

RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

Of

AUSTIN JAMES MONTGOMERY, Brigadier General

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 16 September 1912, New York, New York

YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE: Over 35 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 1 August 1967

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED

The Transportation School, Advanced Course
The Command and General Staff College
The Army War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES

University of Pittsburgh - BA Degree - Business Administration

MAJOR DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
Aug 56	Apr 57	Plans & Tng Br Chief, HQ, USAREUR
Apr 57	Jun 58	Corps Trans Officer, HQ, V Corps
Jun 58	Jul 59	CO, 10 th Trans Grp, USAREUR
Aug 59	Jul 60	CO, 3 rd Trans Grp (TML), FEVA
Aug 60	May 61	Plans Div Chief, MTMA
May 61	Mar 63	Trans Div Chief, J-4, OJCS
Mar 63	Apr 65	CO, Brooklyn Terminal Command
Apr 65	Aug 67	CO, MTMTS (Eastern Area)

PROMOTIONS

DATES OF APPOINTMENT

2LT	2 Nov	1931
1LT	9 Sep	1937
CPT	6 May	1941
MAJ	19 Dec	1941
LTC	13 Sep	1945
COL	11 Jul	1957
BG	1 Aug	1963

US DECORATIONS AND BADGES

Distinguished Service Medal
Silver Star w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters
Legion of Merit w/Oak Leaf Cluster
Bronze Star w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters
Army Commendation Medal
Purple Heart w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Joint Staff Identification Badge

SOURCE OF COMMISSION: Direct Commission



INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

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Interview with Brigadier General (Ret) Austin J. Montgomery

Brigadier General (Ret) Austin J. Montgomery was interviewed by CPT Keith Best on 11 May 1985. BG Montgomery received his commission with the Quartermaster Corps in 1931.

BG Montgomery dealt with leadership and command issues throughout the interview. BG Montgomery's experiences in the Philippines in 1941-42 reflected the theme of tapping the expertise of the people around you to accomplish the mission at hand. When forced to evacuate to Bataan, many civilians and untested soldiers had to be evaluated and entrusted to carry out missions. Judgement of character, the ability to trust others to perform, and tapping the knowledge of others are three traits of a good leader as seen by BG Montgomery.

He stated the importance of seeking command; of evaluating the situation one finds oneself in to make changes for the better; and training of subordinates as a key to good leadership. Allowing subordinates to learn by doing and making mistakes was highlighted as an important tool by BG Montgomery. Advancement of an officer's career can speed up with a successful command, as well.

Being fair, concerned, and loyal both up and down the chain of command were emphasized by BG Montgomery. Also, good leaders possess moral courage to do what they feel is right, as well as flexibility to advance as technology moves forward.

Finally, BG Montgomery reflected on his personal findings that successful commanders are often in demand in civilian business, as leadership is one of the indefinable traits that executives need to ensure a smooth running operation.

INTERVIEW

This is an interview with Brigadier General Austin James Montgomery, US Army retired. Today's date is 11 May 1985. The interview is conducted by CPT Keith Best, TOAC 2-85.

BG Montgomery: Okay let's go into the command assignments.

CPT Best: All right, sir.

BG Montgomery: Do you want to do this in a question form or... ?

CPT Best: That's okay because we can either question or just go by the interview plan.

BG Montgomery: Right. All right. Well, on the command assignments. I'll have to go back to WW II, to what I consider important command assignments. The first one I had on arriving in the Philippines before WWII; I got there in February 1941, was commanding the Philippines Motor Transport School. This was a school that was established for the benefit of the Philippine army officers who were called to active duty in the USAFFE buildup when General MacArthur first took over in about September of 1941; he took command of the Armed Forces in the Philippines. This was an extremely interesting assignment in that we took many officers who were graduates of Filipino universities, with many of them just recently removed from using caribou water buffaloes as a form of transportation and immediately started teaching them the virtues of 4x4 and 6x6 vehicles including some jeeps. We had a language barrier to overcome there because some of the officers came from the southern islands and the northern parts of Lousan, the island of Lousan, in the Philippines. These people had trouble understanding themselves and their own language and dialects and here we were further compounding the problem by trying to teach it to them in English.

I had as a nucleus in my school the key noncommissioned officers in a stripped down Philippine scout battalion that I concurrently commanded. In other words, I did not give my company command; I had a company. It was a two-company battalion; I had a company and by virtue of being the senior officer assigned to the battalion, I was the battalion commander as well.

CPT Best: Okay, sir.

BG Montgomery: And with the Philippine scouts and the few American NCOS, we turned out a group of Philippine officers who subsequently went back to their own units that had some knowledge of convoy operations, maintenance procedures, speedometer multipliers (which was a way of maintaining distance between vehicles used at that time) and some basic military subjects. This was a very satisfying assignment because it was the first one I had ever had when we were basically training what you would call native troops. These boys later on performed extremely well (the war hit us within two months) and I think I've always looked back with a great deal of pride on the performance of these motor transport officers. This was strictly a motor transport operation, which at

that time was a quartermaster responsibility since we did not have a transportation corps then.

