came to your house and walked in, which they could do, and found someone unauthorized there, then everyone in the house went to jail. Then they would tear the house down. It doesn't take much of that to intimidate a population. So, as time wore on, over a period of a year or so, it became more and more difficult to send people home. That put us in a totally different construct as far as agent training, agent infiltration, agent exfiltration, and agent communications was concerned. We had a hell of a time, because we had geared the whole thing up on the basis that we were going to build this big network of people whom we were simply going to send back to live where they had lived before the war. They, along with their families, were going to do whatever it was they wanted to do, and we were going to pay them for simply observing certain things. Now, on the basis of that whole network, we planned on getting this enormous take of information. However, it never happened. As the government closed down on the population and got absolute control over it, that whole idea fell apart. When I left in December of 1955, we were struggling to figure out what we were going to do about that. Eventually, of course, the radio intercept business got going. Once we got satellites up, we would be able to get better information, but that was still some years off. So there was a period of time when we were really strapped for information. You could argue that approach was too much of an emphasis on human agents at a time when there shouldn't have been, and that's probably true, but it was something that they had done during the war and apparently had had great success with, or at least some success anyway. But the North Korean

government's ability to acquire control over the population after the war really made it an obsolete concept.

INTERVIEWER: So, in other words, you never got your house of ill repute established?

GEN STARRY: No, it never got established. The ladies were all lined up. I found a lady who had been married at one time to one of the last members of the ruling house in Korea. She was a very influential lady in Inchon. In fact, she owned the garbage contract in Inchon for the American installations. Now, the person who owned the garbage contract was always wealthy. In addition, she still owned property in Pyongyang, and part of her family lived there.
[End Tape S-199, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-200, side 1]
GEN STARRY: Anyway, she said she owned the property and could get a staff together for us. All she wanted from us was transportation. I was to run the transportation and communications arrangements, and she was to get what I thought was a reasonable stipend for her efforts. We had everything pretty well laid on, as a matter of fact. In the intelligence business, not knowing much about it, I felt obliged to report what I'd been doing and account for the money that I'd been spending. So I prepared a report and sent it in through the proper channels. It wound up in the Joint UW Task Force Headquarters in Japan. Now, it turned out that everybody thought it was so funny that it became the topic of cocktail party conversation in Tokyo. The next thing I know, I'm standing in front of the Army commander--the ambassador was also there--and I'm told that this operation is immoral, illegal, and a whole bunch of other things, and to close it down immediately. So, I shut the whole thing down.

INTERVIEWER: It must have been rather easy to cross the border between North and South Korea at that time.

GEN STARRY: Not across the DMZ. We did send people back and forth across the DMZ. In fact, there was so much traffic out there, going in both directions, that we threatened to erect traffic lights at one point; but, every once in a while, somebody would get killed doing it. There were only a few safe routes through the minefields, and both sides were using those. In 1954 we had to stop the parachute work. We did continue to do some, but not very much. We dramatically reduced the amount of that compared to what we were doing during the war. So we were mostly dependent on boats, and to eliminate or to solve a part of the problem of identification, and to make it a little more clandestine, we used fishing boats. We used some of the native fishing boats with those old “hot-head” engines in them, while others were fishing boats with Gray-Marine diesels aboard. With the diesel-powered boats you could get into Manchuria and back in one night. In other words, you could start up in the afternoon off the east coast, put agents ashore in Manchuria, and get back by daylight, or at least get far enough south by daylight so that you were out of the North Korean Navy's grasp.

INTERVIEWER: Were the North Koreans doing the same type of thing to the south?

GEN STARRY: Yes. They sent an enormous number of agents back and forth. At least as far as we could tell, they didn't use the fishing boats as much as we did. They infiltrated an awful lot of people through the DMZ. And, as the DMZ shut down over the years, they started digging tunnels. That's what you've got over there now. They did not have the resources that we had, either in boats, people, communications equipment, or anything else. Also, most of the agents that we captured--that had been sent south through the DMZ, or the ones we picked up landing from

fishing boats--really weren't very well trained. As time wore on, they were not at all well informed about what to expect in South Korea or how to act, and frequently they would give themselves away just by the way they acted. I'm sure that was true going the other way as well. In fact, I know it was. There was a question of training. HUMINT [human intelligence] is a very, very interesting business, and we don't do enough of it. There is a tendency to believe that technology is going to take over and do what HUMINT does better, by intercept and so on, but the fact is there are just some things that human collectors do much better. In fact, we need them in east Europe today. As you know, Soviet divisions can march around over there blacked-out with no communications, and they're very good at it. They don't have their MPs [military police] talking on the radio all the time checking bumper markings off as convoys go by. They do it all by telephone. So what we really need over there is a network of little people who just watch the traffic go by and every once in a while make a phone call someplace. That's just the way it works.

INTERVIEWER: In conducting this intelligence operation, did you ever find any indications that the North Koreans, or anyone else, were considering another invasion or anything of that nature?

GEN STARRY: Every once in a while you'd get a flurry of activity up there, and you'd find units moving south. We knew enough about what they were doing, and had enough people in place, that we could pick up those movements. We flew visual reconnaissance across the DMZ every day and could see it going on. So occasionally there would be a flurry of activity, and we were always asked to respond to that. We would be told, "We've seen this going on here in this area and this going on in that area. Send some people in there quickly." Well, you don't send people in there quickly to do something like that, at least not the kind of people we were trying to plant in order to develop a long-term network up there. Plus you don't have agents standing by in the ready rack waiting to send them in

response to such a request. It's always very difficult to respond to those things. We tried as best we could to do it, but many times it just didn't work. I found that, in most of those cases, the best source of information I had was the distinguished gentleman who was the Apostolic Delegate to the Republic of South Korea, Bishop John Quinlan. He'd been a prisoner of the North Koreans during the war and was credited with keeping most of the people in the camp alive. The North Koreans hated his guts. About once a week, or once every two weeks, there would be a propaganda blast from Pyongyang against the "gangster" Quinlan. He was a marvelous man, and somehow he had communications into North Korea. On two or three occasions that I can remember, we really had a crisis, and it was alleged in this country that they were getting ready to attack. Now, of course, during these times we would crank up the whole intelligence network. The Army commander would send for the Intel people; I would always be standing in the rear rank someplace and, sooner or later, attention would be focused on me to see what I could find out. Well, I'd get in the jeep and go see the Bishop. In response to my request for help, he'd go down into the cellar, crank up whatever commo gear he had down there, then come back up and say, "There's nothing to worry about. Here's the situation." Apparently what he had access to was the south end of a piece of the old Mukden cable which, before the war, ran from Pusan to Seoul to Pyongyang and into China/Manchuria. I don't know where it crossed the borders, but it wound up in Mukden. Part of the cable was cut during the war, but apparently not all of it, and he was still communicating on a piece of that. I'm sure he also had radios; in fact, I know he had radios.

INTERVIEWER: Was this like a telephone cable?

GEN STARRY: Yes, only it's bigger than a commercial telephone cable. They cut it during the war. Now I don't know whether it was a multiple cable or not, and they didn't cut all the cables, or if he had a separate

cable. I just don't know what it was. But he actually had telephone traffic with people in Pyongyang. He also had radio communications. I don't know where the radio was situated in the North. I suppose they still had monasteries there, for a while, at least, but they too finally went away.

INTERVIEWER: Another question concerning the Korean War. I think you probably know that, in current Army circles, you're known as one of the "warriors." Yet you missed the Korean War. Did you attempt to get there?

GEN STARRY: Well, yes. I was in Europe when the war started. I came home in 1952, the fall of 1952, and it wasn't apparent at that time that the war was going to end. Several of us tried to go straight from Europe to Korea. The personnel manager's wisdom was, "No, go to the Advanced Course. We don't know when the war is going to be over, but it'll probably still be going on when you get there." So we decided to wait it out. I don't know whether I regret that or not. I really wanted to go see what it was all about, but by 1952, of course, the war had pretty much stalemated along the DMZ, and once I saw the dismal situation of the training centers, I wasn't really sure that I wanted to go any more. It was really pathetic. We had the blind leading the blind. All those training companies down there were commanded by second lieutenants right out of OCS. They ran the OCS at Fort Knox. OCS graduates were assigned to run those training companies. Frequently there would be only one officer per company, maybe two, because of the rotation problem in Korea. It was truly the blind leading the blind. The officers were not well trained. Sergeants were the same way. The sergeants were pretty much similar to what we had during Vietnam, although I think we did much better in the training base for Vietnam than we did in Korea. It was really pathetic. You just had to wonder what you were going over there to command and to operate with if it involved that kind of soldier. We just shouldn't have done that. Well, anyway, unfortunately I missed it.

INTERVIEWER: I think we need to revert back to your aide-de-camp time for just one more question. You were mentioned in the books The Lieutenants, The Captains, and The Majors. I take it you know the author.

GEN STARRY: I know him well.

INTERVIEWER: I believe he was an enlisted aide at the time.

GEN STARRY: No. His name is Bill Butterworth, not W. E. B. Griffin. His initials, from William E. Butterworth, is where he gets the W. E. B. Why he wrote under a nom de plume, I have no idea. He's a professional author. He's written quite a number of books. Anyway, Bill Butterworth was a sergeant in the 82nd Airborne during the war. At the end of the war the 82nd wound up in Vienna, then became part of the Constabulary. Bill became an enlisted aide to General I. D. White, the commander of the Constabulary. When General White came home from the Constabulary, sometime in the early 1950s, to command Fort Knox, Bill Butterworth came with him as an enlisted aide. General White then went to Korea to command X Corps, then to Hawaii to be Commander, U.S. Army, Pacific. With him went Bill Butterworth. Then he left the Army and spent some time at Fort Rucker as a civilian employee, where he got all the Army aviation lore that's in those books. Then he became a professional writer. He's one of those fellows whom the publishing houses have in their stables. If they want a book about whatever, they'll call him and say, "Write a book about so and so." So one book is about stereo systems. Another is about the history of Army aviation. What's in the Brotherhood of War series, those first two or three books, stems from his personal experience. The Army aviation history is also something he is stuff that he observed firsthand. He and I were correspondents for a long time because he used to write letters to the editor of Armor magazine. I also wrote for Armor magazine, either letters to the editor or articles, and occasionally he would

comment on one of my articles or write me a letter or send it to the editor and the editor would send it to me. So he and I have corresponded for a long, long time. I'd never met him face-to-face until I was in command at Knox in the mid-1970's. He called me one day and said, "I'm coming up to Louisville to see an old friend who teaches at the University of Louisville, and I'm bringing my two boys with me. Could we stop and just go around Fort Knox?" Well, my wife and our two girls, who were living at home at the time, were away. So Bill and his boys came and spent several days with me. We went out and shot tanks, drove them around, and had just a great time. The association that started through correspondence and that visit has continued ever since.

INTERVIEWER: He wasn't assigned at Fort Knox the same time you were in command there, was he?

GEN STARRY: No.

INTERVIEWER: You left Korea and went to Fort Holabird, Maryland, and became an instructor there. I guess this was as a result of your experience and expertise in the G-2 field in Korea?

GEN STARRY: I went to Holabird as the armor instructor. There was a little combined arms instructor group there consisting of a couple of artillerymen, a couple of infantrymen, two armor folks, a medical service officer, and an engineer. We were the combined arms group. We taught organization, tactics, weapons--we taught all of the field training that they had. Nuclear weapons employment, we also taught that to all the classes--basic classes, investigator, advanced classes. That was our responsibility. I guess someone decided they needed someone who knew something about G-2s, and would know how to talk to intelligence officers in the classroom. I tried to get the assignment changed, but the answer from the personnel manager, of course, was, "Look, we know best what

we're doing, as always." So I went. Professionally, it was really very rewarding. They were very good to us. It was originally the home of the Counterintelligence Corps, but in the mid-1950s the combat intelligence schools were moved from Fort Riley to Holabird. In addition, they organized a new field called field operations intelligence which, of course, is clandestine collection--a HUMINT program. All of that was centered at Holabird. They had put Colonel (General) Henry Newton there to organize the school; he did a super job. It was a good school. It was well run and had a good set of facilities, which General Newton was noted for providing in all the schools he ran. They looked on us in the combat arms group as a source of expertise. Most of us had been to some service school, whereas they had no experience in school management. As a result, we were asked to do all sorts of things for them, some as simple as figuring out how to get to the students the issue material on time before the class, which is kind of sophomoric; still, we were asked to set that up for them. It involved arranging pigeonholes to make sure that all the students got their stuff two or three days ahead of time. Well, we did that, but in addition, because we had expertise in subjects they knew nothing about--nuclear weapons employment, operations and tactics, they were really very happy to have us and very good to us. From the family standpoint, it was a miserable place to live. There were no quarters on post. Fort Holabird is right in the middle of downtown Baltimore, almost on the waterfront, behind nearby Dundalk, Maryland. There were few, if any, what would now be called condominiums--in Baltimore they call them row houses--in that area. It was largely populated by people who worked at Bethlehem's Sparrow's Point steel mill. A lot of military people lived on our block which made it easier, but it was still not a desirable place to live. So, from a family standpoint, in an attempt to escape from that, we spent a lot of time touring battlefields at Gettysburg, Antietam, the Valley, the Wilderness, and others. From that standpoint, it turned out to be educational. My kids still go to places like Gettysburg--"Yeah, that's the cannon we stuffed our little sister into on such and such a visit." So apparently it made some

impression on them. But it was a time when we were just learning about tactical nuclear weapons, the first of them. There was a nuclear weapons employment course at Leavenworth, which I had to attend while I was teaching at Holabird. At that time target analysis was a tedious business. There were knee curves and other primitive methods for determining blast effects. The nomograph and tabular data forms we use now were not available at that time. As a matter of fact, another officer, Vernon Quarstein, and I developed a system of target analysis that eventually, along with some other work, led to the use of tables as opposed to the graphs and charts we were using and lent themselves to computerization of the whole process of target analysis. So, professionally, it was a very rewarding time, particularly so because I went straight from there to Leavenworth as a student. I'd been teaching and writing operations orders for the Intelligence School students. They weren't really interested in tactics at the platoon and company and battalion level, although we taught a little bit of that; rather, the question was, "Where does the intelligence staff officer fit into the staff organization at all levels of command?" So we were teaching everything from the field army on down. As a result, I got a much broader exposure to that kind of instruction than I would have had had I been instructor, for example, at Knox. That was particularly useful at Leavenworth, because I found out at Leavenworth that I knew a lot more about the various subjects than did my classmates. We had used Leavenworth issue material to teach our students at Holabird, simply because no other school in the system put out material at the level that we were concerned with teaching. So it turned out to be a fortuitous thing for me, at least. I went straight from there to become a student at Leavenworth. It made the Leavenworth C&GSC [Command and General Staff College] year a lot easier and a lot more fun.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find the subjects taught at Leavenworth at the time to be relevant? Did it prepare you for your future assignments?

GEN STARRY: Yes and no. I enjoyed that year very much. You've always got a little problem of relevance between the school and the real world. Mind you, by the time I went Leavenworth in 1959 I'd been away from troops since 1953-1954 when I was at Knox. So there was a little gap there. So if there was some irrelevancy, I probably wasn't as conscious of it as I was before, coming directly from a troop unit and going to the school. It was a good course. I enjoyed it very much.

INTERVIEWER: After another tour in Europe, you then went to the Armed Forces Staff College. Now, it was fairly common in those days for people to go to both schools. Do you think that is necessary? Are the two courses that dissimilar?

GEN STARRY: Well, in those days, of course, the Army and the Marine Corps had a rule that you had to have gone to your service command and staff course, either at Quantico or at Leavenworth, before you could go to Norfolk. So all of the Army officers who went to Norfolk were graduates of Leavenworth, and all of the Marine Corps officers were graduates either of Leavenworth or the Quantico school. The Navy has never put the kind of emphasis on progressive schooling that the other services have, so the Naval officers at Norfolk were people who were essentially between assignments; they may or may not have had a squadron officer's level course. So for them it was a brand new world. That was also the case for the Air Force officers.
[End Tape S-200, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-200, side 2]
GEN STARRY: So the Air Force officers tended to be people who had spent the last five or ten years of their lives on the flight deck of a MAC [Military Airlift Command] airplane or flying fighters someplace, and may or may not have been to a squadron officer's school. Now, of course, that

has all changed, and I think it was a mistake to change it. We should have held on to what we had. Most of the time, the Army and the Marine Corps students in that five-month-long course were tutoring their Air Force and Navy classmates, which is not all bad. As a matter of fact, it made us coalesce our thoughts on what the Army is, what the Marine Corps is, how they do business, and so on. It provided a better base line for us. It taught all of us a lot about the other services that we never would have known otherwise. The allegation was frequently made, of course, that the Army and the Marine Corps were having too much influence on Joint Staff processes through the school at Norfolk. Essentially, there was an over-influence by the Army and the Marines on joint operations, whereas every service should be equal. So we went through an equality spasm. I guess it was General Ralph Haines' board that recommended that Army and Marine Corps students at Norfolk need not be graduates of a command and general staff course. I think that's the last of the Haines' board recommendations that we have not yet turned around. I thought it was a mistake in the first place, and I still think it was a mistake. That was a super school. Of all the schools I've been to, that one, for a lot of reasons, I think is the very best. Now, I dearly love Leavenworth, but Norfolk is an opportunity to learn something about the other services that you could never get anywhere else. You get the majors' or the lieutenant colonels' viewpoint of the Navy and the Air Force that you're never going to get in any other way. It really was invaluable. That place should be, as I've said many times and recommended several times, given some doctrinal development responsibilities, which is part of the key, I think, to developing what I called joint tactics, techniques and procedures. When I was at MacDill Air Force Base as CINC [Commander in Chief] Readiness Command, nobody wanted to let us tell them about joint doctrine. There wasn't any real honest-to-goodness doctrine for tactical and operational-level employment of joint forces, but there needed to be some, and that's the place to develop it. There isn't any other place. At the same time, I thought Leavenworth was short on joint operational training, especially

operational level command, Joint Task Force theater-level warfare, and so on. Lacking that at Leavenworth, then Norfolk is an essential linkage. An awful lot of what I learned there I subsequently used, both as REDCOM commander and before that in trying to work joint problems out with the Air Force and Navy wherever that was appropriate, more with the Air Force, I suppose. Anyway, it's a super school.

INTERVIEWER: We've always had a problem with jointness. We had a problem even during the days when everyone was going to both schools. We'd like to get into joint operations a little bit more, but I guess the best place for that is when we talk about REDCOM.

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: In the meantime, you went back to Germany, served a tour in Combat Command C, which was . . . ?

GEN STARRY: The 3d Brigade. All combat command Cs became the 3d Brigades in 1963 when we went ROAD [reorganization army division].

INTERVIEWER: This was part of a regimental system?

GEN STARRY: Well, the armored divisions were always organized into combat commands--A, B, and C. The infantry divisions from about 1956 onward were organized into battle groups. They went from regiments to battle groups in the infantry, but armored divisions never gave up their combat commands. Then, with the 1963 reorganization of armor and infantry divisions, everybody went to brigades. So the battle groups became battalions, and brigades commanded several battalions. We essentially adopted the armored division organization with brigades and battalions instead of battle groups or regiments. So the armored divisions really did not undergo as much of a reorganization as did the infantry

divisions. But, in the process, Combat Command A became 1st Brigade, B became 2d Brigade, and C became 3d Brigade.

INTERVIEWER: Now, shortly after that, about as soon as you got promoted, you took command of a battalion, is that right?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I went from Leavenworth to the brigade in Friedberg in the 3rd Armored Division in the fall of 1960. I was the S-3 from about August of 1960 to April of 1962. I was the executive officer of the 32nd Tank Battalion for about a year. Then I was promoted, as I recall, in April of 1963 and took command of that battalion until about July of 1964.

INTERVIEWER: Do you want to tell us a little bit about that battalion? You mentioned it a few times before. What was your mission? You hadn't spent a lot of time in troop units between the time you were in Germany before and you went back over there. In the meantime, had you run into other ideas or lessons learned, or did you model your battalion based on what you'd learned before?

GEN STARRY: No, I think you'll always discover that a lot of things have changed if you stay away from the operating units for as much as even a year or so, and then go back to them. You'll be surprised how many things have really changed, but they're not necessarily essential things. Administrative procedures change, and morning report systems, readiness reporting systems and things like that, change. But the fundamental things don't change much at all, really. So you see a lot of differences, but when you look at it carefully, I would argue that the differences are not all that significant. So, when I went to be the S-3 of that brigade I'd been an instructor for almost four years in tactics, armor tactics. I'd also been a student at Leavenworth for a year, and at least from the standpoint of the operational concepts of the Army of the day, I was probably as up to date as I possibly could have been. The most interesting thing I found at

Leavenworth as a student was that I was the only person in my section who knew how to write an operations order. I taught that in school for four years. As a result, I could sit down with a clean piece of paper and fairly quickly write an operations order that was fairly correct, to include the punctuation, which was very important in those days. So, when we'd get into our little seminars at Leavenworth-- work groups, I believe they were called in those days--and we'd have a problem to solve, the other students would gather around the map, and I would sit down, put a piece of paper into the typewriter, and start writing an operations order. They would all be around the map trying to decide what we were going to do, because we had to turn in an order at the end of the period and time was always short. Anyway, we'd get on towards the end of the period and I'd still be typing away, and then someone would inevitably say, "What the hell are you doing?" and I'd say, "Well, I'm writing the order. We've got to submit it in 15 minutes," or whatever it was. "Well, we haven't decided what we're going to do yet." I'd say, "Well, it's too late, fellas. If we're going meet the course requirement, we have got to get the order in." Now, another officer and I worked on the basis of that system. He'd stand up and listen, then he'd come over and tell me what they were doing, and I'd write it up as best as we could understand their concept. As a result, we always got our stuff in on time, and frequently, we were the only people who did. So, that was good background for being a brigade S-3. Combat Command “C” was traditionally the reserve brigade, the reserve combat command, of the 3rd Armored Division, so we always had to go where one of the other brigades was and do counterattack planning. By that time, I was pretty good at it. So, when I went from the brigade to battalion, it was just another step down the ladder. I knew how to do that fairly well. The battalion commander of the 32nd Tank Battalion was Bill Mangum. Bill liked to let his executive officer run the battalion. I didn't object to that at all. Then, when Bill left, I took command of the 32nd. It was, as I said a while ago, during the period that the Berlin Wall went up. As a result, we

had stabilized, and had a lot of people who had been there a long time. Thus it was fundamentally a very good battalion.

INTERVIEWER: When you took over?

GEN STARRY: When I took command. It was a good battalion, and had been for a long time. It was one of the best in the division. My predecessor was a good battalion commander who had continuity in command, and good people. We weeded out the incompetents. We had a lot of cohesion. I talked about the cohesion before, so I won't go over that again. But, one point that I think needs to be made is that we had a shortage of majors and senior captains, as we always do in units. So, we had a situation in which we had plenty of lieutenants; we weren't short of lieutenants. But, what I found out was that I couldn't have a mixed bag of commanders out there. In other words, I couldn't have a couple of companies commanded by lieutenants and a couple of companies commanded by fairly senior captains unless I was willing to issue two different sets of instructions because the kind of instructions I issued the lieutenants were not the same kind of instructions I would issue the captains, given that the captains had three or four more years of experience than the lieutenants. So, I elected to keep the captains on the staff. We were short majors, anyway. So, you were almost always lacking majors. I kept the captains on the staff in the principal staff positions and let the lieutenants command the companies. Now, you could argue that procedure was wrong, that I should have put my experienced people in command of the companies and had a tutorial exercise for the staff, but I elected to do it the other way. I don't think you can mix them. I've had that happen to me several times since. I don't think you can mix them, and, at the same time, I would also argue that the younger people with more imagination and a little bit more get-up-and-go, are perhaps the kind of commanders you want to go to war with, at least in the initial stages. I would rather coach and develop teamwork with a

group of people like that than to work with older officers who had had those jobs before and had a lot of preconceived notions. I think coaches have the same problem with teams; I remember some conversations with my football coach about that. Well, anyway, we had a bunch of young first lieutenant commanders. In those days, you made first lieutenant, I guess, with two years in service. You were second lieutenant for two years, and then you made first lieutenant.

INTERVIEWER: That was about the time I came in and made it in 18 months.

GEN STARRY: It may have been 18 months, 18 months to two years, but you didn't make captain then for quite a while. It was about five years or something like that. The Vietnam War began to shorten that up after a while, and eventually, folks were making captain in two years. But, it always seemed to me to be easier to work with the younger people. I used a technique with them that I've used a lot since because it worked so well then. I always tried to have them together doing something that was different, and when you do that, the Hawthorne effect comes into play. In short, you find that no matter what you do, turn the lights up or down, or turn the music up or down, makes no difference. As long as they think they're involved in some kind of experiment and doing something different from what everybody else is doing, things just keep getting better. And, the people get a lot more satisfaction out of doing it, and actually learn a lot more while doing that. It worked very well. General Abrams was the division commander for a while during that period, and he sent a team from RAC [Research Analysis Corporation] to our battalion. They were trying to collect data on target acquisition times, fire times in tank combat exchanges. They brought some Air Force gun camera systems with them to record tank versus tank engagements. We spent about a year doing that. It was a great experiment and a lot of fun. We learned a lot from it. It was an experimental situation, a test evaluation kind of situation, but we

all learned a lot from it. We found that we had to lay out these scenarios meticulously, in great detail in order to do the instrumentation. Now that took a lot of time, but as we sat back and reflected on it, the S-3 said, "You know, the lesson I'm getting out of this is that we ought to be preparing all of our tactical training in that level of detail in order to get out of it the lessons that we want the troops to get out of it as they go through the training. I don't think it's enough just to give them the training area and send them out there all the time and tell them we're going to do an RSOP [reconnaissance, selection, and occupation of position]. What do we want them to learn as a result of that?" In artillery terms, we're going to send them out to do an RSOP. Well, that's fine. So they go out and prowl around the training area at Friedburg, Wildflecken or wherever for a couple of days without, by and large, anybody ever saying to himself, "What do I want them to know when they come back that they didn't know when they got there in the first place?" Or, "What skills do I want them to work on while they're out there?" By and large, that wasn't done very well. It may have been done sort of halfway, but it really wasn't done at all well. So, ever since, I've done that. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out the pattern of "What do they know when they go into the training experience? What do we want them to know when they get out of it? And what goes on in the middle to make that happen?" In the end, I think we were getting a lot more out of training time than we had ever been getting before. Looking back on it, I decided at the end that we were really derelict in the beginning. We hadn't been doing our job very well.

INTERVIEWER: Your objectives sound a lot like the BTMS [Battle Training Management System] system.

GEN STARRY: That's where the Battalion Training Management System started. If you go back in the literature, we created the genesis of it in that battalion. We had a thing called the Readiness Training Program which consisted of tasks, conditions and standards. We didn't call them that;

those are Gorman terms. But, essentially, the Battalion Training Management System and that whole workup, the tasks, conditions, standards and the whole training system today, originated in the ideas stemming from the experience resulting from that test. It involved a very smart kid as an S-3, with all kinds of imagination. A captain, he had been a platoon leader and company commander in that battalion. I made him the S-3, and he had more ideas than we could cope with, but we got them organized. We had two good things that we did. One of them was that Readiness Training Program which laid out the tasks, conditions and standards. The other one was that we standardized all of our administrative things in what we called the battalion policy manual. We'd had a couple of changes in division commanders and chiefs of staff, which resulted in a flurry of directives from division. Everybody was all confused about what they were supposed to be doing. We ran platoon tests one time and I went out to look at them. I remember saying to one of the platoon sergeants, "Why are you doing that?" whatever it was that he had done. I don't remember what it was that he had done now. "Why did you do that?" "Well, we got a letter from Colonel Something-or-Other." Now, Colonel Something-or-Other was about four battalion commanders before me, and I said, "Show me that letter." So he dragged out the letter and showed it to me. It was dated four years earlier, and this guy had signed it. I said, "Hasn't that been changed since? I mean, is everybody else doing that?" Well, I got a bunch of the platoon sergeants together and we had a big talk about that. What I found was that each one of those platoon sergeants were sergeants who had been there that long. And they were carrying around little directives like that, from one battalion commander to the next one. None of them were the same; there was no standardization. So we took all that stuff and standardized it. Whatever the directive was, you cited it and put down what the division had said about it. If you wanted to add something to it, or the brigade had said something about it, or you wanted to add something to it as the battalion commander, you did it. So when you went to do whatever it was, and it ranged all the way from

investigations to motor pool operations, you just turned that tab, looked down, and there was your guidance on what to do. It eliminated an awful lot. We finished that thing and threw away about two filing cabinets full of standing orders and instructions. It dramatically simplified the administration. And we did a lot of fun things. I'd been there so long by that time that I knew how to work all the systems for training. We always had a sergeant at the range conferences at Grafenwohr, whether it was our time or not. We just sent somebody to all the range conferences, and he'd pick up the ranges. Anything that anybody turned in, we'd pick up. Then we'd trade them to people. The idea was that we would build up our primary time out there as much as we could, so that when we went to Grafenwohr or Vilseck or Hohenfels to train, we'd sometimes spend a couple of months out there. If I could get somebody to pick up my sector of responsibility for that period of time, we'd go and stay for six weeks to two months. Everybody else went for three weeks. We also had a sergeant in the Ammunition Supply Point at Vilseck who picked up all the turned-in ammunition credits that we could use. So, by the time we got there, we had all the ammunition we wanted. We did the same thing with POL [petroleum, oils and lubricants]. We picked up turn-in credits, extra fuel, so that by the time we got out there to do the major training area activity we had more resources than we could use. We just spent as much time out there as we wanted. Locally, we worked a deal with the Germans so that we could maneuver in the countryside based on maneuver rights agreements. We'd work out the maneuver rights agreements in advance, then not have to deal with the forstmeisters [German forestry officials] and the kreis [county] people. That way, if we had a 24-hour freeze and I wanted to go out on an exercise, I'd call and tell them that the ground had been frozen for 24 hours and where it was we were going. We had more training areas than we could use. So, while everybody else was standing around complaining about not having enough resources to do training, we had more resources than we could

expend. We did a lot of things that nobody else could do because they didn't have the resources.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, your first command tour in Germany occurred about the same time that I was coming into the Army, and I also went to Germany. What I remember most about training in those days was how very stifling the training schedule was. It had to be prepared, I think, a month to six weeks in advance, and you had to have an act of Congress to change it. Plus, the training schedule was very, very detailed. If you planned a class for an hour, it had better last an hour. However, it sounds like you weren't constrained by that nearly so much as the battalion that I was in. Either that or you did very good planning. How did you work around that requirement?

GEN STARRY: Well, once we had our Readiness Training Program laid out, the argument we'd make in the training network through division was, "Here's what we're trying to do," and nobody would ever argue with that. So the hour that had to be an hour and so on, fit into that someplace, we just accepted that. Then what we did was start modifying it. I never really knew, until about six months ahead of time, how long I wanted to stay in a training area, a major training area particularly, because I never really knew how many bullets we were going to have or how much gas we were going to have. We really didn't know until about three months ahead of time what kind of credits we had built up. For the major training areas we had kind of a three-month cutoff thing. Three months ahead of time, the S-3 and I would sit down and say, "Here's what we now have. Based on the way the buildup is going, here's what we're likely to have when we go." We'd take off ten percent as a safety factor, and then we'd decide how long we could afford to stay. Next, we'd look at the range schedules and get our range sergeant on the phone and say, "We want all we can get in here." Then, about three months ahead of time, we'd look at what he had collected and what he was likely to collect in the remaining time between

then and the time we went. Then I'd get somebody to pick up my sector of responsibility, and we'd just stay out for however long we wanted. So we started with that rigid program but, at the same time, we collected resources, to include range time, and negotiated with everybody for resources. Now, we got nicked a couple of times because we were out too long. Somebody said one time, "How can you afford to stay out that long?" General Bert Spivy was our division commander, a super officer. He asked me one time, "How do you do that? Everybody else is complaining that they don't have enough." I said, "Well, I shouldn't tell you this, General, but if you've got somebody who needs additional resources, I'll be happy to loan him some. We can't use what we've got. I've got to go home because we've got some other things to do. We've got to go home; we've been out here two months." He said, "How do you do it?" So I explained it to him, and he just shook his head. We knew how to manipulate the system, which really all came from my experience as a brigade S-3. It was just a matter of having been there long enough to know the system and how to work it.

INTERVIEWER: General Spivy succeeded General Abrams?

GEN STARRY: No, General John Ramsey Pugh succeeded General Abrams. General Spivey succeeded him.

INTERVIEWER: Were you selected by General Abrams to assume command?

GEN STARRY: No. He had gone by the time I took command. General Pugh put me in command of that battalion. General Abrams sent me to that battalion. He wanted me to become his division assistant G-3. Well, I got him in my corner one day in the training area, and told him that I was flattered that he wanted me to work on his staff, and so on, but that I really felt that I needed to go down to that battalion, particularly since I was on

the promotion list at the time. No, that's not correct. I thought I would be on the promotion list. I wanted to go to that battalion because, if the promotions went the way it looked like they were going, and if the battalion commander, the incumbent, left on schedule, then I would be in line to command the battalion, which is what I really wanted to do. He listened to that argument, grumped around a little bit, and said, "Okay, let me think about it." He called the brigade commander a couple of days later and said, "Okay, send him to the 32nd." So, he sent me to the battalion, and by the time my promotion came along, the other guy had left and General Abrams had become the corps commander. He went away for about a year, then came back as the corps commander. General Pugh is the one who put me in command of the 32nd.

INTERVIEWER: That was in the days before the central selection for command, of course. I take it you're an advocate of the central selection process for battalion and brigade command?

GEN STARRY: Not particularly. I don't think we've got any better people now than we had before. And, by and large, we've taken away from the system the ability of the guy who really wants to do that, and may really be good at it, to hustle it, even though he may not have the record that would stand up under scrutiny. Take my example yesterday of the battalion commanders in V Corps. If you've got a selection system that's all that good, you should not have such a situation as I discussed.
[End Tape S-200, Side 2]

[Begin Tape S-201, side 1]
GEN STARRY: It would be ideal if we had a system that admitted that the selection process is made on the basis of records that are made out by human beings on other human beings, and that there's always a source of judgment involved with a high probability of error and a higher probability

of a lack of sufficient precision upon which to make an intelligent decision about the guy. Such is the nature of boards. We should have a system in which we somehow select people with the idea in mind that the first six or eight months is a trial period, during which we are going to take a look at this fellow and see if he is going to make the grade. If he's not, then we take him out, but with no retribution. In other words, we simply say, "At this level, this job under these circumstances is apparently not this fellow's bag, but there are probably other neat things that he can do for us, given his background and so on, so we're going to put him to work doing those kinds of things instead of commanding this organization." That's pretty farfetched, but ideally that would be the way to do it. Of course, it's not going to work that way. The stigma of not succeeding in command, the drive in all of us that you've got to command in order to succeed, is so deeply ingrained into the system that I doubt we could ever have a system like that. So, while I think that would probably be the best way to have it, I also recognize that we're probably not going to have it that way. It was that realization that led me as the TRADOC commander to propose what was non-affectionately known at the time as SQTs [skill qualification tests] for officers. I fundamentally believe that if we're going to have the selection system like it is, then we ought to have an examination system--for promotion, at least, if not for command. There ought to be some way of examining the officer, testing him as best we can, together with whatever selection process goes on in the board, to improve the selection process. I just can't believe that we can't do better than pick 72 guys to command battalions in a corps and get 15 who really shouldn't have been posted in the first place, along with 20 or 30 who are in the middle of the group of 72. We ought to be able to do better than that. I think, and I don't have any statistics to back this up, but I would argue that those rates are no better than the rates we had when we were doing it with the OMLs [order of merit lists] that were held by branch chiefs and so on, which, in effect, was a selection process all its own. There was an allegation at the time that doing it that way wasn't equitable and, as we went through our

great equality kick in the Army, along came these boards. I've sat on many of those boards, and I just have to tell you that it isn't all that good a process. It isn't all that precise a process. But we created a situation; rather, we regulated a situation in which, once that selection is made, it's very, very difficult to change it. Unlike General DePuy's experience in Vietnam, you really can't just go in there and jerk the guy out and put him on the helicopter with you, then send him off to wherever it is you go when you've been relieved. The system regurgitates over that. So you have to go at it some other way, and frequently it takes longer to get the guy out of command than it should. As I said yesterday, I would argue that we do not have enough battalions in this Army of ours to have mediocre battalions or mediocre battalion commanders. The second thing I would argue is that we owe the soldiers something better than mediocre or unsatisfactory leadership. Those two things, I think, are paramount in the selection of commanders. How to improve the system? I think some kind of a testing system should be added to the board selection if you want to do that. It's probably the only way we could do it. It would be much better if we had a system in which we said, "All right, we're going to put this guy in command," and then six or eight months later, you say, "I don't think old George is going to make it," so we take old George out without any retribution or black mark on his record. However, that requires a cultural change that I just think is beyond our scope. Also, you have to accept the fact that, as people move up the ladder of command, you're going to find guys who were marvelous battery/troop/company-level commanders, but are not going to make good battalion and squadron commanders. It's just human nature. I can introduce you to guys, sergeants and officers, who were heroes in one war and cowards in the next at the same level of command; sometimes it happened in the same war. Everybody changes as he moves up the ladder. That's one of the things I admired most about General Abrams. I don't know how he did it, and I never talked with him about it, but it appeared to me that every time he got promoted and took a new command, he deliberately took two steps backward and said to

himself, "Okay, what am I? As the commander at this level, what am I supposed to be doing? What am I supposed to be doing as opposed to what I was doing before?" You could see him shifting gears. I watched him move from the 63rd Tank Battalion to become the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment commander. He left our division, but that regiment worked with our division, so we saw a lot of him even after he left our battalion. He clearly was a different kind of guy as a regimental commander than he had been as a battalion commander. I also watched him move from being a division commander to being a corps commander. He went away for a short period of time, then came back as a corps commander. He clearly was a different guy as a corps commander than he had been as a division commander. Knowing him as well as I did, I know that he made some deliberate decisions about what he wasn't going to get into because it was somebody else's business, and what he was going to get into. It wasn't that he didn't score you on that other stuff, because he did. He watched very carefully and made some judgments that served as the basis upon which he took people out of command and so on; but it wasn't his responsibility to get down there and muck around in that world as it had been before. He was deliberate about it. I watched him do the same thing in MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam], and I think, from my own standpoint, it is one of the great lessons I learned from him. It's also true in business. Every time you move up to some new plateau of responsibility, you had better step back and take a look at yourself and decide what share of that responsibility is yours and what part of it belongs to somebody else, then make damn sure that you are not, in your new plateau, still doing the things that you were doing at that lower plateau where you were probably managing things or running things in greater detail than you should be doing now. A lot of people can't do that. A lot of people can't shift gears. I counsel my own operations managers today. When we expand the business, or we move a guy up onto a new plateau, I sit him down and tell him, "Look, you've got a new job, new responsibilities, a new level of responsibility, and new things that

you should be worrying about, as opposed to the things that you were worrying about in your previous capacity. Think about that, and then let's talk about what you're going to do now, as opposed to what you were doing before. I want to make sure you've thought that out. I don't want you down there running their programs in that much detail. You've got to do something else. You have other responsibilities now." So it isn't just a military thing. I think it applies to the whole world of management, leadership, and being in charge of things. You have to do it, or otherwise you wind up with division commanders running squads and corps commanders running platoons, and that's not what division or corps commanders are being paid to do.

INTERVIEWER: Back to the selection process for a battalion commander. I don't know whether it would be the same percentages as before, or less or more, but didn't you see instances where an individual was selected for command as a result of being in the right place and knowing the right people? Didn't it involve a bit of cronyism?

GEN STARRY: That's true. But if you take that bag of 72 battalion commanders in a corps that I'm talking about, what I'm saying is, I don't know that that other system, the whole system, was any worse than the system we've got now. I wouldn't argue that it was any better, either. I just don't know. I've never statistically analyzed that. But my perception is that it isn't any better now than it was before. Now, cronyism, that's a charge that's been levied against a lot of people and I'm one of them, I guess. I have kept myself surrounded, particularly as a commander, with people who were known quantities. It's the business of the association thing, the unit cohesion thing all over again, but in a little different context. You like to be surrounded by people in whom you have confidence, who are known quantities, and whose quality of work is known to you. Now there is some risk involved--risk because you're looking at them in a totally different perspective than the people below them, or with whom they work,

are looking at them. So you have to be careful about that. You have to listen a little bit in the corners to see what's being said about all this, because you can get yourself into a situation where they begin to issue orders in your name and that sort of thing, and that's not good. You have to watch that. But, at the same time, I would argue that the advantages of having people work for you who are known quantities, and on whom you know can depend to do things, far outweighs the risks that you run that they will begin to take advantage of their position, your position, your name, and so on.

INTERVIEWER: A great deal of this excessive cronyism, you might say, is, like in your case, based on your judgment concerning that individual. Apparently, and I've seen this in my own career, there have been some poor judgments made in selection of battalion commanders by local commanders. Like you, I don't know which system is best. I think one thing that you might comment on is that the Army has a problem in making up its mind on the criteria to be used. For example, probably while you were at TRADOC, the Army decided it wanted all "Wunderkinds" to command its battalions. These were the guys with 12, 13 or 14 years' service, early promotees and, in many cases, individuals who hadn't done anything, so therefore they hadn't made any mistakes. As a result, we wound up with individuals with 12 or 13 years of service commanding battalions. Apparently, and I'll be quite frank with you, the Army won't admit that that was a mistake, but they've now gone in the opposite direction. Are you aware that they have put a cap on the number who can be selected for battalion and brigade command their first time considered? No more than ten percent can be from the first time considered group.

GEN STARRY: I didn't know that.

INTERVIEWER: Now, they say that that's to equalize the opportunities for command. I think the real reason is that the "Wunderkinds" didn't make it-

-and they know it. No one will admit that. But all of those decisions caused a severe problem within the hierarchy of the Army.

GEN STARRY: But that's a function of what goes on within those selection boards. By and large, those boards tend to operate on the basis of what's on the printed page. You put the thing into the processor, you look at the screen, and then you take all these neat records and pick out the top guys. Now, I always picked the guys on a basis other than their record. I started my screening process by trying to find the guys who had had the tough jobs and had done fairly well at them, as opposed to the guys who had had the not so tough jobs and had done extremely well. For example, if you're picking battalion or brigade commanders, if you look at the guys who have been on the Joint Staff, on the Army Staff in Washington, or some command staff someplace else, or department director of the schools, by and large they'll have clean slates. They're good guys because they were really never in charge of anything large in which there was a high probability of screwups as compared to a guy who's been in a couple of battalions somewhere. That doesn't happen anymore, but in a battalion he has been responsible for some little thing. Now a lot people may be working on a problem, so there is a high probability that something is going to get screwed up and that it is going to be detected. The same is true for project managers or program managers in the logistics community, somebody who's been responsible for something other than just being a staff officer and running a little group of guys on the staff. That's a fairly straightforward job. You always get good marks for those. In fact, those good marks tend to dampen out the less than good marks you get in some of these other circumstances where you've got a higher probability for screwups. So I always looked for the guys who had the tough jobs, what I thought were the tough jobs, and who had done well--not as well as the other guys in terms of the record, but who had done fairly well. Those were my candidates for a command, or for almost anything, because they were the guys willing to take risks.

They knew they were taking risks when they did it. And, when things didn't turn out well, they bore the responsibility. They've got to be better guys than these other fellows. Sometimes they're just victims of circumstances. I'm not saying that these "Wunderkinds," as you call them, aren't going to be good but, by and large, in that particular period, you're right, there was a rash of people who came with top credentials. Now let me give you a good example. When I had V Corps, one of my division commanders called me one day and said, "Do you remember Colonel So-and-so who commands that mech battalion down in 2nd Brigade? He's been in to see me. He wants to resign or retire. I don't know if he has enough time in to retire or not, but he wants to get out. I asked him if he wanted to talk to you, and he said that he wasn't asking for an audience but, if you had time to talk to him, he would be more than happy to have you do so." So the next opportunity we had to visit that area was a week or two later, and I went to see this guy. He'd been out on our terrain walks, and I'd looked at his training and so on, and he really had done fairly well. He was a professional Joint Staff officer. He had spent a lot of time on the Joint Staff. He had a tour on the Army Staff, had taught in a service school, and had commanded a company way back someplace in the beginning, but not for very long, and obviously he had not done very well. But he hadn't been relieved, and there was no great problem; he just hadn't been there very long and received a "damning with faint praise" kind of report. Obviously he had done extremely well on these other assignments, and had been selected for command on the basis of these staff jobs that he had had, where he had done fairly well. Now he was by no means in the bottom half when compared to the battalion commanders that we had been out with. He was good. He knew what he was doing and had it all organized. He obviously worked very hard at it. Anyway, he said a very interesting thing to me. He said, "General, I want to get out because some years ago I made a conscious decision that I didn't really like this sort of thing, what I'm doing now, commanding things. I made that decision as a company commander in Vietnam, and nothing that's

happened since has changed my mind. I was happy to be selected for this job. I knew that I had to do it in order to get promoted again, to get to go to the War College, and to do all these other things, but I was not at all looking forward to it because I knew it was a lot of work, work that I didn't like. I much prefer the staff environment. Then I got out here and started walking around out with you and the division and brigade commanders. The thing that impressed me is that you obviously like this sort of thing, and you're very good at it. You're much better at the terrain in my sector than I am. I could never understand that terrain the way you do. I understand that you have spent a large part of your adult life out here and have spent a lot of time on the ground. You have a feel for the ground that I will never have; I could never develop that. You also have a feel for the soldiers and the weapons and the equipment." He had a mechanized infantry battalion. "You know more about my battalion than I do. I will never be as good at that as you are. If I wanted to be a general and command a corps, and do something big, then I think that that's what generals ought to be good at. I'm not good at it, and I'm never going to be that good at it. So I don't think it's right for me to hang around." Well, we had a long talk about this. We sat together a whole afternoon; the guy had come to the point where his conscience was really bothering him. He realized that, a long time ago, ten years before or something like that, he'd gone off on a tangent and it was the wrong tangent. Now, as he looked at the leadership of his own general, his colonel and his corps commander, he realized that the real world of the operational Army was a world that he was divorced from, and all of a sudden he said to himself, "I'm not really doing what professional Army officers are supposed to be doing, and I don't think it's right for me to stay." Eventually he quit, resigned. I have to admire him for that. There were a lot of guys who were obviously in the same situation, but who didn't have the guts to quit. Now he was a "Wunderkind," he really was. He was a fast burner. I'd forgotten how much service he had, but he was in the category that you described and, all of a sudden, he realized that he was a fish out of water. I think most of

those folks were fish out of water. I don't know how many of them were willing to face up to it the way this guy did, but I admire him for it.

INTERVIEWER: I think the Army is now making an honest effort to try to recognize success in positions other than command. A number of people, for example, are getting promoted to O-6 without having commanded. Still it appears that, if you have a successful command, you're going to make O-6, while great numbers of O-5s without command have to fight for the remaining positions. I would like to see some kind of professional practice that would fit this guy. We need people like that. Perhaps we're going that way, I don't know. You talked about a testing system. I suppose you know that we're going to a testing system. It's still on a trial basis. Right now, it's nothing more than an aid to a battalion commander with regard to his captains and lieutenants. You mentioned before that the battalion commander, for example, should know as much as any of his troops. I want to discuss that for a moment, because I'm not sure that that's possible anymore. I'm an artilleryman; I can operate in any slot on a 155mm howitzer crew. I can direct the artillery, but I personally cannot operate a TACFIRE [Tactical Fire Direction System] van nor, in all likelihood, do as well as my troops at stripping the rifle. In my 31 months of command I tried to become as much of an expert on everything as I could, and I worked a lot on that before going into command. As far as the primary tasks--in your case, tank gunnery, I think the battalion commander can excel. However, do you believe that in the modern Army, with all the modern technology that we have, that the battalion commander can still excel at what his troops do?