When the war hit the Philippines, a special service was formed; it was called the Philippine Motor Transport Service. It was commanded by a Quartermaster Colonel named Michael Quinn, and I had command of what they called a Motor Transport Center which had as its nucleus a Philippine scout motor transport battalion. A number of trucks and buses which we had commandeered from the civilian world in the Philippines and put to use in the movement of not only troops; but in this case, evacuation of civilians and also substantial supplies from Manila. A number of ships had come in to the harbor before the war started and were partially unloaded. Here again, we had the usual documentation foul-ups that seem to plague all military operations and people didn't know what they had and such things were overlooked that later were worth their weight in gold. If anybody ever listens to this, you simply have got to find out what you have available. I found in some incredible manner, a large shipment of fishnets, fishing nets for a civilian fishing fleet that came in through the Philippines. These were absolutely invaluable when it came to camouflage for field artillery units. I'll never forget, a battalion commander almost kissed me-- when he found out I had brought these fishnets with me when we had evacuated Manila and I might add that that (the evacuation) was somewhat of a debacle that has gone down in history as a marvelous military maneuver where the tail end of the North Luzon force moved into the Bataan peninsula. The leading elements of the groups from Manila and South followed closely on their heels. As a matter of fact, it was the worst mess the world ever saw. There was no traffic control, we had jammed up roads and why in the world the Japanese didn't send one or two airplanes down to strafe us is something I'll never know. But somehow, somehow we managed to make it. We were left relatively unharmed by Japanese air but we got ourselves into position at Bataan. Here again, I think it was interesting to take a number of civilians who were given -- I guess you'd call them battlefield promotions or battlefield commissions in many instances to augment our forces over there. A man who operated the big bus company routes over in the Philippines, a gentleman named Max Blouse, was commissioned as a first lieutenant or a captain. He had excellent knowledge of bus operations but we weren't using very many buses there, that was the only problem. However, he was usable and I think there was a lesson to be learned there given in one of these fast moving situations. There is a lot of talent when you have a pool of civilians that you can draw from that you can put to good use when there's really an experience very useful to you. Particularly, as I say, if you find people who've been operating bus companies, you'll find out that not only do they know the operation, but they also know the maintenance; they know something about procurement, and we were able to flesh out our units which were hopelessly under strength anyway. He had, in many instances, only one officer assigned to a regular army unit, at company level so you needed to flesh it out. And we did make some experiments even in those days on what used to be called the "B" type units. Where you take basically a cadre and then flesh it out the way we studied it after the war, you would be fleshing them out with reserve units or national guard units, but in this instance we fleshed it out with the civilians and Philippine army that somehow, somehow had become separated from their initial missions. We were also getting some of the line units that we would integrate in

the logistics units because they had lost all of their equipment in the footrace out to Bataan; however, we could still use them.

Now, I think I'll focus on what I consider the most important command assignments I had after WWII. I got my regular army commission in the Transportation Corps and for about 5 or 6 years I never really served in a true transportation job, they were basically branch immaterial assignments and interspersed with the service schools: Command General Staff College, the long course and the Army War College. Consequently, I don't think that I had the tremendous knowledge of other Transportation Corps officers and I'm not sure I was particularly well known myself. In any event, I did, after the Army War College, serve in a true transportation corps job in headquarters US Army Europe, and then in V Corps, as the transportation officer. It was then that an opening came up to command a group, the 10th Group with headquarters at Ludwigsburg, Germany. I volunteered for this and I must say that the people in the corps headquarters, the corps commander and the corps chief of staff, felt it was refreshing that somebody really wanted a command job and would fight to get it. I particularly say that because Seventh Army was a graveyard for officers. Which meant, if you took a command and they had something like 20 or 30 of what they called indicators of the effectiveness of a unit, and if you weren't commanding to the satisfaction of the Seventh Army Commander who at that time was General Bruce C. Clark, or the support command commanders, you weren't going to last very long. If you flunked the course, particularly as a group commander at the colonel level, you were finished in the military.