GEN STARRY: Well, no. Without question there's a limit to what you can do. I think you have to sort out your primary tasks. In a tank unit, particularly, that's fairly easy. The battalion commander is a tank commander. Now, just by definition, that tells you something. When I took command of the 32nd we had five companies in the battalion at that

time. We were getting ready to go ROAD [Reorganization Objective Army Division], so we had to absorb one of those old heavy tank companies equipped with M-103s. Two of those companies were then to go off and become another battalion. One of them was Don Smart's company. So I got all the tank commanders in the battalion together. That included the company commanders, the platoon leaders, all the sergeants who were tank commanders, and myself. Nobody else was allowed to come. The sergeant major had a bad case of the ass because I wouldn't allow him to come to the meeting. He said, "I've got to be at that meeting." I said, "You're not a tank commander. This is only for tank commanders, of which I am one and the S-3 is one." And I said, "Okay, we're going to get everyone assembled, and we're going to go through tank gunnery." The reason I did that was because we had had a big argument in our division for a long time about whether or not the battalion commander should even fire his own tank, let alone go down range and fire the crew qualification course. Well, based on my previous conversations, I don't need to tell you that there was never any question in my mind about that, having come from a battalion in which the battalion commander went down range first and was followed by the company commanders. I couldn't believe that there was any conversation about it. It had never entered my mind, but the argument had gone on for so long in that division that it had become a big bone of contention. So, to solve the problem, I got them all together. Nobody else was in the room except for 80-some-odd tank commanders, maybe 89 tank commanders, and I said, "Okay, we're going through tank gunnery. Why I'm telling you this is because the battalion commander will be the first guy down range, followed by the company commanders and their companies. As we go through this, the company commanders will be the first guys down range, followed by platoon leaders, who will be the first ones in their platoons. Furthermore, I'm going to whip your asses with the crew I've got. I'm not going to fix my crew." Now, one of them was AWOL about every third week; I was always out looking for him. The other one had been busted; he had been a sergeant and a private about four times

in a row. Anyway, I said, "I'm going to take the crew I've got and we're going to beat your asses. Anybody who beats us, any crew who beats my crew, I'll owe them all a steak dinner and a case of beer." Well, you know, they responded with a big, "All right. All right, you're on." Now, my gunner was a guy who'd been a driver but got tired of driving. He said, "I want to do something else," so I made him a gunner. He was a good gunner, but he wasn't a professional gunner, he was a crewman. So they said, "Okay, what do you want to do?" I said, "Well, we're going to practice. Now, I'll tell you what, fellas, we're going to have to practice on Saturdays and Sundays, and we're going to have to practice at night. That means you're all going to have to be here and be sober in order to do that, and you're going to have to meet my schedule. Now we'll work out the rest of your work so that it gets done, too, but you're going to have to work when I can work because my time is really not my own. I've got a lot of other things to do." Well, we'd been out all night one night doing some night tracking exercises and some sub-caliber firing. I was walking down through the motor pool, chatting with the platoon sergeants during a maintenance period one afternoon, when one of the platoon sergeants came up and said, "Sir, you're serious about this, aren't you?" I said, "About what?" He said, "About beating our asses." I said, "Why do you ask?" He said, "Well, I drove by here last night and the only thing I could see was your crew and yourself out there, working the targets and whatnot. We're not doing that." I said, "Sarge, if you intend to compete in the big competition, you better get your ass out here and do the same thing." So, after that, you began to see them all doing it. Well, we fired and were the high battalion in the division that year. Now, with that little crew I had, we were second high in the battalion. We were beat out by a crew that set a new USAREUR [United States Army, Europe] record. Now I neglected a lot of other things in order to do that but, at the same time, we did a lot of things by doing that that I think helped the whole battalion. For example, we had just been issued the M-73 machine gun, which was a disaster.

[End Tape S-201, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-201, side 2]

GEN STARRY: So the first problem was simply assembling and disassembling the stupid thing, which was part of the preliminary gunner's exam. So I got the crew to take the gun out of my tank and I took it home. I took it home, and that thing sat on the floor in the little den we had for about three weeks, with my wife sitting in there with a manual and me working that thing and, eventually, I got to the point where I could take it apart and put it together blindfolded in less time than was required in the preliminary gunner's exam. So then we put it back into the tank, and I walked down through a training session one day--we had a little county fair set up--and there was one station which involved the assembling/disassembling of that machine gun. They were having a hell of time with it. I stood there and watched that for a while, and then I asked the sergeant in charge, "What's the trouble?" "Well," he said, "we trained the guys on the goddamn machine gun." I said, "Look, there's nothing wrong with the machine gun. You may not like the way it's designed, you may not like the way it fires, but we've got it, and that's all we've got. We're not going to get anything else. Let me tell you something. I bet you I can take that thing apart and put it back together again blindfolded, and I'm the battalion commander, that's not my business. You guys are the gunnery guys; I'm just the battalion commander." He said, "Sir, we can't even do that, and we can see!" I said, "All right, you blindfold me and give me the gun," and I did it. I said, "You time me. I'm going to do it in less than the required time," and I did. The sergeant looked at me and said, "Oh, shit, you've done it again." I then said, "Time out. I want to go back and start the training all over again. We've not done it right. How long is that going to take?" So we sat down with the S-3 and we figured it out, and he straightened the thing out. Now, I could have gone down there and made a speech, pounded on the table, kicked them all around the tent and whatnot, but it wouldn't have done any good. All I did was have him

put a blindfold on me and then I disassembled and assembled the gun in less than the time that was required for the preliminary gunner's exam. I took the blindfold off and said, "If I can do that blindfolded, you guys, who do it all the time, can sure do it. I don't do that for a living; you guys do that for a living. If I can do that, you can do it without the blindfold on; but, remember, it's going to be dark in the tank. It's going to be night; it's going to be raining and the rain is going to be leaking in; you're going to be in a hurry, and you're going to be scared. So everybody who has to do that ought to be able to do it blindfolded, because that's exactly what you're going to be. You may be able to see a little bit in there, but by and large all the other things are going to add to your problem." That was the end of the argument. We had no further arguments about that gun. It didn't work very well; we had stoppages and whatnot, but they learned to clear the stoppages, and they learned to keep the damn thing firing. And it was that one thing that did it. I did several things like that. That was a trick I learned from General Abrams. He would sit in his office and he'd read up on something in excruciating detail--not everything, but something--in excruciating detail, and then he'd go around and start looking at how that was going. When he found it going wrong, he'd get into it himself and demonstrate that he knew more about it than anybody around the table, or around the training site, and that he could do it better than anybody around the training site, and that was the end of the argument.

INTERVIEWER: That's a very good technique. I've found, though, that many times I have left someone out. I still remember my RATT [radio teletype] rig crews and my cooks. Their feelings were hurt because I couldn't cook.

GEN STARRY: Well, there's no question that you can't cover everything, but I think you can the primary things. That is much easier for a tank battalion commander, I think, than anybody else. It's quite clear. He is a tank commander. The tank is there for command and control, but it also

has a basic load of ammunition. If he's where he's supposed to be on the battlefield, he's going to have to shoot it. So it solves a lot of his problems for him.

INTERVIEWER: You talked about an SQT, the testing system again, and in line with that you considered that as part of the criteria for selecting battalion commanders.

GEN STARRY: Well, I think it ought to be a selection factor. We ought to have a standard examination system, like many armies in the world do, for officers for selection for promotion, for selection for school, and possibly even for selection for command, I don't know. If you have the other two, it seems to me that it isn't necessarily as important to have it for selection for command. You're going to be able to read the testing records for selection for promotion and for selection for schools and the outcome of their service in the school. You're probably going to be able to read enough out of that to help you make a selection for command. So I wouldn't argue necessarily that they ought to be tested for promotion to command.

INTERVIEWER: The testing would be a primary or a specialty type of testing?

GEN STARRY: It's just part of the whole routine. If you're going to get promoted, you have to pass this level of exam. If you're going to go to this school, here's the entrance exam.

INTERVIEWER: No leadership-type exams?

GEN STARRY: Well, how would you do that?

INTERVIEWER: Well, some people like to go with psychological testings, but I'd venture to say that I could screw up every one of those if I wanted.

GEN STARRY: I don't have much confidence in those.

INTERVIEWER: The testing system can get out of hand, too. I guess that's my point. You have to be very diligent and careful.

GEN STARRY: I think we ought to periodically have, as a part of the evaluation system for officers and NCOs, a thing like the old cavalry stakes, a three-day cavalry ride. We put an armor stakes thing at Knox when I was there which was really fashioned after the old cavalry ride. In fact, I wrote General Hamilton Howze and asked if he had in his files some of the stuff that we had gone through as lieutenants at Fort Riley, which I thought was extremely good, and, by golly, he sent it to me. I used that as a basis for the armor stakes thing that we established at Knox. I don't know whether they're still doing it or not. I think they are, but maybe not. Over the years I have used that. In the 32nd I used a system derived, in part, from what I knew about the cavalry stakes based on the experience at Fort Riley, combined with some information out of a book called The Assessment of Men, which was about the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] and how the OSS evaluated candidates for service in the OSS in World War II. It was an individual stakes kind of thing involving stress situations. These were small group stress situations, and these were individual stress situations, but largely they were onesies, twosies and threesies type situations and you were evaluated at each station. You were evaluated either on your performance as a leader, if you happened to be a leader at that station, or as a follower. I think that every time an officer goes to school, at the basic course/advance course level and so on, there ought to be a repetition of that kind of thing, geared to that particular level of schooling. That's a test. When you say test, people think of a written test. How are you going to do that? That's like the paper

evaluation. There are a lot of ways of testing people and a lot of ways of evaluating people. I would rather make a judgment about whether or not a guy ought to be put in command on the basis of assessment tests like this thing out of The Assessment of Men than I would on a written exam.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned 15 less than mediocre officers were commanders in V Corps. Did you do any kind of, or direct any kind of, an assessment of their backgrounds or previous experience or anything?

GEN STARRY: No, not really, not a proper kind of evaluation. In many cases, I looked at them just out of curiosity more than anything else.

INTERVIEWER: It might be interesting if we could do that. I guess you can tell that I'm very concerned about the selection process. I think, if we go to war, we're going to need that.

GEN STARRY: Well, my concern is based solely on those two things I said a moment ago. One is, we haven't got enough battalions to afford to have a lot of average or less than average battalions, and we haven't got enough soldiers to afford to put mediocre or less than competent guys in charge of them. We owe the soldiers something better than that.

INTERVIEWER: I think another problem is, and maybe we shouldn't be on tape now, but another problem is that you see very few outstanding battalion commanders. You see a lot of the middle ones and, again, a lesser number of the less than mediocre, but very few outstanding ones. Now I know that we have a number of outstanding officers in the Army, but they don't get there for some reason.

GEN STARRY: There are a lot of guys who would probably be very successful battalion commanders, certainly better than the average, who never get a chance to command for one reason or another, and I think

that's wrong. That's why I think the single thing that bothers me most about the present selection system is that it deprives those people of the opportunity to compete. Most of those guys who are good enough to do that, and be good at it, are people who would really want to compete, but we've deprived them of that opportunity. Now I also will admit that in the old system--that is, before the board system got started--by and large it was the local commander's call. On the other hand, it was always based on the OML. You always had an Order of Merit List at the branch which, as I recollected, most people looked at, at least, or considered when they put people in command. If the guy wasn't on the OML or wasn't high enough on the OML, then you really wanted to think twice before you put him in command.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it was my experience that the branches had way too much power in those days.

GEN STARRY: That's why they got rid of the system.

INTERVIEWER: If you made a phone call to your branch and you maybe breathed hard, they would write down in your file, the file that you couldn't see, that you were out of shape or some stupid shit.

GEN STARRY: The allegation was, of course, that with cronyism, gross cronyism such as if your friend was the chief of your branch, then, by golly, you were going to get preferential treatment.

INTERVIEWER: Well, in my opinion, another problem with the old branch system was that the people who were working in the branches were the "Wunderkinds" who had never experienced any problem anywhere. So, if they talked to someone who had a problem, say a retarded child or hardship case or something, they couldn't understand it, and didn't want to deal with it, and therefore they didn't deal with it. They tended to gravitate

more to people like themselves. I didn't think it was a very fair system at all and I never, never want to go back to something like that.

GEN STARRY: Well, that's why they did away with it. That was a pretty widely held perception.

INTERVIEWER: They were ones who picked the officers to go to C&GS and all that stuff.

GEN STARRY: Yeah, that's right, the whole thing. I suppose you could argue that if you went back to a general officer as chief of branch. Really that's one of the things that caused me to try to persuade General “Shy” Meyer to recreate the center commanders, armor, infantry and so on, as the chiefs of the branches, and give them some say in the process of selecting commanders for the armor units, the artillery units or whatever. However, we never got that far along with it. He was willing to make a tentative start towards putting those guys back in as branch chiefs, but at the same time, because of the centralized personnel management system, the resources didn't exist at the various centers to handle that problem. So it was hard to say how that fellow would get involved in selection. The system you've got is not satisfactory to a lot of people. The system you had wasn't satisfactory for some of the same reasons, plus some others besides. It's hard to say what would be better but, at the same time, I remain convinced that we owe the Army something better than that mix of battalion commanders I described in V Corps.

INTERVIEWER: Another thing that we can't seem to make up our mind on in the Army is the tour lengths, the peacetime tour lengths, for battalion and brigade commanders. Do you have some feelings on that?

GEN STARRY: Well, I argued against extending the tour lengths at the time when General Meyer extended them. I argued with him on the basis

that, if the selection system is no better than it is, then we should not extend the tour lengths. If the selection system produces the circumstances in corps like the one I described in V Corps, then we can't take a chance on extending the tour lengths, because we're going to extend the tenure of those less than satisfactory commanders. As a result we're going to produce a lot more mediocre or less than mediocre battalions than we really should have. If you can change the selection system or change the system to produce something like I described a while ago, where you can leave the guy in command for six or eight months, make an evaluation, and then say, "Well, he ought to stay," or, "He really ought to go," then okay, extend the tour if you think extending it is useful. But a tour length extension for commanders really misses the point. The point of the cohesion argument and the working together argument is that the lieutenants and the captains and the sergeants are there for a longer period of time and work together as a team. It really has little or nothing to do with the length of the battalion or the brigade command tour. The whole system misses the point with regard to the cohesion argument, which is the teamwork argument. Now in my own case, during my tour in the 3rd Armored Division in the early 1960s, I reaped an enormous benefit from having been there. As I look back on it, the other battalion commanders in that brigade really suffered by comparison, and it wasn't that I was so much inherently better than they were. The argument was that I'd been there so damn long that I knew the system inside out. I knew how to use the system to our own advantage as a unit, and they didn't. Talk to Don Smart about that sometime. He went over to be the S-3 of another battalion. He used to come traipsing down to see us all the time, and he'd say, "How do you guys do this?" They didn't know how to get extra resources. They didn't know how to plan the training time. They didn't know how to work the local training areas. They didn't know how to work the maneuver rights. They didn't know how to work any of that stuff, and he sat there in envy most of the time of what we were doing. But the answer was that I'd been doing it for so long by the

time I got there that I had a singular advantage over the other guys. Now, if you're trying to recreate that situation, then it might be useful to extend the battalion or brigade commanders, but the purpose for which it was ostensibly being done was to help with the cohesion problem, but the cohesion problem is not a battalion or brigade commander's problem. It's a problem for the platoon leader, a company commander, a platoon sergeant, a tank commander, a gun section chief, a battery commander or a troop commander, not the battalion commander.

INTERVIEWER: Perhaps that problem was too hard to whip, whereas you could whip the one with the battalion commander.

GEN STARRY: Well, that's true. On the other hand, the argument I made against it is that, by extending tour lengths, you deprive yourself of the opportunity to put a lot of other guys through command, many of whom would have been as good as or better than the people whom you left in command. And, if you ever have to mobilize and expand an army, you really are going to need a backlog of guys who have had some command experience at that level.

INTERVIEWER: How long would you say the command tour should be--24 months, 18 months?

GEN STARRY: It depends on the officer and the circumstances, but 18 months, in my judgment, is not long enough. It depends on where you come from, too. When I took command of that battalion, I required no start-up time, but one of my neighbors came in as a battalion commander and he hadn't seen a soldier, a real soldier, since he had been a troop commander some ten or 12 years before. He'd been in the Pentagon most of the time since, or in that kind of assignment, so that poor guy was starting from scratch. He had about a year's work-up time just to get tangent with the situation that he was in. I had none of that. I walked in

and took command. I'd been the executive officer of the battalion. General Abrams said one time that the best thing that could ever happen to you is to put your executive officer in command of your battalion, because he knows where all the skeletons are and, as a result, the unit will immediately get better because he does know, but he hasn't been telling you, where the skeletons are. I had a significant advantage. This other poor guy suffered daily by comparison. The brigade commander used to come around--a fellow for whom I'd worked in Korea, as a matter of fact, was our brigade commander--and say, "Why the hell can't that outfit get up and get going? It's not that I like you and you're a good friend of mine. Those people have none of the stuff that you guys have got." I said, "Wait a minute. Don't forget I was your S-3 for a couple years and the executive officer in this place for a year or so before I started this thing. I know this unit. That poor fellow came from Washington. Washington is more than 2,000 miles away from here. That guy's going to spend six months to a year getting up to speed, whereas his counterpart down here in this other battalion walked in having been the battalion exec. If you spend six minutes trying to shift gears, it's going to be too much."

INTERVIEWER: Are we ever going to get the Army to leave the length of a command tour to the discretion of the field commanders?

GEN STARRY: Well, I doubt it, because we're off on this equity kick now; everybody's got to be equal. So, if you allow the local commanders discretion, you lose equity. That was one of the big arguments made for going to the centralized selection system.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like you to talk about General Bruce Clarke, who had Seventh Army when you were there. I'm not quite sure when he came out, some time in 1963 or maybe 1962.

GEN STARRY: Must have been; I don't really remember, but it was somewhere along in there.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever have any contact with him? A lot of stories float around about how he used to go down to the units. Do you remember having any contact with him?

GEN STARRY: Well, yes, of course. He came around a lot. I guess you could argue that he was a great one for over-supervision. He used to have a checklist of things that the commander ought to be doing, and you had to carry it around in your pocket, your field jacket pocket. If you didn't have it in your field jacket pocket and he caught you without it, you were in deep trouble, all of which I thought was unfortunate, because he did have some good ideas. His ideas on training are just as sound as a dollar, assuming the dollar is sound. It was unfortunate that he intruded himself at the company level of command the way he did, because it detracted a lot from the value of what he was saying, which, as I said, was not all that out of line. He had a saying, to which I take great exception, that he used at CONARC [Continental Army Command] and when he had Seventh Army. He maintained that the unit does well only the things that the boss checks. I believe the unit will do well the things the boss checks if he goes about it right. They'll also do a lot of other things very well that he won't have to check. You ought to have a unit that you've trained up well enough so that you don't have to check a whole lot of things, and that comes from cohesion, from working together, and from the kind of esprit and camaraderie that you develop in a well-trained unit. I really resent that saying, that the unit only does well the things the boss checks. That's arrogance! That says that, if you don't check everything they're doing, it isn't going to be good, and that's not right. Now, that isn't to say that people shouldn't go check things; I'm not arguing that at all. I'm just saying that it's arrogant. Now, I like General Clarke very much; I admire him for a lot of things, and I don't think he intended for that to be arrogant,

but it is. I think it always struck a lot of people that way, and I think it's out of line. He spent a lot of time as an Army commander intruding into things that were really the responsibility of the platoon/company/troop/battalion/ squadron-level commanders. He probably didn't need to check into them at all. If he'd had the right kind of command atmosphere, he certainly wouldn't have had to check into those things at all. It was very unfortunate.

INTERVIEWER: Didn't General DePuy feel virtually the same way?

GEN STARRY: I never talked to him about it, but I think so. Knowing him as I do, I dare say that he would say about the same thing I just said.

INTERVIEWER: I think it's too early to get into it yet, but it appears to me the 1976 version of FM 100-5 sort of bears that out a bit.

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: General DePuy made a statement that, if you didn't go down and actively lead, then most of the people wouldn't do anything. I don't know what he meant by "actively lead."

GEN STARRY: Well, you know, I wrote a lot of that book, and that was not the intent behind that. I've never heard that comment made about it before. I don't think he believes that. How did he make a decision to relieve a bunch of commanders at all levels--battalion, company, and so on? He was obviously looking into a lot of things. Some of them, at the company level particularly, were things that the battalion commander should have been looking into, but wasn't. In some of those cases, both the battalion commander and the company commander would come out.

INTERVIEWER: How many people did he relieve?

GEN STARRY: The number that we operated on when I studied in USARV was 56.

INTERVIEWER: In a period of how long?

GEN STARRY: In a period of however long he was in command of the 1st Division--a year or 18 months, something like that. I don't know whether or not that is a right number. That was the judgment number that we had to make in order to examine the files to figure out why they were fired. There were a couple of sergeants major in that list, and there were a lot of captains and a bunch of lieutenant colonels, so it was a mixed bag.

INTERVIEWER: When he assumed command of the 1st Division, didn't he find about the same thing you found when you assumed command of the 11th Cavalry, that they weren't doing anything? The reading that I've done is that the 1st Division was virtually sitting still, doing nothing.

GEN STARRY: It was a shoddy kind of operation. There was only one brigade that was really operating. The others were manning the base camps and whatnot. It really wasn't a very effective utilization of the resources. That division was not in a very commendable state. He got the whole division out fighting the war.

INTERVIEWER: His mandate, I think, was to get them moving. Maybe he felt he had to do that because they had become too lethargic and were just sitting around doing nothing.

GEN STARRY: No, I think he would say, and in fact I've talked with him about this, I think he would say very much the same thing that I said yesterday--that I'm not willing to post a guy to command and let him be in charge of other people's lives when I don't have absolute confidence in

him myself. If you lack that confidence, then you've got to take him out, or not put him in or whatever the circumstance is, and my guess would be that if General DePuy were sitting here he'd say pretty much the same thing, that he had lost confidence in the ability of those guys in terms of the fact that they were responsible for the lives of the soldiers, and he wasn't willing to take a chance on it.

INTERVIEWER: Based on your analysis of that situation, had he been in command for two, three, or four months before he started relieving people?

GEN STARRY: I don't remember but, as I said yesterday, I found one case, a case of an artillery battalion commander whose battalion fired short and killed some people, where the decision was probably not proper. There were really mitigating circumstances. I mean, really mitigating circumstances, and I think it was an unfair call. The rest of them we found, in the judgment of the two or three of us who looked at it, that the guys who had been taken out of command for whatever reason, were being taken out of command for nothing more or less than the same reasons for which we had taken guys out of command in Europe in the preceding years when I was in the 32nd and the 3rd Armored Division.

INTERVIEWER: Does that argue, then, that the other commanders in Vietnam were not doing what they should have been doing?

GEN STARRY: Yes, sir, it sure does.

INTERVIEWER: After leaving the Armed Forces Staff College, you went to Carlisle Barracks. Do you want to talk a little bit about the curriculum back then?

GEN STARRY: Well, this place has the same problem, I think, that West Point has, and that's relevance.

[End Tape S-201, Side 2]

[Begin Tape S-202, side 1]

GEN STARRY: There is a totally different perspective, of course, in the West Point situation. As for Carlisle, the Army needs someone not only looking at the political-military aspects of our national defense, but the Army really needs to sort out EAC [echelons above corps] in the context of the operational level of warfare. Leavenworth got out of that business in the 1960s until I started them back into it when I had TRADOC. For a long time there was nobody teaching corps operations. Leavenworth now does that. Someone should have been doing it all along. Part of our dilemma with the echelons above corps is that nobody was teaching corps or echelons above corps. Carlisle, because it is out of the mainstream of the TRADOC school system and bears some special relationship to the Chief of Staff and the DCSOPS [Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations and Plans], is immune from all that stuff. We need some enormous kind of work to be done at the theater level and above, at the level of army groups, groups of army groups, or whatever you're going to have. We need to look at the logistical support systems and all kinds of things like theater air defense systems--not just in theaters like Europe, but theaters like Southwest Asia, or Southeast Asia, and that's not being done. It seems to me that Carlisle is the place where a lot of that could be done and probably should be done. To the extent that we don't do it there, Carlisle's not relevant. We went through a period in the Army where all Army officers were supposed to be political scientists--in addition to being Army officers. I went to school here when that happened, and we had to be political scientists and operations analysts. I went through both of those things as a major, a lieutenant colonel, and colonel. I struggled to get myself abreast of what the hell operations analysis was and how to do that sort of work, and tried

to become some sort of a grand political scientist guy who could relate the schemes of the political science world to the military schemes. It was all very interesting but, at the same time, I was deprived of a lot of relevant kind of instruction about military operations because we were concentrating on something else. We should cover the political aspects of it, the process and so on, but we've got a lot of professional military nitty-gritty stuff that clearly needs to be done at levels above corps, at the theater level of warfare, and they are not being done. Someone might argue with me that this is not the place to do it. Okay, then, we've got to do it at Leavenworth. But we've got to do it somewhere. I think that, to the extent that we don't do at least some of that here, we're not utilizing this place properly. Joint operations and joint warfare arena, where is that done? Norfolk? No, not really. Here? Well, there needs to be more of it here, because the guys who leave here are going to be operating in joint commands, unified commands, and so on. The United States Army is going to go to war with someone else--first of all the United States Air Force, and secondly with the Marine Corps and the Navy. I don't mean fighting against them, but fighting with them. We don't do some of those joint things very well at all, and we have got to concentrate on them. This comes primarily from my REDCOM experience, but it's been apparent all along that we just don't do that very well and we need to concentrate on it. What better place than here?

INTERVIEWER: Have you had a chance to look at the War College curriculum in the last year or two?

GEN STARRY: Yes, I'm aware of the changes that have been made through the years. When I had TRADOC I tried to get the War College back under TRADOC. Not because I wanted to gather in everything, I'm not bent that way at all, but because there needs to be an audit trail from beginning to end of the military educational process, and there needs to be one person in charge of that. To me, that's the role of the TRADOC

commander. I guess that's because I was the TRADOC commander. It used to be under CONARC. They took it out from under CONARC because General Bruce Clarke got into an enormous set-to with the Chief of Staff over what was being done up here. I don't know all of the circumstances but, at that point, the Chief of Staff divested CONARC of the control of the War College, and it's still that way today. I think it's a mistake.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I think we have quite a bit of joint and combined operations here.

GEN STARRY: Yeah, more now than when I was here, and that's a result of a lot of people like me hollering about it over the years. Maybe what I have been saying is not relevant today, but I think to some extent it still is.

INTERVIEWER: We did spend quite a bit of time, about six weeks, in learning how the Pentagon operates, and about the PPBS [Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System].

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: It was old hat to some of us. For others, the way it was covered so quickly, they didn't grab any of it anyway. But we do get a lot of jointness and a lot of combined operations.

GEN STARRY: Starting with “Shy” Meyer, we emphasized that approach. However, you can't turn it into a joint school. I think there has to be a unique Army flavor to it. But, as a former Unified Command commander, I'll just tell you there are some enormous practical and functional problems in joint warfare that have to be solved out there. One of them is air defense. Air defense problems are not being solved because there's nobody in charge of solving them, and they get all wrapped around the

roles and missions axle. Somebody has got to be working that situation out. The unified commanders don't have the time or the resources to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Nor the authority.

GEN STARRY: Nor the authority. Well, they've got the authority, but they don't want you to use it because it gets back into the tank. The JCS [Joint Chief of Staff] get in there and they start wrapping their parochial trunks around it and the unified commander winds up getting shot out of the saddle.

INTERVIEWER: But with regard to joint doctrine, for example, unified commands don't have the authority to get into joint doctrine. In those cases where they have tried, they get their hands slapped by the service chiefs.

GEN STARRY: That's why we called it joint tactics, techniques and procedures. That's the name we used when I was CINCREDCOM to avoid the issue of doctrine. It is doctrine, but we called it joint tactics, techniques and procedures. I got Jack Vessey to agree that we were going to work that problem only at the interfaces where the services come together, and then we would come forward to the JCS and say, "Here's what we need. It's technology, it's organization, it's doctrine, it's an agreement between the services, it's whatever." That was the beginning of a lot of this stuff that's going on now, but it hasn't progressed nearly fast enough, nor has it gone nearly deep enough.

INTERVIEWER: For something to think about when we talk about REDCOM, you're probably aware of the series of joint signatures on agreements between the Air Force and the Army that are supposed to solve some of these problems. Have you read the one on close air support?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: It says that the Air Force will continue to support, which, in my opinion, doesn't solve any problems. But we'd like to discuss those with you.

GEN STARRY: That's a roles and missions problem. Every time that comes up, roles and missions, they really start throwing darts at you. You're on thin ground there.

INTERVIEWER: It's my understanding that the Air Force is jealously guarding its mission because it helps to justify the number of planes authorized.

GEN STARRY: But they'd really like to get rid of close air support, particularly when it involves single-purpose aircraft like A-10s.

INTERVIEWER: Getting back to your student days at Carlisle, General Haig was also here when you were here. The rumor is that you and General Haig sort of dominated the place. Is that true?

GEN STARRY: No, I don't think that's true. Al, considering what he later became, was kind of quiet. We had a lot of fun. The thing I enjoyed most about being here was the graduate school. I had been to Norfolk. I not only went through the class, but I spent the next six months as an instructor on the faculty down there. Norfolk operates very much like this place does now -- a lot of guest speakers -- so I came here having heard almost all of those guest speakers. I'd been through a curriculum which, while it was more joint in nature than this place was, was pretty much at the level Carlisle was. I'd not only been a student, but I'd been an instructor in that world. Frankly, I would have been bored stiff had I not

had the night school to go to. So I spent more time working on my master's degree than I did on the curriculum here. I filed the first dissenting vote, whatever you want to call it, a nonconcurrence with the committee report, that had been filed in something like 15 years. I don't even remember what the subject was now, but I wrote this big dissent. I didn't think anything about it. The literature that they handed out said that, if you disagreed, you were obliged to write a paper. So we argued in the committee and we agreed not to agree. It was something that I felt rather strongly about, so I wrote a paper about it, a two or three pager with a little summary in the front of it. The next thing I knew the commandant sent for me, and I'm standing in front of his desk explaining what the hell my dissent was all about. He said, "Do you realize that you're the first student at this place who has filed a dissent in the last 15 years?" or whatever it was. I don't know whether that was true or not, but that's what he said. I said, "I apologize, General. I'll withdraw it, but I read this paper that you guys put out which said that you encourage independent thinking, objective viewpoints, and whatnot, and that if you can't agree with what's been in the seminar after due conversation with your fellow classmates, then you can write it up and send it in. It becomes a matter of record." Then he said, "That's right, and I think that's fair. We're going to do that. So, I expect a dissenting vote from you on every subject." I said, "I'm not going to dissent on everything. I just had a point to make, and I couldn't agree with my teammates, so I filed this report." Well, that was the beginning of a good relationship with the Commandant. He subsequently retired and went down to North Georgia College, and I went down there a couple times to make speeches to his little ROTC group. And I subsequently wrote four or five more dissenting opinions about things, particularly the political-military things, where I thought we were going off base on the curriculum. He read them all, then called me in, and we'd talk about them. Al Haig helped me write one or two of them. We didn't dominate the place, but we raised a lot of hell.

INTERVIEWER: Before we get into Vietnam, is there anything else about the school?

GEN STARRY: No, when I was here -- it was 1965-1966, I graduated in 1966 -- what we saw here at that time was all of the agony that the Army was going through over what the hell we were in Vietnam for and what we were supposed to be doing there. General Johnson, the Chief of Staff, came here several times during that year and made speeches. The one I remember most clearly was the one in which we spent a lot of time trying to decide what it means to win. He had a long discussion about that. Another time he came and talked about the fact that he'd been over to the White House, and he was worried about the post-war Army because we had not mobilized nor had he been given permission to mobilize. He said, "We're going to have to use Europe as a rotation base." Of all the things that in fact happened, he foresaw them happening, and he was very concerned about it. He said he'd been over to the White House five times to request partial mobilization and had been turned down each time. Someone got up and said, "Why don't you resign in protest?" He said, "I thought it was better to stay on and not raise a fuss and do what I was told to do than it was to try to protest by getting it out in the open and having it become a national cause of some kind." So that was the level of stuff we were talking about. The war was just getting cranked up. The first US troop deployments were being made, first around Da Nang, and then elsewhere. When I got there, in the fall of 1966, we had about 140,000 to 150,000 Americans; we were just in the buildup phase. There was still a lot of angry discussion about what were we doing over there, or what we were trying to get done. So that was kind of the attitude of the students in my War College class.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't General Johnson later accused of not saying anything?

GEN STARRY: He never said anything publicly. He was a very loyal and dedicated citizen. In another war, at another time, that guy would have been a George Marshall. I'm very serious about that. The Army owes him a great debt, because he saw all the problems. He was right on target. He predicted what was going to happen in Europe if we used it as a rotation base, and in fact it happened. It was a lot worse than he ever foresaw that it would be. It took us ten years to get over it. You know that better than most people, having been there for a long period of time. He took the attitude that we would give the guy in the field everything he said he needed to do the job. That was probably the wrong attitude to take. He should have gone out and counseled the guy and said, "Wait a minute, you can't have everything." I heard him tell General DePuy one afternoon on the edge of the airstrip, "I don't have enough lieutenant colonels to keep you supplied if you keep on relieving them at the rate you're taking them out," but at the same time his basic attitude was, "Those guys are out there fighting the war. They're bearing the brunt of this whole thing. My obligation as the Chief of Staff is to give them everything they say they need to do the job." And that's what he did, to the best of his ability.

INTERVIEWER: I think the criticism came later. He didn't feel that the White House was listening to him, so he quit trying to get them to let him mobilize.

GEN STARRY: It was in the spring of 1966 that he came here and reported to us that he'd been over to the White House five times asking for mobilization or partial mobilization. I guess he went over there subsequent to that. I would not say that he shirked his obligation in that regard at all. Now you could argue that he should have stood up and made a public spectacle of it.

INTERVIEWER: Did he enjoy a public stature, such that his public resignation would have done any good?

GEN STARRY: I doubt it, and I think that was his judgment also.

INTERVIEWER: He could have looked at it and figured that MacArthur's didn't do any good.

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: We want to talk about this more later when we discuss TRADOC, but I think you had a hand in trying to solve this problem by creating roundout combat units from Reserve and National Guard units. That scares the hell out of me, sir. I don't mean from the point of view of the quality of the units. I'm just afraid that we may have to send some units to a war without those Reserve units because the political process won't call them out.

GEN STARRY: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: It's a calculated risk, and I think it's a great one. When you get into mobilization and calling up the Reserves, well then you involve public opinion and politics.

GEN STARRY: Well, you get into the statutory limits that have been placed on the number of people the President can call up. I would argue that it's probably better to call up organized units in that first 50,000, or whatever the number is, than to call up a bunch of well-drilling detachments, tooth-pulling detachments, and hemorrhoid detachments, which is what we were doing in the Vietnam War.

INTERVIEWER: Back to the War College again. Do you think that the War College can play any kind of a role in the doctrine process?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I think the War College ought to be the doctrinal repository for doctrine for echelons above corps. I'm talking about armies, army groups, and theater armies, as well as field armies, and the study of war at the operational level. That is, at the theater level and above.

INTERVIEWER: Would you still have the Combined Arms Center to develop this doctrine, or should someone else do it?

GEN STARRY: No, corps level and below is CAC. Leavenworth used to do all that other stuff, and it might be that you'd want to go up through the field army. We don't have field armies, but you could work up a provisional kind of TO&E [table of organization and equipment] and some kind of doctrine for them. You might even want to give army groups to Leavenworth, but someone needs to work daily on the problem of fighting war at the theater level. That means joint, because that's where our biggest problems are. All of the functional interfaces come apart at the theater level in joint operations because there aren't any joint interfaces. JCS publications are not sufficient to cover the doctrine, the tactical and operational-level doctrine, that is necessary. Somebody needs to write that down. Should the Army War College be doing it, or Army units?

INTERVIEWER: That certainly would argue that the War College would have to work with TRADOC, right?

GEN STARRY: Yes, and if the Chief of Staff wants to hold onto his sacred prerogatives to control Carlisle, so much the better. But there has to be some kind of an interface with the doctrinal guys, and that says that there's got to be some kind of an interface with TRADOC/Leavenworth.

INTERVIEWER: I'm not an expert on the staff, here but it seems to me that it would take some kind of major supplement to the staff.

GEN STARRY: It might, I don't know. You'd have to look at that. I don't really know.

INTERVIEWER: A bunch of the students here claim they're overworked. Do you feel that the War College prepared you for your later career -- generalship, if you want to put it that way?

GEN STARRY: No, not really. I had a lot of fun here and met a lot of good friends, many of whom were people I'd known before. We cemented relationships, but as far as preparation for higher level command, no.

INTERVIEWER: Did you maintain a relationship with General Haig after leaving here?

GEN STARRY: We went to school together. We've known each other all of our adult lives, and we're still good friends.

INTERVIEWER: General Haig went a long way without doing anything very conventionally and eventually moved into the position of SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander, Europe]. I think there were many problems within the Army hierarchy when they announced that he was assuming such a role because of his lack of experience in other roles. Did you feel that same way?

GEN STARRY: No. He was a good SACEUR. He was one of the better SACEURs we've had in a long, long time. In my opinion, Al Haig is a good guy. I have a theory about good guys. Good guys can do almost anything, and he's a good guy. He moved right in. He had a brief and frustrating tenure as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and then went hustling back over to the White House. He moved into SACEUR, and one would be hard put to find fault with his performance as a SACEUR. I have great respect for General Goodpaster, but he's a totally different kind of

guy than Al Haig. I think Haig should have stayed longer. But Al Haig was one of the better SACEURs we've ever seen.

INTERVIEWER: Had NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] gone to war during your tenure, would he have been effective?

GEN STARRY: Yes, I think so. As a corps commander, I would have felt a hell of a lot better going to war with him as the SACEUR than anybody else I could think of.

INTERVIEWER: But he had very little operational experience.

GEN STARRY: Well, that's all right. He's a good guy, like I said. He can do almost anything.

INTERVIEWER: Well, he certainly had a super reputation among the allies and within his own headquarters.

GEN STARRY: He sure did.

INTERVIEWER: I worked in and around SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe] while he was there. He was much beloved by his staff.

GEN STARRY: That's right, and they were loyal to him. There was an atmosphere there that has not been seen since.

INTERVIEWER: You're right there. How about his performance as Secretary of State?

GEN STARRY: Well, the press got after him, and it's hard to say how much of that is because he's a positive, straightforward, typical Army guy.

He stands up and takes charge. If you've got a problem, stand up and take charge of it, and he did. I think he should have been a little more sensitive about the fact that the press was after him. I guess he says it in his book. He told Patton when he went down to try to get the Argentine thing under control that it was probably going to cost him his job, and sure enough it did. He was smart enough to realize that. Should he have done that? Well, I don't know. Somebody had to try it. Don't forget, the press was still living on the crest of the wave; they brought down the President, and they wanted to get him, too.

INTERVIEWER: The general impression at the time was that he was upset about his perquisites, who got to ride on the right airplane and things like that. It wasn't so much of a substance matter, such as Argentina, as it was the perks. Are you familiar with all of that?

GEN STARRY: I've heard that said, and I find it difficult to believe. That is not characteristic of him at all, based on my experience with him, and I've known him a long time.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think he'll get another position with an administration?

GEN STARRY: He'll have a hard time. He's antagonized the press, particularly the Washington media.

INTERVIEWER: I think a lot of people would like to see him come back, but I agree. Do you still maintain contact with him?

GEN STARRY: Yes, but not frequent. I haven't talked to him in a long time. Being retired, I've been busy frying the oils of the military industrial complex and haven't done much with my military buddies.

INTERVIEWER: You went from the War College back to Vietnam to the G-3 Section, U.S. Army, Vietnam. I believe you were there when General DePuy commanded the 1st Infantry Division.

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Any more "lessons learned" pertaining to your tour in Vietnam?

GEN STARRY: In that year, I spent three or four months as part of the G-3 Plans shop in USARV which at that point was located in Saigon. It had not yet moved out to Long Binh, and was essentially a logistics headquarters. It was a terrible place, a really awful place. I had one miserable assignment in 40 years in the Army, and that was it. Fortunately it only lasted for about four months. General Art West, in charge of the Mechanized and Armor Combat Operations, Vietnam Study [MACOV], came along and grabbed me up to be a part of that study group. I essentially spent the rest of my tour working on that study. I came back and briefed it in this country and then went back to finish my tour. The last couple of months I spent in Malaysia. We were doing some training of tracker teams in the British Jungle Warfare School at Kota Tinggi. I worked that exchange with the Brits. We bought some dogs from the Brits, and got some soldiers from Vietnam, and married them up in the British Tracker Wing in the Jungle Warfare School. They trained them for us and then we deployed them to Vietnam. So I spent most of my last two or three months in Vietnam in 1967 working that problem.
[End Tape S-202, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-202, side 2]
GEN STARRY: USARV had too many people. They really didn't know what they were supposed to be doing. It was all make-work. You had to

be in the office by 6:30 or 6:45 in the morning and you couldn't leave until 6:30 or 6:45 at night. When you got there at 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning, you had to look around and say, "What the hell am I supposed to be doing today?" You looked at all the guys up and down the hall, hundreds of them, doing the same thing, and you just had to wonder, "Here I've uprooted myself from my wife and my family and they're all back there suffering from this whole thing. The press is against the war, and here's old Dad out here doing this. So what in the world am I doing here?" There really was no logical answer. The old logisticians were over there fumbling around trying to figure out how to get organized. Some of the logistical units in the field were doing super work building ports, establishing airfields, and doing that kind of stuff, but still that whole headquarters was a common zoo. The commander of the place was a logistician or ordnance officer. He had a big screen system in his command briefing room. They used to go out and take 35mm slides of the port and airfield construction, then bring them in to show the general. You had to wonder if he was afraid to go out to them or what.

INTERVIEWER: He was the commander of USARV?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Who was that?

GEN STARRY: An officer named Gene Engler. Nice man, but clearly in over his head.

INTERVIEWER: What rank was he?

GEN STARRY: Lieutenant general. He was succeeded by General Bruce Palmer, so we had a soldier instead of a logistician in charge, and things began to get a little better. But it was a disaster in the beginning.

INTERVIEWER: During this period, who commanded MACV?

GEN STARRY: General Westmoreland. In all fairness to General Engler, the command had been a logistics headquarters. We were organizing the 1st Logistical Command at that point. This thing had been the support command or something, I don't remember the proper name of it, and they split it. They organized the Logistics Command separately, got another ordnance general to command that, and then organized USARV. They never should have put a logistician in command of it. Then, when General Palmer came in, things began to get straightened out.

INTERVIEWER: You were still there at that time?

GEN STARRY: Yes. General Palmer, as I recall, took over in the spring of 1967. By that time we had finished MACOV. I think we finished that in about March. We came home and briefed it in March and early April, then I went back out in April. I spent the last part of April, May, and most of June in Malaysia with the British training the tracker teams.

INTERVIEWER: What were they tracking?

GEN STARRY: We had used scout dogs, of course, but the scout dog will alert on a position, but will not track people through the jungle. The British had had great success with tracker teams, using Labrador retrievers (as opposed to German Shepherds, which were the scout dogs used in Malaysia) in the confrontation in Borneo and the emergency in Malaysia. Actually I had been down there earlier, then worked on the MACOV Study, then went back and finished the training after I got through with MACOV. We bought 30 or 40 Labradors from the British. The dogs had been deployed in operations in Malaysia and Borneo. We bought them and the British trained our soldiers to use them. A tracker dog will track a human

from wherever the scent is picked up to wherever the person is. If the person goes into a hole in the ground, the dog will track him right into that hole. The risk with the tracker dog is that he'll track you right into an ambush; he won't alert. We found that, after you had a lot of experience, the dog will really tell you when he's getting close to the target, but it isn't like the scout dog. The scout dog will really stop and alert on someone who's 100 yards, or whatever it is, away. The Lab won't do that. The Labrador will get a little nervous as he gets closer. So, if you know the dog and you've been doing it a while, you can sense that you're getting very close. When the dog starts getting nervous, you know that there's somebody usually within 30-40 yards of where you are.

INTERVIEWER: Did that prove to be successful?

GEN STARRY: It was successful. By the time we got the program going Tet 1968 came along, and after Tet there really wasn't the problem with the VC [Viet Cong] that we had before Tet. After Tet, for the most part we fought regular North Vietnamese Army units, so the need for the trackers was not as great as it had been before, when we were dealing primarily with guerrillas inside the country. You still could use them, but the need wasn't nearly as great. All of the VC infrastructure came out during Tet and essentially got blown away; it really left very little behind. During the whole time I commanded the 11th Cavalry we had some “ankle-biters” in the rear, but we fought regular North Vietnamese Army units the whole time. We had a couple of VC units in the rear calling for help from the North Vietnamese regulars across the border. We took great delight in intercepting the carrying parties that they sent down to bring medicines and food. We were about to starve them out. So tracking wasn't the problem after Tet 1968 as it was before Tet. It was an interesting experiment, and I happen to believe that it has a lot of promise for counterinsurgency-type operations.

INTERVIEWER: After that tour in Vietnam, you spent from 1967 to late 1969 in the Pentagon.

GEN STARRY: I came back from Vietnam in the summer of 1967 and went to work on the Army Staff in the Assistant Vice Chief's office as an operations analyst. I stayed there until about February of 1968, when I went to work in OSD as a special assistant to Dr. Solis Horowitz, who was the ASD [Assistant Secretary of Defense] in those days. Dr. Horowitz, as the ASD, was Mr. McNamara's watchdog over the organization of the OSD and the JCS. In his watchdog role he was charged with rationalizing all the “purple” papers -- all the split decisions -- of the Joint Chiefs and rationalizing all the differences of opinion among the OSD staff about what ought to be done concerning whatever the issue was. These were the days when the OSD Systems Analysis groups were running rampant over the Services. It was a very interesting time. We worked some very difficult papers, all of which turned out our way because Dr. Horowitz had Mr. McNamara's ear. We got the Systems Analysis group under control. About that same time Alain Enthoven had decided that the fun had gone out of it, so he left and went back out to Litton. That was the de facto end of Systems Analysis power in OSD. In the next administration they downgraded them a little bit, and that's been continuing ever since. It was an interesting time. I went to work up there in about February and I left almost a year later to go back to Vietnam. So, from February 1968 to February 1969, I was in the office of the ASD.

INTERVIEWER: Was this during the period when McNamara was busy taking away prerogatives and authority?

GEN STARRY: It was after that. He left office early in that period and Clark Clifford replaced him. When Nixon was elected in the fall of 1968, Mel Laird came into office. So, during most of the period that I was there, Clark Clifford was the Secretary of Defense. It was during the period that

McNamara changed his mind about the Vietnam War and for that reason resigned. Clifford, of course, was part of the anti-war movement, so he spent most of his time away from the Pentagon making speeches about getting out of Vietnam. The department was really run by the DepSecDef, Paul Nitze, for most of that period. McNamara left about the time I got there. I don't remember the exact timing of it.

INTERVIEWER: From there you went back to Vietnam in February of 1969 and spent about seven or eight months in J-3 of MACV. What exactly did you do there?

GEN STARRY: After a very brief period as the head of Operations Analysis for J-3, I became the head of the task force to Vietnamize the war. This was in March of 1969. By then the new administration had taken office. It's quite clear that they had begun work the previous November and December (of 1968) trying to figure out how to “get out of” Vietnam. In Vietnam, reading the probabilities that we would soon be told to plan redeployment of U.S. units, General Abrams set to work in December considering one division, then in January and February he added an additional requirement to examine taking out two divisions. In April of 1969 redeployment had become National Security Study Memorandum 36. It set forth the requirement to develop a plan to first redeploy 25,000 people, then another increment of 100,000 or perhaps more, later on that year. It was very closely held. General Abrams and Major General Carter Townsend, who was his Chief of Staff, plus myself and four majors, two Army, one Air Force, and one Marine Corps, were the only people in the headquarters who knew what was going on. The majors did the “spadework” and I would draw up a plan. The whole exercise was run through backchannels between the Chairman, the President, and the SecDef, mostly the Chairman and the SecDef, and General Abrams and General Townsend. As the MACV Chief of Staff, General Townsend had knowledge of it and sort of steered us along with what we

were doing. Essentially we had to decide who to redeploy, how many, when, and so on. Then we had to bring in the J-2 to make an assessment to find areas where the threat would allow redeployment of U.S. forces. In the beginning we developed a plan to take out the 9th Division from the Mekong Delta. We talked about that a little bit yesterday in terms of how the deployment went and the mistakes I think we made in making that decision the way we did. We brought that division out that summer. Before we finished that redeployment we were at work on the second increment, which was to occur in August. However, it was delayed because the North Vietnamese staged a period of high activity. We delayed the redeployment until September just to see what they were going to do. We also drew up plans for yet another increment, which was to be the third redeployment. This one was to take place in the spring of 1970. In December 1969 I was then posted to command the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. I went out to the Regiment and took command on the 7th of December.
[End Tape S-202, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-203, side 1]
INTERVIEWER: Sir, can you tell us how you found the Regiment when you arrived?