Now I had what I considered to be one of the most challenging assignments that can face an Army officer and strangely enough what this was, was taking over basically a good unit and making it better. Almost anybody can take a lousy unit and by going around and booting people in the butt, relieving people right and left; scaring the hell out of everybody. You can start making some progress; you've got to make some progress because you've started from a zero base. In this instance, this was basically four good battalions, none of which would strain themselves to be any better, all they wanted to do was to get by. And without naming names, the previous commander had in fact told me that, he said, "You're not going to make any changes in this because you don't have to. These are good units." Well, they were good units but they could have been a lot better and they were made a lot better. The way one steps into a situation like that or can step into a situation, because no two people are probably going to approach the problem the same way, I did nothing for about two weeks except look around. Without being asked, the previous commander had given me a small thumbnail sketch of the four battalion commanders. I found his evaluation completely erroneous as far as I was concerned in that the battalion commander he rated number four was far and away the outstanding guy, and so on down the line. What I found there was that people who had tried to innovate were cut off at the pass. They had some good ideas but nobody wanted to try them. They felt, "We are a pretty good unit; don't rock the boat." I would say of the twelve or thirteen units that we had in the Seventh Army Support Command, the 10th Group at that time would have been rated third or fourth, maybe fifth. Without blowing my own horn, when we left, we were not only number one but number one by so far it was not even close.

The first thing I did was to get the attention of the battalion commanders which I did by frequent personal contact - visit them and then bring them up to me. If I saw that they had good ideas, I turned them loose, yes - do it. Occasionally, some of the things recommended were flat out impractical, or if they weren't impractical, the time wasn't right.

One battalion commander had got himself in trouble because Elvis Presley had just been inducted in the service and this battalion commander happened to come from Memphis, Tennessee. He wrote an ill advised letter to Elvis Presley, which the media printed, and said that if he joined his battalion he wouldn't have to cut his hair. Well, that went over like a lead balloon but that was the only stupid thing he had proposed; he was a hell of a good commander. And I later made him my executive officer. He had some excellent ideas and I turned him loose.

Fortunately, we had our annual general inspections and our Army training tests, they were on a phased basis and for the first time after about three months, this battalion, it was the 6th Battalion with headquarters at Byangur, Germany, and it got straight Superior on the AGIs and straight Superior on the Army training test. You can't go much better than that; all the companies got it and battalion headquarters. So we were doing something right.

The next battalion was able to do almost as well; they got an overall Superior although not all of the companies were Superior in both of the fields. Things such as the five major areas that were looked at very closely in Seventh Army statistical areas were the accident rate, AWOL rate, the serious incident rate which was a problem that developed between the soldiers and the community, sometimes soldiers against soldiers. You had your AGIs and your ATTs and then a lot of small stuff like hometown releases, and how people would go and not buy US savings Bonds. You can name them right down the line but the point was you had to get with that program; that's what the Seventh Army Commander wanted. I think all of these things were good, except in retrospect, I wouldn't have leaned so much on some of these poor guys to buy savings bonds because it was a lousy investment at that time. At the same time, my regrets now are slightly conditioned by the fact that I realize many of them bought a savings bond one month and sold it the next so all they did was really just probably cause more expense to the US Government than it was really worth but that was one of the hot programs at that time. I could go on and on about that particular battalion but the point I want to make there was, this was basically a good unit and we made it a cracker jack unit. That's a very hard task. I can also say what impact these assignments have on your military success. I had volunteered for this group. I was largely an unknown in the Transportation Corps, except that they knew that I had been a prisoner of war, and I had a very good combat record. I had volunteered for an infantry assignment during WW II and happened to win three silver stars, get wounded three times and get three bronze stars; and that was a little unusual for the technical services. I might add that it doesn't do you any harm if you have combat experience because when you walk into a headquarters such as Seventh Army, which are all combat arms types, and they look at a guy's chest and he's got as much on there as they have, or almost as much, you're

talking a little bit on fairly equal grounds. I got along very well with the combat arms types there, especially with the G3. Not always as well with some of my other logistics contemporaries who were frequently screaming that on Army training tests and things like that, they couldn't divert the manpower to provide some of their own perimeter defense.

I wanted to just digress a little bit and hope that in the notes they'll get this thing straightened out because I think that this a fairly important point. We had a hot shot ordinance outfit over there and their commander said that it was impacting on his unit to provide his own perimeter defense. Seventh Army had aggressor forces that would go out and stage raids to see how prepared you were. He felt it would be more realistic if he were assigned infantry troops to guard his ordinance unit; which amongst other things had a very important and very highly classified special weapons mission with tactical nukes. This went over like a lead balloon at the critiques after we would have our various exercises over there. I recall standing up with all sincerity at a meeting with rest of the combat arms commanders of Seventh Army, logistics types and saying that the 10th Group, would provide its own perimeter defenses and didn't need any help from MPs, infantry or what have you. I recognized that if we were attacked by armored units or something like that, we wouldn't even get to first base but against guerillas, partisans or that type of thing, I felt that it was incumbent on us to provide our own plans which would include mobilizing the cooks and everybody else who happened to be around and the bulk of our truck companies out on convoys. One of the most gratifying experiences of my life was to be applauded when I finished making that pitch. I also must look back to Vietnam. I just recently read General Bruce Palmer's book on the Vietnam War, Twenty Years of Reflection; he points out that years later this problem existed. The tech services have this had habit of not wanting to make any effort to provide their own defense. Now, there is a limit to what you can do and when you face highly skilled partisan type outfits, sometimes they're the same as facing front line infantry units; but there is something you can do, you can lessen the load on the combat arms. I would urge every Transportation Corps officer when he gets into a command type of job, to see how much he can realistically do for his own defense. Make the plans for that, see that his people are trained for it, and if he needs some extra support in the way of weapons or things like that, that are not in the TO&E, see if it's possible to get them. Again, it will relieve the load on the guys who are basically fighting the war and it'll cut down on our overall manpower requirements. If you go to the trouble of putting weapons in the TO&E, people ought to be able to use them. They're not just to stop some guy from trying to steal something out of a supply tank somewhere. They're there to defend you. I believe that our tech service units can do a lot better job of defending themselves than a lot of the officers think that are with the units and than a lot of the people in the higher headquarters think. I think they've become adjusted to the fact that the tech services are a little lazy in that regard.