GEN STARRY: For mechanized units, I guess, it's fair to say the fortunes varied as the wet and dry seasons varied, because there were a lot of things you could do in the dry season that you could not do in the wet season. There wasn't always a sufficient recognition of that fact on the part of either the people in command or the overall commanders themselves, that is the division and field force commanders. I assumed command just at the end of the rainy season. It was a good regiment. They had had a couple of very frustrating campaigns in War Zone C in the rainy season. As I recall, the operational ready rate of vehicles was less

than 50 percent and hadn't been above 50 percent for some five or six months, which was cause for concern. We had a good training program for newly assigned personnel. It was a couple of weeks' in duration for officers as well as enlisted, designed to acquaint them with the weapons, the enemy and the situation. The officers, sergeants, and the soldiers were as good and well trained as the Army could make them for that kind of duty. The thing that bothered me the most, I guess, was the maintenance situation, and the fact that there was no balance between the operational schemes and the availability of vehicles and weapons systems. In addition to running the operations, I focused on the operational ready rate of our combat vehicles. We were at the beginning of the dry season, which helped a bit. But in any event we had a maintenance situation which, I thought, was intolerable. The first part of it had to do with the spare parts situation. The second part had to do with what the officers and the supervisors themselves knew about maintenance and how much maintenance was being done. I tackled both of those problems while running operations. The first thing I found was each squadron had somewhere between 2,500 and 3,000 lines in the Prescribed Load List. My experience told me that was almost ten times too much in terms of one's ability to carry it, inventory it, keep it current, and turn it over. When I looked into it in detail I found that a lot of the problem had to do with the Sheridan vehicle. They had pushed large packages of spare parts when they issued the Sheridan. Many of those parts had to do with the missile system. We were not using the missile system, but the parts were still on the PLL [Prescribed Load List]. If you're carrying them on the line, you're carrying them in the inventory, and they clutter up the depot system. So I went and tried to track back into the depots. What I found was that there was such a proliferation of parts that there was no emphasis on what was really needed as opposed to what was marginally needed or not needed at all. The demand support and supply system is not satisfactory for that kind of an operation for a war. It may work in peacetime, though it really doesn't work very well then, either.

So I did two things. I made them purge the squadron PLLs. Not long after we started the purge the biggest squadron had about 325 lines in its PLL. So we reduced the line item count in the Prescribed Load List by a factor of almost ten. At the same time I went through the usage cards and got the Logistics Command commander to come out. He was a lieutenant general whose name I can't remember at the moment. Anyway, we had a long session between the sergeants, the general and me. His story to me was that I had the authority to adjust those usage factors based not only on the usage rate, but on the time it took to get the supplies and all the down time. However, that was not correct. I guess I didn't do a very good job explaining it to him, but I found that I had a couple of sergeants who knew more about it than either one of us. So I let them explain it to him. What I had told him was that it by Army regulation I could not adjust the usage factors. The sergeants finally convinced him that he was the only one who had the authority. He said, "All right, you send me a list and I'll authorize it." So we did, and he did. Within about four months or so, in addition to stripping out the PLL, we had increased the stockage of the high mortality parts, and the OR [Operational Readiness] rate started to go up and continued to go up. We went into Cambodia in May of 1970 at about 98 percent OR and, although we lost a lot of vehicles in Cambodia, we cannibalized and came out with about a 98 percent OR. So, over the period of just a few months, we straightened out the maintenance situation. From an operations standpoint, I found the same situation that one finds almost anywhere. The hardest thing to teach people at the small unit level, battalion and below, is how to integrate all of their resources into whatever they're trying to do. It's particularly difficult in a battle situation. You get into a firefight and, unless you've drilled yourself to just almost methodically go down a checklist -- air, artillery, cobras, maneuver units, resupply, all of those things, you'll forget some of them. And sometimes you'll have a squadron or battalion off in the middle of a firefight with the airplanes winging around overhead, the maneuver units maneuvering around on the ground, and the artillery sitting silent. Or you'll

be blazing away with artillery with six sticks of fighters circling in the air overhead. In other words, it's just hard to teach people to remember to use everything. However, there is a drill. For a long time I carried a bunch of three-by-five cards. I did it as a company commander and even later as a battalion commander. I did the same thing as a regimental commander, because I didn't trust myself in the heat of battle and the excitement to remember all those things. I was always grabbing those cards and looking at them to make sure that I hadn't forgotten something. I think we all tend to believe that, by the time we get to be lieutenant colonels or colonels, that we have all of that in hand. That's not the case! One of the things I did with new squadron commanders, if I didn't already know them well enough to judge whether or not they could do that, was put them in a helicopter and take them up and let them do it. I watched them and made a judgment about whether or not they could do it. As part of the MACOV Study in 1967, we went around and visited every tank, mech, and cavalry squadron, troop or company in the theater. If I had to make a single observation out of that whole study, which consumed seven volumes and made a lot of other conclusions, it was that we had a whole lot of people out in command from the troop/battery/company level on up who really weren't as good as they should have been at putting all that stuff together and fighting the battle. I had believed that for a long time. I remember hearing then-Colonel Abrams talk about that as a big shortcoming of his battalion in World War II. He commented that it was a matter of training and discipline. You had to train the officers and the key NCOs, but particularly the officers; they had to learn to discipline themselves to just go down an automatic kind of a checklist to make sure that there weren't some resources available that they could bring into the fight that they had ignored. In some cases, that resource might win the battle for them. In the operations that followed, the squadron commanders that I had to relieve outright or get out of command a little early were people who simply couldn't figure out how to do that very well. Some folks can't do it, but I guess you never know that until you take them

out and let them try it. It's something I think the individual needs to have thought a lot about beforehand. He had to figure out some way to cope with that situation. How you cope with it varies a lot from individual to individual, but it's something you always have to keep in mind. You've got to work out little systems for yourself to help you cope with it. To me, that was the overriding lesson I drew out of the whole MACOV study effort. There were a lot of others, but that was, in my mind at least, the overriding lesson of the whole thing.

INTERVIEWER: Did you and your squadron commanders handle command and control from helicopters?

GEN STARRY: Not often. We did some, of course, but it was not a habitual thing. As a matter of fact, we wrote in the MACOV Study in 1967 that “the helicopter in the air costs the commander his feel for the war on the ground.” That's essentially saying the same thing I just said. It's a question of the relevancy of your resources, and putting them all together to do the job at hand. If you're flying around in the air over a firefight at altitudes of 1000, 2000, 3000, or 4000 feet (if the flak envelope will allow it), from that height the whole place looks like a pool table. It all looks so simple. I've observed generals and colonels flying around up there giving instructions which were totally out of line with what was going on on the ground, simply because they had no visualization of the ground. While I did some commanding from the helicopter, I made it a practice to deliberately spend at least three or four days a week on the ground with units in operations. I had a couple of command tracks equipped for me with crews in them; they were just like a standby airplane. All I did was land and get into the command track and off I went. The sergeant major and I ran the Regiment. Sergeant Major Don Horn had been first sergeant of three companies in the 32d Tank Battalion in Friedberg when I commanded that battalion. He was probably the best operations sergeant I ever met. He was our brigade operations sergeant major in Friedberg,

and when I went to the Regiment he was serving his second tour as the Regimental Command Sergeant Major. So I cleaned off that bench in the helicopter where most people had their artillery officer and air liaison officer and a number of other folks. The sergeant major and I, the two door gunners, and the two pilots were the only people I would allow in that airplane. The sergeant major was responsible for the fire support -- air, helicopters and artillery, and I was responsible for the maneuver units and what he couldn't handle in terms of fire support. If he got overloaded I'd pick up one or the other of those. We had a system worked out so that two people ran the operation. He kept the maps, the records, and worked the radios. I helped occasionally with that. We had a super pilot, Larry Parsons, who'd been a scout pilot. For most my tour we were in northern War Zone C and we had, on the ground, either just south of the border or just north of the border, sufficient North Vietnamese antiaircraft units to force us to modify our air operations in the area. We really never flew much over the treetop level. At treetop level the reaction time was such that the enemy ground gunners couldn't get at you. Even so, we got hit a couple of times. Fortunately no one was hurt. My air cavalry troop commander, Don Smart, got shot down so many times I told him that I didn't have enough airplanes to keep him in command and that he was going to have to modify his tactics, which he did. So it was a risky enterprise, and we learned to fly low and stay there. When we went into Cambodia, I went in on the ground simply because I was afraid I would lose control of the Regiment if I started out in the air and didn't have access to my ground command vehicle and got shot down or forced down someplace in the middle of nowhere with no way to get out. So we made a big decision before we went into Cambodia that we were all going to go in on the ground, at least until we got through the flak belt. Once we were through the flak belt, and through the two regiments they had deployed in front of us, we were able to put scouts up. It was dangerous to fly because of the flak, but once we forced the regiments out of position they weren't able to set up and we were able to suppress the flak sufficiently to

fly. I guess that answers your question about what kind of a regiment it was; it was a good regiment. I think there were a lot of things we could not do simply because we had not had time to learn how to do them and hadn't been together long enough as a unit to do them. As for the fundamental skills, which battle sharpens up very quickly, I think they did about as well as we could expect them to do under the circumstances. They were good troops. We kept personnel on the line for 11 months. One of the other things I did was to run about 600 folks out of the base camp at Bien Hoa. Then, when the 1st Infantry Division moved out of one of its base camps, we moved into it. It was smaller and further away from Saigon and the lure of the city. I just cleaned out the base camp. There were a lot of people there who shouldn't have been there, and the cavalry crew commanders were complaining to me that they didn't have enough people on the tracks to do their jobs. Six hundred guys sitting in the base camp will fill up a lot of tracks. So we put them out there and kept them out, except for their R & R [rest and recreation]. We tried to take care of them by rotating them in and out for a maintenance standdown period. We didn't stand anybody down for maintenance, but we took time out for maintenance and that improved the ready rate. At the same time, it gave them a chance for a little break. Those were never safe areas. You were always surrounded by somebody. So it wasn't like the airmobile infantry, when they went back to their base camps, got drunk, and went to the massage parlors. I always felt that that was a mistake, because the soldier spends a week doing that, then you take him back out to the jungle and you have to reclimatize him all over again. He's gotten all full of booze and women and the safety of that base camp, and then you take him back to war again. Psychologically, it's a bad thing. I always felt that we had a better balance. We weren't just thrashing around in the jungle for a few days and then going back and sopping it up in the base camp. We were out day after day after day grinding away at the same old problems, and we learned to take care of ourselves much better than the infantry, the airmobile infantry units in particular, did.

INTERVIEWER: One of the criticisms of our operations in Vietnam was that we were so totally dependent upon firepower that it hurt our maneuver and kept us from closing with the enemy in some cases. Did you find that to be a problem? I'm talking specifically of the use of artillery, air, gunships, and recon by fire.

GEN STARRY: I'm going to pick on airmobile enthusiasts a little bit. Among the airmobile zealots I would include the elder General George Casey, who commanded the 1st Cavalry Division to which we were OPCON [operational control] for a long time, and of whom I thought a great deal. He was a great guy who was killed in a helicopter crash shortly after I left Vietnam in 1970. He was an airmobile enthusiast, and his vision of airmobility was pretty much like a lot of the typical airmobile enthusiasts. The purpose of airmobile infantry was to locate the enemy and, once having located the enemy, to destroy him by fire. What we found in the MACOV Study was that it wasn't being done very well. Most of the enemy was being located by air cavalry and not by the infantry -- that is, the "air" air cavalry, not the air cavalry infantry. The time gap between when the infantry contacted the enemy and engaged him with fire was sufficient for the enemy to get away. So in every case we dumped this enormous load of firepower on an enemy that didn't exist, because he had had time to react. He knew what we were doing and was quick to react to it. The minute contact was made he would stir it up a little bit. If he thought he was winning, he'd press on. If he thought he was losing then he'd back away from it, knowing full well that firepower was going to descend on him. The enemy learned that tactic, and we were not proficient enough at it to employ it successfully. In the time we were OPCON to the 1st Cavalry Division something like 60 percent or more of their claimed kills were claimed by the divisional air cavalry squadron. If that be the case, then my question is, "What's the purpose of all that airmobile infantry?" It is a means of getting soldiers from one place to

another very quickly, there's no question about that. It beats the hell out of walking through the jungle. I don't question that a bit, but I would also observe that we had airmobile infantry battalions attached to us many, many times. We went into Cambodia with several of them attached to us, and before that we had them attached almost continually. My impression of them was that, while they got from point A to point B rather quickly, once they got there they didn't know where they were, they didn't know what the enemy situation was, they didn't know the ground, and they didn't know the terrain. In short, they didn't know anything. They're babes in the woods out there, with the blind leading the blind. I have commented on that before. It was inexperienced lieutenants leading inexperienced sergeants, and together the whole outfit was scared to death out in an environment with which they were not familiar. As opposed to that, we put the cavalry troops out and left them there. They knew the ground, they knew the trails, they knew the enemy, they knew the situation, and they knew the animals that lived in the jungle. I've seen infantry companies waste a whole basic load firing at a couple of monkeys because they were something that stirred in the jungle. The cavalry soldiers could almost smell monkeys and had superb fire discipline. In Cambodia one of the troops ran into a large group of refugees in a rubber plantation. Had it not been for the fire discipline we had established, with the troop commanders controlling the fire, they would have blown away several hundred people before they realized what was happening. Once you start a cavalry troop firing, if you can't stop it immediately, you've got a disaster on your hands. You can wipe out a village in a matter of two or three minutes. You can wipe out several hundred people in a matter of two or three minutes. In this particular case the troop commander was in front, where we required them to be, and he maintained control long enough to determine, in his mind at least, that they were not something we should fire on. We avoided a near disaster with that situation. All of the troops were very good at that. It's risky, because you have a tendency to withhold fire, particularly in populated areas, until the leader is sure that he's facing an

enemy and not friendlies. But you have to do that or you're going to have a My Lai or something like that on your hands. We knew about My Lai and were fearful of killing a lot of people who didn't deserve to be killed. As I said, we made the troop commanders and the platoon leaders ride up front where they were supposed to be, instead of in the rear, where you found a lot of the leaders in other units, and they were in charge of the fire discipline. I think that's the only way to do it.

INTERVIEWER: In operations away from the heavily populated areas and villages, were your troops allowed to use the recon by fire technique?

GEN STARRY: Yes. But I think you have to discipline your recon by fire. That's why we put the unit leaders up front. As units gain more and more experience they're less and less apt to just fire up a basic load in a recon by fire. My experience with them is -- and we saw this in the MACOV Study a great deal -- that a new unit that has not been in a lot of firefights will fire up a basic load of ammunition the first night out. If you can replenish it on the second day, they won't fire near that much ammunition the second night out. It just goes in decreasing orders of magnitude until you get down to a point where the people out in front begin to sense whether or not they ought to recon by fire. It's living on the ground, on the trails, in the jungle, with the enemy, and with the animals --it's that continual sensing of that environment that is so important. This was particularly important because of a whole lot of trail networks coming down through the area like we had in northern War Zone C. You just can't drop an airmobile unit in there during an afternoon and have them become effective by nightfall. They don't know the area and they're not familiar with the situation. There's a feeling for the jungle and the enemy that you get from being there and staying there all the time that you cannot get in any other way. That's why I thought it was so important. We worked those trail networks out there. We had an automatic ambush system in which we employed Claymore mines in tandem hook-ups. Most

ambushes should be covered, but we would cover an automatic with another automatic instead of putting people out there unnecessarily. Sometimes we covered them with people and so with direct fire. Automatic ambushes are dangerous. If the enemy finds out that you're putting them out, and if he can get to them, he'll turn them around on you. We had several incidents of that. We also established a rule that the guy who put it in has to take it out, so that a new man coming in doesn't make a mistake. You can't send someone new in to take down an automatic ambush. You have to send in the soldier who set it up in the first place. As long as we did that, it was OK. When we violated our own rules, we paid dearly for it. But we knew those trail networks. You could go in there and see all the soldiers working at reading the signs on the ground. I learned some of this from going through the Jungle Warfare School when we were doing the tracker training in 1966-1967. The soldiers who were teaching at the Tracking Wing were New Zealanders, native Maori. They were very well educated people, but retained their traditional skills. As I watched them work, and looked at what they were doing, it became apparent to me what they were doing was well described in my “ancient” Boy Scout Handbook. The more we watched our own soldiers in the 11th Cavalry, the more we tried to train them well in those skills. We concentrated on the simple tracking and scouting procedures. Because of that, they could read the trails. The lead scouts could tell you how many people went down the trail, how long ago, and about what they were carrying. And they were hardly ever wrong. That's mechanized soldiers, not infantry. You can't put airmobile infantry in there and have the lead scouts be that proficient instantly since they won't know what it looked like before. So I'd like to think we had a steadier, more stable, better balanced, more proficient, and at the same time safer kind of an operation. We had fewer casualties because we stayed there longer and became more familiar with the terrain and situation than did the units that just popped in, stayed a few hours or a couple of days, and then pulled out. [End Tape S-203, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-203, side 2]

INTERVIEWER: You did a lot of mounted and dismounted work. When working dismounted, did you form ad hoc groups by pulling together the dismounted soldiers of the squads?

GEN STARRY: The ambush operations were all dismounted, because if you took the tracks in it was a dead giveaway. Those were dismounted operations. The troops learned to cover their tracks as they came back out of the ambush by dragging stuff down the trail. They learned to use all the tricks of woodcraft that people use to cover trails. We did that essentially by scout squad. The squad leader was in charge, and the platoon leader was in charge of the squad leaders. We didn't change the organization. It was the same as vehicular organization. You usually leave a soldier or two on the vehicle to man the guns and provide communications and security, and overwatch if you are close enough. When you went into the ambushes, particularly to set the automatics up, you were out of direct fire range. In those cases, we would move by fire team, or we'd use the squads like fire teams and move in what later came to be called traveling overwatch and bounding overwatch. If we got to the point where we were really in bounding overwatch we had a firefight on our hands and had to bring up the tracks and do something differently. As long as we were in a traveling mode or traveling overwatch, and weren't too sure about what was out there, we went ahead with it. Once we moved into a situation where we had contact and shifted to bounding overwatch, we would bring up the tracks for direct fire support.

INTERVIEWER: One of the hardest problems in a case like that is the coordination of the fire support. What system did your regiment use, or did you leave that to the squadrons to coordinate? For example, who coordinated the tac air, the gunships, and the artillery?

GEN STARRY: The squadrons were far enough apart, geographically, and the missions were far enough separated, geographically, so that almost always it was an individual squadron operation. We carved out an AO [area of operations] for each squadron. Everything that went on in that AO, from the ground to the sky, was the squadron commander's responsibility, to include artillery and air. We monitored that from the regimental command post to make sure that, if we had a priority problem, we'd give priority fires to it. I don't recall that we ever really had a serious conflict with that. In the winter of 1969-1970 we were engaged in an operation along the road from Loc Ninh to Bu Dop in northern Binh Long Province. In clearing that road with Rome plows (D9 Caterpillars) we had to use more than one squadron, particularly by the time we got into Bu Dop. The 2nd Squadron was conducting that operation. It finally got up to Bu Dop, which was some distance from Loc Ninh. Meanwhile, we'd had a situation in Loc Ninh which required the moving of another squadron in there. We had to coordinate that, because they were close enough together that we were using the same fire support for both squadrons. When we went into Cambodia we had to control the artillery and the air. To do this I had organized an artillery section in the regimental headquarters. I got an artillery lieutenant colonel to run that. He was our senior artillery coordinator--the regimental artillery officer. The air liaison officer worked with him in the fire support element that we created at regimental level. You would call this the Fire Support Coordination Center or Fire Support Element at division level. It was essentially a division-level kind of thing, but at the regimental level. When we went into Cambodia we had our own three squadrons and, later on, four battalions of airmobile infantry attached. That's almost a division, and we were dealing with division equivalents of fire and air support. When we crossed the border into Cambodia we had six sticks of fighters in the air overhead. We didn't have the Cobras up because of the flak situation, but we used artillery -- 8-inch and 155mm. Behind that we massed tac air. When we were able

to use the Cobras, they were mixed back into our fire support, but we began with just artillery and tac air.

INTERVIEWER: Being an artilleryman, one of the experiences I ran into over there was that we would be cut off at some point in the battle in order to bring in tac air, and then there would be a long gap before the tac air would come in.

GEN STARRY: Never do that. There's no need to do that; you should never do it. When the battle starts, you start everything up. You start up the artillery, you start up the helicopters, and you start up the tac air. All you do is move it around. You never stop it. You don't stop anything. You might slow down the pace of it. In a stiff firefight, you have to keep it all working all the time. The trick is to learn how to move it around so that you're not firing at one another. That's coordination of resources and building up the battle. Not everybody can do that. You have to teach yourself to do that; most people aren't very good at it. The good ones are the people who have thought about it a little bit. They have a pattern in their minds about how they're going to do it.

INTERVIEWER: In judging your squadron commanders, and in determining whether or not they were adequate to lead their squadrons in combat, did you look at their coordination of firepower and their ability to visualize the terrain? Just what did you look at in determining whether or not they knew what they were doing?

GEN STARRY: The first thing that I looked for was whether or not he could put all that together -- the maneuver forces, the fire support forces, the air, the artillery, and the helicopters, in a coordinated way and run a battle.

INTERVIEWER: Generally speaking, how long did it take him to learn that once he assumed command?

GEN STARRY: Some of them never learned it.

INTERVIEWER: How long for the good ones?

GEN STARRY: The good ones had just about figured it out by the time they took command. Of the ones who seemed unable to learn, a couple of them had obviously given it some thought but hadn't worked it out in detail. It took them three or four months to catch on. Once I took them up in a helicopter and made them do it, they realized that it was something that was at least important to me, if not important to the battle, and their performance was going to be graded on their ability to do that. So they spent some time figuring out how to do it. Some people can't do that. Some people's thought processes can't be divided up and segmented that way. It isn't easy to be firing artillery over here, having Cobras coming in somewhere, and having close air support going in over there, then move all of that around. You can get it started up, but how do you move it around? How do you redirect the fighters so that they're not firing across the gunships, the gunships are not firing at the fighters, and everybody's not flying through the artillery?

INTERVIEWER: How do you convince the fighters that you are doing that? That's one of the problems.

GEN STARRY: Confidence. You do it a couple of times. We always took our air liaison officers and forward air controllers and had them spend a couple of weeks in a track on the ground with a cavalry troop before they went to work as FACs [Forward Air Control] or as air liaison officers. We also brought the pilots in from the fighter squadrons to spend a day or two with us. They loved it. It was the greatest thing we ever did. Once they

got out there and saw how we did it, there was an increase in confidence. They developed their own confidence in the fact that we knew what we were doing and that they weren't going to be flying through our bullets, and that we were not going to fire across the Cobras and close air support with artillery.

INTERVIEWER: Did you normally require your squadron commanders to have served in Vietnam in some other job prior to assuming command?

GEN STARRY: I didn't have a requirement for that, although my personal opinion was that it was essential. I don't think we ever put in someone who hadn't been there before. I preferred to have somebody who'd been in the Regiment and knew how we operated. The people I put in command during my time were all folks who had been in the Regiment. A couple of them had been the Regimental S-3, two of them, and one had been the Regimental Executive Officer for a while. So they were people who had been in the Regiment.

INTERVIEWER: What about troop commanders?

GEN STARRY: You were pretty well forced to take what the system delivered to you in that case. It was really not possible to insist that they be people who had been in the theater. Most of the captains came to me new and had not been there before. Most of them had only a couple of years of service. We tried to use our own people who had been promoted, that is the platoon leaders who were promoted to captain. We just took the best of the platoon leaders and made them troop commanders. Inevitably they made better troop commanders than those who came from the outside who had not been there before. I don't remember putting one from the outside directly into command. We would put him on the squadron staff for a while to give him a chance to get familiar with the ground, the operating conditions, the enemy, and so on. After watching

him for a while and giving him a chance to get “acclimated,” then we'd sometimes put him in as a troop commander. The Regiment had a training detachment in the base camp which we put everybody through. The sergeants and the officers received a reorientation on weapons, enemy tactics, and so on. The soldiers received a little indoctrination on the enemy, living conditions, hygiene in the field, and the kinds of things that bother soldiers in the field. The longest courses were a couple of weeks long. The majors and the senior captains who had been to Vietnam before were frequently there for no more than three or four days, just long enough to reacquaint them with what had changed since they'd been there the last time. If a man had not been there before at all, we left him in there for the full two weeks, I didn't care what his rank. That helped a little bit, but even so we never took someone directly out of that and put him directly into troop-level command. We had to with the platoon leaders because we didn't have any choice, but with the captains, the troop/battery/company commanders, we never did that.

INTERVIEWER: Was your normal command tour for troop and squadron commanders six months?

GEN STARRY: Yes. Now, the company-level soldiers, the company/battery/troop-level people, a lot of them, once you got them out there they were good. They wanted to stay, and so there were significant numbers of them who did more than six months. That means, if you were a new officer, you would come in as a platoon leader. Given that you'd been commissioned, gone to a school in the States and had a little leave, by the time you got to the unit you'd have a year or so of active duty and were within shooting distance of getting promoted to captain. So I gave him six months in a platoon and, if he worked out, I might put him in as a troop commander. He'd spend six months more as a troop commander, which essentially gave him a year on the line. They wanted it; it was their call. In watching them, as long as you didn't detect that they had peaked and

were about to go downhill and start making irrational decisions, there's no substitute out there for experience.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a problem at company and troop level with the competence of the officers? Were they well trained? Were they well motivated? Did you run into any cowardice?

GEN STARRY: Given the system we had, they were as well trained as the Army could afford to make them. They were not as well trained as you would want them to be. How much that additional training would have cost the Army in terms of additional manpower, and additional training resources, I don't know. Somehow or another the Army elected not to pay that price. So we had to take what we got. The same thing was true with the sergeants, particularly in repeaters. We had a significant number of sergeants who simply didn't want to go back on the line and spend another six months to a year as a platoon sergeant, first sergeant, or whatnot. Whether or not that's cowardice, I wouldn't go so far as to charge that to them. If they had been through it once before, and then gone home and thought about that a little bit, and didn't want to do it again, is that cowardice? I don't know. From a philosophical standpoint, I happen to believe that man's most difficult problem is fear--not necessarily fear of death, but apprehension in the face of the unknown. You and I leave to go to a new assignment and there's always some apprehension about how we are going to do in that new job. Is it going to be a good job or not? And that apprehension runs all the way down to wondering what the family living accommodations are going to be like and so on. It's uncertainty, and in the face of danger that uncertainty heightens into what is just out and out fear about bodily harm. In the case of leaders, if the officer or NCO is conscientious it turns into fear of how well he's going to do in commanding his outfit, because he's responsible for them. Their lives and fortunes are in his hands, and he wonders if he's going to make the right decisions and not get a lot of them killed unnecessarily. Are we

going to do the right things and do them well? I honestly believe you have to have thought about that in advance if you are going to be a leader. If you don't, you're going to be confronted with the situation head-on, and that's not the time to be trying to think about it. You have to have thought about it ahead of time. So I always tried to interview all of the lieutenants and captains. It didn't always happen; I'm sure I missed some of them, but it was because my nights were spent in the bunker working on paperwork and thinking about the next day. Frequently the urgency of the situation was such that there simply wasn't time to interview them, but I did try to interview them all. The Sergeant Major would interview the senior NCO and I'd interview the officers. If he found an NCO he had a problem with he'd come to me and we'd talk about it. Sometimes I'd interview the NCO. I'd do the same thing with him and the officers. He and I together made judgments about whether or not we ought to put sergeant so-and-so in A Troop as a platoon sergeant, or whether or not his reservations, and the impression that the two of us had of him, was such that we shouldn't put him in command at all. Frequently we'd turn them away. I had a list of questions I asked them, but the single question that I repeated for every one of them was, "Are you scared or afraid?" I asked that question because I had come to believe that, if you weren't afraid or were unwilling to admit it, then you didn't belong out there. And, if you hadn't figured out what to do about it, you really didn't belong out there. I got some interesting answers to that question -- really interesting answers. Most of them were not willing to admit that they were afraid, but you could tell by the way they talked about it that they were. Finally, as they talked through the problem, they would say, "Well, yes, I guess I am." I guess there were two dramatic examples that I can remember. A lieutenant came in one night and, in the course of the conversation, he said he wanted to be in the Civic Action Program working the villages, medical, food, and all that, help we gave to villagers. I said, "Well, that's fine." He had a degree in social work from a good university and he was interested in that. I said, "That's fine, but we require every lieutenant to spend six months on the

line in a platoon so that, when you're working the other part of that problem, you understand why you're doing it. You will understand the battle context in which we're trying to work this whole problem. Also, if they get into a problem down in your village, or wherever you're working, you will be qualified to call in artillery fire, direct close air support, call for gunships, and fight." Several times during the course of the conversation it came up that he really wanted to get into that program. I said, "Okay, six months in a platoon and then you can do that." To the question, "Are you scared?" he sort of hedged and never really answered it directly. So I sent him off to be a platoon leader in the 2nd Squadron. The next afternoon I'm in my helicopter going someplace and the squadron commander called me and asked, "What have you sent me?" I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "This kid is out here in the middle of my firebase and has now refused to take command of his platoon." So I whipped the airplane around and we went over and landed. Here he is with his duffel bag, standing in the middle of the Bu Dop Road. Our Rome plows were crashing the trees down, and we'd been burning a bunch of trash. It was a scene right out of Dante's Inferno. Here's this kid, standing with his duffel bag on his shoulders, frozen in the middle of the road. He'd gotten off the helicopter, but that's as far as he got. He walked out from under the blade arc, looked up at the trees, watched the trees come down as the plows went by, heard the artillery going out, the small arms zinging around, and he froze right in the middle of this place. Somebody went and got him, and finally took him over to the squadron commander. He said, "I can't do it." So I put him on the helicopter and sent back to the Regimental Command Post. We gave him a nice, warm, safe, overhead-covered bunker to work in. I gave him a letter from me which said, "Having been posted to the command of so-and-so, it was reported to me that you had refused to accept command. I would like for you to take a few hours to think this over and please reply by endorsement, by hand, on the bottom of this page what your intentions are." Part of the letter pointed out some of the possibilities that could come about as a result of refusing to assume

command. I didn't think it was a threatening letter, although some people complained that it was. But it was all there -- his rights and his obligations. Almost inevitably, in previous cases, they had relented and said, "I'll do what you told me to do." In this particular case I did what I did in most cases. I made him think the thing through and gave him 24 hours to sign the letter as to his intentions. He came around and said, "I'll go do that." I said, "Okay, what you're going to do now is get on a helicopter and go back to Long Binh." He served out his tour in Vietnam as the assistant club officer in Long Binh. You could criticize that policy, I suppose, but I come back to what I said before, I was not willing to put in command of soldiers leaders in whom I did not have confidence. I was not willing to trust the soldiers' lives to someone whom I didn't think was up to snuff as a leader. Was the act of making him think it through and admit to himself that he was scared and say, "I'm going to sign up to go do it and do it right" sufficient to cause the turnaround? I don't know. I was not able to judge; that was beyond my skill level. I did the only thing I thought I could in all conscience. It was to make him solve the problem in his own mind, for that moment at least, after which I then sent him to the rear. Just as a postscript, he was an ROTC scholarship graduate from a good university. I said to him, "What in the world were you doing in four years of ROTC in that university? What in the world did you think you were getting ready for?" He said, "I don't know, sir. I never thought it through." I don't blame him, I blame the PMS and the whole system for that. I said, "You went to the Armor School. What in the hell did you think they were getting you ready for?" "I don't know. I never stopped to think about it," he said. "Now that you've made me think about it, I guess I always was scared to death the whole time, but unwilling to admit it, so I just put it aside." Such behavior is fairly typical of too many people in that category. Another lieutenant came in a couple weeks later, and in response to the question he said, "Yes, sir, I'm scared. Colonel, I've thought about that a lot, and here's what I've decided -- I've decided that I'm about as well trained as the Army can afford to make me. I need more training, but that little

school we went to in the rear with the weapons, the enemy training, and all that stuff was super. I enjoyed it and I got a lot out of that. I don't know what kind of a platoon leader I'm going to be, but I think I've got it all sorted out in my mind. I'm ready to give it a try. As far as fear of being killed is concerned, I've thought about it a lot and have looked at what is going on in our country in that regard, and I've decided that there are a lot of things a lot worse than dying for your country, and some of those things have to do with going away and hiding in some village in the mountains, or going to Canada, or not being willing to serve." Now, the unfortunate sequel to that is that he was killed about three months later while leading a patrol on foot down a dry creek bed outside of Loc Ninh. He was a good platoon leader. He was probably was one of the best ones we had. I asked his sergeant afterwards what happened. They ran into an ambush. The lieutenant was out in front and was smart enough to understand what had happened to them. He gave a little signal of some kind that they'd worked out to deploy and attack just before he was hit. The platoon sergeant told me afterwards, "We had practiced that a hundred times. We practiced it in the base camp. We practiced it in the motor pool. We practiced it wherever we were doing our maintenance. We practiced it out in the jungle when nothing else was going on. We had about a half a dozen drills, and the guys all knew them. All he had to do was make a signal and the thing went. I didn't have to give a command. After the lieutenant was hit I didn't give a command, I just went with the fire team that I was supposed to go with and the thing worked just like it was supposed to." They wound up blowing away the better part of a North Vietnamese infantry company. They won the fight, cleaned up the battlefield, and marched out of the jungle carrying their lieutenant on their shoulders. It was all because he'd gone in there and organized the thing and drilled them so that, when the fight came, they did what they'd been trained to do and it worked like gangbusters. Some psychiatrist would have a field day with that story. Philosophically, ecclesiastically, or whatever, how do you justify the fact that one kid lived out his tour as an

assistant club officer in Long Binh and came home because he was a coward, and another guy who had the courage to face up to it went out and got killed? I'm not able to solve that problem. It's beyond my skill level.

INTERVIEWER: Your after-action report indicated that there was some problem, and I don't know how great of one, with conscientious objectors. I believe you were talking about officers.

GEN STARRY: I was talking about officers.
[End Tape S-203, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-204, side 1]
GEN STARRY: As I recall, we had several people who claimed to be conscientious objectors. I have two observations to make about that. One is that I can't figure out how the system let them get that far in the first place without having determined that they were conscientious objectors. Secondly, among other things, I came to the conclusion that their real problem was fear. All of a sudden they had gotten to the place where their fear overwhelmed them and they didn't know what else to say except, "Hello, I'm a conscientious objector." I don't really believe there were any conscientious objectors at all. It was just that they were scared to death. For the first time they had to deal with fear, and that's the only thing they could think of to say. But we did the same thing with them as we did the others -- we sent them to the rear.

INTERVIEWER: For most of your tour as a regimental commander you were attached to the 1st Cavalry Division.

GEN STARRY: Yes, that's right.

INTERVIEWER: In your after-action report you made a comment that, prior to your arrival, the regiment had been split up quite often and attached to other commands. Were you able to keep the regiment together as a fighting force?

GEN STARRY: Yes. It wasn't as badly fragmented in 1969 as it had been when George Patton was in command of it in 1968. For some four or five months during his command, I don't remember the exact time, all he had under his control was the headquarters troop and part of the air cavalry troop. Everything else was allocated out to someone else. There was a tendency to do that with armor. One of the findings of the MACOV Study was that in Vietnam infantry commanders tended to piecemeal their armor out, as infantry commanders always do. Armor units were never employed as units, and so it was with the 11th Cavalry. They had a squadron with the 1st Division and a squadron someplace else when George Patton was in command. Jimmie Leach, who succeeded him, managed to get back most of the regiment for part of his tour. When I took command, I insisted that we had to have it all back together again. There was no sense in having it over there if it was not going to be employed as a unit. A cavalry regiment in an environment like that, even against the North Vietnamese regulars, can really cover about as much ground and cope with the size problem that you would probably have to use a couple of divisions of airmobile infantry to cope with. A lot of people would argue with that, but I really believe that a cavalry regiment is worth two divisions. In that environment, against that kind of enemy, used properly, you might want some battalions of airmobile infantry to help you with some things, but I'd want some more air cavalry. It's been alleged that I'm a critic of it, and I am, but my experience with airmobile infantry is that it's a very sophisticated concept and, if you have a very well trained division that has worked together for a while and you employ them together, it's a good concept. But once you take that division and fragment it to the point where you've got a rotation rate that's based on a

one-year tour of duty, you essentially have the blind leading the blind out there in the jungle and the concept breaks apart. I would argue that, if the air cavalry squadron is accounting for 50 to 60 percent of your kills, then you have to wonder what the infantry is for. I would also argue that, if the whole concept of infantry is as the finding force, and then you pile on with the artillery and fire support and it can't work, then it's not a viable concept. We were not able to make it work. We commented adversely on it in the MACOV Study, and I found it to be true as a regimental commander. I'm not a great fan of airmobile infantry except as a means of transport. And then you have to wonder, when you get them to where they're going, how good they're going to be. They don't know where they are; they don't know what the enemy is; they don't know the ground and situation; and so on. That's not very effective, and you're risking peoples' lives in a situation in which you have alternatives that are a hell of lot more acceptable than that.

INTERVIEWER: Were most of your operations under the 1st Cavalry Division prior to Cambodia?

GEN STARRY: That's right. We went under the 25th Division just shortly after we got into Cambodia. The Cambodian Task Force was commanded by General Bob Shoemaker, who was an ADC in the 1st Cavalry Division. We went in under a task force organization. I don't remember now how long after we went in that it was broken up. I was wounded at Snuol and when I came back, which would have been about late May, we went over to the 25th Infantry Division under General Ed Bautz.

INTERVIEWER: This was while still in Cambodia?

GEN STARRY: Yes, we were still in Cambodia.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we back up a moment, sir, and let you explain to us the objectives and what was going on during the excursion into Cambodia.

GEN STARRY: We really weren't given clear-cut objectives. Bob Shoemaker himself admitted that he didn't really know what we were going in there for. But we were going, even though we didn't know how far or what we were to do. From reading the Stars & Stripes we knew that the purpose of the exercise was to disrupt the logistics operations over there by getting into the cache sites and digging them out. That forced the North Vietnamese regular forces back from the border and gave the South Vietnamese time to get themselves a little better organized to take over as part of the Vietnamization process. It was almost a preemptive attack. We preempted the other guy by forcing him back away from wherever he was, and away from his operating objectives. The objectives were ill-defined, and the timing was ill-defined if defined at all. So we sat down and laid out some objectives for ourselves. Based on what we knew about the enemy situation and the lack of any instructions from higher headquarters, we made our own objectives.

INTERVIEWER: Do you believe this was a political objective?

GEN STARRY: Well, the political objective was to give the South Vietnamese time to get themselves a little better organized. To me, that says a preemptive attack; that's the way I read it. What we did was to strip out their logistics infrastructure that they had laid down for themselves across the border and force the regular units back off the border some distance. If they wanted to come back in they would be obliged to do the logistics all over again.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know whether or not this operation was directed from the United States, or was it approved from the United States at the instigation of the MACV commander?

GEN STARRY: I have no idea. Generally there was great apprehension. The press became enamored of the idea that we were going to find COSVN [Central Office for South Vietnam (North Vietnamese)], COSVN was a thing that looked like the Pentagon to most correspondents, so they wanted to know when we were going to get to the COSVN Pentagon. I tried to explain to a couple of them that, if there was a COSVN Pentagon, it was four or five guys with a radio in a hole in the jungle. We had all sorts of ridiculous reports about what was over there. The intelligence situation was, at best, confusing. It was alleged that all of the stuff that was in Cambodia had come down the trail network from the north. We had been reporting for months that that was not the case. It was coming in by truck convoy out of the port of Kompong Som (Sihanoukville), and was probably being delivered by Cambodian Army truck units working for the North Vietnamese. This, in fact, turned out to be the case. But the initial intelligence information said that it was all coming down from the north. We got into the caches and I made them pull out the bills of lading which, incidentally, were all there. Sure enough, they'd all been unloaded from third country freighters in Kompong Som. There was a dividing line somewhere further north of us, northeast of us, where we found the stuff had indeed been coming down the trail network from the north. But it was some distance away and completely out of our area of operations. Everything that we found in Cambodia, as far as I know, was stuff that had been brought in through the Cambodian port and delivered into position by Cambodian Army truck units working for the North Vietnamese. The second problem we had was that there was an enormous amount of misinformation generated by the special operations group people who were working across the border. I'd always been suspicious of them. They were there when I was in Vietnam the first time. I had limited contact

with some of them and had the impression that they really weren't doing what they were saying that they were doing. That is, they weren't going deep enough to find out what was going on. They weren't getting across the border far enough to find anything. They'd go out and sit around in the jungle for a little while, get scared to death, and then come back and write themselves up for a bunch of awards. Most of what they reported was probably not true; at least we found that to be the case. I went up to see the senior man in our area--he had a command post up in Bu Dop--before we went into Cambodia, and he told me about all of this stuff over there, the buildings, the concrete gun emplacements, the antitank guns, the antiaircraft guns with sliding concrete overhead cover things and all that stuff, none of which we had seen. Now, mind you, we flew that border every day. You could fly it at night and watch the truck convoys. I did that night after night myself. We watched the truck convoys coming in from the west, going into the cache sites, coiling up, and then going back out to the west. Report after report that we turned in had that in it, and yet they insisted that this stuff was coming down from the north. These people were reporting that way, and they were reporting bunkers and emplacements and all those sorts of things, none of which we had seen. We even had photography runs to try to find these things. We found absolutely nothing that those people said we were going to find, which of course confirmed my suspicions about them.

INTERVIEWER: Prior to going in there, had we been firing any artillery across the border?

GEN STARRY: No, there was no firing across the border. We went across the border with a cavalry troop. Grail Brookshire and I went across the border with a cavalry troop one afternoon to rescue a scout crew that had been shot down. This was in early April. We fired some direct fire and had artillery ready to fire, but did not fire it. We had air stacked up overhead, but did not use it, either. We were able to get to the crew, get

them out of the helicopter, and get them and the wreckage out before it was necessary to use the artillery.

INTERVIEWER: Had he been reconning across the border?

GEN STARRY: No, he was flying along the border. The border was ill defined in that area. Anyway, he took a burst of AK [Soviet Assault Rifle] fire from the ground. When he crashed he ended up across the border. We thought at the time that he was across the border, but there was no border marking to confirm it. We saw him go in and knew about where it was. We just cranked the troop up. Brookshire and I had our command tracks out there, so we just went after him. It took us about a half hour to get the guys and the wreckage out and pulled back on our side of the border. I think we reported the coordinates honestly, but there was some discussion about where the border was in those days, so nobody got skinned for going across the border. We did not fire except for direct fire weapons. You could hear the NVA [North Vietnamese Army] rustling out there trying to get organized. The helicopter did not burn, fortunately. The guys were wounded and covered with fuel. The scout/observer had a couple of rounds through his leg and the pilot had a hole in his hand or an arm. Anyway, we got them out and washed them off. If you wear a flight suit impregnated with fuel it'll just burn your skin something terrible. We stripped them and washed them off, then wrapped them up and hauled them away. We did all that in about a half hour. You could hear the North Vietnamese rustling around out there in the jungle, so we put a couple of platoons out as security while we worked the problem with the helicopter. We hoisted the helicopter up on the back of a retriever and hauled the whole thing out. We would have been attacked, but we popped a few shots at them as we left just to convince them that we were still there. This forced them to pause a little bit before they started closing in on us. Anyway, we high-tailed it back to the other side of the border.

INTERVIEWER: During the actual incursion into Cambodia, what size force went in?

GEN STARRY: We went into the Fishhook. Remember that there had been an earlier incursion further to the southwest by some ARVN troops. The force that went in in our sector consisted of the 11th Cavalry; the 1st Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division, which was stationed in Tay Ninh; the 2nd Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division; and a brigade of the ARVN Airborne Division. The 11th Cavalry was to go directly through the southern-most border of the Fishhook. The 2nd Brigade of the 25th was to go in on our immediate left. The 1st Brigade of the 1st Cav Division was to go in almost due north of Tay Ninh City, to the west of 2nd Brigade, 25th Division. We all took objectives commensurate with our respective fronts. The ARVN airborne brigade was to go into a place just north of where the Blackhorse was crossing the border, and we were to link up with them. That part went pretty well. By afternoon of the second day I met the ARVN brigade commander in an area we had agreed on--we had linked up. He had gone in with his brigade. It was an interesting operation from a command and control standpoint. We met the night before to decide where commanders were all going to be. Because of the flak problem, Brookshire and I decided to lead with the 2nd Squadron. The two of us would go in on the ground behind H Company, a tank company, which would lead 2nd Squadron. The 3rd Squadron followed the 2nd. Later, on the first day, we moved the 3rd Squadron up on the right flank of 2nd Squadron. By the end of the first day we were two squadrons abreast, with the 1st Squadron following closely. The brigade commander of the brigade of the 25th said he was going to command from his helicopter. I cautioned him against that because of the flak. He was liable to get forced down or shot down and lose control of the operation. He was leading with a tank battalion, the 2/34th, which had never fought as a battalion before. They got bogged down in soft ground in a place where we had advised them not to go and finally had to be

dragged out. The commander of the 1st Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division elected to try to command the operation from his bunker in Tay Ninh. I tried to suggest to him that he risked losing control of the situation. By the time his brigade got across the border, there would be at least 50 kilometers between where he was and where his troops were. The FM links were pretty fragile at that distance, and they didn't have a good relay system. I just felt that he was going to lose control. He did, and by the second or third day out he'd been relieved of command and replaced by Bob Kingston, then commanding 3d Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division. I discuss that in my command/control conversations because it's an interesting lesson in command and control. Here's one commander who's going to do it from a secure bunker and he loses complete control of the thing because of the distances involved and he really can't visualize the battle. Other commanders commanded from a helicopter, in spite of the fact that they know that there were regiments of flak in front that must be suppressed before they could fly safely at altitudes where they could see what's going on and control the battle. I was counseled by Bob Shoemaker for deciding to go in on the ground, and particularly counseled for positioning myself behind the lead company. That was considered to be too dangerous a place for the Regimental Commander. I said, "I've been joking. The reason I'm going to be out there is that, if you want to fire me, you'll have to come find me, and I don't think you're going to want to come out there that far." As it turned out, I don't know whether he wanted to fire me or not, but what happened to other commanders was just exactly what we had predicted. That brings up the question of where the boss ought to be in a fight. Although it's of some risk to yourself, I think you have to be close to the front. I don't necessarily say that the Regimental Commander ought to have his saber drawn and be out in front of the lead cavalry troop, like a George Armstrong Custer, but nonetheless you have to be there. The other reason I wanted to be out there is that it was unknown territory and an unknown enemy. Even in a helicopter, had it been safe to fly, I did not have enough confidence in my own ability to

visualize the situation down there so that I could make intelligent decisions. I think you just have to be there and see it. You have to be right there because the decisions have got to be made instantly. It was a good decision. We never got to the line of departure we had drawn on the map. One of the things the manuals tell you is that your line of departure should be in friendly hands and be identifiable. The line of departure we drew was in enemy hands, and we damn near got blown away before we got to it. We attacked with about eight or ten sticks of fighters and about six or eight battalion volleys of artillery on that position before we even got to the line of departure. I don't know that we let our guard down, but the little bastards figured out something was going on and came across what they suspected we would lay out as a line of departure and opened up on that lead tank company with volleys of RPGs [rocket propelled grenades] and rockets. Fortunately nobody was hurt and no equipment was seriously damaged. Most rounds were short because they fired too soon, and during the reload process we attacked. The minute the stuff landed we attacked, because we knew they had to reload or rearm somehow. We figured that, if we could catch them in the middle of that rearming process, they'd break and run for cover, which they did. They broke and ran, and we shot them up with canister and machine guns as they boomed off through the jungle. That was the last organized resistance we ran into until we got to Snuol.

INTERVIEWER: That was on the third day?

GEN STARRY: We got to Snuol on the fifth day. We ran into a couple of intermediate positions, then we ran into an enemy entrenched around the southern approaches to the airstrip at Snuol. The aerial scouts picked them up and we laced the trenches. According to the scouts they were standing shoulder-to-shoulder in this trench line along the trail network. We weren't on the trail, but we were using it as an axis of advance. You could see them. We worked Cobras back and forth across the trenches

and they broke and ran. On about the third day we ran into a river line where the bridges were down. They'd obviously blown the bridges sometime before, which said that somehow or another they knew we were coming before we knew we were going to come. So the question was how to get across the river. The S-3 of the 3rd Squadron took the commander of the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, and went up and reconnoitered the river bank. They were crazy, because they were well behind enemy lines and nobody knew what was out there. They went in using a scout helicopter, came back out, and never had a shot fired at them. The Cavalry Division decided that they'd bring in their bulldozers and put in a bridge. So, by the time we got there and had the site covered by fire, they were bringing in their bulldozers. You had to assemble the little bulldozers on the ground, which was going to take a great amount of time. While we were squirreling around with that, in frustration I took a sergeant and an AVLB [Armored Vehicle-Launched Bridge] and started out down that river line, trying to find a place where we could put the AVLB down. Every once in a while some guy from the other side would take a pot shot at us, which would zing off the bridge. The sergeant would lay the thing down, discover that it wouldn't work there, and then we'd move on to someplace else. We were about to give up when the sergeant said, "Sir, you fire a little bit over there to make sure that the bank is clear and I'm going to put this thing down to the river bank and see if I just can't sink it in the bank. That way we can go down this side, go over the bridge and up the other side. There's enough dirt down there to hold it if we can get it mashed in. If I take the thing down the forward slope of this stream those guys are going to shoot at me again." So I took my M-16 and fired a couple of magazines into the other side of the river. He drove that AVLB down there, laid the bridge out, sort of patted it down a couple of times, and then backed out. I went back and got a cavalry troop and brought it up. We laid down a little suppressive fire on the other side and put the cavalry troop across. Within 15 minutes we had a whole squadron across and headed north, while these guys were still fumbling with their bridge.

They finally got it in the next day. Meanwhile, we'd put the whole regiment across that one little AVLB. In fact, we finally put a couple more AVLBs in at other places that we found later on. Essentially we crossed that river on AVLBs and proceeded north. I remember that it was late on the third day. On the fourth and the fifth days we ran into Snuol, where he had really dug in. On the edge of town were probably two regiments. I don't know where the third regiment was. They had a division, the 1st NVA Division, and I think they were looking for us to land on the airstrip. Snuol is a rubber plantation headquarters, and there was the typical plantation chateau with the typical grass-covered airstrip. It was built like Loc Ninh and Quan Loi must have been before the war. It was a pretty place. They had several antiaircraft positions around the airfield. A kilometer or so away the regiments were dug in around the village. As nearly as we could tell, they were looking for us to airmobile into the airstrip and try to work into the town from there. So they were set up to defend the town, but from the direction of the airstrip. But when we went in there was no airmobile, as we were all on the ground. We fanned the cavalry out on the southern edge of that airstrip and went for it and the town simultaneously. At some point in that process they broke and ran.
[End Tape S-204, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-204, side 2]
GEN STARRY: They destroyed the village in the process. As we went into the airstrip area where the antiaircraft guns were, we captured all of them. I got wounded capturing one of them, but they really didn't have any troops over there. All they had was the ack-ack. I guess they figured they were just going to shoot down the troop-carrying aircraft as they came in. They left the guns in position. We also captured some NVA. In one gun pit was a soldier who elected not to run. He dove into a bunker and threw grenades out as we tried to talk him into coming out and surrendering. By that time, it had been announced that we were only

going to go in so far, 18 miles or 30 kilometers, whatever it finally turned out to be. In our sector that happened to be across a river line, so they drew back across the river and sat there. The North Vietnamese knew that was as far as we were going to go. They just pulled back and dug in. We'd shoot across the river at them, because you could see them over there.

INTERVIEWER: The village you went into, did the NVA blow the village?

GEN STARRY: They did an enormous amount of damage in there themselves. We were blamed for most of it in the press reports. Storefronts were broken in. There were a couple of small fires, but no great conflagration. It wasn't that big a village. A couple of small fires, and the petrol station where the fuel pumps had been knocked down. We didn't, as far as I know, do any damage to that village. There was no looting and pillaging or breaking down buildings and knocking out storefronts. That was all done before we got there.

INTERVIEWER: Were there still Cambodians in the town?

GEN STARRY: There were some in the cellars. The French plantation manager and his family were in the basement of the chateau. Within an hour or so of the time we cleared the airfield -- I didn't see this, because by that time I had been wounded and carted away -- but within an hour or so of the time we cleared the airfield a little red airplane came in and landed on that airstrip from somewhere. Shortly afterwards, the Frenchman and his family came out and got into the little red airplane and flew away. They, too, had good communications.

INTERVIEWER: From a tactical standpoint, was this operation worthwhile? Did you recover enough material or whatever to make it worthwhile?

GEN STARRY: Oh, yes. You can read the tonnages in the reports, but the amount of equipment we captured was just unbelievable. Brand new, Russian-made, some Chinese, some US, but mostly Russian-made equipment. Machine guns, mortars, small arms, AKs, tank gun ammunition -- interestingly enough, no tanks, but tank gun ammunition -- and this followed General Abrams' analysis of the enemy, which said that, "They project their logistics nose out into an area, and then they conduct an operation after they get the logistics laid down." For a long time they were doing that in South Vietnam. In other words, they'd go across the border with the carrying parties and a little security and they'd lay down the supplies. When they felt they had enough supplies to support their operation, they'd move the units in on top of their supplies and then conduct their operation. That's exactly what they were doing in this case. We found a really extensive hospital complex in the Fishhook area, to include X-ray machines. I mean, it was a regular base area.

INTERVIEWER: Above ground?

GEN STARRY: No, it was underground.

INTERVIEWER: You stated earlier that you thought that they knew you were coming.

GEN STARRY: I judged that by the bridges. The bridges were down and they'd been down for a few days.

INTERVIEWER: Was this just too much material to move, or did you think they thought they could move it?

GEN STARRY: No, there was no way for them to move it all. You're talking about thousands of tons of stuff.

INTERVIEWER: Based on that, should we have gone back in a few more times?

GEN STARRY: Well, we probably should have stayed there. An interesting thing happened during my first tour over there in 1966. Mr. McNamara came over in the fall--August, September, somewhere around there--and had a briefing down at MACV. General Westmoreland stood up and went through a recital of all the things that he needed to do his job. Mr. McNamara kept trying to tell him that the resources were not unlimited and that he ought to pull back on some of that. General Westmoreland's response was that he had been given all of these missions by all of these people -- the President, the SecDef, the CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific], and the State Department -- and that he couldn't do them if he didn't have all of these resources. Mr. McNamara responded, "Make me a list of all the things that you've been told to do and the people who told you to do them, and then make some estimate of what it would take to do it all." So a task force was convened. The USARV Plans Group had some representation on that task force, part of which was me. We made up a list that showed what had been said by whom and how long it had been in force and the instructions involved and so on. We then drew up an estimate of what it was going to cost. It would take a million and a half soldiers -- a million South Vietnamese and half a million Americans -- and ten years, and a force structure of so and so. We tried to make some budget estimates, but they were not very precise. We took the message to General Westmoreland to sign. He refused to sign it. He said, "I'm not going to send that in. That's politically unacceptable." After some pressure from Washington he sent the message, but he put a disclaimer on the bottom of it that said, "Here's what the staff has worked up in response to the Secretary's requirement, but I don't endorse the staff's report." One of the things we said in that report was not only what force levels and manpower would be required, but also that a different strategy

would be required. If you wanted to win, you were going to have to go into Cambodia and Laos, and you were probably going to have to go into southern North Vietnam. The purpose was to block the infiltration routes, clearing away the logistics infrastructure and pushing the enemy back away from the border far enough so that he couldn't snuggle up to the border and conduct his operations with a safe haven base behind him. We were going to force him to traverse a whole lot of friendly -- to him, enemy -- territory before he would be able to get in and do the things that he wanted to do in South Vietnam itself. General Westmoreland's comment was, "That's totally unacceptable." At one time he had prepared a plan to put a corps into the Laos plateau and block the infiltration routes from the north. That wouldn't have stopped it, because most of the stuff in Cambodia had come in through the port. That's what was wrong with that plan from the beginning. Eventually the message that we worked up for him to send to Mr. McNamara got to the Pentagon. I'm told it was one of the things that caused people like John McNaughton and some of the Pentagon Papers guys to back away from the war and become advocates of getting out. I drew a lot of political/military lessons from that. Personally, the thing that really bothered me was that there were no instructions from the National Command Authority about what MACV was supposed to be doing over there. There was not really a clear-cut operational concept for the theater. What was the theater commander supposed to be doing -- search and destroy and all those other schemes that were worked up? To me, none of those things seemed to be relevant to whatever we thought we were doing. It was hard to get anybody to say what their ultimate purpose was. Even after we decided to Vietnamize the war, there was still a lot of the, "Guys, get out of the way. We're going to do this." While General Abrams was trying to instruct his commanders that we are going to leave, and that if we really want to leave our RVN [Republic of Vietnam] allies something to go on once we leave then they're going to have to take this thing over now, the attitude on the part of the senior American commanders was still, "Get out of the way and let us do this. Let us big

guys do this." That was wrong! A lot of it was personal. It was self-aggrandizement on the part of the senior people. They wanted to succeed and they wanted their divisions to be successful, particularly during their tenure in command. That meant they had to operate, be visible and be doing something. You weren't going to do that if you were encouraging and helping your Vietnamese friend take over in your sector. Besides that, he might get in trouble and screw you up. There was a lot of that, particularly with the 1st Cavalry Division. Not so much with the 25th, particularly under General Ed Bautz. But it was certainly true with the 1st Cavalry Division under Elvy Roberts.

INTERVIEWER: Was that during the time you had command of the regiment?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that General Westmoreland, in the absence of clear-cut objectives, did the very best he could in trying to set some kind of military objectives?

GEN STARRY: Well, that's hard to say. What you need to do is ask that question of General DePuy, because he was the J-3 and a lot of that was of his devising. I suppose at the time it was what was politically feasible, but I would also argue that they didn't have any instructions. They sort of had to figure out what they were supposed to be doing. General DePuy himself has admitted, subsequently, that the problem with the force structure was that they had deployed a lot of the wrong kinds of forces. They brought the Infantry divisions over without their tank battalions. There was a big argument for a while about whether or not they even ought to bring the divisional cavalry squadrons. They thought there was no place for tanks. In the book that we wrote at Fort Knox about the mechanized operations in Vietnam, that comes out loud and clear. For

years and years the mythology in this country was that there was no place for tanks. The data that we gathered up the MACOV Study, which I used later on in the book that we wrote, shows that Vietnam was a place where you could use armor. The mythology started with Bernard Fall's book, Street Without Joy, which described the death of Groupe Mobile 100. Groupe Mobile 100, even if you read Bernard Fall carefully, was not a mechanized unit. It was a column of trucks, it was truck- borne infantry. They had some armored vehicles with them as fire support, but it was in no way an armored convoy, and they got themselves into a stupid situation, made some very dumb mistakes, and got eaten up by the enemy just crisscrossing the column. They eventually destroyed the groupe. The image that we drew out of that battle was that Vietnam was no place for tanks or armored vehicles of any kind, simply because they destroyed this armored group on the road up there in the Central Highlands. It wasn't an armored group at all, but just a bunch of trucks under a stupid commander who made some dumb tactical mistakes that cost him his entire command. The thing that bothered us the most, when we got to writing the book, was that there was an enormous amount of information available from the people who had been in Saigon since the French left. Our people, Americans, who'd been in the mission over there had an enormous amount of information. Unfortunately it was all classified and kept in the State Department files and not distributed or disseminated. Army schools never got hold of that information, and no one ever studied it. There was no attempt to extract lessons learned from it. There was no attempt to look at it and evaluate tactics, force structure, strategies, and so on at the operational level. So there it sat, an enormous body of information, because it had some State Department classification on it and couldn't be released to anybody. So the mythology came into being that Vietnam was just a swampland and had a monsoon climate and was not suitable for much of anything except dismounted infantry and the animals that lived in the jungle. That was not the case at all, as you know. So we did that to ourselves. We had very imperfect knowledge of the landscape, of the

climate and weather, and of the enemy. We made some very dumb decisions early on about the tactics, the strategy, the force structure, what the operational goals at the theater level of war were, and so on. In retrospect, and I suppose it's easy to be 20/20 in hindsight, but some of that should have been apparent up front. The information was available in this country to give us a better handle on that.

INTERVIEWER: I believe you made a comment earlier, and in some of your after-action reports you've stated that even after you had done the MACOV Study, there was really no reaction to it in the Army.

GEN STARRY: Well, it was too late. By the time we got the study finished in the late spring of 1967 there was a ceiling on the force structure. The ceiling had been imposed by Mr. McNamara because of the situation I described a little while ago in which he tried to explain to General Westmoreland that we didn't have unlimited resources. I think it was on 10 or 11 November 1966 that Mr. McNamara sent a message which put a troop ceiling on us. As I recall, the troop strength at that point was about two hundred and some-odd thousand. Of course we eventually went up to five hundred and some-odd thousand, but each one of those additional requests was approved almost man by man. There was an office in OSD where a civilian was responsible for every single additional manpower authorization that was given to MACV, to include units and individuals -- cooks, bakers, and candlestick makers. This one civilian had never been in uniform, never fought a war, and never been to Vietnam, yet he was the authority. He was the single, sole authority for approving manpower authorizations from MACV. Every one of those additional three hundred and some-odd thousand manpower authorizations was wrung out of that guy, one drop at a time. Eventually it was General Westmoreland's ill-advised request for 206,000 more, however that came to pass, that broke the camel's back. Whether or not he thought General Wheeler encouraged him to do it, no one will ever know. General Wheeler's gone

now. But--in good faith, I suppose--General Westmoreland sent in his request for 206,000 after Tet, and that broke that camel's back. He believed that the Secretary of Defense and the President were going to give him everything he thought he needed to run the war. I heard him say it many times, and he says that in his book. The trouble was, every time something happened over there, he requested more troops.

INTERVIEWER: But they had cut his requests prior to that, hadn't they?

GEN STARRY: Yes, but they still kept coming. So we got up to 549,500 authorized. As far as his perception was concerned, that was not at all the end of the line. He thought there were probably more available. I remember saying to him at a briefing one time, shortly after the SecDef message came out, "This is the beginning of a new era over here. The fact that they've imposed this ceiling on us signals that resources are not unlimited, and that whatever we do from here on out, we're going to have to justify in excruciating detail." We had no force development activity in USARV at that time. That led to the creation of a Force Development Office in the G-3 section in MACV and USARV, because they'd just been clobbering requests for units. It was so bad that we had no force structure guides to work from. They were sitting down in MACV using Leavenworth pamphlets which had listings of type units, and they'd say, "Well, we need to go up here and operate in this area. What kind of units do we need?" So they'd order up these units by type number. These guides were what they were using at the Command and General Staff College. Some of those units weren't even in the force structure. Some of them were units for which a TO&E had been drawn up after World War II. So they worked up TO&Es for those units and sent for them, even though the Army didn't have them. The Army would try to create them or send them a substitute. It was really a force structuring disaster. A lot of the large number of people we deployed were individuals or two-man well-drilling detachments. There was a TO&E for a two-man well-drilling detachment.

The most ridiculous case I can remember is that we actually deployed a one-man mess detachment. I spent Christmas week of 1966 pursuing the case of the one-man mess detachment. A sergeant at Fort Meade got orders: “You are a one-man mess detachment.” The orders described this kit and stuff that he was to gather. He got this stuff together from one place or another, signed requisitions, got himself shipped to the port, and got his one-man mess kit, stoves, and all this stuff put into the hold of a ship. He got on the ship with his rifle and arrived in Vung Tau. They picked him up and shipped him out to Long Binh, where he got separated from his one-man mess detachment kit. At this point he called the Inspector General and said, "They can't do this to me. You pulled me out of my nice warm bed with my wife at Fort Meade, gave me all this stuff, and here I am. I brought this damn stuff all the way over here, with the Army protesting all the way. All the colonels and the generals were trying to keep me from getting here. I got here with my rifle and my one-man mess kit and now, by God, I want to be employed some place!" So we had a big investigation. I went out to talk to the sergeant, and that's exactly what had happened; he wasn't exaggerating. But, when he got there, no one knew why they had requested a one-man mess detachment. There was this young captain with a truck company. They had organized this truck company, gave him whatever the truck company authorization was--62 or 65 trucks or something like that--and landed the truck company at Vung Tau. He went in, reported to the commander at Vung Tau, and said, "Here I am with my truck company. What do you want me to do?" The commander replied, "Who the hell are you and where did you come from?" The captain showed him his orders, and he said, "Well, I don't know, we need some trucks to haul trash, why don't you haul trash around here?" So the captain organized the trash-hauling detail at Vung Tau. Pretty soon he got bored with that and said, "I really didn't come all the way over here just to haul trash around Vung Tau." So he went to see the base commander at Vung Tau and complained. The commander said, "I don't have anything else for you. Get on an airplane and go up country

someplace and see if you can find somebody who needs a truck company." So he did. He got on an airplane and finally wound up at Qui Nhon. The Qui Nhon area commander said, "Boy, am I ever glad to see you. I need you. We'll use you to haul stuff into the 1st Cavalry Division up at An Khe. Go back to Vung Tau, get your trucks together, put them on a ship, and bring them up here." So that's what he did. He went down to Vung Tau, got his guys, cleaned up his trucks, said good-bye to the Vung Tau base commander, got on the ship, went up to Qui Nhon, and spent the rest of the war hauling stuff in to the 1st Cavalry Division at An Khe. When the 1st Cavalry Division moved south to MR III he went on to do something else. It was a force structuring disaster.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like it.

GEN STARRY: From the word go.

INTERVIEWER: How did you get wounded, sir?

GEN STARRY: We rolled up onto the southern edge of the airfield at Snuol and could see in front of us, right off the edge of the airfield, a gun pit with one of those great big antiaircraft machine guns. Then, off 50 or 60 yards away on the edge of the rubber, were two other gun positions that we could see. We sent a cavalry troop after the guns in the rubber and the Vietnamese got up and ran. They were in hot pursuit over there. I was in my command track in the middle of a cavalry troop and the gun in front of me was pointing at the helicopter overhead. The OH-6 had in it Major Fred Franks, the S-3 of the 2nd Squadron, who said on the radio, "This guy is pointing his gun at us." So I looked up and sure enough he was. The gun was swinging around and I thought, "My God, we're going to lose that helicopter and those guys." I rolled off the back of my track with my rifle, which was all I could get my hands on at the time, and grabbed a couple of guys and headed for the gun pit. I rolled over the

edge of the parapet as this gunner was swinging the gun around to get the helicopter in his sights. I knocked the gunner away from it; he went back with his arms up and surrendered. I gave him to somebody. The second guy, who was standing there holding the ammunition belt, dropped the belt, jumped over the parapet, went down the trench, and crawled into a bunker. So I went after him. I was looking for the interpreter to try to coax him out of the bunker. Still I had a hand grenade in my hand. The interpreter, the Vietnamese scout we had with us, was coming along hollering at this guy, and I looked over to do something and then looked back. By that time the little bugger had thrown this damn grenade out of the bunker that he was in. Well, you have read about things happening under those circumstances, and they're quite true. Your whole life passes in front of you. You weigh out all sorts of alternatives -- I can throw myself on the thing and get a Medal of Honor and be a hero, but that doesn't make much sense because it'll probably sting a little bit when it goes off. I could pick it up and throw it back into the bunker and get him, but God damn it, the fuse is awfully short. I could kick it away, but that doesn't make much sense. While I was in the process of going through that systems analysis, I looked over and the helicopter has landed and Major Franks was standing there. I remember thinking, "If I don't do something, poor old Fred's going to get blown away." Well, that was more important than all the other alternatives, so I dove for him and that's about the last thing I remember. Sometime in the process of diving after Fred the grenade went off and the two of us went rolling around on the ground. I lost my helmet and my rifle. I still had a grenade in my hand. Somebody got that away from me and went and dumped it in the bunker and eventually we got the little guy. I had about 15 or 20 holes of one size or another in me. The worst wound Fred had was in a leg, which eventually became infected to the point where he had to have it amputated. Several other people were also wounded. I guess he and I were the most severely wounded of the lot. That occurred mid-afternoon on the 5th of May. I missed the battle for the next 12 days. I'll tell a story about the hospital. If

they did this to me, you have to wonder what was going on in the hospital with the soldiers who got wounded. We went to the aid station, and from the aid station they patched us up, stopped the visible bleeding, and sent us to the hospital in Long Binh. I was operated on late that night. In fact, apparently they spent most of the night picking stuff out of me. They cut a big hole in my stomach to see where the big piece in the middle had gone. Now, I made all the soldiers wear flak jackets, but it was a very hot afternoon and so the friendly Regimental Commander, in disobedience of his own orders, had taken off his flak jacket. You ought to obey the Regimental Commander's orders, and the Regimental Commander especially ought to obey the Regimental Commander's orders.
[End Tape S-204, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-205, side 1]
GEN STARRY: By sometime early the following morning they had probed around in me sufficiently to get most of the metal out. Anyway, I'm lying there in the bed, having slept a little, not feeling very well, and open one eye, and there stood this doctor, a major. He says, "Don't worry about this. We'll have you out of here in a few days. I think you probably need to go to Japan, where they'll do some more surgery on you, and then, if we can get the thing stabilized, you'll be in the States in short order. There's nothing to worry about. You don't have to go back to war," or words to that affect. So I tried to grab the bastard, but found that I was not able to do that quite as briskly as I wanted. I finally managed to get myself into a half-assed sitting position, and then I called him several things that were later reported by the nurse as being obscene. I said, "You get the hospital commander and the two of you report right here," and they did. I told the hospital commander the story, and I said, "Let me tell you something. I'm one case, but if this guy's going around telling the soldiers this sort of thing, you've got an unconscionable situation in your hospital. These guys are soldiers. Some of them want to go back to war. I want to

go back to war. I'm not leaving this place until you guys send me back to the damn war. You're not going to send me anyplace else. A lot of other soldiers in here feel the same way, and here's this screwhead trying to tell us, 'Oh, don't worry, we're going to get you home and get you out of here.' He's subversive." He said, "Calm down. I'll give you a shot, sir." I said, "I'll give you a shot." So I finally got calmed down. I don't know whether or not the major went around making his speech anymore. He had obviously made it several times before he got to me. How much of a problem did that cause in the hospital? I don't know, but as far as I was concerned that guy was subversive.

INTERVIEWER: Did you remain in that hospital until you were released?

GEN STARRY: I stayed there for 12 days. The first thing they do with wounds is they stuff them full of gunpowder, gunpacking, or whatever that stuff is, that absorbent stuff. Then they have these ghouls who come around once a day and jerk that stuff out and pour sulfuric acid on the wound and stuff more stuff back in. They call that debridement or something like that. When it stops watering, they sew it up. So, on about the third or fourth day, they sewed it up. I realized that if I was ever going to get back to the regiment, I had to demonstrate to them that I was in sufficiently good physical shape to do that. I got my doctor, the guy who had operated on me, not that quack major, and said, "Okay, I have got to start doing exercises -- situps, pushups, whatever you think I can do. What I want to know is, did you cut muscle when you cut into the wound?" "No," he said, "I separated the muscles. We didn't cut any. You can do exercises if you can stand it, but I doubt that you can stand it." So I went over to physical therapy, found a nice nurse/physical therapist, and said, "Okay, Sweetie, we are going to get me back into shape, because I'm going to get out of here as quickly as possible." She took a look at the holes and said, "That's going to be a long time." I said, "No it isn't, it's going to be a very short time. We're going to do situps today." She said,

"It's going to hurt." I said, "That's right." So I did situps that day and the next day. I did them two or three times a day. Eventually, it helped the recovery process really dramatically. When I went back, I was still kind of wired together. The regimental surgeon had to come and do a little patching every evening just to make sure that I was still intact. But, in the end, it allowed me to get out of the hospital in 12 days. I'm sure it would have been a hell of a lot longer had it not been for that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you rejoin the Regiment while it was still in Cambodia?

GEN STARRY: Yes, sir.

INTERVIEWER: Who commanded in your absence?

GEN STARRY: The regimental executive officer, Colonel Bob Bradley.

INTERVIEWER: Was that normal, or did you normally pick your senior squadron commander to do that?

GEN STARRY: In this case the regimental executive officer was called the deputy. He was a colonel and ranked the other guys.

INTERVIEWER: Was this the action for which you were awarded the Silver Star?

GEN STARRY: No. I got the Silver Star for leading the original attack into Cambodia to rescue the scout pilots. We just started up and went and I was the first guy on the scene. The guys were still strapped in the helicopter. The fuel was pouring out all over the place. I thought, "Oh, Jesus, it's going to blow up." I reached in and cut the switch. By then the tracks were coming up, so I made the guys deploy a security force, bring

up a VTR [vehicle track recovery] and a couple of tanks, and got it organized. I realized that if we didn't get out of there in a hurry we were going to get attacked. As I said a while ago, we got them out of there in about half an hour. Now, as for the Snuol operation, I guess I got a Bronze Star for that. If you're dumb enough to have that happen to you, you really shouldn't get a decoration for it -- at least not in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Was Major Franks also evacuated to the hospital?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did his leg become infected while in the hospital or later?

GEN STARRY: No, they evacuated him to the States, because his leg was badly wounded. He spent a lot of time in Valley Forge Hospital. I think it was during the Valley Forge operation, while cleaning up the wound and trying to repair the damage, that he finally got a low-grade infection that they couldn't get rid of. They finally had to do the amputation there.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, to wind up the Vietnam business, we've talked about what it did to the officer corps, and what it did to the NCO corps, the supply system, and the maintenance system. Were there any other lessons learned that you think we gained from that?

GEN STARRY: No, I think we covered them all. We laid out a lot of them in that little book we wrote on mechanized and armor operations, but only for the mechanized and armor aspects. I'm afraid the big lessons, the political/military lessons, such as the goal of the operation at the theater level -- the operational level of war -- is one that we're still struggling with. It's one of the things that caused me to revise the operational level of war

in the 1982 edition of FM 100-5. I believed that we had reached a point where we spent a lot of time worrying about tactics, what we used to call minor tactics. We were turning out War College graduates who were great political scientists and could talk about things at the political/military level in Washington, but nowhere in our school system were we causing people to think about the operational level of war. We hung back from it for a time, but the Soviets have never given up on it. They've always talked about the operational level of war. They've always believed that you could separate theater nuclear warfare from intercontinental ballistic missiles and intercontinental nuclear war. We've never believed that. There's always been a linkage in our system between the tactical level and the intercontinental level of warfare, nuclear or otherwise. That deprives you of a whole lot of flexibility. I stayed away from trying to put it back into our liturgy because there would be some criticism that we were trying to mimic the Soviets, which wasn't the case at all. We used to teach the operational level. That's what they did in the second year at Leavenworth years and years ago. That's why we had so many senior officers in World War II who were good at that. That caused me to try and start a second year at Leavenworth for everybody. That's beginning rather well. Eventually, we may get to a second year for everybody. We've now got a course out there where 40 students this coming year will attend a second year at Leavenworth. The purpose of that second year is to study the operational level of warfare.

INTERVIEWER: In your reflections on Vietnam, did you ever come to the point where you felt that, personally and professionally, we wasted resources within the U.S. Army because of the way the war was conducted? There are a number of people who were quite bitter after years of reflection. The perception is that we lost the war because we never prosecuted it right. Should we have been there?

GEN STARRY: Well, that's hard to say. You could argue that we sort of backed into it. We did a lot of things wrong. We didn't study the background. I've already commented on that. We didn't know the history of the thing. We didn't know the country. We didn't know the enemy, and we made no organized attempt to find it out and disseminate it. It wasn't studied at the higher levels at all. We had a flawed operational concept at the theater level of warfare which flowed from some mistaken notions in this country and confusion at the executive level of government about what we were supposed to be doing there--which was, I suppose, aided and abetted by a lot of the problems in the beginning. When they relieved General Harkins and brought him out of there it was in large part because things were not going well in the countryside. Now, General Harkins had been reporting that things were going well in the countryside. There were several of his subordinates who were telling him that the reports he was getting were wrong. However, for reasons that no one will ever know now, he sent them in because they were positive reports and he thought, I believe, that's what the administration wanted. It's unfortunate that he died without writing all that down. I don't know whether it's in his papers or not. I have talked with him about it several times. He was a good friend. I don't know whether or not that will ever be unveiled. From the beginning, we had a mistaken notion about what was going on over there. We were not able to size it up. The information was there to make those judgments, but we interpreted it wrong or, for one reason or another, we reported it wrong. General Westmoreland operated under the mistaken notion that he was going to be given all the resources he needed to prosecute the war. It became apparent to some of us early on that that was not going to be the case, and that he had to operate on the basis that he was not going to be given unlimited resources. On the other hand, with a few exceptions, we really did not lose any battles. A North Vietnamese officer pointed out to Harry Summers, "That's right, but it's irrelevant." I think the Army acquitted itself very well, given the circumstances. The soldiers did well. The officers did well, under the circumstances and given

the conditions -- our lack of ability to train them as units, to give them the unit cohesion they needed to do well in battle consistently, the one-year rotation policy, the confusion of goals, and the situation at home. As the war wore on, they came out of an environment in which there was all sorts of adverse commentary about the war and what we were doing and not doing and so on. Given all those things, I think the soldiers did admirably well. You see it in this Once a Warrior King book. As I read this book, I felt this same thing myself. You had been over there, with every day being a matter of life and death. You're involved in something that, to you, is a very vital undertaking with your Vietnamese buddies and your American buddies, and you're doing great things. There was an intensity about life in that environment that was a little nerve-racking at the time. But, when it's gone there's an enormous letdown. This fact is reflected in the book, Once a Warrior King. I felt the same thing when I came home myself. I remember getting off the airplane at Dulles Airport, and I'm about four days out of command of a cavalry regiment then in the middle of a bloody firefight in Cambodia. Life was a very intense operation. Then, all of a sudden, I was back, and there were no flags. I didn't expect everybody to call out the honor guard to greet me or anything else, but as I walked through that terminal and watched these Americans going about their normal business, I thought, "There are Americans over there, too, and they come home to this? They deserve a hell of a lot better than this." I would argue that the country, by and large, the management, the administration, the Congress, certainly the press, let its Army down, let its soldiers down, let its airmen down, and let its sailors down. I think you see that reflected in the current spate of attitudes towards the Vietnam War and the things that you see going on now. The books being written are almost revisionist history. In some cases it is being drummed up. In all that, I read some guilt feeling on the part of people. The press is now saying, "Oh, my goodness, we shouldn't have done that." When Peter Braestrup wrote that super book of his, Big Story, about Tet, they damn near drummed him out of the press corps. Now they're saying, "Well, yes,

Peter was right and we were wrong." But, damn their souls, they did it at the time and they stuck by it. They knew what they were doing. You can't condone that. I don't care if they're having second thoughts about it now. They're saying, "Well, we shouldn't have done that." They did it and, as far as I'm concerned, we lost a lot of good soldiers because it was the perception in North Vietnam that the war was going to be won in the United States, not on the battlefields of Vietnam. I don't know how many times we intercepted message traffic out of the North that contained a statement like, "We don't want to do this operation," or "We don't want to do this thing," or "We don't want to have this happen because of potential adverse impact on our base of support in the United States."

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure you've heard the statement that war is too important to be left to the generals. It appears that our political leadership was not up to the task of prosecuting the war. For example, what you were just talking about. They never made any attempt to mobilize public opinion in support of what we were trying to accomplish. President Johnson made a conscious decision that he would not mobilize anything, and in that decision it was inherent that we wouldn't mobilize public opinion.

GEN STARRY: That's right, because it might have interfered with the Great Society. He was so selfish, so short-sighted, and so narrow in his views that he insisted on pursuing the Great Society when anybody with a right mind could have told him that he couldn't have the Great Society and the Vietnam War at the same time. It was too much; the country couldn't stand it. It was apparent at the time, and it's more apparent since. For that you have to condemn the man.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir, and that approach was not changed by a subsequent president. Given that most of our political leaders have not served in the service, and have no intent to do so, are we in danger of this

type of a problem recurring in the future in that the generals will be inadequately listened to, and the politicians don't know, or are unwilling to mobilize public opinion, or to mobilize the armed forces? In other words, they are unwilling to commit themselves to a philosophy of winning.

GEN STARRY: Well, I think the danger is substantial. I have a little problem with the generals. You ought to listen to the generals, but the generals are not all that smart, either. The single lesson I learned most dramatically out of Vietnam, but you learn it also from studying political science in places like the War College, is that before you commit your military force to an operation you had better decide what you want to have happen politically as a result of that commitment. Once you've laid the political goals out, you should be able to evaluate the possible outcomes of the military operation to see if they fit the political goals. If they don't, then you'd better take a second look at it. But military guys are also guilty of that. When I had REDCOM David Jones, who was the Chairman of the JCS and is the author of all the turmoil that's in Washington now about reorganizing the JCS, wanted to control everything. I testified before Congress that I thought it was wrong to give the Chairman any more authority, particularly the kind of authority that Dave Jones was asking for. He's a nice man and I like him, but he's totally off base. He used to call me up about once a week and say, "We need a plan to send a brigade to such and such country," and I would say to him, "David, what do you want them to do when they get there? How do you know it takes a brigade?" He'd reply, "Well, we just need a plan." So I'd say, "Wait a minute, what is the political goal? Give me a scenario, what we are trying to do in that country, so that I can structure a military force and a military operation to do what it is you want to get done in terms of contributing to a political goal, but you have to start with a political goal." "Well," he said, "all right, I'll do that." He never did. About a week or so later he'd call up and say, "We need a plan to send a division to so-and-so." "David, what do you want them to do when they get there?" We went through that litany over

and over and over again. He never understood that there has to be a political rationale underlying every military operation this country's armed forces undertake, and that unless those military operations contribute to that political goal then you'd better have a second thought as to whether or not you want to commit your military force. Because the military is well organized and responsive, it often salutes and says, "Yes, sir." There is a tendency in this country, and always has been, to grab the military as the first and only instrument of national policy. That's wrong! That's flat-assed backwards, and unless we all learn that -- the generals, the politicians, the administrators, and everybody else -- we are going to get ourselves in deep trouble one of these days. Take the Gulf of Sidra. What are they doing in the Gulf of Sidra? What is it, you step over the line -- what's the game the kids play, chicken? You step over the line with your toe and I'll mash your toe and smash your nose, or however that goes. Colonel Khadaffi is a madman. There is no way of predicting his behavior. What is the political goal of circling the wagons of the Sixth Fleet off shore and trying to poke into the Gulf of Sidra? To provoke him into something? Then what are you going to do? So, two steps backwards, men, and wait just a minute. Now, I'm not saying we should back away from doing something when resolute action is called for. I am saying that, between the generals and the politicians--and the generals need to be the foremost spokesmen for this, when the President or the SecDef says, "Let's send a force to do this, that and the other thing," some general needs to ask, "What is your political goal?" In my opinion, the belligerent posturing of this administration has created turmoil in parts of the world where there need not be turmoil today. Eventually, if they keep it up, it's going to get us in trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Are you including the Gulf of Sidra in that?

GEN STARRY: Yes, sir. President Theodore Roosevelt said an interesting thing, "Speak softly and carry a big stick." What we're presently doing is speaking loudly and carrying a small stick.

INTERVIEWER: We are often blamed -- when I say “we,” I'm talking about the services and the generals -- for not coming across strong enough on these worldwide crises. The perception right now is that the President and the Secretary of Defense desire to commit military forces, but the Joint Chiefs, the generals, are against it. In other words, the President and the Secretary of Defense have more confidence in the military than the military has in itself. Or is the military more realistic? Which is the case?

GEN STARRY: I would argue that the military is more realistic. I've spoken with Mr. Weinberger about this several times. Mr. Weinberger is an honest-to-God hawk. I like him very much. He's been a good Secretary of Defense in a lot of ways, but he's a genuine out-and-out hawk. Part of the belligerent posturing that I spoke of has been of his devising, and I honestly believe that's wrong. I also believe that he doesn't think much of his military advice, although he will tell you the contrary. When I went down to take REDCOM my predecessor, Volney Warner, had been very vocal about his disagreement with the decision to make a unified command out of the RDJTF [Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force] -- and for good reasons. When I was asked if I would take the job, I went to see the Secretary of Defense. He said to me that he could not understand why General Warner had been so vocal in his opinion about the Unified Command, and that he couldn't understand why he wanted to retire in protest. They had offered him another job but he wouldn't take it, and Mr. Weinberger couldn't understand that. I said, "Your intent is to create another Unified Command down there, whether we need it or not?" "Well, yes," he said, "we're too far along with that now -- we can't back away from it." I told him, "I don't think it's a wise idea, either, because I

don't think you need that other command. I also happen to believe that there are some things at Readiness Command you should be doing and can be doing quite apart from the RDJTF, missions which are useful and necessary in the joint area. I'm willing to do two things for you -- with REDCOM -- get it started doing some things and get us out of this squabbling. I'm willing to stop the squabbling. There will be no squabbling when I get there. If that's what you want done, I'll be willing to go do that for you, but I tell you that, in my opinion, you're making a mistake." So I went. I stopped the squabbling. Bob Kingston and I stopped the squabbling. We agreed that there wouldn't be any. There was still some among the staff, and a lot of adverse commentary among the staff and so on, but the two of us elected to ignore it. We wouldn't let anybody talk about it when we were around, and that tends to suppress it. I started out with REDCOM doing some things that I thought REDCOM should and could be doing. For the first year Reagan was in office his administration paid no attention to foreign policy. They spent all their time squirreling around with the economic problems at home, which probably was proper. Then someone dusted off this plan that was drawn up in the Carter administration for us to go to the Middle East. If they'd looked at it carefully they would have seen that all they were doing was recreating the Strike Command mission. They had a command at McDill that was perfectly capable of absorbing a little bit of an increase in manpower and recreating that other joint task force that Strike Command used to have for that very purpose -- deployment to the Middle East. But oh, no, they've got to have a Unified Command, with all the expense of officers, overhead, and the whole damn thing. The creation of the command itself was construed by many people in the Middle East to be a belligerent act. It was probably not appropriate, but it probably cost us. It would be hard to say what, but it probably cost us. Mr. Weinberger's an older fellow, and a very loyal, dedicated American. But I have yet to see him in a situation with generals around where it didn't seem to me that he had already made up his mind as to what he was going to do. It didn't really make any

difference what the generals around the table said. This included the Defense Resources Board meetings with the JCS and so on -- at which I've been present.

INTERVIEWER: Who do you think has Mr. Weinberger's ear? Who has influence over him?

GEN STARRY: I don't know. One of his problems has been that he doesn't get very good advice from inside his own secretariat. He had a bunch of people working for him who were pulling and tugging in different directions.

[End Tape S-205, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-205, side 2]

GEN STARRY: On a single coordinated course of action you've got Dick Perle pulling off in one direction and Fred Ikle pulling off in another direction. For a long time, the only stabilizing influence in the whole thing was General Dick Stilwell. He is retired now, so I don't know what's going to happen. But there is divisiveness inside of OSD about strategy, the perennial problem of the Defense Department and State Department working at odds with one another, and the problem with Dave Jones the former Chairman wanting to take charge of everything. It wasn't until we got Jack Vessey in office that we had a much better rational viewpoint of the political/military world than we've had in a long time. The chain of command goes through the SecDef, there's no question about it. He's in charge, but it's unfortunate that it has been necessary to do what I call belligerent posturing. I would argue that when you posture belligerently with forces that are as inherently limited -- not necessarily weak, but limited, as ours are--you run some risks that you better have another look at.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, after your departure from Vietnam you went back to the Pentagon and spent some time there working for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, then later the Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Development. First of all, would you identify who the deputy chiefs were in both of those jobs?

GEN STARRY: General Stilwell was the DCSOPS when I came back and went to work in DCSOPS in August of 1970. When I was in the hospital in Vietnam I came out on the promotion list to brigadier general. In April 1971 I was promoted, and about the same time went over to be director of the Manpower and Forces Directorate in the ACSFOR [Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development]. General Bob Williams was the ACSFOR. The person I replaced was General Fritz Kroesen. It was a job that General DePuy had held at one time, as had General George Blanchard before him. It was a prestigious job. That guy was the keeper of the force structure of the Army. One of the things General Kroesen and I talked about as he left office was, "What is the force structure of the Army?" We were coming back from Vietnam and bringing out thousands of spaces. The troops were all getting on airplanes and going somewhere, wherever MILPERCEN [Military Personnel Center] wanted to send them. But the question was, "What is the structure?" At the same time, they were organizing all sorts of interesting things like the Race Relations and Equal Opportunity Program, which cost us 1,900 manpower spaces. That cost us six field artillery battalions. The day I had to make that decision, that is what was on the force list. It was coming out of Vietnam that day, and someone called to say, "The Secretary has made a decision to create a Race Relations/Equal Opportunity Directorate in OSD, a school down in Florida, and advisors about RR/EO [Race Relations/Equal Opportunity] in all the units of the military." For the Army that bill was 1,900 and some manpower spaces. I said, "The only way I can do that this morning is take these units." I totaled them up and it turned out to be six field artillery battalions. We didn't know whether or not the Army was going to go back

to 16 divisions, which it had before the war, or down to six divisions. Over the course of the time that I had that job we worked our way down to about 12 and a third divisions that really had manpower in them. General Vessey had become the Director of Operations in DCSOPS, so I went up the hall one afternoon and I said to him, "How many divisions do you guys want in this Army of ours?" "Well," he said, "isn't there a plan for that?" I said, "No, there's no plan for that." So we sat down and spent one Saturday afternoon in his office trying to figure out how many divisions we ought to have in the Army. Then I was to go back and figure out what the supporting force structure was to be. We finally decided, for a whole lot of good reasons, that we ought to have 16 divisions. By that time, General Abrams was about to take over as Chief of Staff. During the period when he was being confirmed, or shortly after he was confirmed, I don't remember which, I went to see him and I said, "We have got to make a decision, because these guys are niggly-pigglying us to death." There was no limit. There wasn't even talk of a 600,000 man Army -- 580,000 men was the number I remember, and it was going to have somewhere between eight and ten divisions. That was a little bit alarming. We looked at the menu of things the Army was supposed to do in pursuit of the national defense and we realized that this was not a sufficient force structure. We finally convinced General Abrams that he had do something about it. In those days Jim Schlesinger was the Secretary of Defense, and he and General Abrams used to get together on Saturday mornings and have a little cigar-chewing session. General Abrams came back from one of those meetings, called us up to his office, and said, "You've got your 16 divisions." Now, I had talked to him beforehand about the manpower end strength and had cautioned him that, if we got an agreement for 16 divisions, we would need an end strength that's something on the order of 850,000. We could not have less. The last time we had 16 divisions we had about 986,000 people in the Army. He said, "Well, I didn't do too well on that one. I got him to agree that we would take as a floor 765,000, or something like that, and that we would

justify additions to that as time wore on." I don't need to tell you we've never been able to justify sufficient additions to that. As a result, the Army today is overstructured and understrengthed. It was in the beginning, when we put that together, and still is. The addition of all these light divisions in the force structure has made the problem even worse. I believe you ought to structure what you think you need. The structure is expressed it in terms of the AAO [authorized acquisition objectives]. You develop your authorized acquisition objectives, and then your procurement programs are set out on the basis of that. The base line of the AAO is what you're trying to get to, but at the same time there's a practical limit to it. Overstructuring and understrengthening the Army means that you increase the turbulence of the people going back and forth trying to fill up the structure. The more you increase the structure, unless you make a decision not to fill this or that slot, the more you increase the rotation problem. The result is that you get units that approach the rotation limits of the guys in Vietnam, where they're standing up in front of squads trying to get them to do something that's important and no one present has seen his fellow soldiers before. You can't run good operations that way. That job and the redeployment planning job in MACV are probably the two toughest jobs I ever had. At MACV we'd go to work at four o'clock in the morning and seldom quit before ten or ten-thirty at night. I took two hours off for lunch. I swam for an hour and slept for an hour. It was like working two days in one. I did essentially the same thing in the Pentagon. I'd get a list every morning of what was coming out that morning, and how many manpower authorizations and how many units that represented. I then walked around with that list all day satisfying everybody's requirements for extra this and extra that. The war was over and we were going to get back to all these other things like Race Relations/Equal Opportunity and all sorts of other special interest claims, all of which caused me in the end to go up the hall and say to my friend Jack Vessey, "How big an Army are we going to have? How many divisions are we going to have in it?" That is what started it.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose you know that they just eliminated Race Relations/Equal Opportunity.

GEN STARRY: I know.

INTERVIEWER: Did someone in 1971, 1972, or 1973 sit down and decide what size the armed forces were going to be and then divide that pie between the services?

GEN STARRY: To the best of my knowledge that was never done.

INTERVIEWER: So it was just a "fishing expedition" to see what you were able to retain?

GEN STARRY: It was done service-by-service. The Army's problem was that we created, with the absence of mobilization for the Vietnam War, new units out of whole cloth. In other words, we added some three divisions or whatever it was to the Army's strength from the base line of 16 that we had at the beginning of the war. To my knowledge the Navy and the Air Force didn't do that. They were operating with a force structure that was pretty much fixed throughout the war. Once we expanded, that sort of eliminated any base line, and I couldn't find any plan that said when the war is over we're going back to this. There wasn't any such plan. The question then was, "The war is over, what are we supposed to be doing now, and how big an army do we need to do it?" When you only have twelve and a third divisions, and that's all you've got and you know it, and as you see the redeployments continuing, you have to say, "Where are we going to stop?" That raises the larger question of how big an army we are really going to have. So we had to go back through the whole thing and commit with NATO, commit with the Koreans, and commit somewhere else in the world. Then we had a two and a half war, or a one and a half

war, concept. Eventually the turmoil that we started led to the administration falling off the two and a half war concept -- whatever that is. I'm not even sure the one and a half wars is a viable concept. I know it's not when you have to deploy units to fight the one and a half wars, because we don't have the deployment means to do it. But it's sure a hell of a lot better than two and a half wars, which we obviously have no capability to do.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned General Abrams and his confirmation as Chief of Staff. Could you fill us in on what the problem was there? I believe it took about seven months for that confirmation.

GEN STARRY: It had to do with the allegation that he had knowledge of the bombings in Cambodia at the time he was COMUSMACV, and that he and his air component commander were both guilty of some kind of insubordination or withholding information from the administration. Eventually, I guess, the Congress decided that he wasn't involved, so they went ahead and confirmed him.

INTERVIEWER: Did he know about the bombings in Cambodia?

GEN STARRY: I don't know. We were bombing Cambodia all along. Everybody knew it. There wasn't any prohibition against it, to my knowledge. I'm not knowledgeable enough about that. The argument was over in the Congress. I guess the Congress was mad because they hadn't been told. The administration was doing it, but hadn't told the Congress, and they got upset about it.

INTERVIEWER: Another question that many of us often wonder about concerns the Pentagon. You mentioned working there probably 15 or 16 hours a day during this period. I spent some time there, and that's fairly common in the Pentagon. It drives many of the better staff officers and

many of the better officers away from the Pentagon, never to return if they can help it. Are the hours that we put in at the Pentagon really necessary?

GEN STARRY: One of the good things General Westmoreland did as Chief of Staff was to say, "We're not going to be here on Saturday," because we were working Saturdays and Sundays just like other work days. So on Saturdays and Sundays he shut the place down. It didn't have any ill effects that I could determine. I still had to go in on Saturday because we were doing what we were doing. I eventually wound up taking part of Sunday off during that tour. I think there's a lot of make-work. Some of the people in that building are awfully busy and some of them are not busy at all, and that's always the case. You could argue, I suppose, that 80 percent of the work is done by 10 percent of the people. That's always going to be the case. I do think we overdo it. It used to be a matter of great pride as to how long you worked. I was never very proud of that. It was always a pain in the ass to me. I finished a three-year tour there , and my wife reported to me that I had had dinner at home with my family twice in that three years. She felt that we should really strive for something a little better than that on the next go-around.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you know there was a time when they were trying to force everyone to carpool. Many of the generals in the hierarchy decided that was a good idea, as it provided a good reason to go home. That's worn off now. It doesn't happen anymore.

GEN STARRY: I spent a brief tour on the Army Staff as a systems analyst in 1967. We lived out in Springfield in those days, and we only had one car. I was a lieutenant colonel and we couldn't afford two cars. I rode the bus back and forth to work. Eventually I got into a carpool with another guy down the street who worked in the same office, but we were pretty much dependent on that bus, or his car, or my car. If both wives needed

the cars, then he and I rode the bus. There were only one or two buses in the morning and two in the evening. It was pretty far out in those days. It's the middle of town today, but back then it was pretty far out. So we were victims of the bus schedule. At the first office social event the wives were complaining to me about their husbands not coming home until eight, nine, or nine-thirty at night. I wasn't working them that hard, and I was in charge of this little office. I said, "Hey, let me tell you, I leave to get on that five-thirty bus, more often than not, and I'm not keeping them there." I borrowed the car from my wife for a couple of days and drove to work. I would leave at five-ten, go down the hall, walk around a little bit, and then I'd come back. At five-thirty promptly these guys would close up the desks, lock up the safes, take out a deck of cards and start playing bridge. They played bridge until eight-thirty or nine o'clock at night, then go home and tell their wives about what a terrible day they'd worked. So I asked them, "Why are you doing this?" "Well, we've got some papers up in the Chief's office." General Johnson was the Chief of Staff at the time, and he had a system where you put the "blame line" up at the top of the page with your name and phone number. He'd call action officers at home sometimes. It didn't seem to bother him, and I didn't see why anybody else would be bothered about it. But their story to me was, "We've got some papers up there with our 'blame lines' on them, and the Chief may call." I said, "Well, how long have you been doing this?" "Oh, about a year." I said, "Has he ever called?" "No, but he might." So I said, "Okay, let me tell you what, fellas. I ride the bus. You know my little problem with the bus and the car. From now on, everybody has to be out of this office before I leave. I seldom leave, almost never leave, after five-thirty at night. That means all of you guys are going to go home by five-thirty at night, or at least be out of here. You can go to a bar, or to your girlfriend's house, or wherever you want to go, but you're going to be out of this office, because I'm not going to be castigated by your wives for being the cause of your working overtime when, in fact, you're sitting here playing bridge." There was a lot a grumping around about that, but I became an

instant hero with the wives. The guys didn't like it too well, because they didn't have anything to complain about anymore. Well, there's a lot of make-work.

INTERVIEWER: Perhaps that should occur throughout the building.