Now, what impact did these assignments have on your military success? Well, the Chief of Transportation to be General Frank Besson, and later head of the Army Material Command; the first four star general we have had, I guess the only one we've had. General Besson made a trip to Europe and all he could hear about, I'm happy to say,

from Seventh Army headquarters was what a great unit the 10th Group was. I had had just a very passing acquaintance with General Besson and he came to the unit and I had already been assigned to be Chief of the Organization and Training Division of the Office Chief of Transportation; I had my orders. I had had my job for just about a year, which was par for the course as a commander when he asked my wife at a dinner party if she would object if my orders were changed. He is a very funny general. He didn't realize that I'd already had a letter on this respect but they were changing my orders. They wanted to know if I would take a second command job in succession-very unusual. I was delighted of course. my delight was a little tempered by the fact that my household goods were already going somewhere else and I knew they'd get messed up, but I was offered the then 3rd Group at Fort Eustis, the largest unit on the post.

At that time, this unit contained the one boat battalion we had in the Army with those enormous companies --some 300 to 350 people in them. We had a maintenance battalion, a stevedore battalion, the aerial tramway and the 3rd Port. I took that unit and it was pretty much the same type of situation that I had run into in the 10th Group. There was no question that the 3rd Group was the best unit at Fort Eustis. I was told so by the previous commander. He told me not to rock the boat and many of the post headquarters staff and the command staff felt the same way. This was the best unit on the post. However, the best unit on the post had statistical data that would have caused the commander to be relieved in the Seventh Army. They had an AWOL rate that was ten times the rate that I had in Germany; they had NCOs there that were just getting by, not trying to do their jobs. I had, pretty much, the same problems and the same techniques that I used in the 7th Army worked with the 3rd Group at Fort Eustis. A new gimmick had come up then; we had what they called STRAC units, certain of our units were Strategic Army. Do you still have the STRAC units, Strategic Army Command? They were earmarked to be used in emergencies; primarily boat companies and the stevedore companies but not necessarily as whole battalions. You might have a company, one or two companies, you could have a boat company and two stevedore companies-any combination.

CPT Best: That might be similar to our CAPSTONE program we have now.

BG Montgomery: Probably you have a different name. You know the French have a saying, the more things change, the more they are the same. You give it a different name but it's the same thing we were doing twenty years ago and probably fifty years before that.

For the NCOs in my unit, I started my own leadership school. The post itself, Fort Eustis, was going to start an NCO Academy; something that they needed; something that we had in 7th Army. I started my own for the 3rd Group and was able to start it and get it going while they were still talking about it. It took them three or four or five months. In fact, the first Commander of the NCO Academy at Fort Eustis, was a Colonel Eustis, Tom Eustis, red hair, I remember him real well. He spent hours at my NCO school that I established with our own people and then tried to take all of my NCOS, which I wouldn't let him do for the school. I guess you still have the school down there?

CPT Best: Yes, sir.

BG Montgomery: Ninety percent of what we were doing was cranked into one unit in the post NCO Academy I'll you what.

CPT Best: They almost did away with that two years ago.

BG Montgomery: They did? Probably. Now there was a little pain connected with this job too. I can recall that I had to relieve one colonel and three sergeants; busted them around Christmastime, which was a very unhappy experience but a very necessary experience. Anyone who is listening to [reading] this may be interested to know that when I busted the three sergeants, the Commanding General, General Vissering, a very fine gentlemen, and the person who had asked for we personally to come down to Fort Eustis to take over the 3rd Group, called me in his office. The conversation went something like this:

"Monty you have busted three sergeants."

"Yes, sir."

"One of these men is a master sergeant."

"Yes, sir."

"He may never get those stripes back."

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you think you're being a little harsh?"

"No, sir. I have told these people what I want, not once but twice, and they persist in going their way; you've got to make an examples."

"Look, would you change your mind?"

"Not voluntarily, General." (I was a colonel talking to a General Officer.) "Not voluntarily, I feel that if I am reversed on this, that my value to you as a commander would be zero."

Now, General Vissering did not like that, but he certainly never held it against me and he didn't overrule me. It was necessary; something that I have never looked forward to - relieving people, nobody should; it's a very sad duty, but it's a very necessary duty. I might add that we did very quickly have the only superior STRAC units. They were rated by the Continental Army Command. Who was commanding that? General Bruce C. Clark from Seventh Army and I were just playing in his same old orchestra again. He was rating people on what made you a superior STRAC unit. You had to do well on your AIT, on your AGI, on your hometown news releases, or your savings bonds, you name

it. All the same old statistics, and had been doing this thing since he was a first lieutenant; General Clark had. So, it was very easy to fall into the swing of things. Every one of our units that were in STRAC received these Superior STRAC ratings; the first time it happened on post. So I had to figure that whatever I was doing was right. Because I had volunteered for one command assignment and had learned a lot from that command assignment, I was able to take this same knowledge that I had gained in Europe and apply it to a slightly different situation stateside.

There were things different about duty in the states as opposed to duty in the Seventh Army, but the techniques gave me basically the same results. Having commanded two big units, two of the largest units a colonel can have in the Transportation Corps, consecutively, I was 'made' right after that. Had I not volunteered to take this command job in Europe, I would not have had the subsequent job at Fort Eustis. Now, that immediately brought me to the attention of the Transportation Corps hierarchy and from then on things were very simple. Career management people then started to manage a few careers. Somebody sat down and said, I'm sure this is the case, "What do we have to do with this guy to make him the General?" Somebody said, "Well, You've got to send him to one of these get-rich-quick management courses at either Harvard or the University of Pittsburgh," so they sent me there. "He's got to have some joint staff experience," which I had not had, so I was sent. "And he needs some traffic management experience to broaden him." I think traffic management is one of these overblown terms that's just applying common sense to transportation. We did have the whole Defense Traffic Management Service or old MTMA, initially the Military Traffic Management Agency, which was a joint agency in Washington, where they had Army, Navy, and Air Force in it. They put me in charge of the Plans Branch and that set the stage to move me in the Joint Staff as head of the Transportation Division. Then the first time my name went before a G.O. (General Officer) selection board I was picked up. So what impact did these assignments have on your military success? They made it, no question about it. The thing I want to get across is that you'll make a name fast and you'll find more enjoyment in a command than you'll ever find in these staff assignments. Yet everything I had done before this prior to WWII was staff, staff, staff. This also emphasized the importance of command assignments and why a command should never be refused. First of all, we're all ambitious to a certain degree. With some people, it becomes an obsession with others it's just something in the back of their mind. If for no other reason, that's the quickest way to advance in the military -- do a good job in a command assignment! Somehow people expect you to do a good job in a staff assignment and I don't know why because it can be very difficult and very trying. But when you do a top flight job in a command assignment, it just stands out like a searchlight.

Now, to cover the traits of a good commander, as I had mentioned previously, You've got to see that your men get from you honest, just, and fair treatment; that they get the consideration due them as professional soldiers and that they know you're taking a personal interest in them as individuals. I don't know if we still do this or not but I always made it a rule that the Company Commander, during certain nights of the week stayed in the office and if a soldier has a problem he's there; not the First Sergeant - the

Company Commander. One night a week, I let it be known that as the Group Commander, I was available. I went to my office. I had very few people come in to see me and whether they were told not to I don't know, but I was there. They needed no permission to see the Group Commander. I saw some of them; I must admit that I don't remember any problem that I felt couldn't have been resolved at a company level but maybe it made the guy feel better. And certainly the word gets around in the company that the old man's taking some interest in them so for nothing else, it's pretty good from a public relations standpoint.