GEN STARRY: You walk down the halls early in the morning, look into all those little cubby-holes, and what do you find? The old civil servants and some of the military guys walk in there with their paper, their thermos bottle and their portable radios. They sit down at their desks, turn on their radios, pour a cup of coffee, open the paper and read the paper. I think they can do that at home.

INTERVIEWER: I never had the luxury of that experience there. I had more to do than I could get done, and I think most of us did. At the beginning of this assignment in Force Development you were promoted to brigadier general, I believe.

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like you to talk a little bit about your transition into the general officer ranks. Was there schooling for you at that particular time? How did you make that transition? That's a subject of much interest today.

GEN STARRY: There were no charm schools in those days. Well, there was, too. I guess you went to an orientation course of some kind. It was conducted in the Pentagon and lasted just a few days. It was not as broad an event as the ones that are run now. The problem with getting promoted to general officer rank, I think, goes something like this. For reasons that I have never been able to determine, a lot of people believe that they have arrived when they make general. Now, where they think they have arrived or what they think is there after they have arrived, I'm

not quite sure. But somehow there's a perception that, "I have arrived at some new plateau which is quite different from what has gone on before. Now I'm a part of a larger framework of this thing, part of the elite at the top of the dung heap, and I'm now different." Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, brigadier generals get treated with less respect and so on than second lieutenants do in many places. I got much better treatment as a second lieutenant, in many instances, than I did as a brigadier general. So that's all mythology. Where it comes from, I really don't know, but you find a lot of people, the minute they make general, start acting like damn fools because they think they've arrived. I have a good friend, I've known him all my military life, who made brigadier general. He survived that fairly well. The day he came out on the promotion list for major general he went home and said to his wife, "I'm going to be a major general. The President has nominated me to the Congress to be a major general, and that means that I am in the top." He had it figured out that one-point-some-odd percent of all the officers in the whole military establishment make major general. “It says that I am on a new plateau and there are greater things ahead, and I have to change my lifestyle. And you, my dear, do not fit into my new lifestyle." He thereupon packed up his stuff, left, and filed for divorce. Now, as far as anybody knew, they'd not had any sort of problem up to that point. I mean, they'd been happily married all their lives. We'd gone to school together and all that sort of thing. All of the sudden he decided, the day he came out on that list, that he had somehow arrived. Interestingly enough, there was apparently no other woman or man involved in the situation. He just decided he had arrived someplace and he didn't want this grumpy old hausfrau, who had been with him all these years, as a part of his entourage at this point. So he left her. They got a divorce. I guess he eventually remarried, but it was several years later. Strangely enough, within a couple of years he had retired from the Army disgruntled, disillusioned, disappointed, and upset because somehow or other being a major general hadn't elevated him to some pinnacle that he had somehow

or other perceived in his mind was where major generals were long, long ago. It's a strange phenomenon, and it happens all the time. I contend that it's the Peter Principle in operation. I think there should be some kind of a trial period, or provisional period, in which the institution has a look at the newly-promoted brigadier/major general to see if the guy is going to make the grade. I replaced a fellow in V Corps who had been relieved for cause. He was the kind of person who thought he had it made with every promotion, but being a lieutenant general blew his mind. I mean, that was obviously the pinnacle of everything, and he was going to be something. I don't know where he thought he was going next, but obviously he was now a lieutenant general and had arrived. He took his private car down to the motor pool and had them weld star plate brackets on the front and back of it. Then he put star plates in those brackets. So, in his Buick or Oldsmobile or whatever it was, up the road he drives, visiting his friends along the way with his brackets and the star plates on his private car. He went to Frankfurt to command. First of all, he turned in the house they were living in because he didn't like that. It was full of antique furniture. It had been the American High Commissioner's house for a long time in the early days. The corps commander had lived there ever since. He moved into a set of expanded colonel's quarters out in Bad Vilbel. Over the little portico that keeps the rain off the people who are waiting to get in the front door he had erected this large red sign, and I mean a large red sign. It was six or eight feet across and two or three feet high -- with three big white stars on it. It was illuminated at night. Now, here we are on an American kaserne in the middle of the German community, where the Germans walk by and whatnot. So here is this obscene American with this insignia of rank over his door, floodlit at night. In addition there is a big corps patch, made out of plywood, about six feet tall, sitting beside the door. It, too, was floodlit at night. He signed a letter certifying that he had to have his own furniture over there because of his position. He had a house full of the most beautiful antique furniture in all of Germany, but he had to have his own private furniture over there because of his position.

He turned all that stuff in to the Quartermaster, and I don't need to tell you what happened to it -- it disappeared. I spent a year trying to recover it. When he left the house there was nothing left in it. My senior enlisted aide and I reported for duty in Frankfurt. My wife and the girls were still living at home. They temporarily stayed in the States, as one of them was having some minor surgery. We moved quickly and were unable to get all that organized. So Sergeant Norman and I went to Frankfurt. I took command of V Corps, walked into the house, and there's not a God damn thing in the house -- nothing. We broke out some sleeping bags and air mattresses and slept on the floor for the first week until the Quartermaster could find some furniture of any kind to put in there.

INTERVIEWER: Did you replace the Quartermaster?

GEN STARRY: I replaced the Quartermaster! If public executions were allowed, there would have been one. But, in any event, the point of the story is, "Where do you suppose that fellow thought he had arrived?" He just came unscrewed and behaved like a blithering idiot. Among other things, he started lying about this and that. This was the basis on which he was finally relieved for cause. I went down to the corps headquarters and, midway through the first week, the G-3 came in and said, "Sir, it's time for you to go and see the 'cutting edge' room." I asked, "What is the 'cutting edge' room?" "Well, that's where we keep track of the maintenance situation in the corps." So I went up to this room, and there's a major, three or four sergeants, and a captain or two in there. They've got this side-lighted plexiglass up there, and it's built like a Form 2715. Every company-sized unit in the corps has a line and the columns, of course, are the columns in the 2715 report. The company, battery, and troop phone numbers are up there, and when he finds something in red, the corps commander calls the company/battery commander up and says, "What are you doing about old Alpha-15" or whatever the vehicle number is. I said to them, "What is the purpose of this?" "Well, it's how the Corps

Commander keeps track of the maintenance in the corps." I said, "What are the brigade commanders and the battalion commanders and the division commanders doing?" "Oh, this is the Corps Commander's network. The heat goes directly to the troop, battery and company commanders." And I said, "As I recall the regulation, the corps commander is not in the 2715 reporting chain." "That's right, he's not." I said, "What's the purpose of this, then? The Division Commander is responsible for this, and he reports it through another channel. We monitor those reports, and if he needs help we can give it to him, but he is responsible for it, and he reports through a different channel."
[End Tape S-205, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-210, side 1]
GEN STARRY: "There is no provision for me to be a part of this. Why was it necessary in the first place?" "Well," they responded, "the OR rate was down." I said, "How far down was it?" And they said, "Well, it was about 80 percent." I said, "What is it now?" "It's about 56 percent now," they said. I said, "You mean under this system it's gotten worse, not better?" "Well, that's sort of right, but there are some extenuating circumstances." So, I said, "I'll tell you what, men. You have exactly 24 hours to get rid of this whole mess, this room, these people, this stuff, this reporting system, and the whole thing. And Major, I want you to go back to wherever it was you were before. Captains, sergeants, the same thing. Get this whole thing out of here." And I went downstairs and called up the division commanders and told them, "You guys and the regimental commanders are in charge of the 2715, the AR 220-1 Reporting System," or whatever the number of it is. "I don't want to hear any more about it. If you have a problem, I expect you to call me. If you don't have a problem, I don't expect to hear about it. The OR [operational readiness] rate should run about 98 percent or better, and that's all the guidance you're going to get from me." Well, there was this applause on the other end of the telephone. "Thank you very much," and within a couple of weeks the OR

rate started to go up. It hit 98 percent, and it stayed there or better for the whole time I was in command. Now, what in the world did the man think he was doing? I have no idea, but somehow, as an individual, as a commander, as a whatever, he thought he had arrived someplace. Meanwhile he took command and starts squirreling around over the status of vehicles in the motor pools of the troops, batteries, and companies in his corps. That's ridiculous!

INTERVIEWER: The ultimate in micro-management.

GEN STARRY: Right. I said, "There are more important things to do. How are we fighting the war? We get out on the ground and find battalion commanders who have never been in their General Defense Positions." I asked one of them, "Why haven't you?" And he said, "I've been down in the motor pool monitoring the cutting edge report." I said, "Oh, it's a matter of priorities." So that's my story about generals. They're a strange lot. Some of them make it through one or two grades but don't make it to the next one. Some of them get seized with the agony the first time around, and some of them behave like asses until the time they retire. Even worse, they get away with it.

INTERVIEWER: Are you familiar with the latest survey that was conducted of about 40-something newly promoted brigadier generals?

GEN STARRY: No.

INTERVIEWER: A number of questions were asked, such as, "Are you perceived to be different by your friends?" The respondents mentioned, "Yes, I am, and I have to work very hard to get them to still be my friends" and this type of reply. Sir, while you were in the Force Development job you were selected for major general. Is that correct?

GEN STARRY: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And then you were subsequently selected to take command of the Armor Center. Do you know how you were selected?

GEN STARRY: As far as I know, General DePuy and General Abrams made the decision and, as far as I know, it was at General DePuy's request. General DePuy was the A/VICE, [Assistant Vice Chief of Staff], when I had that directorate. Because we were trying to restructure the Army, rebuild it and whatnot, he was in that business up to his elbows. I should add that the ACSFOR himself was really not very interested in that. General Bob Williams was more of an equipment development-type guy. He was the senior Army aviator, and probably one of the fathers of Army aviation, if not the father. He was a very, very good guy to work for, but force development, force structuring and whatnot really wasn't his bag. It was General DePuy's bag, but he didn't have a staff to cope with it. So my directorate and I really worked for the A/VICE directly almost the whole time I was in charge. I did report to General Williams weekly, tried to report to him weekly, on what we had been doing so that he could stay abreast of what was going on, but by tacit agreement between him, General DePuy, and me, I really worked for General DePuy. Over that year or so we developed a rapport, and I think he was instrumental in my appointment to the Armor Center. Whether or not he went to General Abrams and said, "I have to have this guy," I don't know. I don't know how that happened. I do know that they had decided to put someone else at Fort Knox. General Bill Desobry was going to leave. They wanted to put him in V Corps, and planned to post General Bill Burke to command Knox. I don't remember whether or not there was actually a set of orders published on him, but it was common knowledge in the Pentagon that he was going to Fort Knox. At about that time, the Steadfast reorganization came into being and, as part of that reorganization, we were going to create Forces Command and TRADOC out of CONARC and have two

separate commands. General DePuy and General Kerwin were probably going to be the two commanders, although early on it really wasn't decided who was going to take which command. General DePuy sort of dropped the A/VICE work then, because the A/VICE was to disappear during that reorganization. Instead he concentrated on sizing up CONARC, and eventually more and more concentrated on sizing up TRADOC, which he eventually commanded. It was sometime during that period of sizing up the school system that he apparently decided that, for some reason, he didn't want General Burke. Once I came out on the promotion list, he preferred to have me. Maybe he had been waiting on the promotion list, I don't know. It came out in March, I guess, or February, somewhere in there. It may well be that when he looked at the list and saw my name on it, he decided that he would push the other guy aside and put me in. I really don't know. But, of course, General Abrams made the final decision.

INTERVIEWER: Where did General Burke go?

GEN STARRY: He went on to be the Chief of MAAG [Military Assistance Advisory Group] in Greece. After that assignment he retired.

INTERVIEWER: And General Desobry had been commanding Fort Knox?

GEN STARRY: Desobry commanded Knox, then went on to command V Corps. General Bob Fair replaced him in the fall of 1975, and by Christmastime he was in trouble with the SACEUR [Supreme Allied Commander, Europe] and with both General Bill Knowlton, who was Chief of Staff, EUCOM, and with General George Blanchard, who was CINCUSAREUR [Commander in Chief, US Army, Europe]. Shortly before or after Christmas, I don't remember which now, but sometime over the Christmas period of 1975-1976 they decided to replace General Fair. By

this time, of course, General Abrams had passed away and General Fred Weyand was the Chief. He called me in January of 1976 and said, "I'm gonna send you to V Corps." So I went to V Corps in early February of 1976, Bob Fair having been the commander for about four months.

INTERVIEWER: F-E-I-R or F-A-I-R?

GEN STARRY: F-A-I-R. You're thinking of Phil Feir, F-E-I-R. It's Bob Fair, Robert L.

INTERVIEWER: And he retired?

GEN STARRY: He was retired as a major general. They relieved him for cause and, because they had relieved him of cause, they were not willing to place his name before the Congress for promotion to lieutenant general on the retired list, so he retired as major general.

INTERVIEWER: So, General Desobry only had V Corps for about eight months?

GEN STARRY: No, he had V Corps for the whole time I was at Knox, plus that four months, so it would have been from the summer of 1973 to 1975, a little over two years.

INTERVIEWER: He retired from there?

GEN STARRY: He retired from there.

INTERVIEWER: Right up front, how did you compare commanding Fort Knox to the normal progression which would have meant being a division commander?

GEN STARRY: Well, I went to see General Abrams when he sent me, or when it became apparent that I was going to go to Fort Knox. I went to see him at his request, and one of the things I said -- I think I commented on this conversation the other day -- but one of the other things I said to him at that time was, "You know, I really would like to command the 3rd Armored Division, more than Fort Knox or anything else, because I spent five years in that division, and I know that ground, and so on." He looked at me a minute and chewed on his cigar for awhile, and then he said, "I know that. But you're going to go to Fort Knox." I said, "Yes, sir." The answer to your question really varies a lot with where that division is. If it's a stateside division, then in many cases the commander is also the installation commander. That may not be true in a place like Fort Hood, for example, where you've got more than one division, but he's usually the installation commander. The school operation in the big centers like Knox, Benning, Sill, and Bliss is a much bigger, more comprehensive and more demanding operation than commanding a division, even if the division assignment includes commanding the installation. You've got a school, a set of schools, for officers and for NCOs. You've got a training center for initial entry training. You've got the whole combat developments spectrum of events going on out there, to include a board, plus you've got the community. So you've got a thing that's larger than a division as far as troops go. It's engaged in a variety of activities that are much more diverse and demanding on your time, really, than is commanding a division. You've got to worry about the community, the post and the installation, all at the same time. It's a tough job. And at the big installations, the big school centers, it's a very, very tough job. It may be too big for one guy, I don't know. I've thought about that a lot; people have asked me about it. Should we have a system where we have one person commanding the post? You've got a Training Center Commander and an Assistant Commandant down in the school, but at the same time, if you're going to have an effect on your branch and move it in the directions it needs to go, you've got to take charge of those things. Initial entry

training centers are always kind of a disaster waiting for the proper time to happen. You're always going to have some problems down there, of one kind or another, with the drill sergeants or the cadre or something. So, in spite of the fact that you've got a good guy in charge of that, you're going to want to spend some time at it, because it's part of a whole spectrum of training that runs from beginning to end, for the enlisted people as well as for the officers. The combat developments problem is equally demanding. I was at Knox when we were trying to reorganize the Army and trying to look at the equipment. We hadn't done any equipment development to speak of for ten years or more. We tried to piecemeal Vietnam with stopgap kinds of developments. We did those through the Limited War Labs for things that were unique to Vietnam. General Desobry had run a tank task force to develop requirements for a new tank. Someone else had worked up some requirements for infantry fighting vehicles. Those were just in the preliminary stages, and more work needed to be done on them. The scout vehicle was the same way. So we neglected our vehicle requirements process, R & D [research and development] and procurement, for a long, long time. And, in addition to that, we had a very active TRADOC commander who was trying to develop tactics and techniques and whatnot and get the Army straightened out. It was a busy time, a very busy time.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like you went to Knox with a mandate from General Abrams and, subsequently, from General DePuy. It was a great time of doctrine development while you were at Knox. Did you spend a preponderance of your time on working with General DePuy on doctrine development, along with weapons systems?

GEN STARRY: Yes, the organizations and weapons systems and the training systems to go with them. I did not view my situation there as being a mandate from anybody to do anything. That's been alleged by a lot of people. One of the majors at Leavenworth wrote his doctrinal

dissertation on this. He said that I said I thought I had a mandate. As I reported to you the other day, I had a long conversation with General Abrams about what I thought needed to be done at Knox. But it was part of a larger spectrum of things that I thought needed to be done for the Army, based on a lot of conversations that I had previously with General DePuy. And I think General DePuy and I were certainly in line, or in tune, with his perception of what needed to be done there at the schools and in the doctrinal business. Anyway, apparently whatever it was I said to General Abrams passed whatever test he was putting me to by having the conversation with me. Otherwise he wouldn't have called me in. I think perhaps he was looking to see whether or not I was lined up in the same direction as General DePuy. And, without saying so, I guess he validated that notion. So I went, not necessarily with the idea in mind that I had any mandate at all, but that there was a necessity to look again at things like the doctrine, the organization, the weapons systems and the whole training system. "What is the Army going to do?" now that Vietnam was out of the way. "Are we going back to what we were before? We can't go back. So what are we going to do now?" Well, that opened up a whole series of questions that had to be answered. So the first thing I did was sit down and have a look at our warfighting doctrine. We spent the summer of 1973 squirreling around with that. I organized a cavalry task force because I felt that, functionally, cavalry was something that, in the armored world, we probably needed to look at first. We'd fallen into some bad habits in the cavalry over the years, particularly in Europe. Because of that I thought we needed to have a re-evaluation of cavalry tactics and, perhaps, even organization and equipment, although I wasn't certain about that in the beginning. So we started with the cavalry task force and, at the same time, we tried to depict what we thought war on the modern battlefield was going look like. I had that in my own mind fairly well by the fall of 1973, when the Yom Kippur War came along. For us the Yom Kippur War was -- I've said this in writing somewhere before -- a fortuitous event, because almost without exception it validated everything we

thought we had discovered in the studies we had done. And it was fortuitous because, once I had the framework in which I thought doctrine development needed to go, tactics and so on, I looked at it and said to myself, "This is so dramatically different, or sufficiently different, from what we've done before, that there's going to be a perception that these wild men out there at Fort Knox are trying to upset the traditional old apple cart." I didn't know if it was going to fit with General DePuy's notions at the time or not, although subsequently I talked to him about what we had done, and he said, "That's about right. We're getting there." Together we went on with that development. So it wasn't at all apart from what he was thinking about, but still it was sufficiently different from what the Army had ever done before that I realized, and I think he did too, that we were going to have a hell of a time selling it to the Army. The Yom Kippur War was real armies, real bullets and real soldiers. And everything that happened out there validated, almost without exception, what we thought the future battlefield was going to look like. It was the analysis of that battlefield, in comparison with what we had pretty much decided we ought to be doing in the first place, that led to the first edition of FM 100-5, the 1976 edition, and all of the supporting manuals that went with it -- the cavalry, tank, infantry, and other manuals. We went down to that level, based on testimony of the Israelis after Yom Kippur. I spent a considerable amount of time in Israel in 1974, 1975, and 1976, working with the IDF Armoured Corps and with General Tal, who is the developer and father of the Merkava Tank. Working those equations back and forth, we had help from both General Tal and General Musa Peled, then commanding the IDF Armoured Corps, and General Bren Adan, who commanded in the Sinai during the Yom Kippur War. However, by this time Bren was the attaché in Washington. He came to Fort Knox several times. We learned an enormous amount from all of them and we really owe them a great debt. With their experience and background, most recently in the Yom Kippur War, they identified things about which we were unsure. In the 1976 edition of FM 100-5, we really did a reasonable job of describing

doctrine for the close-in battle--what had to be done to be able to fight that tactical-level battle successfully. What we were not able to cope with, and I knew it at the time, was what to do about the follow-on echelons. I wrote most of the defense and offense parts of that 1976 manual, and I knew that something was missing--what to do about the follow-on echelons. You can stand on the Golan Heights--in the command post that northern command occupied during the Yom Kippur War, and you can see Damascus--only forty or fifty kilometers away. There the Syrian Army deployed, row after row after row, 2000 meters wide, rank after rank of tanks, fighting vehicles and artillery, marching from Damascus towards the battle line along the Golan Heights. The three brigades deployed along the Golan Front had in fact stalled the Syrian offensive. But what would those already badly wounded brigades have done if those follow-on echelons had kept on coming? About this time Musa Peled's (reserve) division began to arrive. Musa proposed to counterattack directly on a line toward Damascus, along the exposed left flank of the Syrian force. Debate ensued. The Prime Minister was called. She dispatched Bar Lev to referee the debate. Bar Lev sided with Musa's desire to seize the initiative with a counterattack. With no more than two-thirds of his division on site, Musa moved towards Damascus. Whereupon the Syrian Army broke and ran. The front echelons on the Golan got up, got out of their T-62 tanks, leaving the engines running, and ran away on foot. It was that close. So we asked, "Why didn't you put air on the follow-on echelon?" There were many reasons for that. "Why didn't you use artillery against the follow-on echelon?" Again there were many reasons for that. So we were left with the questions: "What systems do we need to fight the follow-on echelon and what tactics do we need to fight the follow-on echelon?" All of this occurred at the very time we were trying to determine how to fight the first echelon battle--the battle at the FLOT [forward line of troops]. By the time we wrote that book in 1975, I knew what the problem was, but I wasn't quite sure how to solve it. Anyway, we wrote it the way it was, for better or worse, because our judgment was that it was better to try to describe the

tactical battle, get that settled first, then try to solve this operational-level problem. Otherwise it would be a matter of delaying the new doctrine, and didn't want to do that, so we went ahead with the 1976 edition. It aroused an enormous furor. Most of the furor, incidentally, had as its genesis the resentment of the staff and faculty at Fort Leavenworth. The book was written at TRADOC--much at Fort Knox, and a lot more at TRADOC headquarters at Fort Monroe. And so General Jack Cushman at Leavenworth led the surge of resentment about the 1976 edition of FM 100-5--Active Defense. I have characterized that many times as probably the greatest act of institutional and individual disloyalty I have ever had the chance to observe. It reflected Cushman's personality, and the undue influence of Ivan Birrer, Cushman's education advisor. He had spent 35 years or more as the education advisor at Leavenworth. He thought Leavenworth was the nexus of all doctrine development. His after action report reflects his disdain for the rest of TRADOC--Headquarters down to the schools and branch centers. He and Cushman were buddies from the time when Cushman was a faculty member out there. Anyway, they didn't understand how TRADOC, particularly with the participation of a bunch of "smelly tankers from Fort Knox," was smarter than they were. Nobody ever said we were smarter than they were; we were just trying to get the job done, and they weren't participating, so they got shot out of the saddle in the end. Also they fed the information, the complaints and so on, to guys like Bill Lind and Ed Luttwak, who became the vocal non-military critics of the 1976 edition of FM 100-5. In my opinion they did the Army a great disservice, the Army and themselves, one for which I shall not soon forgive them.

INTERVIEWER: Was General Cushman involved in this?

GEN STARRY: Yes, sir. The principal manuals (FM 100-5, Operations, for example) are supposed to be written at Leavenworth. They wrote them. They had a draft version of what later turned out to be the 1976

edition. They also had their own draft. It was non-relevant. They hadn't digested the lessons, Cushman hadn't, of the Yom Kippur War. General DePuy finally gave Brigadier General Morris Brady a charter to do an evaluation of that out in Leavenworth, which he finished. But by then we were well along with the book and with the horseback estimates of General DePuy, the others and I, who had been there and had talked to the Israelis as they came back to this country to visit us. The work they produced at Leavenworth really didn't match, in most cases, what the rest of us were trying to do.

INTERVIEWER: Was Leavenworth chartered to write the first edition, or the first draft?

GEN STARRY: Yes, they wrote a draft.
[End Tape S-210, side l]

[Begin Tape S-210, side 2]
INTERVIEWER: The way this divergence of philosophy comes across in some cases, sir, is that General Cushman was very much up-front with General DePuy on his disagreement and philosophy and submitted that first draft in good faith. General DePuy then -- and this is all supposition -- rejected it, but never charged General Cushman or CAC to go back and correct it. At that time he drew it into his headquarters. Is that right?

GEN STARRY: Well, I think that's essentially correct. He was in a hurry, General DePuy was, because he realized that he didn't have a lot of time. He realized he had taken considerable time to produce that first draft, and if he went back and did it again he was looking at another year or two of drafting. That being the case, the thing would never get done on his watch. As a result, the Army would continue to drag along in whatever shape it was in tactically. We couldn't wait that long. In that judgment I

think he was quite right. You could argue, I suppose, and Cushman did from time to time, that there wasn't all that much divergence between what he was saying and what we finally produced. I can't begin to adequately describe this, but General DePuy is the product of his World War II experience, which is described eminently well in Paul Herbert's doctrinal dissertation. He did a brilliant piece of work, he really did. He interviewed General DePuy at some length. He talked with me for several hours. He also talked to Paul Gorman, apparently, because we were the principal authors of a large part of that first book. Herbert spells out in detail where General DePuy was coming from in terms of his tactical perceptions, and in those perceptions, although I didn't have nearly as much combat experience as he did, I found him to be exactly correct. The old traveling overwatch, bounding overwatch, and everything that grew out of it made eminently good sense to me. We did it in the 11th Cavalry in Vietnam for good reason and it worked. We didn't call it by the same names, but we did it for the same reasons that he was talking about. He had a hell of a lot more dramatic experience with "sorry-assed" commanders than I had had, although I had had enough to bring me to the same convictions that he held. I had no difficulty at all with what he wanted to do. What he called it didn't make any difference as long as we did it tactically, organizationally, and so on for the battle of the FLOT. I don't think Jack Cushman had the same perception of the battlefield as we did. I cannot talk for him. Jack Cushman is a very smart guy and I have great admiration for his intellectual ability. But he is not a very practical person. He fundamentally believes that he knows more about almost any subject you want to talk about than anybody else. He came to see me at Fort Knox shortly after I got there, because Leavenworth was supposed to be some kind of a coordinating headquarters over the combat arms schools. He said he wanted to come and see what we were doing. He came and I was prepared with briefings to talk with him and show him what we were doing. He talked for three days. He talked for three days; I listened and quickly determined, within a couple of hours on the first day, that he didn't

want to hear what we were doing at Fort Knox at all. He wanted to talk; he wanted to show me how smart he was about all these things. The more he talked, the more I realized that he and I were not in any sort of agreement about anything -- tactics, organization, doctrine, anything. That caused me some concern, because he was supposed to be my coordinator and the coordinator for all the other combat arms schools. If this guy was coordinating, how were we ever going to get anything done? I knew that he was off-track with our boss. I went away and talked with myself a little bit about that and decided to wait it out and let the thing unfold by itself, which is what I did. I never said one way or the other to anybody what I thought about Cushman.

INTERVIEWER: I understand that General Cushman and Leavenworth were more or less excluded from the writing of FM 100-5.

GEN STARRY: They came to the meetings, but they didn't write anything.

INTERVIEWER: I understand, at the meeting you had at Camp Hill, that you wrote, General Tarpley wrote, General DePuy wrote, General Gorman wrote, and staffers wrote, and that General Cushman and some of his staffers were there but that they did not take part.

GEN STARRY: That's correct.

INTERVIEWER: Was not that a very awkward situation? What did he and his staffers do while the rest of you worked on FM 100-5?

GEN STARRY: He sat down at the end of the table during the big meeting we had. We wrote for about two days steady without taking a break. He sat at the end of the table, a big, long table, with his draft edition of FM 100-5. Meanwhile Gorman, Tarpley, and I would talk this back and forth. Tarpley had some intelligence guys down there. Vern

Lewis was also there. General DePuy was at the other end of the table. We were working these things, and were throwing cards and papers at one another with comments such as, "Write this up. This is good." General DePuy would talk and somebody would write it down. It happened just like that. The first thing that became obvious was that Cushman couldn't follow that exchange. He wasn't following what we were doing. As the kids say, we were "on a roll." And it would be like that for 12 hours at a time. Meanwhile, every time anyone would say something, Cushman would grab his draft and start looking though it and would say, "Well, we said that on page so and so." Nobody paid any attention to him, nobody at all, including the boss. So he finally got up and went away. He sat there for several hours, doing that with his book, and then he finally went away. He came back after awhile and listened, and then went away again. I don't know what they did. But we wrote the book. You'd finish a page, hand it over your shoulder, and a clerk would then take it and bring it back typed, and you would say, "Okay, fix it and make some copies." Then we would pass the copies around. That's the way we did it.

INTERVIEWER: General Cushman and CAC were not the only sources of consternation and controversy at that time. I guess consternation is a good word, in that the infantry was in the midst of losing its dominance on the battlefield. It appeared that you and Fort Knox were trying to take over.

GEN STARRY: Right.

INTERVIEWER: You were accused of trying to do that, and General DePuy was accused of letting you do that, or directing you to do that. General Tarpley, I believe, at first objected. Do you care to comment on that?

GEN STARRY: We were not trying to take over the world. I don't believe I'm the kind of a guy who likes to grab hold of everything in sight simply because I think I ought to be doing it. But it seemed to me, it has always seemed to me, that the big problem we had was with mechanized infantry. If you really did it right, you'd do what the Germans do and you would have two combat arms schools. One would be for mechanized forces and one would be for infantry. And all of the mechanized--whether its infantry, tanks, cavalry or whatnot--are trained on the combat side, or trained as the German Combat Arms School Number One. Meanwhile, the infantry -- airborne, ranger, airmobile, light, mountain, whatever -- belongs in this other place. That would be a better division than the one we have. That way you've got a guy in charge of the mechanized forces, a Chief of Armor, which includes the mech infantry, and a Chief of Infantry, which includes all the infantry except for the mech. We ought to train the way we fight, and that's the way we're going to fight. It's an old school system. The training of the soldiers, the training of the officers, and the training of the NCOs is broken out that way, and it makes much more sense to me than to do it the way we're doing it. Matter of fact, at one time General DePuy had a new school model that had that in it. There were some other changes in the artillery as well. But the big change was that combat arms training system. He and I talked about that a lot. I wasn't necessarily pushing for it. I also believe we've got a problem with Army aviation. We had transport aviation at Fort Eustis. We had attack aviation and scout aviation at Fort Knox. We had the Aviation School for training aviators at Fort Rucker. Well, is that right? Should you do that, or should you have all the aviation at one place? In fact, when I had TRADOC I tried to put it all together at Fort Rucker, but I lost that battle in Washington because the Transportation Corps cried, "Oh, my God, you can't take that away from us." In the end it broke apart simply on the numbers. We couldn't train that many aviators at Fort Rucker--unfortunately, because I still think that all aviation training ought to be in one place. I still don't believe that we should have created an aviation branch per se. For the combat aviators,

the scouts and the attack guys, we need to run them through the combat arms schools so they understand what's going to happen on the ground. That way they'll know how they fit into the battle. If you don't do that, you're going to get the kind of aviation support that the rest of the armies in the world have, which is not as good as ours. So we've got a lot of problems and, in my opinion, we've not been at all successful in trying to rearrange that. My perception of how that went, the reason that he gave Fort Knox so much more of the free rein and gave me the things he did, is because we produced results. That was not the case at Benning. I like General Tarpley, he's a good guy, but he was not caught up in the ground swell of this thing like we were at Knox. That may have resulted from my previous association with General DePuy and General Abrams. Tarpley was in position when we all got there, and had been for some time, but he simply wasn't seized with the need to do all these things by way of tactics, organization and so on that the rest of us were. He's not the kind of guy to get his hands dirty. I was writing doctrine at Fort Knox. I organized some task forces at Fort Knox which reported to me. We wrote the manual, we wrote the doctrine, ourselves--at least the skeleton outlines of what we wanted in the books. After we finished the outlines we gave them off to somebody else. If you let the school system alone, it takes forever to get anything done. So a good guy, Ed Scribner -- an artilleryman, interestingly enough--and I wrote those books. He'd get a lot of help; he had some super people helping him, but Ed organized the operation. It was a simple-minded thing that went back to, "Who writes the thing and who does the illustration?" It's almost a mechanical thing. But, at the same time, it's conceptual as well. How do you take two pages worth of concept and make a manual three inches thick out of it, with illustrations and diagrams, and breaking it all down? Ed was very good at that. So I created a task force. Eventually I created several others to do other little pieces of it, and they all fit together. But I took charge of that because that was what was important to TRADOC. Without the doctrine, I couldn't see any way of describing our equipment requirements, our organizational

requirements, and our training requirements. So we first had to decide how we were going to fight the battle. We needed to do that very quickly. So I started with that. My perception, and ask General DePuy about this, was that he leaned on us because we were doing something. Right or wrong, we were producing results. And we produced them more quickly than anybody else did because I was personally involved in it. We cut through all the red tape and normal procedures, because I felt there was a sense of urgency about what we were doing that wouldn't allow us to use the normal procedures. I won't take exception to what Paul said in his dissertation at all, based on what General DePuy said to him about me. He's quite right about most of it. Some of what he said is based on his interviews with General DePuy.

INTERVIEWER: I read Paul Herbert's dissertation.

GEN STARRY: That's a super piece of work. That ought to be a book. I told him that it should be a book.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir. Sir, yesterday we were talking about the development of doctrine and the development of FM 100-5 while you were at Fort Knox. The Army has been accused of developing weapon systems and then developing doctrine to use those systems. Was one of your objectives to get the doctrine developed and then to build the weapons systems?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I've been convinced for a long time -- and I'd be hard put to say where it started -- that we were doing it backwards. You have to lay out what I have since come to call operational concepts, which amount to doctrine. You need to describe how you think you're going to fight the war and then force the technology to produce the equipment, force the system to produce the organizations, force the training system to support the training necessary to support the operational concept, which is

doctrine in the broadest sense. That notion really upsets the scientists. Several years ago I was invited to talk to the Defense Science Board about this subject. They were meeting at Colorado Springs, at the Air Force Academy, and I made a speech that had to do with this very subject. It turned a lot of people off. I got a lot of violent argument from the scientists in the room, whose view was, "If you just let us fish around long enough, we'll find something that will solve all your problems for you." My view of that is that, in effect, they are saying, “We don't want anybody telling us what to do in our hobby shops,” which is what the laboratories are, scientific hobby shops. On the other hand, I do believe there has to be a close linkage between whoever is responsible for developing the operational concept and the scientific community. Thus the user, the requirer, the guy who writes the requirements, who develops the operational concept, is obliged to go and find the laboratories and find the technology in the laboratories and, together with the technologists, make some kind of an assessment about which technology best supports the kind of things he thinks he wants to do. That should result in some modifications to the operational concept itself. It certainly will result in a different list of priorities for the laboratory work than was the case before. But it is necessary! That's hard to do. There is no mechanism for that. There is no institutionalized system for that. The laboratory system in the Army Materiel Command exists, and always has, quite apart from the user. They march to their own drum. They do what they damn well please. We tried to mesh operational concepts with what was going on in the laboratories to make sure that the prioritization of moneys and resources spent in DARCOM [Materiel Development and Readiness Command] or AMC [Army Material Command] matched the set of operational concepts that the user thought he was laying down for the conduct of warfare. We haven't got enough resources to afford to have laboratories function as hobby shops for the scientists who work in them. That's still going on, but perhaps not as much as before we adopted that notion. There are a lot of scientific people who still resent, even reject, the

idea, but we don't have the resources in this country to allow for the luxury of the scientists just to squirrel away in their little laboratories and come out every once in a while and say, "Can you guys use this?" It has to be directed, and that direction comes out of what we came to call operational concepts. That was behind the doctrinal revision from the beginning. Whether General DePuy believed in it any more than I did, I don't know, but I was convinced of it, and I guess my conviction came more from having watched us field a bunch of unsatisfactory weapons systems than anything else. When I was a battalion commander in the 3rd Armored Division, and Mr. McNamara came into office in the early 1960s, you may remember that President Kennedy told him to go out and get what he needed for defense and never mind the cost, or words to that effect. So in the early 1960s we really had more weapons systems delivered to us, dumped on us almost, than we could accommodate. We had a hard time training up for the next one. Some of them were all right. The M60 tank was a welcome change from the M48 and represented a significant advancement in combat capability. Others of them were not. The M114 was a disaster, an absolute bloody disaster. We never should have fielded it. Somebody should have terminated that program before they put it in the field. How does that happen? Later on, in Vietnam, the first time I was there, they wanted to field the Sheridan. They sent a message from Washington saying, "We want to send you the Sheridan. Can you handle that?" Well, it turned out that they organized a little study group in USARV to look at the Sheridan, and we looked at it for several weeks. We decided, first of all, that at that point it was nothing but a machine gun platform as far as we were concerned. The missile system apparently was operative, but we didn't have any targets for it. The conventional ammunition, the caseless ammunition, was not ready to be fielded and so, in effect, without conventional ammunition and without the ability to use the missile (there were no targets for it), we essentially had a $300,000 or $400,000 machine gun platform. Now that didn't make any sense. So the task force that I headed at USARV to look into the thing rejected the

deployment of the Sheridan. But the fact was that AMC had several hundred of them coming off of the assembly line. They were sitting in a field someplace out in the AMC community, which was bothering them no end. They knew they had to have them fielded to justify themselves. So there was great pressure to field them. After I was gone from USARV they in effect forced the command to take them, with a caseless ammunition which was really not ready to be fielded. We had enormous difficulties with it, and we lost a lot of soldiers' lives because of the way that stuff behaved when a vehicle got hit. Fielding of the M60A2 was the result of a conviction on the part of the missile community. I guess they came into their own with missiles and rockets in Huntsville, which ranged all the way from Pershing and whatnot down to little missiles for tanks. General Hank Miley said to me after he retired that he guessed he'd made a mistake, because he was really the guy who was pushing missiles. He believed that they offered us a greater combat capability, better first round hit probabilities, and so on. But the systems that ran the missiles out from the launch vehicle to the target were a disaster; you couldn't keep them operating. The soldiers couldn't fix them. They tried to fix that by the black box system in which you simply replaced the boxes. But the Sheridan itself and the M60A2 which followed it were technical disasters that the soldiers couldn't really use very well. And so one of the things I tried to do, and did at Knox, was lead the fight to get all of those things removed from the fleet. The Sheridan, the M60A2, the M114, all the way down to that unsatisfactory machine gun on the M60 tank. They were technical pipe dreams. Now you could argue, I suppose, that they were so technically advanced that we just hadn't worked all the bugs out of them, and if we had just left them alone long enough they would have been all right. But I really don't believe that's true. There is a great gap between what's going on in terms of the requirements in the user community and what's going on in the Materiel Command laboratories. After I got to Knox, one of the first things I did was go up to TACOM [Tank-Automotive Command] in Detroit-Warren, Michigan, just to hear what their

programs were and find out what was going on, just so I could establish some kind of personal relationship with the people up there, some kind of a linkage between what we were trying to do in doctrine development and what they were trying to do. I was introduced to the civil servant who was, according to the people up there, the most knowledgeable man in the whole world about track suspension systems. And, of course, he showed us all the modern things they were doing with track suspension systems and, along towards the end of the day, I asked him what they were doing about the sprocket bolt problem. He said, "I don't understand. We've never had a sprocket bolt problem." And I said, "We've had a sprocket bolt problem with new tank models ever since I was a second lieutenant. We had it on the M26, we had it on the M47, we had it on the M48, we had it to some extent on the M60, and we had it on the Sheridan. We've had it on every series that we've fielded. We've turned in complaint after complaint after complaint. They used to be called Unsatisfactory Equipment Reports. Now they're called Equipment Improvement Reports, or something like that, but they serve the same function -- to identify unsatisfactory equipment." Now this was the guy who was introduced to me as the most knowledgeable fellow in the whole world about track suspension systems, yet he didn't understand that the Army, which he's supposed to have been serving for thirty-some-odd years in service, has had a problem with sprocket bolts since the very beginning. Now that tells you something about the system! So the real problem is that the DARCOM or AMC laboratories are all segregated. It's almost as if each one of them was behind one of those green intelligence doors that everybody talks about. There was little, if any, cross-leveling between them. I remember one day at Knox that I had three guys come to see me in the same day. Each one was from a different laboratory, and each one was working the same technology trying to solve, essentially, the same problem. Yet none of them knew that the other two existed, and neither did the people for whom they worked. There was no place in AMC, or DARCOM in those days, where you could go and find out how much

money we were spending on that technology across the board. So the system is not very well organized. I tried to correct that when I became the TRADOC commander. We got started on a program, but I understand it was dropped after I left because not everybody understands the problem that way. It is very difficult for those center commanders out there. We talked about the center commanders' workload a little bit yesterday. He's a busy guy if he's doing the job. He really doesn't have time to run around to all the laboratories in the country to find out what everybody is doing. Yet I maintain that he has got to take the time to do that. I took the time to do it, which was at some considerable expense to myself in terms of the energy and the effort I had to expend to go see them. You have to do that, because you can't go to just one place to find out what's going on. You have got to go see them all, or enough of them to understand what's going on, and ferret out the technologies they're pursuing and see if they line up with what you think you're doing in terms of operational concepts. It's very difficult to do, and not many people are interested in doing it. Not everybody is interested in doing it. As a result, it's a tough little task, or series of tasks, to add to a center commander's bag of tricks which is already overloaded.

INTERVIEWER: You had a Combat Developments Command, and each of the centers has a board. There's an Artillery Board, an Armor Board, and so on. Is it not part of their charter that they tie in doctrine with development?

GEN STARRY: Well, that went away with TRADOC. TRADOC absorbed CDC [Combat Development Center].

INTERVIEWER: But don't we still have the Boards?

GEN STARRY: Well, the Boards are not separate. There was a big argument, and I suppose there still is, about whether or not the Boards

ought to go under TECOM [Test and Evaluation Command]. In my view, at least, and I don't know what they've done with them since I retired, the Boards belong to the Center Commanders. The Boards are the user's test vehicle for operational tasks at the lower level. It allows for an operational test of the equipment for which the user has prepared requirements. They're the Center Commander's way, the TRADOC commander's way, of telling whether or not the stuff that has been built actually matches the requirements that you laid down for it from the user's standpoint. The secret to the thing is for the center commanders to get connected with the labs when the development begins, when the thing goes to FSED [Full-Scale Engineering Development], or even into engineering development. You've got to have soldiers on the ground. I think one of the reasons that the Ml turned out so well is that General Bob Baer, program manager for the tank, and I as Armor Center Commander agreed that I would provide some sergeants from Fort Knox to be stationed at the tank arsenal in Detroit at a time when they had nothing but plywood. They didn't even have a mock-up at that time. They had plywood boards out there, and were trying to build a mock-up. Thus, from the very beginning, the sergeants were standing there telling them what made sense and what didn't make sense. And those people from Fort Knox stayed there throughout the M1's development.
[End Tape S-210, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-211, side 1]
GEN STARRY: General Baer and I had been friends for years, and we realized that if we didn't link arms and march forward together that we were probably going to lose the tank program because, for one thing, of all the hullabaloo in Washington over how much it was going to cost and so on. If it didn't turn out right, it was going to be our fault. So we swore a blood oath that we were going to do it that way, and we stuck together from beginning to end. I think that's one of the reasons that the Ml turned

out to be such a successful program. I think that approach needs to be used with everything.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the Army is getting better at doing this?

GEN STARRY: Well, I think there is a better recognition, a more urgent vision, of the necessity to do the sort of thing that I described. Whether or not it's being done adequately, I am unable to say. I would suspect that it's not being done adequately, simply because the laboratory system is so fragmented that it's hard for the guys at the centers to find out what's going on. Not all of them are as interested in that part of their job as they are in the business of running the center, the training center, the school and whatnot. Some people just aren't bent towards technology. Plus they're busy people. I took a lot of time to go and do that, but it was time that I could have spent, should have spent in some cases, doing something else. I think the air defense, the DIVAD [Division Air Defense] gun, the Sergeant York, is a different sort of problem. It was to be a quick development. We were going to sidetrack all of the normal development processes by simply taking those old tank hulls that we had and refurbishing them, upgrading them to an M48A5 chassis and power train. We were going to take the radar off the F16 and get some guns, either from Orkilon, Hispano-Suiza, or from the Swedes, the Bofors, and hire somebody to glue all of that together. So they had a competition. Well, in the first place there was really no evidence, from the very beginning, that the air defense radar, or the F16 radar, was going to work in a ground environment. Most of us were worried in the beginning about the ground clutter problem, which eventually turned out to be a big part of the problem with that system. It wasn't designed to operate on the ground. It was a good radar system, but it wasn't designed to operate in the ground environment at all, and it didn't. Now the developer, in this case Ford, did not insist, did not really bear down on Westinghouse, which makes the radar, and force them to fix it. Even the development items, which were

part of the developmental system on the basis of which the award was made, didn't work, and yet nobody bore down on Westinghouse in the interim--between the time that the test was finished and the award was made and the time they began production. So, when Ford went into production with the thing, they had an imperfect radar and they knew it. They had done nothing, absolutely nothing, in the ensuing two or three years between the time the award was made and the time they started rolling Yorks off the assembly line, to make Westinghouse fix the radar. Many of us, and I guess I was the strongest, or at least the loudest, voice in this argument, objected to putting that thing on the M48 tank chassis. We wanted to put it on an Ml tank chassis. The argument against that was that we didn't have enough Ml tank chassis. Our counterargument was that we would have, or could have, by the time the York was ready for production. And that turned out to be the case. But, “Oh, no, we can't do that. We don't have enough Ml chassis. Besides, we have something like 4,000 M48 tank chassis out there at Anniston.” Anniston was just about through with the refurbishment of the damaged vehicles that we got back from Vietnam, and folks were concerned about what we were going to do with the Anniston Army Depot. So all of those things caused the decision to be made. Also it was pushed by AMC and the Army staff to take the M48 tank chassis and refurbish them. I thought at the time it was a lousy decision, and it turned out to be a lousy decision. That thing can't keep up with the Ml on a road march or on leapfrog. It just can't operate in that battle environment. You need a common chassis at least. The turret was going to be different, but you need a common chassis. It was to be a hurry-up job, yet it turned out to take almost as long as the development would have anyway, largely because they forced Ford -- and they would've forced GD [General Dynamics] if GD had won the contract -- to make a lot of changes in the thing after the test was completed but before the production model came off the assembly line. As a result, there was no time to do testing. For example, the requirement was to remove 4,000 pounds from the turret. Well, 4,000 pounds is a lot of weight, it's a lot of

armor, and it meant a lot of reconfiguration in terms of trying to provide some survivability for the turret commensurate with what the original armor package was thought to provide. Ford had a modest little armor development program involving their own IR&D [Industry Research and Development] money to try to solve that problem. They got no help from the Ballistics Research Laboratory. So we felt that the system was more vulnerable than the system we tested. I speak from some knowledge about that, because one of the first things that happened to me when I went to work for Ford was that they asked me to go and do an IG [inspector general] job on DIVAD, which I did, through the production facility and through the vehicle itself, of which we had just produced the first assembly line model. I came back and recommended to Ford management that they not bid on option two, which was up for bid at that time, and certainly not on option three. There were several reasons for it. I still felt that the vehicle was not satisfactory in terms of the battle environment. We were fielding the Bradley, and I was a critic of the Bradley from the beginning because it couldn't fight with the tanks out there. It didn't meet the requirements for an infantry fighting vehicle. I was responsible for getting the Bradley adopted as a scout vehicle. It was an unsatisfactory decision at the time and I knew it, but the alternative was to put the scouts back in jeeps. So going ahead with the Bradley was less unsatisfactory, if that's a good phrase -- I don't like it -- than the alternative, which was to put the scouts back in jeeps, just as the decision to put the mech infantry in the Bradley itself was a less unpleasant alternative to putting them back in 113s. But, in the business decision in the case of Ford and the DIVAD, the problem was that the AAO [Authorized Acquisition Objective], had come down from, I think, a couple of thousand in the beginning, which was what everybody was talking about, to 618 fire units. Now this was the result of the typical congressional staff line item analysis and whittling things out of the budget. So, that number, which was originally postulated at 2,000, had shrunk to 6l8. The break-even fire unit quantity, as nearly as I could

calculate it in the fall of 1983 when I did this for Ford, was about 460. So in effect Ford was going to invest $500 million of their own money in the program before they reached the break-even number of fire units. And so the question then is, "Can you, between fire unit 460 and fire unit 618, recoup your $500 million investment and in fact make a profit? Well, the answer is no way are they going to do that. So if those numbers were about right, I became convinced that we, Ford, should not bid on subsequent options. Now the management of Ford Aerospace and Ford Motor Company felt that they had a commitment to the government to produce this thing, and here is this wild-eyed retired general, who now works for them, running around probably grinding some old axes. And, to some extent, I was, although I tried to make a fairly objective business kind of an analysis for them. So they decided to go ahead and bid on it. In the end it was canceled, and in the end it cost us a little over $300 million of our own money. There was no profit at all.

INTERVIEWER: Was the government obligated to cover any part of that?

GEN STARRY: No. If what prompted your question was the example of the Ml, where we had soldiers on the line from the very beginning, that wasn't necessarily the case with York, although I don't really think it was that much of a problem. Don't forget the chassis came to us “as is.” We were really the systems integrator. The turret was built by AI. The guns came from Bofors. Westinghouse provided the radar. We did build the gunner's sight, a couple of electrical control boxes, a wiring system, and some other odds and ends which were necessary to make the interfaces between these other systems. All in all it performed fairly well. In other words, there were a couple of areas like "time to acquire" and "bring fire to bear" in which we were sort of marginal in meeting the requirement. But essentially it met the original requirements laid down for it. The reason it was killed was because they changed the requirements, then they tested it. The last series of tests that were run were tested against requirements

that were well out of the original requirements envelope. That's not a fair test. There was no objective testing done. What the tests said was that the system was obsolete against today's threat. We should have been smart enough to see that in the beginning. Some of us were, or at least we thought we were. But, in terms of mobility, in terms of survivability and in terms of firepower, nobody was willing to listen to us. We were going to try this as a gimmick, and the gimmick didn't pay off.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, back to the development of doctrine. There were two schools of thought, especially after the criticism started of the 1976 version of FM 100-5. I don't think there is any doubt that General DePuy felt he had to rush that doctrine out to the field as soon as possible. But one of the schools of thought was that the Army was geared for a Vietnam-type war and, coming out of Vietnam, everybody again realized that the threat was Europe. The other school of thought was that General DePuy wished to hurry doctrine into the field in order to justify new weapons systems or a modernization of the Army. Could you comment as to which of those is true, or both, or what?

GEN STARRY: Well, I think General DePuy would have to speak for himself, but my impression was that he was driven in large measure by the desire to get the Army focused back on something that was, "What are we going to do now that Vietnam is over?" It wasn't that he necessarily wanted it to turn our backs on Vietnam, but we needed some new focus, and that new focus was to be provided by a modernization program which included tactics, operational concepts, equipment, organization, and training. In that regard he was driven, I think, largely as Paul Herbert points out in his doctrinal dissertation, by his experiences in World War II. After I came back from Vietnam the second time in 1970, while in my job at DCSOPS, and then in ACSFOR, I made several trips to Europe. It was six or seven years since I had seen Europe. When I left it in 1964, we had a good Army over there. It was solid, we had good equipment, we had

good soldiers, and we had been together for a long time. We had some problems, as we always do in a place like that, but essentially it was a first-class fighting force that was ready to fight. When I went back in 1970 and 1971 and took a look around, it was a shambles. It was an absolute bloody shambles. If you went and talked to the sergeants, the lieutenants and the captains, they didn't think they could win that battle over there. And there's nothing more frightening and discouraging and disheartening--frightening is a better word, I guess--than American soldiers and American officers who don't believe they have a Chinaman's chance in hell of winning the battle that they've been sent to fight. I'll tell you what, that scares you. And, when I went around and listened to them talk, and looked at why they weren't able to do it, I realized a couple of things. One was that the quick rotation in and out of the theater during the Vietnam War had deprived them of any unit cohesion at all. They were almost as bad off as the guys in Vietnam were during the latter stages of the redeployment. As I said the other day, when you stood up in front of your squad or your platoon in the morning, you couldn't recognize anybody out there, and they didn't recognize you. Yet you were supposed to go out and fight a successful battle. There was no unit cohesion. They had apparently been deprived of sufficient funds to maintain the barracks, maintain the family housing, and provide themselves with sufficient fuel and ammunition to do training. Those things were always problems, but I have never been convinced that the funding levels were so low that they had to neglect the things that they had obviously neglected. But they did neglect them, and I lay that on the doorstep of the senior commanders who let it happen without doing anything about it. I remember I went over there one time and went down to see one of the very senior commanders in the theater who happened to have been a good friend of mine. It was early in the morning, and he had a set of 5x7 cards on his desk. He was going through these cards shaking his head. I politely inquired as to what they were, and he said, "Well, these are all the telephone calls that came in during the night." You know, at that time there was a little unrest among

the troops. They had had some riots in some of the prison facilities, and everybody was worried about the soldiers' complaints. So they'd established this Dial CINC hot line, and what he was reading to me, from these 5x7 cards, was the Dial CINC input from the night before. I looked at some of those cards and, just looking at them, and knowing soldiers as I did, I began to suspect that there was a little leg- pulling going on. Several days later I was back in Friedberg, visiting my old haunts, and one of the sergeants major invited me to come down to the NCO club and have dinner with him and sit around and shoot the bull with some of the guys who'd been in the 11th Cavalry in Vietnam. Some of them were guys out of the battalion that I'd commanded earlier, or at least out of the division, the 3rd Armored Division, who were back again. So we went over and had dinner and sat around drinking beer, talking, and I was just listening to what was going on. Late in the evening everybody took out a coin, and they started matching coins. I watched this for awhile. Of course, by the process of elimination it got down to three or four guys. At that point they stopped the game. Then these guys, one at a time, would get up, leave and come back, apparently having made phone calls. So I said to one of them, "What are you guys doing?" And they said, "Well, we've decided that we ought to put a little input into the Dial CINC program. We sit around here almost every night and decide who's going to call that night. The mission of the caller is to make up the most preposterous story he can. Whether or not it's true doesn't make any difference. We just make up a leg-puller. Then we dial it in, because we think the whole thing is so god damned ludicrous that that's all it deserves." Now, here sits the senior U. S. Army commander in Europe, going through those 5x7 cards, worrying, shaking his head, and becoming all despondent because of what's on the cards, and at least some of those cards were the result of that sort of activity on the part of the sergeants. I suspect, if it was going on in Friedberg, it was going on in a lot of other places. It was all a big laugh to them. The program was considered unnecessary and non-relevant. They just thought it was a spoof. Now,

when you get a situation like that, something really needs to be done. Short of going over there and taking command of part of it, which I was later to do, the question is, "How do you solve that problem?" You talk to the lieutenants and the sergeants about the tactics and why they think they can't win, and they say, "Well, we're outnumbered." So the big problem was out. Hell, we were outnumbered when I was a lieutenant over there in the 1949-1950 time frame--much more so, in fact, in terms of sheer numbers than we were in the early 1970s. They had no confidence in their tactics, they had no confidence in their operational schemes, they had no confidence in their logistics system, and they had no confidence in themselves. Training was a shambles and was a hang-dog kind of an operation. It was pathetic, particularly when I looked back on my own experiences in Europe in the 1960s. The difference was so dramatic that it was really alarming. So the thing that was really driving me when I went to Knox was how to help Europe. How could we at the Armored Center help get hold of those tank battalions, cavalry squadrons, and mech battalions over there, even though they didn't belong to me doctrinally, and get the people off of their butts, mentally and psychologically, with some new scheme that would at least help restore their faith in themselves and their ability to do what they were there to do. I've long believed that with soldiers, with anybody for that matter, if you get them involved in something that's a little bit different, or new, you get an immediate positive response to that, psychologically, which makes things happen just because it's different. The Hawthorne Experiment, which I think I talked about the other day, is a good example of that. It doesn't make any difference what you do with the music level, or the light levels, or anything else, because the people think they're involved in some kind of experiment, something that's a little bit different, and all sorts of good things begin to happen. In short, you're working on the group psychology. I was not at all sure how much Fort Knox could do about that, but I was convinced that it was a problem throughout the Army as a whole about which we had to do something. So I guess I was driven by the same sort

of motivation that drove General DePuy, although I did not have his vast combat experience as a background. Anyway, that's what was behind my personal impetus in revising armored operational concepts -- what we spend, organization, equipment, and everything else. And, after I got to Knox, I went back and forth to Europe. We'd go around to the battalions and the squadrons, trying to talk to people about what was going on and what was coming up. Of course it takes a long time for that stuff to gestate in the training system, in the school system, and in the development system. And so, as time wore on, it was more and more apparent that that lag, time-wise, was preventing us, really, from producing the results that we thought we needed to produce in Europe. As a matter of fact, when I was there as corps commander, there was still a lot of that going on. As a corps commander, one of the reasons I took them out on the ground and made them walk around and describe how we were going to accomplish our mission was because we had a lot of new weapons coming in. We had new doctrine. When I went there I got General DePuy to send me several hundred draft copies of the new FM 100-5. We passed them out and made people use them. We also had some draft manuals from Knox which we passed out and made the people use them. Just to show you how people reacted to that, I had one brigade commander who had done a very unsatisfactory job of describing what his brigade was to do out there. I told him, "Look, I gave you a copy of this thing. You're supposed to read it and do what it says. Why aren't you doing that?" "Well," he said, "General, that's not going to be approved, that manual." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, "Well, it's not approved. It doesn't have the Chief of Staff's signature in the front of it. All it is is a draft out of that TRADOC place, and I've worked in the Chief of Staff's office a lot, and I can just tell you that that manual is never going to get approved. You're talking about something that's never going to happen." I happened to know at the time that the Chief had approved the thing the week before, which I knew he would all along. So I said to this colonel, "You're making a judgment. Now here I am, the Corps

Commander, and you are the Brigade Commander in this division, right? You understand that, right?" He understood that. I said, "I am telling you as the Corps Commander that this is the way we're going to fight the war here until somebody tells us not to. But you're telling me that you're not going to do that." He said, "That's right, because it's never going to get approved. It isn't signed by the Chief of Staff of the Army." I said, "Okay, Colonel, I thank you for your opinion. I would like you to turn your brigade over to your executive officer. Your successor will be on station as quickly as we can find somebody to succeed you." So we replaced him that afternoon. I got the new guy in and I gave him some instructions and turned the battalion commanders around. It was a good brigade after that. But here is a colonel in the United States Army, saying to his corps commander, "That's bullshit, General. That's never going to get approved. Therefore, I ain't gonna do it." That's insubordination! That's what that is.

INTERVIEWER: And also not very smart.

GEN STARRY: Well, right, you could say that about it. But the first reaction is it's insubordination. I told that story because it was a mindset. I don't know what he thought we were going to do. He had a lousy brigade. I mean, they were all there. That was also the brigade in which I found the battalion commander who had never been to a General Defense Position before. The colonel didn't think that was important. The colonel, himself, had never been out to his GDP [General Defense Position] until the Division Commander made him go out because he knew that I was going to come and talk with him about it and listen to him tell me what they were going to do. The man had never gone out there to figure out how his brigade was going to fight the battle. I asked him about that before we had this other conversation. "Well," he says, "this isn't important to me. What's important to me are the statistics -- the AWOL rate, the number of phone calls to the Dial CINC system, the 2715s--and we're having trouble in the motor pool, as you know from reading the 2715s--and so on. The

community affairs are in bad shape. I've got more important things to do than to be out here doing this." There was a lot of that. So you've just got to get them up and out of those holes and get them doing something that relates to their mission. The people, themselves, in the end, the battalion commanders and the brigade commanders in that corps, convinced themselves that we could fight and win using the doctrine laid down in that draft manual and the supporting documents that we passed out. We were sitting down in the 3rd Armored Division sector one afternoon and the battalion commanders in the brigade were telling their stories about how to fight the battle. We were back in about the third set of defensive positions, and had worked out the whole equation about how we were going to move, who was going to cover while we moved, and so on. We were sitting there on the side of this hill on a lovely summer afternoon when the Brigade Commander turned and looked at me and said, "You know, General, I think we've won the damn battle." Now, he said that! All I did was take him out there and make him work out the equation. They convinced themselves that they were gonna win. Now, we had some problems. I thought about that statement afterwards, and had said to him at the time, "There's another echelon coming over the hill. What are you going to do about that?" This further reinforced my concern for what to do about follow-on echelons. It was then that I realized that that was my problem. As the corps commander, I had to solve that problem. That started what later became the AirLand Battle in which we had a full-blown concept for the attack of the follow-on echelons. But the people, the sergeants and the officers, convinced themselves that they could win. That's what you have to do. There's no way for me to go over there and stand up on a pulpit and make a speech, "Hey, guys, if you do this, this will happen and you'll win." They convinced themselves, particularly so in view of the mindset they were in in the first place. But how we can let an Army sink to those levels? I don't care what the problems were, how we could let them sink to that level of despondency is beyond my comprehension.

[End Tape S-211, side l]

[Begin Tape S-211, side 2]

INTERVIEWER: Shortly after the initial distribution of the 1976 version of the FM 100-5, there was widespread, shall we say, criticism. To whom would you attribute that, or was it actually a fallacy in FM 100-5 itself? And, to follow that up a bit, I think before you got to Europe as a corps commander there were already a few draft copies over there. Is that correct?

GEN STARRY: To the best of my knowledge, the only ones that were there were those that I took along with me, and that was, you know, just two or three. In fact, those were preliminary drafts. I'm not even sure we had a draft, because I sent a message after I went out and looked around a little bit, and realized just how poorly we were doing--I sent a message to General DePuy asking that he send us some copies. We had really not made -- well, we had made some attempt to coordinate the thing with the field. And so you're probably right. There had been drafts go back and forth. How many, I'm not sure. The biggest concern we had was over the nuclear problem. We had tried to coordinate the nuclear problem with the SACEUR, but it didn't work. Given more time, or had we taken more time, we probably could've coordinated it successfully, but General DePuy wanted to publish it unclassified. It got all wrapped around the NATO classification system in the SACEUR's office. They were not willing to have us talk about nuclear war, particularly relating it to battle in Europe, in an unclassified context. So we decided to take that out. Thus the 1976 edition was very weak about nuclear war, and the reason for that was because we were going to publish a classified annex. But we tried to coordinate the thing with the SACEUR. We just were not successful. As for the criticism--and I said this yesterday, I think--how do you get guys like Bill Lind, who at that time was Senator Gary Hart's gadfly; Ed Luttwak,

teaching at Georgetown; and other people of that ilk to speak out or to even pay any attention to the thing? What you found, if you listened to Luttwak, and Lind particularly, is that Lind hadn't even read the damn thing in any detail. I'm not sure that Ed Luttwak had, either. They were the principal academic Washington kind of vocal opponents of the thing. Subsequently--and I didn't realize it at the time, but it has come to my attention off and on more and more through the years--most of that opposition, vocal opposition, came out of or was generated by the guys at Leavenworth. Whether Jack Cushman, himself, was personally involved in it I don't know. I suspect he was. I know that Ivan Birrer was, and I know that a lot of the colonels, the disappointed colonels at Leavenworth who had spent a lot of time writing that draft manual that Cushman brought to those meetings, really resented it. I mean, some of them were violently resentful of the whole thing. They were the genesis of most of the opposition to the manual, in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: How did they approach this? Was it criticism by article, or by word of mouth?

GEN STARRY: Well, they fed it to the people who they knew were the vocal critics. It's the same thing that the staff officers in the Pentagon do when they want to build support for or opposition to a program that you've got going. You go over to the Hill and get some of those staffers to work the problem. Lind is a staffer, and so they got Lind. Luttwak, I don't know who got to him. Well, I do too. There's enough evidence in my mind as to where it came from. That's why I said earlier that it was the greatest single act of individual and institutional disloyalty that I've ever observed.

INTERVIEWER: Was General Cushman actually General DePuy's deputy?

GEN STARRY: No, I think we made the guy at Leavenworth a deputy after General DePuy. I think we did that on my watch. I think you'll find, if you look back at it, that he was not then styled the deputy. He was the Commander of the Combined Arms Center. There were to be three of those: Combat Arms at Leavenworth, Administration at Ben Harrison, and Logistics at Fort Lee. I don't think he was deputy. Now the deputy thing came along when we appointed General John Roy Thurman to command Leavenworth. We made him a deputy because we wanted to promote him. I think that's when that happened, which was about the time I came to TRADOC.

INTERVIEWER: Well, at any rate there was absolutely no doubt that General Cushman added to the criticism.

GEN STARRY: He was supposed to be a coordinator. There was no question about that. The coordinator, in that case, was operating at odds with his boss. The coordinator was either not smart enough or not willing to listen to his boss. You couldn't tell Jack Cushman anything. You had to listen to him. You'd go to a meeting out there, and there'd be fifty or sixty guys. General DePuy gave them all the resources in the world. Meanwhile, I'm working with Ed Scribner and a handful of guys at Fort Knox trying to write a manual that was supposed to have been written at Leavenworth with the fifty, sixty or seventy guys he had been given to do it. I didn't necessarily resent that, because I think, when you get that many people together, you're never going to write a good piece of work. That's too many folks working on the same project. Anyway, you'd go to a meeting out there and you'd spend all day sitting in a room. There'd be forty or fifty people in the room, and everybody would sit there and listen to Jack Cushman talk all day. And, he was by no means the last word on every subject that he talked about. He was by no means an oracle. I said previously that I admire the man's intellectual ability, but he's not very practical and he never listens to anybody. He listens to himself, I

suppose, but he never listens to anybody else. Now, he was aided and abetted by Ivan Birrer, who was a good friend of mine. I liked him as an individual very much. But Ivan also falls into the category of the disloyals as far as I'm concerned, because he was egging Cushman on. In Ivan Birrer's debriefing report, submitted when he retired, there were several paragraphs that revealed a whole lot about this whole thing. He said in effect that Leavenworth was an institution apart from the rest of the Army; it exists for itself, and nobody in the rest of the Army should be telling Leavenworth what to do, and certainly not a bunch of jerks over at Fort Monroe. The tone of his commentary was resentful that anybody like General DePuy should intrude on the sacred grounds of Leavenworth's responsibility to the rest of the Army. He and Jack Cushman were good friends; they'd been friends ever since Jack Cushman was a captain out there on the faculty. A lot of Cushman's problem was Ivan Birrer.

INTERVIEWER: What was his position at that time?

GEN STARRY: He was probably the educational advisor at that time, or whatever we called them in those days. The title of that fellow changed, but he was essentially the educational advisor for a long, long time. He's a good guy, a curriculum developer and a lot of other things, but he was in over his head and, over the years, he had become very possessive. He'd been there a while. He was the old civil servant who stayed while the generals came and went. Over time he'd become very possessive about the place. He thought it belonged to him. And he certainly believed that it had some kind of a role in the Army system that was independent of anything else the Army was doing. That may be true, but there needs to be some checks and balances on it, nonetheless. And there needs to be some guidance from the top. I love the place. When I commanded TRADOC I tried to restore it to some of its former glory. That's why we introduced things like CAS3 [Combined Arms and Services Staff School], second year courses (SAMS) [School for Advanced Military Studies], and

some of the other things that they're doing out there. I insisted that the 1982 FM 100-5 manual be written out there. Even though I wrote a lot of it myself, ostensibly it was written under the Leavenworth label, and when it finally came out it had that in the book. I participated in that writing no less than General DePuy did in the 1976 edition but, having watched the reaction to the 1976 edition, and having sensed at least some part of what I just said about the Leavenworth guys being the generators of a lot of the opposition to it, I was convinced that we had to somehow write the next edition of that manual at Leavenworth, even though that would mean that I wasn't going to participate in it as fully as General DePuy did in the earlier one. So we had no meetings at A. P. Hill or any of that stuff. And we got a very, very smart colonel named Huba Wass deCzege, who was really the principal author of that thing. Had it not been for Huba, it never would have gotten written, either. It's got some shortcomings, and they're all my fault or Huba's fault. Were he here I'm sure he'd be the first one to say the same thing. But at least we wrote it out there and did not give the world the impression that we were going off into the jungles at A. P. Hill all by ourselves with a handful of three or four guys sitting around a table, cobbling up some kind of doctrine for the Army as a whole.

INTERVIEWER: Was General Cushman moved as a result of this controversy, or did he serve a normal tour?

GEN STARRY: Yes. They promoted him and sent him to command I Corps Group in Korea, which I thought was a mistake, as did a lot of people. He retired from that job. General DePuy was anxious to get him out of Leavenworth. In fact he passed through Fort Knox one night, spent the night with me, and allowed as how he was on his way out to relieve Jack Cushman, but he never did it. I never asked him what happened.

INTERVIEWER: General DePuy must have tacitly, at least, approved the promotion.

GEN STARRY: Nope. I was sitting in his office the morning the Chief of Staff called and told him what he was going to do, and I remember General DePuy saying to the Chief of Staff, "Fred, you're making a mistake."

INTERVIEWER: This was General Weyand?

GEN STARRY: General Weyand, yes.

INTERVIEWER: One other question on the 1976 version of FM 100-5. We've already talked about one of the problems with it, which I don't personally think was universally recognized. Apparently you recognized it, but most people hadn't begun to think about the second echelon at that time. The other problem was the nuclear problem. One of the greatest criticisms, as I read the literature, was the elimination of, you might say, the human dimension, coupled with the elimination of the age-old principles of war. Many people felt there was too much of a systems approach rather than a human approach, and that the manual gave no weight to the human dimension.

GEN STARRY: Too statistical was the charge that was made against it.

INTERVIEWER: I think we've discussed many reasons for the development of the doctrine contained in FM 100-5, such as coming out of the Vietnam syndrome, recognizing Europe as a primary threat, and the modernization of the Army. Now it's obvious that one of the things driving all of you was the 1973 war and the lessons learned from that. One of the lessons learned from that, according to most people, was the emergence of the hand-held tank destroyers, if you want to call it that.

GEN STARRY: ATGMs [Antitank Guided Missile].

INTERVIEWER: I'm using someone else's term. It's felt in many circles that many people at that time felt that the ATGM was coming into an era of pre-eminence and that the tank and the APC [Armored Personnel Carrier] may be doomed. However, I think we found out later that this was not the case because we could develop tanks that could handle that. Given all of that, the criticism and the lack of acceptance of FM 100-5 was due primarily to what?

GEN STARRY: It's hard to tell, because no one that talked about it, particularly the most vocal of those who talked about, Lind and Luttwak and so on, really came forth with any substantive commentary. Lind kept talking about maneuver warfare and so on. I don't know what he meant. He never said what he meant. The argument that we were too statistical and whatnot I suppose was a valid charge. But, at the same time, one of the other things that was in my mind, in addition to trying to get the Army in Europe, the Army as a whole, off of its ass and moving ahead was trying to solve the problem we faced in Europe. I had become almost totally convinced that we were never, ever going to get permission to use nuclear weapons. And yet the whole structure of the defensive scheme depended on the use of tactical nuclear weapons at some point in the battle. The SACEUR now testifies, depending on what year you catch him, that he has somewhere between six and ten days before he's got to use nukes. I was never convinced, first of all, that we were going to get permission to use them; secondly, I was never convinced that the mechanisms we had for their use, the target analysis and direction capability, were going to be adequate to use nuclear weapons in the tactical mode. When I was an instructor at Fort Holabird, another officer and I invented a target analysis system for use in the tactical employment of nuclear weapons. Someone like an FO [forward observer] could work that problem, because I was convinced that--if you were going to use small yield weapons in that close--then you had to have a faster response

mechanism in terms of target analysis than we had built for ourselves. The purpose of that study, which essentially led to the tabular systems that we now use as opposed to the old curves, was generated out of our desire to create a system that was responsive to the commander at the tactical level. That was the other problem. One of the underlying purposes, in my mind at least, of the whole exercise of doctrinal revision was to try to figure out how we could fight and win when outnumbered, and do so below the nuclear threshold. Now that says you've got to pay attention to numbers. What are the numbers? The Russians are great on this, and I think perhaps they overdo it, but I don't know. They analyze everything. They crunch the numbers in seven different directions and come out with these statistical analyses of battle for which they're so famous. But, at the same time, crunching the numbers and moving them around, and analyzing them in different ways, gives you insights into how to fight the battle. And looking at, listening to, and reading what the threat guys say about that same problem gives you some further insights into the battle. So I would argue that it's necessary to do some kind of analysis simply to inform your judgment--not necessarily to base the analysis on some number that's below a line that you draw at the bottom of the page, but to inform your opinion and to inform your analysis of the subject at hand. So I do not believe that the criticism that that manual was based too much on statistical analysis is well-founded. The purpose of that analysis--and perhaps we laid too much of it out in the book, I don't know--was to inform us and form our opinion and judgments about how to fight the battle outnumbered and win, and to do so below the nuclear threshold. This was part of the follow-on echelon problem. If you can win the battle up at the FLOT, and do so in the second or third battle position back, what are you going to do about the second echelon front? Do you have enough left to fight that fellow, or do you have to, as the SACEUR says, turn to the nukes? That's essentially what he's saying. Well, the answer is, if you can get the forces deployed there in time, you can fight the second echelon. There are four echelons of Soviet forces between the Inter-Zonal

Border in Germany and the borders of European Russia, and we are going to have to fight at least three of those four echelons and probably all four of them. We're not going to succeed against the first of those echelons, whichever echelon that turns out to be, unless we can prevent the follow-on echelon from loading up the front-line battle. In fact, if we let them load up the front-line battle, it turns out there are not enough nuclear weapons on board to do that. So, even if you use nukes, you're not going to achieve success. You've still got to do something with the follow-on echelons. And the question is, "Can you do that conventionally?" Well, technology seems to promise the means--perhaps not at this very moment, but then again, perhaps at this very moment. Who knows? The means are there to attack the follow-on echelons, but they're not very well coordinated and they're not very well tied together. The surveillance and target acquisition means all go down in the downlinks that are closely guarded by all of these intelligence agencies and other agencies of the national government. But they're not linked together, so the information flow is difficult. Still, they're there! And I maintain that, even though we don't have a full spectrum of air-launched cruise missiles, ground-launched cruise missiles, or MLRS [Multiple-Launch Rocket System] deployed yet, we do have a growing capability in that regard. But the thing we lack most dramatically is the command and control capability over the intelligence systems, the surveillance systems, and so on that will provide the corps commander and the army group commander with the kind of information he needs in a timely way to go after the follow-on echelons. We'll never know whether or not we've got enough sensors in the air or in space. We'll never know whether or not we've got enough weapons systems to successfully interdict the follow-on echelons until we wire all that stuff together and make some kind of an analysis based on the numbers. We need to do that to determine whether or not we can really fight that war over there successfully when outnumbered, and do so below the nuclear threshold. We can do it in Korea. If you look at the Korean War plans and at the way that battle turns out, there aren't that

many echelons, and that's the secret. They're not looking at four echelons; they're only looking at about two plus. And someday, someplace along about the 10th or 12th day of the battle over there, if the scenario unfolds along the lines of central tendency, the Korean and US forces are going to win that battle, and the war--unless someone else intervenes, of course. But the problem in Europe is just echelon after echelon and the growing strength of the Soviet conventional forces. I maintain that that's why the Soviets have undertaken such an enormous improvement in their conventional forces. If you read the Soviet literature over the last 15 years or so, they themselves are struggling with the problem that I've just outlined -- how to fight the theater-level war and win it without having to resort to nuclear weapons. They do that, in large measure, because we have always linked the first 8-inch round that goes out with intercontinental nuclear warfare. They have never done that. They have always believed that you could fight successfully at the theater level and win. Their impetus towards conventional development, improving their conventional forces over the years--the last twenty years, I would say--I think has occurred in large measure, if you read their literature, because they just can't solve that nuclear dilemma. So they said to themselves, "Okay, guys, we need to build a conventional capability that is so impressive and so overwhelming, in the other guy's eyes as well as ours, that all we're going to have to say to him one day is, 'Look, don't do that or we will do this.' " Nuclear weapons are not part of that equation. Meanwhile, we're trying to solve that, at least I myself was trying to solve that same equation, with the additional factor that we are always going to be outnumbered conventionally and nuclear-wise, as well as in the theater systems. They've got the Frogs, guns and Scaleboards at the theater level. We have never deployed a theater ballistic system, nor have we ever concentrated on their theater ballistic systems as primary targets. Now that's the first thing we ought to destroy -- their theater ballistic systems and theater air defense system. We have never adequately concentrated.

INTERVIEWER: But the Soviets realize that if they get too overwhelming numbers in conventional systems, that they're going to drive us to go nuclear?

GEN STARRY: Well, I don't know. I think that's a risk they're willing to run. Don't forget, they didn't start the conventional development that's now underway until after they thought they had nuclear parity. And nuclear parity, in their view, is that they are just a little bit better than we are. So, if you look at the theater nuclear imbalance and at the intercontinental nuclear imbalance, I would argue that they have a substantial margin, certainly in theater nuclear systems, and they have a comfortable margin in intercontinental ballistics systems. Because of that baseline, then, they were willing to proceed on an enormous conventional growth program against a backdrop of a nuclear force with which they were comfortable.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, in February of 1976 you took command of V Corps. At that time you were working for General Blanchard, who was the USAREUR commander. Had you worked with him before?

GEN STARRY: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know at this time who nominated you and how you were picked for that job?

GEN STARRY: No, I don't. As I said earlier, I was comfortably rocking in my swivel chair behind my desk at Fort Knox one rainy afternoon when the phone rang and my secretary came bouncing in and said, "The Chief of Staff of the Army is on the telephone." And sure enough, he was. I said, "You're kidding me!" and she responded, "No, no. He's on the phone." I had heard that Bob Fair was in trouble, but I had not heard just

how much trouble. I had no idea that he was on the verge of being relieved for cause, and I certainly had no idea that I was to become his replacement. You know, I'd been a major general for what, almost three years at that time. I didn't know what major generals had to do to get promoted. I wasn't worried very much about that at all. So it was a bolt out of the gray afternoon sky. I'm sure General DePuy had a big hand in it. General Abrams may have had a hand in it, although he was dead by then. What passed between him and General Weyand before he left, I don't know. I think General DePuy probably had a big hand in it.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that you were compatible with General Blanchard once you arrived?

GEN STARRY: Well, I knew he was a little bit leery of me. At least I sensed that he was a little bit leery of me. By that time, of course, he had heard all the comments about how we were trying to take over the Army and whatnot as you mentioned yesterday. So I suspect he was a little apprehensive about me. But I sensed that almost from the beginning and I tried to work around it and not do too many wild and harebrained-looking things. All we did was go out and walk around on the ground and figure out how to fight the battle and how to train for it. He couldn't argue much about that.

INTERVIEWER: When you arrived there, you mentioned yesterday about not having any furniture in your house. Did you go back and occupy the previous set of quarters used by the corps commander?

GEN STARRY: Well, no, because the agreement that we had about the house downtown with the Germans was that, once we were done with it, it reverted to the ownership of the city of Frankfurt. The city of Frankfurt didn't want it; they didn't know what to do with it. The furnishings were gone. We had put them in the Quartermaster warehouse and all the

generals' wives in Europe had come and raided it. A lot of it disappeared into the bins of the German civilians in the Quartermaster warehouse, and into some of the American civilians' bins I suspect. I spent a year trying to find a lot of it and get it back into the house that we then occupied but, by the time I got there, the furniture was gone. There was no way to move into it. I subsequently had the Germans come to me and really plead with me to move back down there. I pointed out the furniture problem, and the response from some of the wealthier ones was, "We will furnish it with whatever you want in it if you'll just move back down there. It's just not possible to have the senior American in this area not living in the middle of Frankfurt where he has been ever since the High Commissioner was here." Well, it just turned out not to be possible. I talked with General Blanchard about it several times. He gave it considerable thought and, between the two of us, we finally decided that it just didn't make any sense.

INTERVIEWER: Were you living out at Bad Vilbel?

GEN STARRY: Yes, at Bad Vilbel.

INTERVIEWER: Was it furnished with your own personal furniture?

GEN STARRY: No, we finally found Quartermaster furniture. We didn't take any furniture from the States. You're not allowed to take your furniture with you. I would have had to sign a certificate that said I had to have it to do my job, and I didn't believe that, although Bob Fair had done that. So we went around and found enough Quartermaster furniture for the place. It wasn't very satisfactory, but it was enough.

INTERVIEWER: Perhaps this is not too important in the relative scheme of things, but I can't believe that the staff at V Corps allowed you to come in without having furniture in the house designated for you to live in.

[End Tape S-211, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-212, side 1]

GEN STARRY: Of course I saw the household furnishings officer, who I later had to relieve. He was a civilian who I later had to fire for incompetence. They had made some desultory attempts; there were some chairs around and that kind of stuff. But they hadn't even bothered to clear out the office that the Fairs had used in that little study room off of the front entranceway in the quarters. So there hadn't been much done. Whether or not anybody in charge had paid any attention to it, I don't know. Sergeant Norman and I made out all right.

INTERVIEWER: Due to the relief of General Fair, were there a multitude of problems that you had to straighten out when you first took command, such as German-American relations, training of the corps, and the board that you mentioned earlier pertaining to the 2715? Was that General Fair's idea or his predecessor's?

GEN STARRY: No, that was him. That was his invention. I don't know the full story of his problem. I know a lot of things about it, but what actually happened to set him crossways with General Blanchard, with the SACEUR, and General Knowlton, I'm really not qualified to say. That's recorded somewhere, I'm sure. He had only been there four or five months, and apparently he had come there from commanding the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Hood. He brought with him a training program that had worked for him at Fort Hood, which was a way to train a unit in the States. I'm not sure that, had I been a division commander in the States, I would have done it that way, but that's a matter of opinion. There was nothing fundamentally wrong with it. But essentially it was a system in which you rotated your training in such a way that about one-third of your force was, in effect, stood down at any given time to take care of all

the administrative things -- language training, GED [General Educational Development] training and all sorts of administrative, incidental or non-related to the combat mission type things. Now I say that, at a post like Fort Hood, where the facilities are crowded and the training facilities are limited, and given the circumstances of units in the States at the time, that may have been appropriate for Fort Hood. But it was a totally non-relevant training program for V Corps, or for any deploying corps for that matter. Totally non-relevant! He had served in V Corps before as a junior officer. He should have known better. His program just didn't match the circumstances. It was something you shouldn't and couldn't do, given the mission. He apparently arrived with that document, the 2nd Armored Division document, handed it to the G-3, and said, "Implement that in this corps," without ever going around to look, so I'm told, to see what the training situation was, what the circumstances were, and what really needed to be done. He then said that the training system was all wrong. Apparently he was paying a lot of attention, according to this maintenance board that I described the other day, to things that really were not the corps commander's responsibility. He had brought with him an officer from Fort Hood to be his G-3, whom I later had to get rid of. He wasn't flexible enough to change out of the system that he had seen at Fort Hood. General Fair brought him over with him and had promised him that, if he came over there to be a G-3, he'd make him a general. So there he was, but he was not qualified to be a corps G-3 in any way, shape, or form. He was a nice, good officer, I'm sure, but not qualified. Since he had only been there a short period of time, there really had not been sufficient time for a lot of the things that he was doing to filter down to the units. Also the division commanders provided a buffer between the corps commander and their units as best they could. He would appear on the kaserne in civilian clothes in the middle of the night, bowling his way through the gate to check various things on the kaserne, which obviously was the cause of some consternation. So there was some erratic behavior that they were having a little difficulty with. Because of that

reporting system I described previously, he by-passed the division, brigade, and battalion commanders and dealt directly with the company, battery and troop commanders on maintenance matters. So it was obvious that the first thing I had to do was change the training system. But just to change the training system and say that the Fort Hood training style was not appropriate in V Corps didn't appear to me to be sufficient. The training system had to have a grander purpose. So I tried to create that grander purpose by taking them out on the ground and working the battle-fighting part of the corps responsibility and then relating the training to that. I also got rid of that thing where you had one-third of your force stood down all the time. You just couldn't do that. You couldn't meet your mission requirements if you had your people scattered doing everything for three or four weeks at a time. I guess it's fair to say that I think he was relieved largely because he began to fabricate things and lie about things, or so I'm told anyway, to his superiors as well as to his subordinates. That began to surface, and someone appealed to General Haig, who turned it over to General Bill Knowlton, the Chief of Staff of EUCOM [European Command (US)]. The Knowlton- Blanchard equation was what eventually brought about his downfall, but it had to do with integrity rather than disagreeing with the training system or anything else. That's about as much as I know about it.

INTERVIEWER: It doesn't sound like you encountered any major problems when you took command.

GEN STARRY: There were a lot of them. We still had the overriding problem of the fact that they really weren't over that hangdog kind of thing that I described a few moments ago. And we had to do that! I knew that we had to get the new doctrine over there and get it working. I suppose that, if General DePuy had a hand in my going there, it was for that purpose. In fact we later became known as TRADOC East in V Corps -- and not without some good reason.

INTERVIEWER: Was VII Corps doing the same things you were doing, trying to implement the new doctrine?

GEN STARRY: No. The problem was that all of this doctrine stuff had been generated in the school system in the States and, as I said, it takes a while for that to migrate to the field. Essentially no one over there had been paying any attention to it. In fact, in the training systems at Fort Hood, General Bob Fair was one of the big critics of what was going on in TRADOC while he was a division commander. He essentially paid no attention to us, and when we went there a couple of times to try to talk to them about tactics and get their opinions and whatnot, we got short shifted. It didn't bother me. We were still trying to figure out what to do ourselves, so all that was very useful. But no one else in USAREUR was working the problem. General Fritz Kroesen had VII Corps, and of course he had not been privy to any of this that was going on. So V Corps kind of led the way. V Corps had taken a back seat because General Blanchard, himself, had come out of VII Corps. He felt for a long time that V Corps had been the premier outfit in Europe and now it was VII Corps' turn, so they got preferential treatment. That was a problem in V Corps. It was a kind of a morale problem which we tried to correct by just getting old V Corps off its ass and out on the ground. Eventually everybody started doing it, mainly because it made good sense to do it.

INTERVIEWER: You previously mentioned the problem with Europe and that you thought it was a command problem as far as the implementation of new doctrine, living conditions, and whatnot. What commanders were you talking about?

GEN STARRY: Well, I guess I'm talking about the USAREUR commanders through those years, and probably the corps commanders as well. I'm sure that they're good guys, all of them, and I'm sure they

were acting in good conscience. I'm not sure that all of them realized what was happening to them. You almost had to be away from it for awhile and then come back, as I did, and see it now as opposed to what is was before in the mid-1960s, to understand how far down we had gone. General Polk was over there for a long time, and while I have great admiration for him, I never did think that he really realized what was going on and what was happening to his army, simply because he had nothing to compare it with. And I think that was part of the problem. One of my predecessors in V Corps was a gentleman whom I'm told never left his office except to go to official functions and so on. Essentially he didn't prowl around in the motor pools, the training areas, the tactical deployment areas, and whatnot. He did it all by reading reports and writing memorandums to people. Respectfully, I say he's a nice officer, and a good one, I'm sure, but I respectfully submit that you can't command a corps that way. You can, but it won't be a very effective organization. Now, if you went around in his organization while he was doing that, you'd realize that nobody was in charge of the damn thing. What was it supposed to be doing? There was no focus on what they were supposed to be doing. If you're there in Europe, and you've served there long enough yourself, you realize that it's a strange environment in many ways. It's divorced from the Army in the United States, and I think if you're there for a long time you simply tend not to be -- what's the right word? -- aware enough, I guess, of what's going on in the States or what's going on in your own command relative to what's happening in the rest of the Army. We have never admitted to ourselves, in my opinion, the cost of that ridiculous rotation system that we used in Vietnam which caused us to use Europe as part of the rotation base. We've never admitted or owned up to that. We've never admitted there was a mistake. We've never tried to assess the cost and, believe me, the cost was enormous. The cost was enormous in terms of facilities, troop housing, family housing, and training areas. We simply didn't do anything with them; we just let them go. We spent ten years building that back up. Now it's not for me to say, I suppose, that some fellow on the

ground could have done something about that. It may be that there wasn't money enough to do it. I don't know. But I'll tell you what, in the six years from the time I left in 1964 to the time I returned in 1970 to look at it again, everything had gone to hell in a handbag. The training areas, the family housing, the troop housing, the accommodations, the places where the people had to live and work had just gone to hell. That's unconscionable! All those good folks may have been back here in the States pounding the desk trying to improve conditions and been thrown out, I don't know. But the Army never owned up to it.

INTERVIEWER: No, sir. The most frequent things that you hear are that the morale was very poor over there at the time because it was used as a rotation base, and I know from my own experience that, as early as 1966, my battery and my battalion were at less than 50 percent strength.

GEN STARRY: That's right! Someone should have stood up and said, "Hey!" One of the things that has always interested me was the Russian response. You know damn well that the Russians knew what was going on, so why didn't they do something?

INTERVIEWER: Amazing, isn't it?

GEN STARRY: I have never been able to understand that. You know they knew what was going on. All they had to do was drive up and down the road and look at the kasernes. They're smart guys; they know a lot about that environment. Why didn't they try something?

INTERVIEWER: Perhaps they weren't ready.

GEN STARRY: Well, it may be that they looked to the other side of the world and said, "If we push him over here while he's all wrapped around

that problem over there, he may get desperate and do something that we will both regret." It may be that that held them off, I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: Another problem, too, that most commands blamed the lack of fighting ability on was that from probably around 1966 until 1977-1978 no money went into Europe. The Germans, too, at that time, were a little bit desperate for money; hence they had no money for matching funds for billets and whatnot. I guess, given those situations, other than the commander getting out into the field and being able to improve morale -- and perhaps they should have worked somebody's ass off to improve the morale -- I'm not sure what they could have done. For example, I don't think they could have gotten any more money during that period of time.

GEN STARRY: Well, that's what I said a while ago. I'm being critical, and I'm probably out of order because I wasn't there and I don't know. But at the same time, I would argue, as you just suggested, there was still an awful lot that could have been done. It's one thing to have the barracks run down; it's another thing to do something about it, even minimal things. And my impression of them in the early 1970s was that they were sitting there on their asses, waiting for someone to come and do something. There was no initiative being taken at any level. My oldest son was an artilleryman and was in a barracks over there, one of the old German barracks from way back. As you know, they are solid old buildings, but they tend to get dingy-looking very quickly. He was an FO and battery executive officer with a subsequent tour as a battery commander over there, and I said to him one time, "Mike, why don't you do something with these damn barracks?" "Well," he said, "somebody else is supposed to do that." "No, no," I said. "You don't have to let the plaster fall off of the walls and just leave it lying there. Somebody can clean the damn stuff up and you could patch the plaster. You can get the stuff to do that. You can have a self-help program down here and at least make your battery area

look decent." I said the same thing to his battalion commander, who said, "Oh, no, we've been told to stay away from that. They're going to do it for us." So they were all sitting there waiting for someone to come in and fix them. Let me tell you something--I was over there in 1949, 1950 and 195l, and there wasn't any money back then, either. I mean, there was no money in those days. I remember when I was a lieutenant I put -- and lieutenants in those days could ill-afford to do this -- about $25 a month into a fund that Lieutenant Patton and the rest of us kept to buy paint to paint the barracks. We actually bought the paint and the ladders -- I guess we rented the ladders in the end -- and we bought those big old German bamboo sticks they used to paint the high walls with. We bought that stuff and painted the damn barracks ourselves because we couldn't get anybody else to do it. Now, I'm not suggesting that everybody ought to do that, but having had that background, I can testify that a little initiative will do a lot to keep a place clean, neat, orderly, and looking like a soldierly enterprise--even though, in general, it isn't as well maintained as it ought to be. But, you know, the Engineers come and do grand things to a barracks -- big plumbing, big heating repairs and whatnot. But the simple little housekeeping things that you need to do to keep a place looking nice, looking soldierly and orderly, they weren't doing. It was a lack of initiative at all levels. They were sitting there waiting for somebody to come and fix it up for them. It should have been obvious for a long time that nobody was going to come and fix it for them. That's the thing I really objected to, the lack of initiative, just as there was no initiative in the battle-fighting sense. They were just sitting there, waiting for somebody else to fix things.

INTERVIEWER: During your tour as V Corps commander did you begin to get some money for improvements?

GEN STARRY: The barracks improvement programs had begun. I don't remember when they began, but it was a couple of years before.

However, we weren't a quarter of the way through. I don't remember the name of the program, but the first of the big barracks improvement and housing improvement programs was fairly well underway; it was about 25 percent done, or something like that. Money was being made available to fix them. The thing that concerned me, even then, was that it wasn't enough just to fix them once. There had to be a program because, by the time we were finished with the program, the ones that we had done first were going to need redoing. As a matter of fact, before we were through with the program, you were going to have to go back and start doing over again the ones you did first. There has to be a continuing program, and somebody needed to program that out. We had not done a very good job of that. There was money becoming available, and I guess the great thing I did for V Corps was finally get the motor pool in Fulda paved. It wasn't paved until after I left, but I arranged the program to have that sucker paved. To my personal knowledge, since 1949 the unit that was up there, first the 14th Cavalry and then the 11th Cavalry, had been wandering around in the mud and the rocks on the top of that hill. Nobody had the brains to go out there and say, "Let's spend a little money paving the motor pool." We finally did it.

INTERVIEWER: I remember my first sergeant standing in my motor pool and saying, "You know, we've been here so long we could have stolen enough cement."

GEN STARRY: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: It might interest you to know that there are still about 30 to 40 percent of the motor pools in V Corps that are not paved. It seems like that is one of the easiest things in the world to do, yet has the largest payoff.

GEN STARRY: That's right. And it isn't all that expensive, either. You're talking about pouring concrete, which isn't all that expensive. It isn't cheap, but it isn't expensive.

INTERVIEWER: You already mentioned that you got V Corps started on FM 100-5 and implementing the provisions therein. I think you talked about trying to improve morale and emphasize warfighting capabilities, rather than just doing maintenance or housekeeping. You mentioned terrain walks. What other things, sir, did you do for V Corps in terms of getting it ready to fight the battle?

GEN STARRY: Well, I was only there 16 months and, I'll tell you what, I didn't try to measure what else I did. As for the maintenance situation, as I pointed out, we were about 56 percent operationally ready when I got there. Within a few months we were at 98 percent and stayed there till I left. That was a situation that took care of itself. Once the corps commander got out of the micro-management of the thing, it took care of itself.

INTERVIEWER: Let's put the question another way. Since you only stayed 16 months, were you reasonably satisfied when you left that V Corps was ready to take its rightful place and do its job?

GEN STARRY: Yes, I think so. What would I have done had I stayed longer? I was just beginning to figure that out when I left. But it was obvious that the terrain walks and the training related to the battlefighting and the doctrine had begun to take hold. The troops had convinced themselves that it was necessary to do that, and it was beginning to take hold. So the question was, "What are we going to do next?" I really hadn't quite made up my mind. There was still more work to be done on the battle plans, still more terrain walks ahead, and so on. Because guys turn over all the time, you're always looking at a bunch of new faces out

there when you go out on a terrain walk. So all of that has to be done over and over again. The community alerting thing bothered me. That's an important part of a soldier's life. I think you ought to start with the warfighting part of it, but at the same time you need to pay some attention to how the soldier lives and how his family lives. So we had started sprucing up the communities in terms of management as well as facilities. We started a little of what we called Community Life. It's a name that has been used in many places. But at Knox, where we did it--I did it based on my wife's recommendation as a matter of fact -- Fort Knox has about 4,000 and some-odd sets of quarters. At the time we were there, they had more family quarters than any other post in the United States, and yet they spent less money on their family quarters than most posts in the United States. They showed it. There was a lot of dissatisfaction, unhappy wives and unhappy families, because of the way they were having to live. Unfortunately the engineering workforce wasn't very responsive to that, plus we had limited funds. I went to General DePuy and said, "I have got to have some money," and he said, "I'll give you the money if you'll save some and make it available." He said, "I'll give you 'x' million," I think it was $10 million, "if you'll save three or four million in the next year or so, and if you can show me a program which will get the most out of that money." So, instead of getting the engineers to work on that, I put the families to work on that. As we talked about this one night, my wife recommended that we start a program whereby we involve the families in the improvement of their communities. So, as we talked about it, she said, "Those housing areas are geographically isolated at Fort Knox. What if we elected mayors in each one of those communities, and had the mayors appoint town councils, and let them establish the priorities as to what they want done to fix their place up? Can you do that?" And I said, "I don't see why not." So we did it. We had community elections and elected the mayors. In the first round they were all women, as a matter of fact. We allowed them to appoint their town councils, arranged however they wanted. But, they had to have a council, because there were some

functional things that needed to be done. I got the mayors together and I laid out the budget for them. I said, "Here's what's available. Now, here's what I'm going to do. First of all, you are going to establish the priorities in your housing area and determine what needs to be fixed. We're going to match that with the engineers' perception of what needs to be fixed, and then we'll rationalize the two somehow. Secondly, I'm going to make available to you some discretionary money. In other words, there's going to be a part of that money that you're going to use to do things that you want to do that are not in our program. I'm just going to seal off a certain amount of money to do the things that you think you want done." In one case it turned out to be an RV park. The recreational vehicles were parked all over the streets. The kids were darting in and out, which was dangerous, and it looked cluttered. They couldn't get back and forth with their cars. So the first thing that community wanted was a recreational vehicle park. Well, that's pretty simple -- put up some chain link fence, put down a pad, put the RVs out there and provide for some controlled access. So we did that. Well, the engineers resented it. The whole engineering system just resented the hell out of that, but I made the mayors a part of my personal council on that. In the three budgets of Fort Knox, maybe four, over which I had any control, we spent about $40 million on family housing. That was more money than had been spent altogether in the preceding 20 years on family housing. It shows you how bad the neglect level was. One area, I remember, needed roofs--all the houses needed to be reroofed.