I think you owe your troops loyalty; that's a trait that a commander must have. He must be loyal to his troops and he's got to be loyal to the people above him, to his higher commanders. You've got to shield your troops from harassment, because very frequently that happens. Awful silly instructions will come down to you, not orders but instructions, and that's when I think you've got to be able to look at it and say this doesn't mean a darn thing and throw it in the wastepaper basket. I think you've got to provide the best in leadership; the best that you have. Furthermore, you want to make sure that your subordinates are applying the best in leadership. I read that there's more and more emphasis nowadays, and I think it's good if it's true, that whenever you can, the troops deserve to be told the reason why something's done. You're in a fast moving situation. You have no time for debating societies or anything like that, but very frequently a policy will be announced that people don't understand. The worst thing in the world is to say, "Look, there's an order-read it and obey it." Give a little explanation of the thing, sometimes you can give a pretty good explanation of it, make it more palatable. You see, with a military man, you've got to recognize that troops are men; they're tools. A commander is successful to the extent that he can get the extra effort out of all of his subordinates. Starting, if he's the top gun, all the way down, from the executive officer all the way down because ordinarily and on their own initiative most people work at about 35% of their capacity. The extent to which you can tap that extra capacity, that difference between 35% and 100%, you're never going to get 100%, but just think if you're getting 75% instead of 35%, you have more than doubled the effectiveness of your people. They can do twice as much and this, I might add, is equally applicable to the civilian pursuits, and I'll go into that a little later. So I'd say once you've learned how to spark people so you can get that extra effort, you're on your way to being a leader. I think the president of US Steel, Charles Schwabb, I remember reading in one of these management courses I was taking, said he'd pay more for leadership than any skill or talent. This was from the head of a big industrial company; and the Army certainly, if we wanted to go back to the big war of WW II, pays off on command. You look at our top WW II commanders and most of those were the guys that had spent 17 years as company commanders (that's when the promotions were real slow). But believe me, if a man knows how to run a company and run it well, he'll be able to run a Battalion, he'll be able to run a Group, he'll be able to run a Division, or a Corps. Now that doesn't mean to say that every good company commander can necessarily do that: some people can only grow to a certain level and we have a use for those people-don't throw them aside. But, if a man who is capable of growing and is a good company commander just applies those same principles that he used in his company to his succeeding commands, he'll find as he grows older that all he is talking

about is an aggregate of companies. So, if he can command one, he can exercise, exert that influence over 50 companies if that's what his command happens to comprise.

Now, some other traits of a successful commander. Well, I'd say one important thing there is defining command as a mixture of example, persuasion, and compulsion by which you get men to do what you want them to do even if they don't want to do it themselves. That takes a projection of personality. Like all arts, command is more of an art than a science, it's exercised by each man in his own way. If you start off to be a commander, you need a personality -- that's step number one. What sort of a personality a commander should be is the question. I don't mean you must be a flamboyant personality, just a down to earth guy. I know people who went around with daggers, pearl handled pistols, and all of that stuff to project a personality that's a picture.

A commander needs a lot of qualities and the most essential one of those is willpower because when you command you're going to run into more problems than you ever thought could possibly exist. It's one thing if you're getting that from the enemy in a war situation, you expect that, you expect opposition. But strangely enough, you're going to get it in a command job --you're going to get it from your subordinates, your higher headquarters, you're going to get it from the people who tell you don't rock the boat; which is another way of saying stand pat. People want to stand pat because anything else means too much trouble. But this willpower enables you to drive through what you want against every kind of opposition including the opposition including the opposition of nature. This willpower is really based on courage. I'm not talking now about a guy necessarily saying "follow me" and we're going to change into some rifle fire or something like that; not so much physical courage because I think we don't have to worry about physical courage in our American troops, we've got plenty of it, it's bred into us. You'll have the physical courage but you'll also need moral courage.

Moral courage simply means that you do what is right without bothering too much about the effect on yourself, I want you to think about that too. Don't worry too much, sometimes when you do what you think is right, you can get relieved if it happens to be contrary to some of your superior's ideas. But if it's right, you've got to do it and you can't spend all of your time worrying about what somebody else is thinking about, do what you think is right; do it and don't worry too much about the impact on yourself. Everybody worries a little bit about it, but don't get obsessed with it. There's one quality that no leader can do without and that is determination based on moral courage. Now, you need judgment; I won't go into many details on that, but one judgment that I think is very, very important is judgment of men. You've got to be able to select within your personal resources, and this is important, the right man for the job or specific mission. Now you don't always have a *Carte Blanche* on who you're going to weigh and who you're going to get in the way of people, but I say within your resources, you've got to be able to select the right guy for the job or the mission based on what you have. You can have some pretty sorry choices to select from, but select the best one of the worst if you have to - don't just select anyone.

I don't know whether they're looking for any humor in this thing or not but I can remember, and you can scrub this if it's inappropriate, but while I was at Fort Eustis, one of my good friends who later became a general a little after I did, Colonel Richel, of the 48th Group; one of their important missions every year was to send a truck company up to West Point to support the cadets in summer training. Well, Mike didn't give too much thought to who he selected, apparently in this job, and some lieutenant was available for this job and he sent him on up there instead of the company commander. The next thing I knew was my old buddy calls me up and says, "You've got to come over and see me." This was in the evening. We lived right alongside of each other there on Fort Eustis; well, I went over to see him and we had a few drinks and he said, "The damnedest thing happened to me today." I said, "Mike, what was that?" Well, he said, "I sent this truck company up to West Point, we do it every year. Wouldn't you know we had a nut in that company and there were some Girl Scouts up there on a jamboree or something like that." One of his heroes went out there and exposed himself to the Girl Scouts. Now the woman in charge of the Girl Scouts, and you won't believe this, her name was Mrs. Goodbody, and Mrs. Goodbody overpowered this flasher. However, this whole affair immediately came to the attention of the hierarchy there at West Point and he received a frantic phone call on this matter and was told to immediately report to West Point; told that by General Besson, and then came back by Washington to explain what happened. So he gets a light airplane and flew up to West Point and talked to the people; they were apparently well satisfied with everything that had been said. Everybody can't always figure out the fact that there's a nut in an outfit. He talked to the chief of staff at West Point who he said was an old friend of his and then he came by the office, Chief of Transportation, and told me, "I sat there and General so and so; he just looked at me, just stared at me." He pressed a button and another General came in and he sat there and just stared at me, you see, because all this had all happened on hallowed ground at West Point and the Transportation Company had messed up. So he said after being subject to the starting after a while, he said, "Generals, I've got to explain to you that everything's all right at West point on this. I talked to the Chief of Staff who is a good friend of mine and explained everything. General so and so said to him, "What's his name?" He hit his own head and said, "Do you know I got a memory block and I couldn't remember what his name was after saying that I knew who he was." So he took another sip on his drink and he said to me, "Well, I've had to call the course." Well, being a very sympathetic person by nature, I said, "Why did you send a second lieutenant on the job? If it was that important, why didn't you pick some captain out and send him on the job?" He said, "The next time I'll do that." So every now and again, it is important, even though one of the things there was the inexperience of the Company Commander which led to this incident happening, there was nothing you could do with it. Sometimes you do have to go through the CYA action to make sure that at least there is an experienced company commander in charge rather than some lieutenant.

When you select people for a job as you go further up the scale, the thing that has probably hurt more officers than anything else in command is not being fast enough, if the situation arises, to relieve somebody who is not doing the job. In a command job, you simply cannot leave somebody in there because he's a friend of yours, or you've known him for years, or his wife's a good cook, or something like that. You owe it to

your command to get rid of a guy who can't hack it; and yet we see things like this happening all the time, way up the scale. I'm talking about two and three star Generals who are kept in command where they shouldn't be; but somebody simply either doesn't have the heart to take the action they should take or, for political reasons perhaps, they don't take them. When a man is not hacking it, he's got to be removed. When that happens, I believe I've mentioned this before, if you can swing it yourself if it's a man working for you, you ought to be the guy that tells him you're relieving him and why. He certainly entitled to that explanation.

I think that in the fast moving world like we have today, with all these technological advances, having a person must either have or cultivate flexibility of mind; you need a controlled imagination. There's a sort of conflict, I guess, between flexibility of mind and strength of willpower. A person always has to be careful that they're so called willpower doesn't become obstinacy and their flexibility doesn't become vacillation. Some people get so darned flexible that they never make a decision but you've got to be able to recognize the technological advances and be able to gear yourself to these advances. When you get that combination, a balance between flexibility of mind and strength of will that's when I think you're on the road to being a pretty good commander.

You need knowledge. Your knowledge when you command a small unit goes all the way down the scale. You ought to be able to know just as much about a rifle or a crew-served weapon, or truck within reason as any of your soldiers. The further up the scale you get, naturally the less of this you're going to be able to do. No one person in a general officer's slot can do everything that everybody below him can do, or knows as much about everything below him as any man in his unit. You can learn what are the capabilities of machines, how much you can reasonably expect a group of men to do in a day, a week, a month, that type of thing. You've got to have that kind of knowledge and I think it's particularly important to know how much time it takes to do something; if you're going to move a unit from one place to another, how much time is it going to be, how much lead time are you going to need to go from A to B, pick up what you're supposed to and then go. A little of what we call backward planning is a very good technique in that regard.

I certainly think you're going to need integrity, but I don't have to elaborate on that.

I mentioned the matter of judgment of people who work for you and being loyal to your subordinates. I also mentioned the necessity on occasion to relieve people. There's no reason to put up with demonstrated incompetence, nobody has to do that. But equally as bad is "hatcheting" everyone who has made an honest mistake or has done something wrong. We have simply got to learn - I hope there's more of that now than there used to be - that people do make mistakes. When you evaluate the performance of your subordinates, it's important that you look into a mistake and see what led up to it. My advice is that if someone fouls up, go and see him or send for him and find out why. Then if he did it because he was careless or stupid or he lacked courage, moral courage or physical courage, then you've got to fire him - no question about it; then you tell him why you're firing him. But if he did it because he was eager, or daring, or

innovative, or he wasn't properly instructed, then you have to give him another chance. This business of one strike and you're out is nonsense. In civilian life, they consider being right about half the time a pretty good batting average. I know, drawing on my own military experience, many times one mistake was all you could have and you'd had the course; this is wrong.

Now command is a completely personal thing. You've certainly got to have the essential qualities of willpower, judgment, flexibility of mind, knowledge and integrity. The only thing I urge is don't confuse this with a lot of frills that I alluded to earlier, like wearing pearl handled revolvers. This is not going to make someone a Patton. Patton had more to him than carrying pearl handled pistols [they were ivory]. Hand grenades don't make a person a General Ridgeway --a man of tremendous integrity and knowledge. They had everything in the world going for them; they were two great soldiers. A person should look for the essentials in these commanders and copy them. You can develop your own power of command and I certainly urge anyone who is listening [reading] to seek command despite its many frustrations and seek it at any opportunity. The last thing I would say in that regard is command is YOU, as you develop yourself, be yourself, because no imitation was ever a masterpiece.

BG Montgomery [quoting from the interview advance sheet]: Now, it says what type of command do you consider to be most important. I don't really understand that, do you?

CPT Best: Well, what I was trying to allude to there was, are there any specific types of command for example, you've got your troop commands, then you've got your commander MTMC

BG Montgomery: When it comes to types of command, I believe that the average, best approach for an officer would be to seek the true troop commands. A company commander in a stevedore company, boat company, truck company, as opposed to some of the commands that are really more staff oriented than soldier oriented. Put another way, you've got to get the smell of troops in your nose. If you can smell the troops, you're in the right command.

CPT Best: Okay, so the adage, I guess you'd call it an adage, that command is command is command doesn't apply. Is it really true?

BG Montgomery: I think there's a big difference, big difference between a lot of detachments that are commanded by LT Colonels. They've got three people in there and a bunch of civilians; I don't consider that a command job. Sometimes they get away with it. TO&E outfits, that's what you want. Now, my advice to anybody that would shy away from command for fear of being relieved -- I think they're making a big mistake. First of all, it's not all that tough.

There are pitfalls in command and sometimes there's a matter of timing, I'll give you a good example of that. I took over the 3rd Group in Germany and accidents (this was a truck group) were a very important thing. Specifically accidents involving Germans were

very important. I didn't even have time to have my influence felt by anybody. First I took command of the unit on a Friday and by Monday morning there were three bad accidents that had five people die. One of which was a very famous Swiss musician; one of our truck drivers had just smashed right into him -- driving recklessly, no question about it; incidentally, I visited the guy in jail. He was locked up and showed not a bit of remorse, but that's neither here nor there. Now, I could have had the course right there if I didn't have a commander above me who said, "Hey, wait a minute. This guy just took over; he hasn't had any chance to make his influence felt." This was one of the worst starts I've ever made in my life to have five people killed. I've never had another thing like that happen. I'm not sure that it was because of any command techniques that I've used but if you're in a truck unit, you've simply got to get the word down to these people that they don't speed, that they obey the laws, that they do things like that. There are things that you can do. I started -- that gave me a good lesson there -- I had my own courtesy patrols going out. I rotated that duty by having an officer and three or four NCOs going up and down the Autobahn looking for my people only -- our four battalions. I didn't give a darn about anybody else; I had no jurisdiction over them. Seeing that our heroes were, particularly when they weren't in convoy, those who were off by themselves, were obeying the speed limit and not driving in a reckless manner. But outside of a few things like that, if a person is going to apply himself, if he'll use the principles, be honest and fair, and take an interest in the troops, there's no reason why the average guy isn't going to go through with flying colors. He may finish his command tour and not leave anybody impressed that he's going to be Chief of Staff of the Army of Chief of Transportation or a future Commanding General of Fort Eustis but if he's done a good job as a commander, or he's done an acceptable job as a commander and then he can go on and do an outstanding job as a staff officer which may really be his true forte. But he's got that command experience behind him as well. People are not going to avow allegiance to a pretty good job there; he's a pretty balanced guy so I would take it. There is a little more chance in command because if you mess up or something there somehow, someway, it bursts on the horizon much more than it does on a staff job where if you make a mistake on a contract or something like that, you go ahead and say well, we can bury this. We'll figure out some way nobody ever hears about this. But a command is well worth it.

The way a commander develops his subordinates, is first of all, I think, giving them responsibility. Platoon leaders can be given responsibility. If you see you've got a company commander who's trying to do everything himself and won't let his lieutenants do anything, stop that guy. A group commander or battalion commander is supposed to know what's going on in his subordinate units. In commander conferences, he can get that point across. The only way you're going to develop subordinates is to give them responsibility and be willing to accept some mistakes. You're not going to accept mistakes on such a scale that somebody's going to say, "Get that nut out of there before he's completely ruined the unit." But you've simply got to let people learn, and they learn by doing and they make mistakes by doing, but you hope that they can do more things good than they do bad. Command techniques are probably about the same in a company, battalion or group. Some people just don't have the vision to grow beyond. I have seen some outstanding company commanders that made very poor or mediocre

battalion commanders later on. The chances are that should not be the case, all that means is this person can only grow to a certain level. The guy can only go to the outstanding company commander level, but not progress beyond that just has tunnel vision somewhere along the line. That was the limit that he could reach.