[End Tape S-212, side 1]

[Begin Tape S-212, side 2]

GEN STARRY: It was a big contract. As I recall, we engineered it at something like the $4.5 million level. Some guy bid $2.8 million and they gave it to him. When I looked at the difference between what we had engineered it at, and what he had bid -- and won the award as the lowest

bidder -- I realized what he was going to try to do was make up, at my expense, the difference between $2.8 and $4.5 million. So we got the wives and the mayor of that particular area together, and I said, "Okay, prepare a briefing," which she and her staff gave. They got all the housewives together and said, "All right, here's what is going to be done. These guys are going to come and put in the roofs, and here's the schedule." I allowed them to make out the schedule to suit the traffic patterns, the schools, and everything else. They worked up the schedule of how the roofing was going to be replaced. We went down through the contract with them and showed them what the roofer was supposed to do, what he was not supposed to do, and what he was forbidden from doing. He's not going to slop tar all over the front of your house; he can't mash the bushes; he's got to leave in place all the things that were in the contract. If those things don't happen, you call the mayor and the mayor will call me, the Chief of Staff, or a central office that we have established." One of the reasons for that was that, after I looked at the size of the contract, I realized that the guy was going to try to rip us off. I told the chief of staff that I wanted to hire some more quality control guys. He told me that we didn't have the money to hire quality control guys, as only so much was provided by the contract and the contractor was going to provide some. The contractor was going to evaluate his own performance! I said, "Okay, we are going to make these wives quality control quality assurance people." In the end, the contractor came around to see me and said, "You've got to get these women off my back." I asked him what was going on, and he said, "Well, here are the complaints." I said, "You make me a list of the complaints, then you and I will go over them one-by-one with the contract laid out beside us. If you've got a legitimate complaint about one of the complaints I'll be happy to take care of it. But if the wives' complaints are legitimate, then you and I are going to have to have a talk about why you're not performing according to contract." Fortunately for me, there was not a single complaint on that list that was not validated by the contract. He finally came back to me several

days later and said, "General, let me tell you what's going on. I bought this contract, as you obviously have figured out, to try to keep my workforce alive. I'm waiting for this big project up in Louisville to develop. I've been doing work down here for 25 years and I suppose, by your terms, I've been ripping you off for 25 years. You're the first guy who caught me at it. I'll tell you what I'm going to do, I'm going to perform on that contract. It's going to cost me about $l.5 million to do it, but I'm going to do exactly like the contract says because I really admire what you're doing. Somebody should have done it a long time ago. I guess, all things considered, philosophically, I've made enough off Fort Knox so that I can afford to do it." And he did! He went ahead and did it.

INTERVIEWER: Quite an admission.

GEN STARRY: But if you don't terrorize them they'll slack off. I used to ride around in a jeep and my aide would carry a bucket. We'd go around the post visiting the paving contractors, and I'd just scoop up a bucket of what they were using and send it to be analyzed. Nine times out of ten they had a bunch of crap in the paving material that wasn't supposed to be there, which degraded the quality. Just driving down the street one day I stopped and picked up a bucket of paint from a painter. It was about half gone, and I said, "You've got a new bucket?" He said, "I've got one in my truck." And I said, "Well, give me the old bucket." We sent it away to be analyzed and it had twice as much water in it as it was supposed to have. The guy was giving us watered down paint, half and half, and he was pocketing the other half. So I threatened to take him to court. In any case, the painter came around and said, "What do you want me to do?" I said, "I want to you to paint all that stuff over again with paint that's certified, and you and I are going to inspect it." He did and we did. Now you only have to do a little bit of that. It worked at Knox because it was a post with a fence around it. It's a neatly contained thing. But it really paid returns. The people began feeling like they had some involvement in the

quality of life in the place where they lived. They put up an RV park and got the RVs off the street. People would look around and say, "Hey, we did that!" It wasn't that I had done it; it was we did it. "We said we wanted that and it got done." You only have to do that once or twice and everybody becomes a believer. When we went to V Corps I wanted to start something like that, and yet I was reluctant to do it for the very reasons that I described about General Fair. You can't walk into someplace new and function like you did in the last place. It may not be the same environment. So I was reluctant to start that. I asked my wife to take a look at the situation, because by this time she was the expert on community life. "Go take a look at that, and then let's decide together whether or not it's something that's worthwhile doing, that is needed, and how much of a return we would get for the effort it would take." Well, we finally did it after I fussed around with it for about six or eight months. But we finally did it. I'm sorry we didn't do it sooner, because it paid enormous dividends. Same thing as at Fort Knox, the money was there and it would have been spent anyway. What we really did was give the people who lived there some feeling that they were involved in polishing up the appearance, livability, and quality of the place they lived in. It just paid enormous dividends. It needed more work, a lot more work, and had I stayed there longer I think we would have spent a lot of time working on that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the community system is working in Germany?

GEN STARRY: It's a difficult situation. If you look back to the early days in Europe, when I first went over there in the late 1940s, we had a system of little sub-posts. There was a military post and a military sub-post. Frankfurt was a military post. All the little kasernes for miles around Frankfurt -- Friedberg, Gelnhausen, Hanau -- were sub-posts of the Frankfurt Military Post. There was an enormous staff structure. Frankfurt

had a staff, and then there were area commands above the posts. There was a very elaborate structure. It was expensive in terms of manpower and everything else. Of course they did away with that. In the 1960s that all went away and the community eventually evolved as a substitute. The support structure in the old area command system, the post and sub-post systems, tended to live for its own benefit and was not very supportive of the troops. You had an awful time getting anything out of those people because they, the Germans particularly, tended to stay there forever more. You had an entrenched civil bureaucracy that was much worse than the United States Civil Service -- if that's possible. They came to believe that they owned the place themselves, because the Americans kept coming and going and they were the only thing that stayed. In the end it became pretty non-supportive. It was a difficult situation, even in the beginning. The community thing that we have now, depending on how much effort the community commander is willing to put into it, seems to me to be a better solution to the problem. Although there are a lot of the non-relevant problems that were inherited from the old system, this one seems to be the better solution. Although I realize there are still problems, I don't know what a better solution would be.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you mentioned how you only spent 16 months in V Corps. I'm sure this is much less time than you thought you would. Would you explain the circumstances of your leaving?

GEN STARRY: I left, of course, to come home and replace General Bill DePuy in TRADOC. I must say I was so busy as the corps commander that I really hadn't bothered to give any thought to how long I was going to stay. It was a super job. It's probably, all things considered, the best job I ever had. You don't have to worry about all the administration of a post, and you don't have to sign all the courts-martial and all that stuff. If you do what we did when I was there, and spend your time worrying about tactics and training, it's going to be a super job. There can't be any better. I

really had no idea what was to come next, if anything. I was perfectly happy doing what I was doing and willing to stay as long as they'd let me stay. General DePuy came over in March of 1977 on a visit. He spent a couple of days with me. One of the things he unfolded for me was that he was going to retire. He had decided to retire in July and was going to try to get me appointed to replace him. That was the first inkling I had that I wasn't going to be there forever. Of course subsequently, that came to pass. I never gave it any thought, really.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure you're still keeping up with everyone, and probably know that General Wetzel has been talking to someone who may replace him.

GEN STARRY: I have no idea.

INTERVIEWER: One of the candidates is one of your successors who is down at Fort Knox right now.

GEN STARRY: I suppose he is. There's been kind of a tradition of some sort of sending guys from Fort Knox to be corps commander of V Corps. His father commanded that corps when I was in the 3rd Armored Division in the 1960s.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it should go to an armor general?

GEN STARRY: Well, historically, Europe has been looked upon as a theater where we put the armor commanders. I'm sure that was convenient for the Army as a whole, because historically the Army between the wars is run by infantrymen. Artillerymen are scattered here and there, but there are not very many of them. It's something we have done historically. Europe is a convenient place to put senior armor commanders and get them out of Washington and out of the mainstream

of events back here so they can't cause too much trouble. Historically, until you come to guys like Blanchard and Kroesen, Europe had been an armor commanders' theater. It wasn't until the days when they put General Blanchard in VII Corps and then later in USAREUR, and General Kroesen in VII Corps after him, that they began to put senior infantry guys in command in Europe. I don't necessarily believe that you should put the senior armor guys over there just to get them out of the country so they don't clutter up the infantry's management of the Army as a whole. On the other hand, it is a place where you ought to put your senior armor commanders, rather than send an infantryman over there who has never served there before -- and we've had a couple cases of that. They were senior infantrymen who had never served there before, or had done so so long ago that they didn't really remember much about it. Someone who has not grown up in the armor tactics and doctrine world and so on has a different attitude about how to fight that war than the armor soldier does. Fundamentally, I believe it's a theater where you ought to put senior armor commanders, even though some of them probably could be said to turn out to be turkeys in the end. I don't know that the turkey count is any less with the armor guys in command than with other folks. But I think it's a place where you ought to utilize your senior armor talent, and do so consistently.

INTERVIEWER: As you were leaving Germany to come back to be promoted and to assume command of TRADOC, you were involved in an incident that must have been very disappointing to you. Would you like to describe that to us?

GEN STARRY: Well, it was disappointing. I was invited to make a speech, the graduation speech, at Frankfurt High School in June 1977. So I did. We were busy doing a lot of other things, and I have to admit that I delayed thinking much about what to say until it was really too late to sit down and dream up anything very substantive. My oldest daughter,

who was home from college at the time, suggested that I drag out a speech that I had given at Fort Knox when she graduated from high school. I thought it was a good speech at the time. The kids thought it was a good speech which, whether I thought so or not, kind of tells you that it wasn't all that bad. So I got it out, changed it a little bit, updated it a little bit, and gave it. I talked to the graduates about four things: peace, truth, God, and the class of 1977. With regard to peace I said that it was a noble goal. I mentioned that there was a lot of talk about it. A noble goal probably should remain a noble goal, but it is an elusive one. I told them that it would be as elusive in their lifetime as it had been in mine, and that they ought to think about that a little bit. I encouraged them to form an intelligent opinion about that because, although peace is a noble goal, they had to recognize that it is probably not going to be achieved. Truth -- a fragile commodity that some people don't tell much anymore, maybe because it always seems to be unpleasant, more unpleasant than some fiction. But one of the important things in life is to have some personal opinion about that, some personal stance about telling the truth and being honest and candid about things. God -- although the press some years ago tried to bury the poor fellow, he still seems to be alive and well. Whatever your religion, background or whatnot in the world in which we live, where values have become diffused and so on, an attitude, an opinion at least, a personal decision about God and how that relates to life in general, and to you in particular, is important. I commend that to your attention. Class of 1977 -- what is the future and so on? In trying to illustrate the problems of peace, I mentioned the fact that, while the world was in an unsteady state of peace at the moment, there were a lot of places in the world where peace was likely not to persist and that war could break out almost overnight. I used the Middle East and the Yom Kippur War as an example. I pointed out the fact that there had been several wars since the end of World War II. I pointed out the Sino-Soviet confrontation in the eastern part of the Soviet Union and the fact that it had been -- although it doesn't get a lot of publicity -- an open war off and

on for about 15 years at that point, and that it was probably likely to continue. If not an open war, then it was some kind of a stand-off. If that were to break out, it was difficult to see how other major powers, including the United States, could avoid becoming somehow in it, although perhaps not as active participants. It would be difficult to see how we could avoid taking sides. I stayed away from Korea, because this graduation came just shortly after the period of time when General Jack Singlaub had been relieved as the Chief of Staff of Eighth Army because he had disagreed with the Carter administration's position on the redeployment of troops from Korea. He didn't really come out and say he was against that. Somebody asked him a question, you'll recall, about what the Koreans thought about it. He said what the Koreans thought about it, and the reporter then asked him he thought about it, and he said, "I agree with the Koreans." That's all he said about it, but a great furor arose and he was fired. With that as background, I elected not to say anything about Korea. But I used these other two examples and, as I recall, maybe one or two others. Anyway, a person who, it turns out, had been fired by several wire services, but who was still selling to UPI as a free-lance writer and who taught journalism in the American University night classes over there, heard the kids talking about the speech. He was not present and did not hear the speech. Apparently the kids thought it was a good speech and he heard them talking about it. So he called the headquarters and asked for a copy of it. He called my secretary, as a matter of fact. And the secretary, because he called her directly, assumed that he had been through the public affairs channel and that they had okayed it. So she gave him a copy. He came and picked it up. For what purpose, I really don't know. Somebody said it was to be used in his journalism class as an example of a good speech or something like that. Anyway, he took out of context the description that I had made of the Sino-Soviet border dispute and filed a story which said that I had predicted that there would be a war between the Chinese and Russians and that the United States was going to get involved. Following on the heels of the Singlaub incident, that just

blew up all over the place. I read the UPI story before it had been made public and had been printed. I took the speech, made a message out of it, and sent it to the President, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, several of my friends in Congress, and anybody else I thought would be interested in reading it. The message said, "Here's what was said, and I followed the script very carefully. I think that the speech speaks for itself. I have no apologies one way or the other. I didn't predict anything." That, I think, tended to diffuse it a little bit. Then the issue became whether I had cleared the speech. Well, there was a big investigation about that. As a result of the investigation it was determined that I had the best track record of any general in the Army for clearing speeches. I was rather meticulous about it. In that particular case I had not cleared it because I had given the speech before. The PAO [Public Affairs Office] at Fort Knox had gone through the process and had it cleared. As far as I was concerned, it was in the public domain. In fact, the script from which I read, with notes on it, at the graduation had the clearance stamped still on the front page. As I said, I did it almost at the last minute anyway and so it just never struck me that it was going to be necessary to reclear it. After all, when you talk to a high school graduating class, you're really not talking about national policy, and I wouldn't think that it would be an appropriate thing. But that became the issue. We were coming home anyway to go to TRADOC. I'd been nominated a couple of days before the speech was made, and of course that made it a big turmoil. So we all got on an airplane and started for home. It was kind of a dismal departure situation because I didn't know whether I was going to be fired, asked to retire, cashiered with my buttons cut off, or whatnot. When we got home and landed in New York, someone picked me up, put me on an airplane, and I flew down to the Pentagon to confront the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff, General Rogers. I left my wife and the girls in New York. General Rogers was engaged in what he called a large damage-limiting operation in which he was very successful. But I had some friends in the Congress whom I contacted to

see how much damage had been done. I couldn't find anybody who was all that excited about it. By that time, Walter Cronkite had come on either a TV or a radio show of his. I had sent a copy of the speech to him. I had heard a tape of it and Cronkite, in effect, had said, "Wait a minute, fellas [media fellas]." He said, "Wait a minute. We're making a mistake. I have read the speech that the gentleman made. I don't agree with a lot of things he said." I took the media to task, the liberal media, for having tried to bury God and whatnot, and he said, "We didn't try to do that." Well, anyway, he said, "I don't agree with everything the General said, but he has every right to say it. There is nothing in here that is as alleged in the UPI news release. He is not criticizing national policy or taking exception to the President's views on anything." In fact, he said, "I don't know what the President's views are about peace, truth, God and the class of 1977, because he has never expressed them. Therefore, you can't accuse this general, of having commented contrary to the President's wishes, because we don't know what the President's views are." That diffused the whole thing. By the time I got to Washington on a cold, rainy afternoon, the only person pacing the corridors was the UPI bureau chief in Washington, who was waiting to pounce on me as I came out. So the Chief of Staff and I went down the back stairs, got in his car, and went up to his quarters, where Mrs. Rogers was kind enough to feed me dinner. That was the end of it. Well, it wasn't really the end of it. Congress hadn't acted on my nomination, so there was some conversation about whether or not I was going to have to go and testify. The Chief said, "Go on leave," so I went on leave. I went home to Kansas. By this time General DePuy was handling it. He called and said, "Go ahead and start for Fort Monroe, but we don't know how this is going to turn out." So we packed everybody up in two cars, the girls driving one and my wife and I in the other one, and hit the road. We had a little trouble with one of the cars. We got to Fort Knox and thought we could make Fort Monroe with that entourage, even though we were having car trouble. They called from Monroe and said, "Well, we're not sure that confirmation is going to come this week, which means

that the Fourth of July holiday will intervene, so it may be a couple of weeks. The Chief of Staff doesn't want you anywhere near Fort Monroe, lest it be presumed by the Congress that we are acting on the presumption that they're going to approve this when, in fact, they're not. So you can't go to Fort Monroe." So I said, "Okay, here we are at old Fort Knox." So we unpacked the cars, put one of them in the garage, and set out to drink friends out of booze and eat them out of house and home, up and down Fifth Avenue at Fort Knox. That was one afternoon. Late the next afternoon they called again from Fort Monroe and said -- I think this was a Wednesday afternoon -- "You have to be in Fort Monroe Friday morning. Confirmation is going to take place tomorrow or Thursday. The Chief is going to be on a little overnight vacation down at Fort Story, and he wants to come in and promote you into office on Friday morning at nine o'clock." I said, "Okay, roger that." So I looked at the logistics situation. One car was in the shop and two rooms in the guest house were piled full of stuff. So I said, "All right, girls, pack up your overnight kits, because we're going to get on an airplane and go to Fort Monroe," which is what we did. We left all the cars and all the stuff right there and went to Fort Monroe and moved into the guest quarters. I was sworn in on Friday morning as the TRADOC Commander. As I recall, we finally got the cars and whatnot all back together after about six weeks. But there were about 10 days or more when we really weren't sure whether or not I was going to be on active duty or driving trucks for a living. That, and some other things, was what I later came to call the "insulting executive environment" present throughout our government, through industry, too, as a matter of fact.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned General Rogers backing you fully in this. Do you feel there were any detractors?

[End Tape S-212, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-213, side 1]

GEN STARRY: To the best of my knowledge, no. Of course I saw Secretary Alexander and the Chief of Staff, and they had read the speech. Both of them said it was a damn good speech. All the Secretary was concerned about was why I hadn't cleared it. So I went through that with him. He said, "Well, it's not the same to make that speech as the commander at Fort Knox as it is to make that speech as the commander of V Corps." Well, okay, I screwed up, I guess. I never heard from the Secretary of Defense. Somebody later told me that the President had read the speech and said, "I think I'll make him the Chief of Chaplains instead of the commander of TRADOC." I don't know whether or not that's true.

INTERVIEWER: For some time after that incident, the rumor was that you were censured for not clearing the speech. Were you censured in any way?

GEN STARRY: I don't think so. There was never anything in writing. The only thing anybody ever said to me was what Cliff Alexander said as we talked around his table that night, which I just recited -- it's one thing to make that speech as the commander at Knox and it's another to make it as the V Corps Commander. They acknowledged that it had been cleared once before. To the best of my knowledge that was the end of it.

INTERVIEWER: Just for clarification, do speeches by general officers have to be cleared and, if so, by whom?

GEN STARRY: Well, the Office for the Freedom of Information is the censorship agency in Washington. There's an Army office that does that, a DOD [Department of Defense] office that does that, and an OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] office that does that. I don't know what the status of the regulation is with regard to that sort of thing now. Nor do

many of my friends. I don't, to the best of my knowledge, think General DePuy ever cleared anything he said. He may have. He told me one time, "I don't clear anything." I cleared everything. I must admit that I worked up a system. I cleared almost everything before this happened. After this happened, I cleared everything. But, any time I had made a speech before, and a lot of them were kind of an impromptu kind of thing, to include Rotary lunches, Kiwanis Clubs, and that kind of stuff, I wrote something out and I had it cleared. I started doing that at Fort Knox. First of all, it provides a record. Secondly, it protects you to some extent against just what happened. And thirdly, it's a background kind of thing that you can use in developing your ideas. The system I used in TRADOC is the one I had used for a long time -- at Knox, V Corps, TRADOC, and REDCOM [Readiness Command]. The aide did a lot of that for me. Aides that I had were officers who, for the most part, had worked for me before. Several of them had been lieutenants in my battalion. Later we designated one of them as the ghost. The ghost is not a speech writer. The ghost is a fellow who, when the requirement comes in to make a speech before the so-and-so group, comes in and asks, "Well, what do we want to say this time?" You talk about it, and the ghost takes it all down in outline form, goes away and does the research, then comes back with a draft. You go over the draft and then he goes back and revises the draft. You do that however many times it takes to produce what you think you want to say. Then you've got a record copy of it. You've got something as a basis for what you want to say, and you've got something that can be cleared. I'd been doing it before, but I wasn't nearly as religious about it as I was after this incident. So every speech I have given in the last 10 years has been a piece of cleared work. Now I must admit you need to be able to sense the audience and the circumstances, and you may want to change your talk. So what I delivered from the platform was not necessarily what I had written. But, at the same time, it was close enough that you could consider the original as a written record and you had protected yourself. A couple of times after that incident something like this

would come up, and we would just drag out the approved record and throw it on the desk and that was the end of it. So I think you ought to clear your remarks. Were someone to ask my advice going into jobs like those, I would commend it most highly as a matter of practice.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you assumed command of TRADOC in July 1977. You replaced General DePuy, whom you were very familiar with and knew his work. What did you feel you really needed to get done as you assumed command?

GEN STARRY: He was a difficult act to follow. I've said many times that it's fairly easy to take over an outfit that's all screwed up. Almost anything you do is an improvement. But to follow an act like General Bill DePuy's is really quite difficult. I have great respect for him and admiration for what he did for the Army. I was in no way of a mind that I was going to do as much, could do as much, as he did. At the same time, there was an enormous amount of work, that he had started, to which I had been a party in the beginning and had continued to be a party in TRADOC. We had a constant message exchange going back and forth while I was in V Corps. That work needed to be carried forward. At the same time, I had become convinced in my own mind of essentially what needed to be done with the second or the follow-on echelon problem. To me, that meant a revision of FM 100-5. Having observed that to be a process which drove almost everything else, it seemed to me that it was sort of the first order of business. At the same time we had to figure some way to avoid the pitfalls, the trap, that we had fallen into with the 1976 edition. I sat down and tried to consciously decide what those were, and we talked earlier about some of those -- having it written at Leavenworth and so on. We avoided the commentary that we got with the 1976 edition. At the same time, we fully fleshed out what later was called AirLand Battle. TRADOC had a Deputy Chief of Staff for Training. Originally it was individual training, then it became Deputy Chief of Staff for Training. It had a Deputy

Chief of Staff for Combat Developments. It did not have a Deputy Chief of Staff for Doctrine. It seemed to me that we ought to have an office that was responsible for making sure that the doctrine was consistent -- that is, that the overarching guidelines that were laid down in FM 100-5 were followed consistently throughout the system, particularly in the important books, the green camouflage-covered books that we had said were the critical documents. So we went looking for someone. We finally found a colonel named Don Morelli who had just been nominated for promotion to brigadier general and had considerable experience in the old Combat Developments Command. I invited him to come and talk and decided that he was the right guy for that job. The first thing I set him doing was getting the Bill Linds and Luttwaks, and by that time Newt Gingrich had chimed in, and all the critics in Washington and in the press and in academia and so on, to write down their criticisms. In some cases the criticism was just sporadic. We asked the critics to write down what their objections were. "If you don't like it, then tell us what to do better," was the way he went at it. He was a good man. As you probably know, he tragically died of cancer a year or so ago. Don Morelli did the Army a greater service in the last three years of his life than most people do in 35 or 40 years of service. He really was super at that. He was kind of an unassuming fellow who told his story in a convincing way. If I had gone about doing that, I'm sure we would have been rejected out of hand. But with Morelli doing it in a kind of unobtrusive way and just working at it, we turned a lot of our critics around. Newt Gingrich, who started out to be a critic, is a good friend today and a great supporter of AirLand Battle. Without Morelli, regardless of what else I did with it to fix it -- such as writing it at Leavenworth and so on -- we would not have it today. Without Morelli we would not have had it published without it being part of a great controversy. He just did a service whose value cannot be measured. He was just a super guy! He spent the rest of his life doing that, and did a marvelous job of it. AirLand Battle all started at Knox, as a matter of fact. I had a speech I gave that had several versions. At one point it was called the Central Battle. At

another time I called it the Central Dual. It was a briefing that we gave. Most times I gave it myself when I went to talk at places like the Armed Forces Staff College or Leavenworth. Wherever the audience was appropriate, I gave that speech. It was never the same twice, because I got a lot of feedback from the audience, particularly military audiences where I got questions and answers. At TRADOC, V Corps, and Fort Knox, my aide would sit there and take notes, then he and I would sit down afterwards and decide what we needed to change. When I finally got a ghost, my ghost did that. It was an evolutionary thing. It started out as a description of the battle in Europe as we understood it, based on our Yom Kippur War evaluation. That was at Fort Knox. When I went to V Corps, we called it the Corps Battle. Essentially it was how V Corps fights the battle. The briefings had pictures, slides of the terrain, the enemy, the threat, and how the battle unfolded. I used that briefing as a kind of a living thing that developed into what we later called AirLand Battle. For a while we called it the Extended Battlefield. In fact, I published an article in Military Review called "The Extended Battlefield." For a while it was also called the Integrated Battlefield. We said that we were trying to solve the nuclear problem, so we called it the Integrated Battlefield. That didn't seem to be right. Then we called it the Extended Battlefield. There were a lot of candidate names. Shortly thereafter, Morelli persuaded me to call it AirLand Battle. In the original draft of the 1976 edition of FM 100-5 we had had a chapter that General DePuy put in there as a sop to Leavenworth -- it had been written out of Leavenworth -- called AirLand Battle. They're not the same, because what Cushman was trying to solve in that chapter really verged on the role of the Theater Air Commander as the controller of the air battle as well as the air defense battle. In fact they went down at one time -- Paul Herbert writes this up in his dissertation very well, I think -- over to Langley and briefed the TAC [Tactical Air Command], when General Bob Dixon was the TAC commander, on that and got a very negative response. General DePuy backed away from it very gingerly because he was very sensitive to both Dixon's and the Air

Force's reaction to what we were doing. I told Paul Herbert this in my comments on his dissertation. AirLand Battle, as it exists today, is not the same as the AirLand Battle chapter that is, or what's left of it, in the published FM 100-5, 1976 edition. Morelli's argument was a good choice of phraseology. Anything else we used would not have made it quite as apparent that we trying to get a joint battle going, with the Army and Air Force operating together. By the time General Bill Creech replaced General Bill Dixon, they were happy with it. We went over to Langley with it one time and Bill Creech and I sat down and talked about it. He said, "Well, I'm getting a lot of resistance from my staff, but I think it's over something that happened here some time ago." It turned out to have been this briefing that Cushman gave them. Then he said, "As you explain this to me, it isn't the same thing. Let me keep this and look at it." I gave him the briefing with a narrative on the back facing the charts. He later called me and said, "I don't see anything wrong with this at all. As a matter of fact, I think this is just the thing we need, you and I, to move the Army and the Air Force in the direction of a better battle fighting capability, particularly at the theater level." He was very enthusiastic about it. He apparently called his staff in and said, "This makes sense to me. Let's stop bickering about this thing. These people are not in the roles and missions business. They're not trying to redo the theater air commander's function. There is something in here for the Air Force, as well as for the Army, so let's wrap our arms around it." Morelli was an actor on that stage as well and, with Bill Creech's support, we went forward with what was AirLand Battle. Bill Creech had his people at Leavenworth and some of the staff help us with some of the 1982 edition, so it was an honest-to-God joint effort by the time we finished it. It was written at Leavenworth, but it was a TAC-TRADOC product. It subsequently resulted in a memorandum of understanding about a whole lot of things that were. It was started by “Shy” Meyer, but was finally signed off on by Generals Wickham and Charlie Gabriel.

INTERVIEWER: It appears that the 1982 version of FM 100-5 was over four years in the making.

GEN STARRY: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: But, when you finished that, you had involved everyone and apparently the actual distribution and acceptance of the manual was much more pleasant than the 1976 version.

GEN STARRY: I've already mentioned the Air Force and Leavenworth involvement. The other thing we had to do, which General DePuy had started, was an evaluation of the new organizations that we thought we ought to have. There was on-going study at Fort Hood, the division restructuring study. They were having a field evaluation with some organizations organized one way and others organized the other way. I went down and looked at that early on. It really was not very satisfactory. The instrumentation system that we were using was not precise enough to measure the things that we were trying to measure. The units were not well-enough trained in either the old doctrine or the new doctrine to be able to tell whether or not we were looking at a stupid commander, a lousy organization, or poor doctrine. I mean, you just couldn't tell. There was no way to discriminate. Instrumentation was certainly not going to give you that. The soldiers, who were interested only in winning and not having their tracks knocked out during the battle, had figured out how to "spoof" the instrumentation system by putting their field jackets over the sensors that were sensing whether or not they were hit. That was simple enough to do and would fool the system. We learned some things out of it, but really not what we started out to learn. It would have been very, very shortsighted of us to make a lot of decisions based on that. We let it run its course, but then we terminated it. There was a lot of resistance to what was going on there. It was the same kind of resistance that I had sensed before and that we've talked about. It was done off in the corner

by a few people and was based on some notions that went around a table with only a few people. There was not a lot of involvement. But I was convinced that we needed to reorganize our units. I thought we ought to reorganize pretty much along the lines of the armored force in the Israeli organization. There would be three tanks in a platoon, three platoons in a company. Each company would consist of eleven tanks. Although Israel didn't have any cavalry, we had a cavalry organization, and there we went back to the disagreements about whether or not you want a combined arms team at the platoon level. We started over from the beginning with the question, "Is that what you need on today's battlefield?" The answer is probably no. How should the mech infantry be organized? Should it go on with the tanks? Yes, it should. If it does, it has to be in a carrier that will survive at the same rate that tanks survive. Do we have one? No. Are we building one? No, we're not. We talked about that compromise earlier. So we had some dilemmas. The focus of all the controversy had shifted, to some extent at least, from the 1976 edition of FM 100-5 to the DRS [Division Restructuring Study] test going on at Fort Hood. So we let that run its course and then terminated it. Then I got all the center commanders together at Fort Leavenworth. We met about once a month, a couple of times more often than that. The purpose of that was to reorganize the Army, and they were going to do it. The result of that was a thing called Division 86 which, of course, is the baseline for the on-going reorganization of the Army. General DePuy and General Weyand had wanted to just flat reorganize out of hand. Do it! Force it on the Army. They may have been right, I don't know. I think, in the end, they would've had the same problem that they had with the 1976 version of the field manual. The whole thing might have come a cropper as a result, I don't know. It's hard to say. General Weyand, of course, elected not to try to get himself reappointed and, in his words, left after having finished out General Abrams' tour. General Rogers, who succeeded him, was not willing to simply dictatorially reorganize the Army. Meanwhile, General DePuy had started the restructuring study and had gone ahead with it. So

we took that study, some work that had been done at CDC and a lot of organizational evaluation that had been going on since the beginning of TRADOC, and took all that data out to Leavenworth. We met out there, with the center commanders, and over a period of the next two years hammered out what came to be called Division 86. It, like the infantry fighting vehicle on the equipment side, and like the scout vehicle on the equipment side, is not what we really wanted. I still believe that smaller units are better -- the three-tank platoons, the three-squad infantry fire teams, and the mechanized infantry and so on. What we got, obviously, was a compromise. We compromised largely on the basis of a couple of things. One, we wanted to keep the same number of vehicles in a division--that is, the same number of fighting vehicles--in a division. That put some constraints on us. General DePuy wanted to have 15 battalions in a division. I still think that's the right thing to do. In other words, we would have kept the same number of tanks, but would have gone to smaller platoons and smaller companies. We would have wound up with 15 battalions in a division. If you do that, you have to add some battalion overhead. If you add Israeli-type battalion overhead, you don't have much. But if you have US-type battalion overhead, you've got a lot of logistics tail and administrative staff people involved in it. So we were going to have to increase. While we would have increased the leader-to-led ratio on the battlefield, at the same time we would have increased the overhead ratio at an amount that was kind of alarming. In looking back to the 1963 reorganization in the armored divisions, we added about 3500 manpower spaces to the division, but we actually lost one mechanized infantry company in that reorganization. We really got soundly criticized for it. In the environment of the mid-to-late 1970s, I could see us trying to do that again and getting shot right out of the saddle. We had to compromise, based on the fact that we wanted to keep essentially the same number of combat vehicles in the division and we really didn't want to increase the overhead and the number of battalions all that much. So the solution to that turned out to be smaller companies but larger

battalions. In other words, the companies are smaller, but there are four, not three, companies in a battalion. That is an Israeli concept if you're looking at the idea as a paradigm. That's not a good thing to do but, on the other hand, the real difference is that a four-company battalion can fight on two axes, whereas a three-company battalion can't. And, so as long as you understand that, and you accommodate your doctrine to the compromise in organization, you've probably got a good balance. There were a lot of compromises. There were compromises in artillery. There were compromises in the cavalry. One of them was the divisional cavalry squadron, which we decided to turn into a reconnaissance and surveillance organization. That will probably get changed back in the end to something else. However, for a lot of reasons it was an acceptable compromise at the time. But, in the end, we produced an organization that was acceptable to the Army because the Center Commanders had had a part in it. Every one of them. I forced them to make the compromises. I didn't make the compromises and then shove them down their throats. They participated! If it didn't turn out the way they wanted it, they knew exactly why not. They knew that they had had their day in court and been heard out, and that in the end the consensus was that we ought to go the way we did. We evaluated it, and everybody had had a say. All the arguments were out on the table. I think that General DePuy had wanted to reorganize in a hurry and get it over with so that it wouldn't drag on for a long time. And he was right about that. This will never turn out to be what we started to have in Division 86 because it dragged on so long. Now people are beginning to nibble away at the edges of it. At the same time, a long-term reorganization is not nearly as traumatic as is a short-term reorganization. That is, if you can keep your eye on what you started out to do -- which was to improve the leader-to-led ratio and the combat power at the lower levels of command -- that's reorganization!

INTERVIEWER: Sir, that was the beginning of what has continued to evolve over the years to the point where the corps is now perceived as the

warfighting echelon rather than the division. If a division does fight somewhere alone it must receive a corps plug. That brings us right back to the issue that people who have worked together for some time have better cohesion and a better opportunity to do the job right. How do you feel that this corps plug, especially in the contingency operations, will work? And is corps the correct echelon to be fighting the war?

GEN STARRY: I think the corps. We were trying to get at the operational level of war. We've talked about that for a long time. In fact, as you know, we left the Principles of War out of the manual. That was deliberate in 1976.
[End Tape S-213, side l]

[Begin Tape S-213, side 2]
GEN STARRY: We didn't want the manual to be that general and generic, so we took out the Principles of War. Eventually, of course, they were published in FM 100-1, called The Army. When I came back to TRADOC we revised the Principles of War and put them back in that book. Even in that revision you don't see the operational level spelled out. We go from tactics to strategy. That definition of the principles of war, I suppose, is all right, except that I would like to see them written now with the operational level included in them, because it is a thing that requires some definition in terms of general principles. I didn't do it at the time because I didn't want it to appear like we were simply mimicking the Soviets, who have never abandoned the operational level of war. I always thought that we should have been doing it all along. There was instruction in that when I was a student at Leavenworth. I thought we made a mistake to drop it out in subsequent years, and we needed to put it back in. But I was very reluctant to have it appear that we were simply mimicking the Soviets. We had dropped corps instruction out of the curriculum at Leavenworth. In General Abrams' reorganizational decision in 1974, late 1973 or early

1974, we lost the corps as a subject of instruction at Leavenworth. The body of knowledge about the corps was not there, and hadn't been taught to a generation or two of officers who went through Leavenworth. They didn't even know what a corps was. Some of them couldn't even spell it. Some of the new emphasis on the corps was made necessary by the Division 86 compromises, particularly the compromises in artillery and aviation organizations. We were forced to put some things in at corps level, simply because of the lack of resources and the desire not to have a 25,000-man division. When we first laid Division 86 out, it had almost 26,000 people in it. I felt that was too big, and so did everybody else. We all felt that we needed to get it down, so we began the tradeoffs. Part of that set of tradeoffs concerned what goes in general support artillery at the division level and what goes in general support reinforcing artillery at the corps level. The same was true with aviation. The increased level at corps came about as a result of several things. For one thing, we needed to re-emphasize the operational level of war. The corps is the first and probably lowest level to do that. In a joint task force you're probably looking at a corps. You might have a division, but you probably have a corps. Then there were the compromises in Division 86 and so on. All of those things sort of came together and the corps, in our minds, became kind of a central focus of the operational level of war and higher. We talked the other day about groups of corps, armies, army groups, and so on, so it's probably not necessary to repeat that here. In joint operations, certainly, the corps is the central piece of that operation. In almost any kind of a theater, unless you're just going in with a brigade or so to do some little thing, the corps is probably going to be the focus of that operation. So it's an important organizational and doctrinal level. It is back in the literature now. It is being taught. In fact, that's essentially the focus of the SAMS [School for Advanced Military Studies] course--the second year at Leavenworth. And it is being woven into the rest of the Leavenworth curriculum. So we're back about where we were at

Leavenworth in the instructional mode in the early 1960s when I went there.

INTERVIEWER: In your deliberations on Division 86, did you ever approach the Chief of Staff or anyone else about raising the manpower ceiling for the Army?

GEN STARRY: Yes. I commented the other day that, when General Vessey and I went to try to persuade General Abrams that we needed 16 divisions, I had a conversation with General Abrams about the end strength. I told you how that turned out. Subsequently, when General Meyer became the Chief of Staff, he was a part of the Division 86 process. He would come out occasionally and at least sit with us through a summary of what we had done. He was a participant -- not a full-time participant, but he gave us as much time as he could spare. He understood the manpower end strength problem -- perhaps not as acutely as I did, because he had never been in the force structuring business, but he certainly understood it well. He was concerned about it, but was unable to do anything about it. My personal view is that, if you're not going to be able to have much more than 785,000, and I doubt that we will, then you have to look at yourself internally. For example, the Army, the one time we looked at it, had sixty-some- odd thousand cooks. The Army has thirty-some-odd thousand military policemen. The Army has 25,000 or 30,000 in this category and that category. The question then is, "If we're not going to be able to have more than 780,000 plus, can we afford all these little accounts?" The special missions account is an interesting subject in itself. That is the special mission brigade in Berlin, the brigade in Alaska, and the brigade in Panama. There are all sorts of structural things you can do, both MOS [military occupational specialty] structure as well as organizational structure, to help solve the problem in the mainstream Army that is brought on by the shortage of manpower. For example, 30,000 MPs. How many of those do we really need?

You've got too many on this post, for example. You could take two-thirds of them and turn them into infantrymen and have more infantry. That's a little thing, but if you do it across the whole Army it provides you a lot. Should the brigade in Berlin be a separate brigade in a special mission account or should it be a part of a division? It could be a deployed force which is a part of a division, with the other two brigades stationed in the United States. Should the brigade in Alaska be a separate brigade or should it be a part of the division that is in the United States? By a combination of things, you create a structure in which you don't have to go short all the time in the manning levels because the Army is overstructured and understrength. The adding of new structure with the light divisions, whatever you think about light divisions, is a mistake, because you're over the threshold at which your structure and strength is in balance. It was in balance before they started adding this structure. They never should have added this structure, because we are simply aggravating the problem. The problem you are aggravating is turbulence in the units. Soldiers are moved more often. If the turbulence rate is over 20 percent per quarter, you don't get any meaningful training done. We know that, and yet we've got units in which the rotation rate, the turbulence rate, is 40, 50, or 60 percent. If we ever want to fix it, we're going to have to do a whole combination of things. How many times a quarter do you see a new face in that job? Rotation policy is a part of it. There's a whole spectrum of events. Some of the problems are turf problems. DCSPER will tell you that you can't screw around with the rotation policy because that's their turf. Well, that's interesting. It is their turf, but at the same time it's all a part of the same Army. If we're not willing to tackle the whole problem and try to solve it in a multi-faceted way, then we're not going to solve it at all.

INTERVIEWER: Speaking of structure, I'm sure you're aware that the Navy and the Air Force have increased their respective structures in the last few years.

GEN STARRY: They got it on the books. Whether or not they will ever do it, I don't know. Honestly, I do not believe that the Navy will ever have a 600 ship Navy. Who's going to man the ships? You go out to the Naval Amphibious Base at Little Creek and the ships are sitting there with no crews. There's a caretaker squad aboard, or whatever they call it, but there are no crews. Where are the crews? The crews are on the deployed ships in the Mediterranean.

INTERVIEWER: But that's a mothball fleet.

GEN STARRY: No, it isn't a mothball fleet. They've got an active amphibious fleet out there which is not manned. They're not manned because the sailors are on the manned ships. Now, you've got a Secretary of the Navy who, for whatever reasons, is hell-bent for a 600-ship Navy. I would contend they have not given sufficient attention to how they're going to man those 600 ships. Although I highly endorse the need for more tactical air squadrons, tactical air squadrons take base squadrons, but base squadrons take people and maintenance squadrons take maintenance people and so on. If you're going to go up to fifty or sixty-some-odd tactical aircraft squadrons, then you've got to look at your base structure, manning levels, where the pilots are going to come from, and so on. I think it's an easier problem for the Air Force because there is a certain synergy in the base structure. The first airplane cost you two-thirds or more of the base structure. Once you decide you're going to operate that first airplane off the base, you've got to have a base, the people and the tower and so on. You can add a lot more airplanes to that without adding too many more base people. It's a simpler problem, I think, for the Air Force than it is for the Navy. The Navy, if they're going to sail those ships, has got to have crews. There is no evidence in my mind that they know where those crews are going to come from. The armed services, as a whole, have never sat down and done a decent

straightforward analysis of how they're going to raise the necessary manpower in light of the declining cohort of 17-to-21-year-old males, a decline with which we are now proceeding right along.

INTERVIEWER: But the recruiters believe they can recruit enough folks to keep us up there. It's going to take a hell of an effort and a lot of money. The way it was explained to us recently, for example, is that the end strength of the Army was purposely not increased because that would detract from the modernization effort. In other words, it would take away money that was needed for modernization. But I believe you said it best when you said earlier that we've reached the end of our rope as far as expanding our units and services without increasing the end strength.

GEN STARRY: If you're not going to increase the end strength, then you dare not increase the structure.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you know we're increasing to 18 divisions.

GEN STARRY: That's all on paper. That's all a subterfuge. That's all a sham. If it was necessary for some kind of a political image or whatever, that's all right. But the end result of increasing the structure is that it increases the turbulence rate in the units, because there's more structure, which means that people have to move more frequently. There's a ratio there that you can describe mathematically. What it does is increase the number of times you see a new face on the job. We had a situation some years ago -- we still have it, as a matter of fact, although it's been dampened out a little bit, but not much. The armor sergeants, and I believe artillery was next, and I think infantry was third and so on, do a tour in Europe in an armor unit for 36 months and then they come home. They're home an average of about 14 months when they're alerted to go back overseas. Eighteen to twenty months later, unless they're in a school category, on recruiting duty, ROTC duty, or something like that,

they're back overseas. Statistically they do that twice. The third time the wives said, "Wait a minute. I ain't going. You go, but I stay, because the schools overseas are not satisfactory. I don't like stairwell living. I've got a job here in the States, at the PX [post exchange] or wherever, and I need that job because your pay is not increasing rapidly enough to keep up with the cost of living, and I'm tired of moving." So the sergeant does one of three things: he goes without her, which all too frequently results in divorce, broken families, and whatnot; he gets out of the Army; or he does some other ridiculous thing like look for a place to hide in a stabilized tour where he can plan on staying for three or four years. At the time we looked at this I was still at TRADOC, so it had to be 1980-198l. The armor sergeants were leaving us faster than we could replace them. The promotion rate and the turning out of NCOs was not sufficient to replace the loss rate. I don't think that's true anymore. But the more you increase the structure, the more you increase that problem and the more you create the family problems. That's the reason we started the Regimental System. The purpose of the Regimental System is to try to help overcome the effects of turbulence. They're not going to overcome turbulence unless they change the rotation policies and so on, but it was to try to overcome the effects of turbulence, which are: you don't know the people, you don't know the circumstances, don't know the ground, don't know the area, and so on. As I said, the purpose of our Regimental System is to try to overcome the effects of turbulence.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think of the concept of light divisions, per se?

GEN STARRY: You need a light force for some applications, I'm sure. I believe that light infantry brigades are sufficient and that we do not need light divisions. Light divisions are an anachronism, and I'll tell you why. Let's take the Soviet tank fleet. It now numbers about 60,000 or 70,000. That includes only the tanks they have produced in the last 20 or 25 years.

It is bigger than we had thought it was for a long time. It's bigger because we tend to mirror image them and say that the stuff is only going to be in a fleet for 20 years and then go out. So the profiles for tanks by type tend to show them going out in 20 years. As a matter of fact, the T55 has been in the fleet for 33 years, and the last numbers I saw showed that they made 400 of them in factories in Eastern Europe in 1984. I have not seen any 1985 figures. The point is, it's still in production. The T62 is the same way. It's been in the fleet for 28 years. As I recall, in 1984 they produced several hundred of them in factories in Eastern Europe. So they're still in the fleet and under production. The fleet size is larger today than we had thought it was going to be, and the profile increases with a glide slope that we had not predicted in times gone by. If the threat to the central region, given the structure of the central region in Europe, is about 40,000 to 50,000 tanks on their side, the question is, "What have they done with the rest of those 70.000 or 80,000 tanks that they've got?" The answer is they've exported them. Where have they exported them? All over the world. For example, let's take six countries: in the Middle East, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq; India in South Asia; and Cuba and Nicaragua in this hemisphere. If you look down the list of exported equipment, you will find that in tanks alone the Soviets in the last three decades have exported 12,000 tanks of one kind or another to those six countries. That's more tanks than we have made since the beginning of the M60 development. Exported them, given them away, sold them, rented them, leased them, whatever the arrangement was, they've exported them to client states. U.S.A. published a thing last fall which contained an array of where that sort of equipment is located all over the world. It's an impressive list. There's a tendency to say, "Well, that's obsolete equipment, obsolescent at least, if not obsolete." If you look at Syria during those same three decades, beginning in the 1950's, you'll find a profile which shows them beginning with T55s and getting T62s in the second decade. In the last decade ending in 1985, which included the war in Lebanon, Syria lost about 500 T62s. The Soviets replaced them, not with T62s, but with T72s.

The reason they did that is that they had begun to issue T80s, the next model, to their own troops in 1980. In 1982 they were willing to give the next-to-the-newest model, which was the T72, to their Syrian clients. It isn't old obsolete equipment, it's a modern tank. It's as good as anything we have out there, and better than some we have out there. So it isn't that they're just giving away the junk that they have. It's good modern equipment. I used tanks as an example. If you look at infantry vehicles, artillery vehicles, and even helicopters, you'll see the same pattern. They're exporting a whole lot of stuff to folks all over the world such as Nicaragua and Cuba.

INTERVIEWER: Why?

GEN STARRY: Well, because they fundamentally believe that military force is a way you lever political decisions. If you want to lever political decisions, you have to have a credible military force. A credible military force consists of fairly modern equipment in the hands of people who know how to use it. That's a pattern they use in their own country. It's also a pattern they use in their surrogate and client states. That being the case, we're going to send light infantry to do what? Almost anywhere we send light infantry, it is going to be confronted by some size of force that is quite likely to be equipped with a fairly modern set of gear. You can send the light infantry out there if you want, but I promise you that when faced with T72s, T62s, and even T55s, the light infantry is going to get blown away. So why are you sending them there? Now, I'm not saying that the whole Army ought to be armored, or that you have to send an armored force everywhere. What I am saying is, if you're going to send the light infantry, you have to equip them adequately to take care of the threat that is going to be out there. We're not doing that. All of this conversation about light infantry with light weapons -- open HMMWV's [high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle], and TOWs mounted on open jeep-like vehicles, and all that stuff -- isn't going to survive. If you want to obtain a

political advantage with the use of military force, which is why you should be deploying forces in the first place, you haven't got it with light forces. So I think the whole light force is an anachronism. We simply shouldn't be doing it. What do we need for small-level contingency operations? We need light infantry brigades similar to what we had in Vietnam. Those were good organizations, tailored for a specific war in Southeast Asia. I would submit to you that in Latin America, certainly Central America, and parts of the Middle East, that would not be all that bad of an organization, and not all that bad a weapons layout. If you upgraded the weapons, you'd probably have a fairly decent force. But to send light divisions to do a job that clearly is going to require heavy weapons, especially heavy anti-armor weapons, is suicidal. I don't understand why we are doing that.

INTERVIEWER: Many of us don't understand that, sir. And the immediate impact right now is, first of all, that funding the light divisions is taking a large part of the budget, especially in facilities and that type of thing. The other immediate impact is that the bill payers are coming out of the rest of the Army's structure.

GEN STARRY: That's right. I said this earlier, and I'm not necessarily being critical, but it is the cultural mindset of the people in charge. General Wickham is a light infantryman. The Secretary of the Army is a light infantryman. The infantry is in charge of the Army. When the infantry is in charge of the Army, you get this kind of mindset working on the force structure and everything else. They fundamentally believe that, somehow or another, they're going to fly that airmobile infantry all over the landscape and have them somehow be more effective than the airmobile infantry that I described in Vietnam. I defy anybody to do that. Unless you're willing to do some of the things that we've talked about in preserving the cohesion of the units and developing the kind of airmobile infantry that we sent to Vietnam in the first place, but quickly split up because it didn't meet MILPERCEN's requirements, it won't work. The

stupidest thing we ever did was to train those guys as units and send them to Vietnam and then break up the units because it screwed up the rotation pattern. We fragmented all of those units when we got them over there, because if you didn't, then all the guys in the unit were going to be going home at the same time. So you wouldn't have any unit; you'd have a whole new unit. So what we did was to undo the good effect of the training that we had given that unit in the United States. We automatically created a situation in which the unit had a whole bunch of new guys. It's the stupidest damn thing I've ever seen. It's the same thing I said about the redeployment. We let the manpower managers drive that thing -- the personnel managers, not the manpower managers -- and it was wrong. When are we ever going to learn? I say the same thing about this effort.

INTERVIEWER: We're getting into some of the REDCOM business, but I think it's appropriate that we mix TRADOC and REDCOM. In your experience with REDCOM, did you ever see a situation anywhere, either a contingency planning situation or a real one, where we could have used a light division?

GEN STARRY: No. There were a couple of places in the Middle East where you could rescue embassies and protect and repair oil fields, or disrupt oil pipelines, where a light force, probably not to exceed a brigade, would be totally adequate and very appropriate. But the large plans for protecting the Middle East against things like a Soviet invasion of Iran are ridiculous, absolutely ridiculous! I remember in the beginning, just after World War II, there was a JCS study that said that the Soviet threat in Transcaucasia consisted of about 22 Soviet rifle divisions. The friendly response to that, U.S. or otherwise, had to be something like 13 divisions. Remember, we had a lot of trouble getting the Soviets out of northern Iran after World War II. So, against the 1940 threat of 22 Soviet motorized rifle divisions, it was appropriate to deploy 13 U.S. infantry divisions. They had tank battalions, tank companies, and so on. Today the threat is 20

motorized rifle divisions -- a hell of a lot more powerful force. The threat is 20 divisions. I'm sure the same thing was true in the beginning. They're not all CAT I, but there are 20 of them. So we're going to go there with essentially five and one-third divisions -- three U.S. Army and two Marine Corps divisions and a brigade or regiment. With this force we're going to cope with 20 Motorized Rifle Divisions? Are we, now? You're going to go in there with airborne and airmobile to defeat a whole bunch of tanks coming down? Are we, now? Really and truly? You know that the Motorized Rifle Division now has almost as many tanks as a tank division. They've done a lot with tanks at the regimental level and so on. I mean, that's preposterous! That's foolish! We're just deceiving ourselves.

INTERVIEWER: The driving force behind the light division is to be able to deploy that force within two or three days.

GEN STARRY: It's essentially a deployment problem. Well, two things: One, it's the infantry mindset of the senior management of the Army; and secondly, it is the terrible deployment means dilemma that we've gotten ourselves into. We don't have the means to get heavy units there quickly. We owe the SACEUR ten divisions in ten days. We actually deliver to him seven divisions in thirty days. If the current shipbuilding program and C-5B air fleet program come to fruition, we will have just enough to meet out requirements to reinforce Europe, but nothing with which to do anything else.

INTERVIEWER: We hope to get, for example, a light division to a trouble spot within three or four days. Take Iran, for example. They have advanced forces right now on the Kuwaiti border. Within a day or two they could be on the Saudi Arabian border. Saudi Arabia is a friend of ours. If we decided that we needed to protect the Saudis and to project power there, given that the Iranians are already within a day or two of the Saudi

border, we can't get heavy forces there in less than 36 days, yet it is clear that we need heavy forces there.

[End Tape S-213, side 2]

[Begin Tape S-214, Side 1]

GEN STARRY: I think you have to look very carefully at what your political objectives are. I would argue that, even if you deployed a light division, or even a couple of light divisions, in a matter of days it won't matter. The Iranians apparently have a substantial tank force still surviving, even though they've been fighting the Iraqis for some time. If they came down with that kind of a force, what's a light division going to do? What are two light divisions going to do in a matter of days? What you're doing is helping your friends in Saudi, right? It's a noble goal. But, at the same time, you risk the loss, the total loss, of two U.S. light infantry divisions, or whatever force you can get there in the time that's allowed. Is the presence of those two divisions going to stop the Iranians from coming down? I doubt it. The place is run by a madman. The same thing is true about Iran that I said the other day about the Gulf of Sidra. We're not very credible, anymore, after Vietnam. They know what we can do. If the Iranians went down into that area, I suspect it would be with the tacit encouragement of the Soviets. You see, the whole thing is working against you. You should not put forces into a place where you know they're quite likely to lose. We cannot afford to lose. And yet we can't afford to win. Therefore you better have a careful look at your political objectives. In a democracy, some people say it's impossible. My 1982 Kermit Roosevelt Lecture was based on this. Some people say that in a democracy it's impossible to cobble up a set of political and economic programs that are substantial enough and sustaining enough to provide you the means to adequately lever yourself around the world. The Soviets are said to be much better at that than we are, and I would have to say that that's probably the case. But that's a central government, and we are

not a central czardom. I would say that, if we're not able to put together a decent set of political, economic and social programs, coupled with some military support, to do whatever it is we think we want to do, then democracy, as we understand it, our form of it particularly, is doomed to defeat. We are fast becoming a second-rate power. We will soon become one if we persist in fragmenting ourselves all over the world with light forces. In doing so we are diffusing the important issues, which at the moment at least are our defense commitments to Europe and to Korea. Governmentally, we're just not very good at putting together organized and coordinated political, social, economic, and military programs. The military is the last of those four. As I pointed out the other day, historically we have a tendency to reach for the military as the first and almost always the only instrument of national power because it's the only thing we know how to use. Soldiers salute and respond. Nobody else does. If we really believe what we say about democracy and the power of our economic system, the appeal of the capitalistic industrial system, then we ought to be able to come up with programs that make sense to people around the world, and be able to leverage ourselves politically, economically and socially as opposed to militarily. But to date we have a woeful track record at that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that the light division is being pushed strictly by General Wickham, and perhaps the Secretary of the Army, or is it some kind of concept that perhaps meets the requirements perhaps of the Reagan administration?

GEN STARRY: Well, I don't know. It's the infantry mindset, and both Wickham and Marsh are infantrymen -- light infantrymen. They obviously persuaded the Secretary of Defense that they ought to have these light divisions, so maybe he is a light infantryman in disguise, too. I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: I've been told, and I'm not sure it's true, that at a four-star commander's conference General Wickham made a presentation for the light infantry division. He made the statement that the United States had to have a force that it could project immediately over the world. He didn't say who said that we had to have it, but that if the Army didn't take that mission and go forward with it the Army's force structure would be cut and the Marines would be given that mission.

GEN STARRY: That's a risk. I hadn't heard that story, but that is a risk, and it's probably a valid observation. But, with regard to what he's describing there, I would call the force an insertion force -- airborne, airmobile, and amphibious. For years, the United States Army and the United States Marine Corps have been in a contest over the resources, the national resources, for insertion forces. This has been to the detriment of both, and to the benefit of neither, and to the discredit of the country as a whole. There ought to be a better way of handling that problem. The force structure of the Army might get cut, but somebody ought to offer the Marines the airborne mission and see if they take it. They won't take it. I guarantee you they won't take it. The airmobile mission -- they won't take it. The Marines are going to stick with their amphibious mission. Now, they recognize the limitations. They recognize limitations in firepower and airpower support for amphibious forces ashore. They realize, in their heart of hearts, that they cannot go ashore and go deep and fight. All you have to do is look at their contingency plans. In the contingency plan for the Middle East, the Army was going to go to Ispahan and beyond and do all this magic stuff and probably get blown away up there in the end. Not the Marines! The Marines are going to go ashore in this little place up here. The limit of the Marine advance in that theater of operations is the limit of forward projection of sea-based airpower and the sea-based air defense umbrella. They're not dummies. They're very, very smart guys. They're very good soldiers; they realize their limitations more than we are willing to admit our own limitations. What kind of an Army can you have in

the world that we've got now? Well, you know, you can have a quite different Army with the special mission account doing things with the individual MOS structure. You could have a hell of a lot better Army than you've got now. We probably ought to have about 14 divisions in it. Instead, there are going to be 19 or 20 divisions, all of which will be so short in some categories that they can't perform their mission. And in every one the turbulence rate will be such that you're not going to get any decent training done. That's what you're going to have. So we really ought to go back to about 14 or 15 divisions and knock out an airmobile division and an airborne division. Does the Army need an airborne division? I don't think so. It needs some airborne capability. Look at the Israeli outfits. It's landlocked--not landlocked, but a land force fighting a land enemy and so on. They've got a 12 division army, a mechanized and armored division army, with a parachute brigade. Look at the Soviets. Proportionally, the Soviets have a hell of a lot less of an airborne force in their army than we do.

INTERVIEWER: Don't they have an airborne battalion per division?

GEN STARRY: I don't know whether or not it's per division, but you look at the airborne component of the Soviet army and I'll bet you -- I haven't looked at it in several years -- that you'll find that, proportionately, they have a hell of a lot less airborne than we do. We don't need an airborne division! We don't need an airmobile division! We need light infantry brigades, but how many I don't know. You'd have to look at the special mission account and see what they ought to be doing. We need armored divisions and mech divisions, because the heavy threats are in Korea and in Europe.

INTERVIEWER: Your days as TRADOC commander, with the force structure argument, Division 86, and everything else that was raging then -- same as it is now -- marked the real beginning of placing a much greater

reliance on mobilization involving the Reserves and National Guard. I believe in this period we formed divisions with round-out brigades and brigades with round-out battalions. We certainly put, I believe, about 60 percent of the forces in the National Guard and Reserves. I can understand that, because it's probably much more affordable and you can use the active Army end strength for active Army forces. But are we going to mobilize those forces should we go to war, or is the Army going to be sitting out there with combat forces but no support units? Have we made a mistake in relying so much on the Reserves and the National Guard?

GEN STARRY: We did it because it is a part of the overstructure-understrength problem that I mentioned a while ago. That is what drove us to that decision. We didn't have the manpower to fill it up, so we put it in the Guard and Reserve which, fortuitously, gave an additional impetus to the Guard and Reserve, which was languishing after the Vietnam War. So it was probably driven by a couple of those motivations. And then the Congress put a limit on what the President can mobilize which, in effect, almost defeated that. If you want to have a substantial mobilization, you're not going to have it. If you want to mobilize the combat units first because you need to round out your combat units, and you know that you put most of your support units in the Guard and Reserve, you can't mobilize them because they put a limit on what the President can mobilize. With the mood of the Congress these days, I would say that the assurance that we're going to be able to mobilize enough to round out and fill up the Army and support it in a substantial emergency is quite remote. We made some unfortunate compromises. Basically they were all driven, in the beginning, by the overstructure and understrength problem. We could have beefed up the Guard and Reserve and given them some additional impetus in several other ways. We didn't have to do this to them. It was fortuitous. They end up getting some new equipment out of it. They're getting some modern equipment, which is good, because they need modern equipment. They deserve modern equipment. But, there again, even in the Guard

and Reserve there's an awful lot of structure that could come out. We have a lot of ASA [Army Security Agency], what used to be ASA, radio intercept units, in the Guard and Reserve, but we're not willing to provide equipment to train them. Where's the equipment going to come from? There isn't any! If we had to mobilize them and go to war quickly, we're not going to have that equipment, so why do you have them in the structure? The whole force structure needs a good scrub. Some of that I tried to do as the keeper of the force structure. That happens to have been one of them. I tried to get rid of civil affairs, that was another one. None of it worked. With regard to civil affairs, there were so many Reserve general officers in civil affairs that for about two weeks I got nothing but phone calls from members of Congress saying, "You lay off civil affairs units."

INTERVIEWER: During your tour at TRADOC, were you able to improve the working relationship with AMC or DARCOM to the point of helping to solve some of the doctrine and weapons systems interrelationships?

GEN STARRY: Well, we did finally get into the spring lab reviews with a set of TRADOC-drawn up priorities. The Battlefield Development Plan, which we started, helped us lay that out for DARCOM. They were happy to have somebody come and suggest to them what their priorities ought to be. By and large they accepted our priority listing. I understand that system languished after I left, largely because it's a very complex thing. General Jim Merryman did that for me when he was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Force Development. The guys who came after him really didn't understand the problem as well as he and I did. So I understand the system languished. As for the lab guys, in spite of my criticism of them I found that, by and large, they are very happy to have you come and tell them what you think you need. They're happy to have you do that. The whole establishment is happy to have you lay out priorities for them, because it helps them justify their budgets. We didn't have any real

controversies with them. However, the bulk of the work has to be done at the center level. The center commander has to go out and find them and kind of steer the technology along. We don't do that very well, for all the reasons that I cited a while ago.

INTERVIEWER: What would you consider to have been your major TRADOC accomplishments?

GEN STARRY: I really think I'd be foolish to try to take credit for all of this, because General DePuy started it, but when I left we were on the verge of publishing the 1982 edition of FM 100-5. The doctrine revolution that we started in the 1973 time period, as far as I was concerned, was complete. General DePuy and I had done what we collectively started out to do. I felt kind of good about that. I'm sure he would be critical of the 1982 version because it didn't do things exactly like he thought they should be done. To that extent, writing it at Leavenworth watered it down a little bit and made it more generic rather than specific. I'm sure he would be a critic of that. I have not talked with him about it but, knowing him as I do, he probably would be. All of which I understand and accept. We didn't have the controversy we had before. Had we written another FM 100-5 that was as controversial as the first one, we might well have been in deeper trouble than we were in with the first one. First, we put out all the fires, almost all the fires, and then we finished what we set out to do. We finished an organization, which he started and I finished, even though I had to change the thrust in the middle for good and sufficient reasons. We had fielded a new tank, are about to field a new attack helicopter, and fielded the Bradley and several other combat and support vehicles, all of which were required by the doctrinal revolution. The Black Hawk came in. You had to feel kind of good about that. It was a part of that whole process. When I was at Knox we pioneered one station unit training [OSUT] in an attempt to get away from the break between what we then called basic combat training [BCT] and advanced individual training [AIT].

I still think that was the very best thing to do. We should have probably done it long ago. We revised the officer education system. We created the noncommissioned officer school system almost from scratch. That was in place and operating fairly well, with a lot of work left to be done, by the time I left. I would like to say that, between the two of us, we really turned the officer, NCO and enlisted education and training systems onto the new track, following the doctrine and so on. I like to believe that in the years I was there we managed to turn Leavenworth around and get them started on some of the things they should have been doing all along under Cushman but didn't, some of which resulted in what is now CAS3 [Combined Arms and Services Staff School] and the second year (SAMS) for some. I wanted to put all the U.S. students through a second year. We may do that yet, I don't know. We've got 40 SAMS students going this next year, as opposed to 20 each the last two years. Both of those programs are eminently successful. CAS3, particularly, is a real winner, as we thought it would be in the beginning. We turned the regular curriculum at Leavenworth around to the point that they're now studying war instead of political science. It still has some way to go, but it's improving. We got Leavenworth back in the doctrinal business. Now they probably have more clout in that business than the TRADOC headquarters does, which I think is an imbalance that should be addressed. But that's the way it is. So Leavenworth is a big voice on that stage, and that had to be done. We couldn't relegate it to a minor thing or you'd have a situation like the Air Force has at Maxwell. They've got a super school, but it doesn't have anything to do with doctrine training and so on, which is unfortunate. In the things that General DePuy and I both thought were critical to us in the revolution -- the doctrine, the tactics, and the operational level of war (although he didn't see that quite the way I did, and I don't think shared my sense of the importance of it) -- I think we pretty well got them done. The equipment, the organization and the training, in the eight years that the two of us were in command, we pretty much finished the cycle of development. There were some holes and

some imperfections in it. Some of the things we started out to do didn't get done. But, if you judge it on the basis of the fact that is was a pretty grand scheme in the beginning, and look at it eight years afterwards and see how much we were able to do, all things considered (and being human, as we both are) we didn't do badly.

INTERVIEWER: We agree.

GEN STARRY: I'm not one to congratulate myself on what a great guy I am, but I think we did some great things for the Army, some of which are going to last for a long, long time. Somebody asked me the other day, "If you had tried to start that yourself, could you have done it?" Hell, I don't know. I really doubt it. I don't doubt my own ability, nor do I doubt my ability to generate vision and put marks on the wall for people. But General Bill DePuy is a guy who is unique. In spite of the fact that we've had some great leaders in our Army in this century, the circumstances were quite different. In looking at the Eisenhowers and the Bradleys, all of us are going to pale almost to insignificance. And, whether or not they were good at what they were doing at the time, they certainly grew in stature as time went on after the event. But, anyway, a post-World War II soldier has got a hard road being compared to those guys. But, having said that, I just have to say that I think General Bill DePuy is one of the very small handful of very great soldiers that this country has produced in this century. No question about it! He had the energy, he had the intellect, and he had the ability to get the thing organized and get a whole lot of stuff done. We made some false starts, which some of us were able to wrench around, which he probably would have done himself. The organization is a good example of that. The Army owes him a great debt, an enormous debt. He set it on the path for the 21st century.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, I think it's rather obvious what you think of General DePuy, and you stated it rather eloquently. It's also said that the warriors

come out only in war. But, since we haven't had that, who else would you characterize as being in the great or near-great category, based on your experience in the Army over the last 40 years?

GEN STARRY: As warriors, you mean?

INTERVIEWER: As warriors, or those who have made great contributions to the services and to the security of the country.

GEN STARRY: That's a tough one. I don't know. I can think a couple of guys who have just done some awfully good things for the Army. General Fritz Kroesen is one of them. Even though he's an infantryman, he did more for USAREUR than many before him. He's one of the best programmer guys -- taking resources and laying them out against the time line -- that I have ever known. He put USAREUR back on its feet. It was just dabbling along until he took command over there. He put it back on its feet in terms of facilities, resources, and the management of resources. I wrote him a letter when he retired and I thanked him for that. Having served over there for so many years, first as a junior officer and then later as a corps commander, I've seen every ridiculous thing happen in that theater that the mind of man could possibly devise. He was the first guy, in my memory, who got it all organized and really got something going that was organized and programmed out. He did the Army in Europe, and the Army as a whole, really a great service. It's unfortunate that General Abrams died when he did. Who knows what would have happened under his tenure as the Chief, and perhaps as the Chairman? It's unfortunate that General Haig had to leave. I think the world of him, as I mentioned the other day. He was a good SACEUR. I think he would have been a great asset to the Army as its Chief of Staff or as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, particularly as the Chairman. But that wasn't to be. He probably could have done the country more good in those jobs than he wound up being able to do as the Secretary of State, through no fault of his own. I

don't know. I'd have to go through a roster and sort them out to really answer your question in detail. But there are some good guys out there.

INTERVIEWER: You spent four years as the commander of TRADOC. Did you have any expectations as to where you'd be going as you left TRADOC?

GEN STARRY: No, not really. You know, you sort of go on and do the best you can with what you've got and let the chips fall where they may. At that point, having done what I had done, I would not have minded at all staying on. As commander of TRADOC, General Meyer thought I was a logical candidate to succeed him as Chief of Staff. But, in order to do that, I needed more joint visibility. So he persuaded me that I ought to take REDCOM. I did so with some reluctance because it was in the throes of great debate, an acrimonious debate, which I talked about the other day. I wasn't really anxious to go and do that. But I went because he asked me to, and so I said, "Okay, I'll do it." At the time I had several job offers, to include three or four college presidencies or chancellorships, which had been discussed or offered. Some of those went to other people and some of them I simply had to turn down once I made the decision that I was going to go to REDCOM. Europeans came to me and asked if I would be willing to be the SACEUR. But they were not willing to go to the administration and say, "We don't like General Rogers. We'd like for him to go away. We want you because you have done an awful lot of work with the Germans and the Brits over the years, particularly in TRADOC, V Corps and at Knox as well." I personally, and the organizations that I commanded, had a super rapport with the British and the Germans, and also with the French. Because I had spent so much time over there and really looked on Germany as kind of a second home, I had a particularly good relationship with the Germans. I would have welcomed the opportunity to be the Supreme Allied Commander. I thought there were some things I could do for Europe and for the Alliance. I wasn't running

for office but, at the same time, I would've welcomed the opportunity. Same thing with the Chief of Staff job. I thought there were still some things that the Army needed to have done for it. The Army, at that point, had to make a decision to go with the heavy forces and perhaps cut back on some of the other stuff, or go with the light forces and proceed along the lines that we already described. The SACEUR decision was made because General Rogers kept coming back and getting himself reappointed. Nobody ever raised a voice against that. The Chief of Staff decision was made by the Secretary of the Army without consulting with his Chief of Staff or with anybody else.
[End Tape S-214, Side 1]

[Begin Tape S-214, Side 2]
GEN STARRY: Apparently he never asked General Meyer or anybody else for a recommendation.

INTERVIEWER: This occurred after you'd gone to REDCOM?

GEN STARRY: Yes, this was when I was still at REDCOM. Thereupon I said, well, I was coming up on 35 years of active commissioned service. And General Meyer said, "I'm perfectly willing and would like to put you in for reappointment at REDCOM and we'll see what happens." So I went to see General Vessey, and I said, "Do you want me to stay?" He said, "I'd be more than happy to have you stay, but I understand, like all of us, we all have to kind of sort out what we're going to do between now and the time we're 65 and facing retirement. You've got to make that decision for yourself. But I'd like to have you stay." Fundamentally, I had decided to leave because I had 35 years' service. It looked like General Rogers was going to perpetuate himself in command forevermore. General Wickham was going to be appointed as Chief of Staff, and the regulation says that 35 is enough, so I said, "That's fine. There are no jobs that I really want,

other than those two, and I'm not going to go around and make a fuss about it." So I sent in my papers and left.

INTERVIEWER: When was the conversation that took place between Mr. Marsh and General Meyer concerning his replacement?

GEN STARRY: I never discussed it with the Secretary. General Meyer reported to me about February or March of 1983 that the Secretary had made up his mind and had just announced it to him, General Meyer, and that this was the way it was going to be. General Meyer was very upset. At that point he said, "Well, whatever happens, I'm having the paperwork drawn up to go in for you to be reappointed as CINCRED [Commander in Chief, US Readiness Command]." And I said, "Give me a couple of days to think about that." So I went home and talked about it, talked to General Vessey about it, and decided to leave.

INTERVIEWER: Who made the decision to leave General Rogers as the SACEUR?

GEN STARRY: Well, the Secretary of Defense makes that recommendation to the President, and General Rogers has a lot of clout on the Hill from his days as Chief of Legislative Liaison. He, I think, wanted to outlive General Lemnitzer as the SACEUR in tenure and so on. But he's a very mercurial personality, and the Europeans don't like that very well. But he has been very successful in getting himself reappointed.

INTERVIEWER: Did General Meyer, himself, have any aspirations towards SACEUR?

GEN STARRY: I suppose he did. He would have made a very good one, I think. But he had lost a lot of clout, though neither of us realized it. He was a very controversial guy in the tank. He took a lot of exception to

Dave Jones as the Chairman, as anybody had to if they were the Chief. It was a miserable environment to work in. But he became -- what's the word? He lost his clout in the joint arena and with the Secretary of Defense as a result of being so controversial all the time with David Jones and with the Secretary of Defense. He was not a power. Witness the Secretary of the Army not even bothering to consult him on who he was going to appoint as the Chief of Staff.

INTERVIEWER: Isn't that becoming more prevalent today?

GEN STARRY: I think it is. I commented the other day on Mr. Weinberger. As much I respect him, I frankly don't think he gives a damn what the generals say. I've never been to a meeting with him in which it wasn't kind of apparent that he had already made up his mind what he was going to do and it didn't make any difference what anybody around the table said.

INTERVIEWER: Had it been available at the time, would you have taken USAREUR?

GEN STARRY: I don't think so. You get to that 35th year and you kind of have to look at yourself and see where you are financially, what with facing retirement sometime in the next few years. And, if you need money, need to make money, you're going to have to do that essentially between whatever time you retire and the time you reach 65. Given social security guidelines, you're not going to be able to make much money between the time you're 65 and 70. When you're 70 apparently you can go back to work and make a lot of money. But, between 65 and 70 I guess you're supposed to rest up. I'm not quite sure how that's supposed to work. It's an anomaly of the system, I guess. We had just finished putting four kids through college. Some took longer than others. I don't need to tell you that it isn't cheap these days. We had spent ten

continuous years in command, and had spent a lot of our own money doing things that the government system should have been willing to support, such as entertainment and so on. When I went to Fort Knox it was at the time when they did away with the bookstores, which were the commandants' source of funds for entertainment and whatnot, so we had put a lot of our own money into the job. I don't complain about that, because I took it as a part of the job. But, at the same time, that and the level 5 ceiling on executive salaries really put us into a position where we owed some money. We had built a house out in Colorado on which we had a substantial mortgage, and some of our kids were living in it. We had about $25,000 or $30,000 in the bank, which isn't much to show for 40 years of hard work. It was apparent that I needed to retire sometime soon and make enough money so that we could afford to have a place in which we could live with a mortgage that wasn't all that burdensome. I was 58 when I retired, and it was apparent that it was going to take about six or seven years to get enough money together to do that. We wanted to get our act together so we could afford to retire and own enough of our property so that the mortgage wasn't out of line and have enough money left to travel and do some things for the kids, which we thought we wanted to continue to do. So it just looked like a good time to do it. Everybody faces that problem sooner or later. Some of my friends have been a hell of lot smarter about managing their money over the years than we were. I think we gave generously in terms of being willing to commit ourselves and our own resources to the jobs that we had. I don't regret that at all. I wouldn't complain about that at all. At the same time, a lot of my buddies had been a lot smarter about using their money than I had; they didn't put as much into their commands and whatnot as we did. But I think it showed it in the end. So I have no regrets about that. It's just that you have to size yourself up at the end of the line and decide what you need to do between now and the time you have to face retirement.

INTERVIEWER: Back to the prospective question of being the Chief of Staff. When you went to REDCOM, did General Meyer believe he could persuade the Secretary of the Army to name you as his replacement?

GEN STARRY: I'm sure he did.

INTERVIEWER: However, he apparently lost his clout and wasn't able to do that. Did you know Mr. Marsh, or had you dealt with him very much?

GEN STARRY: Well, I had dealt with him a good bit. I don't think he thinks I'm his kind of guy. I wouldn't go so far as to say I don't believe he likes me. We just don't connect. He was a welcome change from the social revolutionary we had had as the Secretary before him. I asked him to come down to TRADOC when he was first in office, which he did. We briefed him on what we were doing and so on. He may have been turned off a little bit. He had a major working for him at the time who was kind of anti-establishment, and I was part of the establishment. I was part of the revolutionary establishment and he was part of the anti-revolutionary establishment. The major, I think, did both TRADOC and me a little bit of a disservice in his comments to the Secretary about what was going on down there. Somehow or other that soured him on me, I think, as a person and on what we were doing. However, he never intruded himself on us. He just wasn't interested. He has a strange personality and is not a very effective Secretary, in my judgment. Look at the Army's share of the defense budget. The Army's share of everything has gone downhill under his tenure, and he has not done anything to prevent it. He spends a lot of time over on the Hill because he was once a congressman and still has access to the facilities. My friends in Congress keep calling me and asking, "What in the hell is he doing over here? We don't want him over here. He's cluttering up our facilities, and we're crowded now. Why don't you guys see if you can't get him away from here? Get him some Army

facilities to go to." As I said, he has not been a very effective Secretary in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think he was looking for a Chief of Staff that he could control?

GEN STARRY: Tractable, I think, is the right term.

INTERVIEWER: Pliable?

GEN STARRY: Pliable? Okay.

INTERVIEWER: What happened to the major? Is he still in the Army?

GEN STARRY: I don't know. He was a candidate for public execution as far as I was concerned for a while. But, what the hell. He may have recovered, he may not. It doesn't make any difference now.

INTERVIEWER: You moved to REDCOM after the decision had been made to establish CENTCOM. I believe that's true, anyway. General Warner had retired rather than go along with this split, but you knew it was coming when you went down there. I believe you said you approached it from the standpoint of it not being a really controversial matter since the decision was made, which you implemented. Did you agree with that decision?

GEN STARRY: No. I think it was a mistake. I said so the other day. I think that the creation of that other command down there was totally unnecessary. You have to remember that when Strike Command was first organized, and for the ten years that it existed as STRICOM [Strike Command] as opposed to REDCOM, they had in the command two Joint Task Forces. There was, within the headquarters, a composition of two

joint task forces. There were two joint communications support elements, each one of which supported one of the task forces. One of those task forces had the mission of conducting deployments into the Middle East and Africa south of the Sahara. The other one's mission had to do with deployments elsewhere in the world in areas not covered by other CINCs under the Unified Command Plan. The Navy resented that from the beginning because Paul Adams, the first commander of REDCOM or Strike Command, took charge of the naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean, and the Navy resented that. Obviously, in their view no Army officer should ever command naval forces. Army officers cannot be expected to issue intelligent instructions to naval forces. That just can't happen. So the Navy over the years tried to break up Strike Command. They tried it several different ways. When we were going through our candy-ass period at the end of the Vietnam War in 1971 to 1973, the issue came up again and the Navy had enough clout to "unstrike" the Strike Command. We're not going to strike anything; we're nice guys and so on. So, they unstruck Strike and renamed it REDCOM. In unstriking Strike they took away that other joint task force, or reduced it to token numbers, and reduced the size of the headquarters. They got them out of the intelligence business and the foreign military assistance sales business. Part of that function went to the State Department, part of it went to EUCOM, and part of it went away. It didn't go away as a problem, but it went away as a function. Now, if you have a problem in the Middle East, which is the same sort of problem you had before, then it makes eminent good sense to beef up REDCOM and recreate that other joint task force. Or take the joint task force that he already has, beef it up, use it as the Middle East focus force, and then restructure the Unified Command Plan to give the rest of the CINCs the areas of the world that REDCOM was then responsible for. The people in the White House in the Carter years, who wrote up this plan to create the RDJTF apparently never bothered to check and see and to understand the background and the history of REDCOM and why it was formed. When they got the Navy input, which

apparently they got somehow, the Navy said, "Boy, you can't go back and do that over again." And so they came up with this plan and somebody said, "Well, we can't do that." So they put it on the shelf. Then the Carters went away and the Reagan people came into office. They spent the first year screwing around with the domestic economy and then said, "Well, we have got to do something about the Middle East -- the oil problem and so on -- lest that recur again." And so somebody dusted off this plan and Mr. Weinberger just accepted it then and there, without ever talking to anybody about it. That other command is not necessary. It's a waste of resources, in my opinion. There's nothing about it that the Readiness Command can't handle perfectly well -- better, as a matter of fact, than Central Command. Those commands are expensive. And as for officers, where are all the majors and lieutenant colonels that people need in the battalions, brigades and divisions? They're down there in that headquarters. The CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] said, "I am not going to commit any more officers to joint headquarters." Then he sat down in the tank and voted for the organization of the Central Command. In short, he spoke with a forked tongue.

INTERVIEWER: Let me ask you this, sir. Given that CENTCOM is a given, does REDCOM retain a viable mission?

GEN STARRY: REDCOM has a lot of things to do. In the first place, REDCOM and the Joint Deployment Agency have an enormous function in terms of meeting the deployment requirements -- the Central Command, Europe, Korea, wherever they are. There needs to be a senior headquarters working on that problem all the time. It could be a joint agency, I suppose, but it really requires the clout of a commander in chief to go around and see those other warlords and do business with them. REDCOM can furnish that service to the deployed CINCs in terms of joint wargaming activity, which we started when I was there. This is, I understand, now proceeding to develop. My idea there was to provide a

central model, in model development and model resources, which would enable everybody to test their war plans. I mean, that's where the computers are these days. Then everybody can play wargames; we can play joint wargames and we can play national-level wargames with something better than those subjective judgments that are made in the Pentagon when we get those wargames going. Somebody needs to be in charge of joint tactics, joint techniques and joint doctrine, which we call tactics, techniques and procedures. I spoke about that the other day. We started that. The JCS has picked that up and it's still continuing. In the couple of years that I was there we stifled the controversy. We got REDCOM turned around and doing some things that REDCOM should have been doing all along. We got a couple of programs started, which apparently have survived. I looked at the mission of command and control of the residual resources in the United States in case of a nuclear attack. REDCOM is not equipped to do that, but it's part of its charter. I wanted to get FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] organized with REDCOM to do that. Of course FEMA has now fallen afoul of the grand jury and I don't know what will come of that. That effort was set back by FEMA's demise. It's still in operation and they have a new head, but they're still under a dark cloud as a result of that grand jury investigation. I think we got REDCOM started on those things that REDCOM can do. It is capable of doing a lot more, I think, and that's why I argued that you should have given it the other mission, too. However, they elected not to do that and that's their call.

INTERVIEWER: One last question, sir. It's quite obvious that your wife and family have been a great source of inspiration for you over the years. You've told us how your wife helped you break down machine guns and entertained lieutenants who were doing it and so on. I think that's something we would all like to see more of. We'd like to have you comment about that relationship. It sounds very good.

GEN STARRY: I talked a little bit about this to Matt previously. I don't think the tape was on when we were doing it. I believe that when you put a person in a responsible job, especially in command, when you put a guy in command, you're really putting a husband and wife team in command. I always selected my commanders based on the guy and his wife. And, as a matter of fact, I turned down several major generals and above for commands in my time because their wives were a disruptive element that we simply couldn't stand. Now some of those general officers were pretty good commanders. So some of my friends didn't get commands because I knew their wives very well and didn't want them out there screwing up my outfit. Command is a team effort. You can't go out there without a wife, or with a wife who is non-supportive. All you have to do is look around you at the posts where you're having difficulty, where the Army Community Services, the Red Cross, and what not are sort of going along but really languishing and not getting the attention they ought to get. You look at what the CG's [Commanding General] wife is doing and you'll discover that she's not interested. She has an obligation. I mean, you join this thing together. This is me talking, it is the Starry approach, and a lot of people don't agree with it, particularly today, when wives like to work and liberation has taken its toll and so on. There is no way that some guy is going to go out and take command of an installation or a command and be able to look at all of the aspects of it that are important. In today's world so many of the young enlisted people are married, as opposed to before we knocked off the draft in the spring of 1972. I think the numbers go something like this: E4s and below were less than 10 percent married. Those numbers are now up to 50 and 60 percent, as I understand it. I don't know the exact numbers, but that caused a change that we were slow to recognize. In fact, my wife recognized it for me first and went and got some numbers and said, "Look what's going on on your post." Then you just have to sit down and think about that, because they're out there living on the sides of the hills and in the trailers at Fort Knox and whatnot. You tell them not to bring their wives to basic training. But you've gotten

them down off the hills in eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, and you know they're going to bring them. And so there's a whole world of work that needs to be done in the community sense to build a community, because a part of the performance of the soldiers, officers, and NCOs is that community, and how well they are satisfied with the community, and how well the community supports them in their view. And some of that is women's work. Guys can't do it. Guys are not smart enough to do that, nor sensitive enough to some of the problems to do it. So it's a team effort. I don't think we ever sat down and had a conversation about this, my wife and I. From the beginning we just assumed that that was the way it was. Most of the good ideas that I ever had about how to improve the communities we lived in were her ideas. She was sensitized to the things that were making people unhappy and causing unrest, and to the opportunities for improving the situation, I guess because she saw it all from a totally different aspect than I did. She always gave pretty good advice. Sometimes I couldn't afford to pay the price as a commander for what she was suggesting be done, but we always managed to get it done somehow. Where I couldn't pay for it, she'd organize volunteers. As I said a while ago, you look around and see places where things are a little bit unhappy and not doing well and you will discover that the CG's wife is not paying attention to the things she ought to be. I've said many times that, behind every successful guy, there's a bunch of kids and a wife, each of whom has paid some kind of price for daddy's success. They've had a lot of fun. They've lived in a lot of different places in the world. They've made a lot of good friends. But, in terms of what their peers have been doing in the civilian world, I think the kids have paid a price. Still, they've gained something that nobody else has. Most of them come away from that experience with a hell of a lot better sense of dedication to the country and to the values that the military system still espouses. At the same time, in terms of school, educational opportunities, and a lot of other things, they've all paid a price. I spent almost three years in Vietnam, three years plus, and it was at a bad time in this country. We had kids in

high school, and it was a bad time for daddy to be away. They've all recovered from it fairly well, but you always have to wonder what they would have been sooner than they were if you hadn't been gone. And there was the trauma. You know the street we lived on in Springfield, Virginia, the guy who lived down the street -- who was a federal employee, as a matter of fact, the head of the Federal Prison System -- used to send his kids up the walk to throw eggs all over our car, particularly when the windows were open, because he was anti-Vietnam. The kids see that, and there's no way to explain that to them. So the family pays the price. To some extent we've tried to reduce that price by letting the women believe that they don't have an obligation. And some of them believe that they don't. In my opinion we're making a mistake, because the sense of family can only come from families working that equation. I maintain that families have to work at it.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, it has been a fascinating experience. I'd like to thank you for being so candid and open, and I hope that we've been able to bring out everything you wanted.
[End Tape S-214, side 2]

APPENDIX A

ACCESS AGREEMENTS

GENERAL DONN A. STARRY, USA Retired
LIEUTENANT COLONEL MATTHIAS SPRUILL
LIEUTENANT COLONEL EDWIN VERNON

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE AND CARLISLE BARRACKS
CARLISLE, PENNSYLVANIA 17013-5008

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, U.S. Army Military History Institute

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Materials

1. I, General Donn A. Starry, participated in an oral history conducted by LTC Matthias Spruill / LTC Edwin Vernon of the US Army War College on the following date(s): 1986.

2. I understand that the tape(s) and the transcript resulting from this oral history will belong to the U.S. government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the U.S. Army, as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative. I also understand that subject to security classification restrictions, I will be given an opportunity to edit the resulting transcript in order to clarify and expand my original thoughts. The Army will provide me with a copy of the edited transcript for my own use subject to classification restrictions.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the tape(s) and transcript to the U.S. Army, with only the following caveat: (Please initial one.)

DAS None.

_____ Other _____

I understand that the tapes and transcript resulting from this oral history may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act and, therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the U.S. Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested be placed on these materials.

Donn A. Starry — 13 May 08
(Signature of Interviewee) GENERAL DONN A. STARRY — (Date)

Accepted on behalf of the U.S. Army by [signature] — February 8, 2012
Director, US Army Military History Institute — (Date)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

USAMHI

13 May 08
(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR, USAMHI

SUBJECT: Access to My Oral History Audio and Video Tapes and Their Transcripts

1. My initials have been placed adjacent to one of the possible access arrangements under subparagraphs a, b, and c below to indicate the degree of accessibility I desire.

a. TO MY AUDIO TAPES ACCESS IS GRANTED TO:

_____ all who seek access.

DAS only those who are determined to be bonafide researchers and scholars by the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____ only active and retired uniformed members of the Armed Services and Department of Defense civilians who are determined to be bonafide researchers and scholars by the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____ only those who first secure my permission directly or through the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____ no one until such time as I direct otherwise or upon my death or incapacitation.

_____ (other, please write out_____

b. TO MY VIDEO TAPES ACCESS IS GRANTED TO: N/A

_____ all who seek access

_____ only those who are determined to be bonafide researchers and scholars by the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____only those who first secure my persmission directly or through the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____no one until such time as I direct otherwise or upon my death or incapacitation.

_____(other, please write out)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

c. TO THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES ACCESS IS GRANTED TO:

_____all who seek access.

✓ only those who are determined to be bonafide researchers and scholars by the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____only active and retired uniformed members of the Armed Services and Department of Defense civilians who are determined to be bonafide researchers and scholars by the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____only those who first secure my permission directly or through the Director, US Army Military History Institute.

_____no one until such time as I direct otherwise or upon my death or incapacitation.

_____(other, please write out)_____

NOTE: I AM PROVIDING A COPY TO TRADOC FOR INCLUSION WITH MY FORTHCOMING "COLLECTED WORKS" (SIMILAR TO WHAT WAS DONE IN THE CASE OF GENERAL DEPUY.)

_____

2. My initials have been placed adajcent to one of the possible access arrangements below to indicate the degree of access that I desire UPON MY DEATH OR PERMANENT INCAPACITATION.

_____be open to all.

DAF remain the same as indicated in paragraph 1 above.

_____be as the Director, US Army Military History Institute feels will best serve the interests of the Armed Services.

3. My initials in the paragraph below indicate THE DISPOSITION OF THE LITERARY RIGHTS to my Oral History materials upon my death or permanent incapacitation. The literary rights to my Oral History materials become the property of:

DAS the United States Army.

OR

_____(Other, please write out)_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. I do / ~~do not desire~~ that ONE COPY of my Oral History Transcripts be provided to my interviewer(s). I understand that my transcripts will not be otherwise disseminated or reproduced by the interviewer(s) without my consent.

5. I consent to have ONE COPY of my Oral History Transcripts placed in the US ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY, WASHINGTON, DC, for use by members of the Army Staff and other official agencies in preparation of official papers subject to the restrictions noted in Paragraph 1c above. I understand that my transcripts will not be otherwise disseminated or reproduced without the consent of the Commanding General, Center of Military History.

6. I understand that all audio and video tapes and interview transcripts are the property of the United States Army.

Donna Starry
(Signature)

DONNA A. STARRY
(Print Name)

In accordance with my wishes, Dr. Roger Spiller may also have a copy of my completed transcript.

DAS (See cover letter to you from MHI)
(Initials)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

USAMHI

_____
(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, USAMHI

SUBJECT: Access to Oral History Tapes and Transcripts

1. I participated in the AY 86 Senior Officer Oral History Program by interviewing General Donn A. Starry, USA Retired.

2. With respect to the audio tape and the transcription of the oral history interview cited in paragraph 1 above, I hereby grant that, subject to any restrictions imposed by the interviewee:

a. Both the tape and transcript may be made available to bonafide researchers and scholars, military and civilian, at the discretion of the Director, US Army Military History Institute;

b. The transcript may be quoted, in whole or in part, in official Army publications.

3. In granting the access and use conditions in paragraph 2 above it is my understanding that:

a. In any publication of the transcript of the interviews which I conducted I will be given appropriate acknowledgement as the interviewer;

b. Subject to the priority claims of the interviewee, I retain certain literary rights to the tapes and transcripts of the interviews which I conducted until my death or permanent incapacitation at which time such rights shall pass to the United States Army;

c. All audio tapes and interview transcripts remain the (physical) property of the United States Army;

d. Without my express written permission, any audio tape or transcript of the interviews which I conducted will not be commercially exploited by any person whosoever except for a brief quotation of ten lines or less.

INTERVIEWER Matthias A. Spruill
(Signature)

MATTHIAS A. SPRUILL
(Print Name)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

USAMHI

_____
(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, USAMHI

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INTERVIEWER Edwin T. Vernon
(Signature)

Edwin T. Vernon
(Print Name)

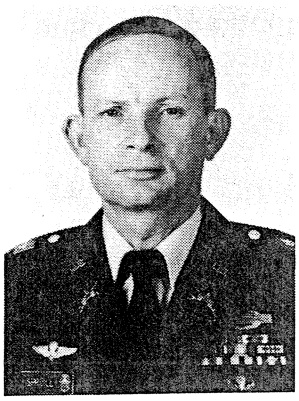
APPENDIX B

BIOSKETCH

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MATHIAS SPRUILL
LIEUTENANT COLONEL EDWIN VERNON

SPRUILL, Matthias A., III (Matt)
LTC Armor

DOR: 4 Jun 80 (64 Yr Gp)



EDUCATION:

Dates	Name and Place	Study	Degree
1960-64	The Citadel, Charleston, SC	Hist	BA
1974-75	Univ of Missouri, Kansas City, MO	Hist	MA

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

Dates	Position, Organization and Location
Jul 64-Jun 65	Plt Ldr, Co B, 1st Bn, 13th Armor, Ft Hood, TX
Jun 65-Nov 65	S2, 1st Bn, 13th Armor, Ft Hood, TX
Jan 66-May 66	Tm Ldr, Tm A, 6th SF Gp, Ft Bragg, NC
May 66-Feb 67	S2, 5th SF Gp, 1st SF, Vietnam
Mar 67-May 67	Op Off, Sp Trps, Vietnam
Apr 68-Jun 69	CO, HQ Co, 1st Bn, 81st Armor, 1st Armd Div, Ft Hood, TX
Feb 69-Apr 69	Asst S3, 1st Bde, 5th Inf Div, Vietnam
Apr 69-Nov 69	CO, Co A, 1st Bn, 77th Armor, 5th Inf Div, Quang Tri, Vietnam
Nov 69-Feb 70	CO, Trp A, 4th Sqdn, 12th Cav, Quang Tri, Vietnam
Apr 70-Aug 71	CO, Trp C, 1st Sqdn, 14th ACR, Fulda, Germany
Sep 71-Mar 73	S3, 1st Sqdn, 11th ACR, Fulda, Germany
Dec 73-Jun 74	XO, C&C Sqdn, 11th ACR, Fulda, Germany
Jan 76-Jun 79	Asst PMS/Deputy Comdt, North Georgia Col, Dahlonega, GA
Jul 79-May 81	Chief, Exer Gp, USARJ/IX Corps, Camp Zama, Japan
Jul 81-Sep 83	Cdr, 15th Bn, 4th Bde, Ft Knox, KY
Oct 83-Jun 84	Chief, Gunnery Div, Wpns Dept, USAARMS, Ft Knox, KY
Jun 84-Jun 85	Stf Ldr, Comb Arms Svcs Stf Sch (CAS^3), Ft Leavenworth, KS

SERVICE SCHOOLS: Grad - USACGSC, 75

INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE: Sr ROTC/Mil Hist, North Georgia Col, Jan 76-Jun 79; Comb Arms Svcs Stf Sch, Jun 84-Jun 85

SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS: OPMS - Armor (12); Op, Plans, Tng & Force Dev (54); Prcht, Historian

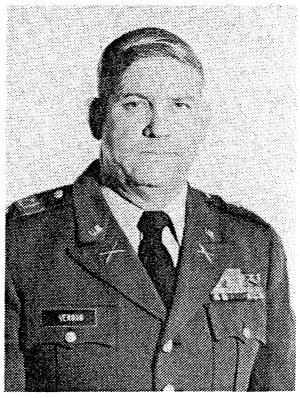
BATTLE CAMPAIGNS: Vietnam, 5

AWARDS: BSM, MSM w 2 OLC, ARCOM w 1 OLC, CIB

ORGANIZATIONS & SOCIETIES: Phi Alpha Theta (Hist Honor Society)

VERNON, Edwin T. (Ed)
LTC FA

DOR: 10 Nov 79 (64 Yr Gp)



EDUCATION:

Dates	Name and Place	Study	Degree
1959-63	Jacksonville State Univ, Jacksonville, AL	Hist	BA
1975-76	Central Michigan Univ, Washington, DC	Pers Mgt	MA

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

Dates	Position, Organization and Location
Jan 64-May 65	BMO, 2d Bn, 39th FA, Schweinfurt, Germany
May 65-Dec 66	XO/CO, Btry C, 2d Bn, 39th FA, Schweinfurt, Germany
Jan 67-Sep 67	CO, Btry A, 4th Bn, 28th FA, Ft Sill, OK
Oct 67-Oct 68	Sr Advr, 212th FA Bn, USMACV, Soc Trang, Vietnam
Sep 69-Jul 71	Asst PMS, Univ of Santa Clara, Santa Clara, CA
Jul 71-Apr 72	S3, 426th S&S Bn, Hue, Vietnam
Apr 72-May 75	Cdr, HQ Co, USASCAF, Washington, DC
May 75-Apr 78	MI Off, USAITAC, Washington, DC
Apr 78-Feb 80	Cdr, Btry D/Deputy Cdr, 3d Bn, 84th FA, Heilbronn, Germany
Feb 80-Nov 82	Chief, POTU, ODCSOPS, HQ USAREUR, Heidelberg, Germany
Nov 82-Jun 85	Cdr, 2d Bn, 75th FA, Hanau, Germany

SERVICE SCHOOLS: Grad - USACGSC (Corr), 78

INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE: Natl Def, Univ of Santa Clara, Sep 69-Jul 71

SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS: OPMS - FA (13), R&D (51); Tech Intel, R&D, NUCWPN, Instr, Mgt

BATTLE CAMPAIGNS: Vietnam, 6

AWARDS: BSM, MSM w 1 OLC, AM, ARCOM w 2 OLC, AAM, RVN Gallantry Cross w Palm, RVN Civil Actions Medal, RVN Honor Medal (1st Class), RVN Staff Svc Medal

THE USAWC SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1970 BY THEN CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, GENERAL WILLIAM C. WESTMORELAND TO PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO COMMAND AND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES UTILIZED BY SENIOR OFFICERS IN KEY POSITIONS AND TO FURTHER SCHOLARLY RESEARCH IN U.S. ARMY HISTORY. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS ARE PLACED IN THE USAMHI ARCHIVES FOR USE BY SCHOLARS IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERVIEWEE ACCESS AGREEMENTS.

U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE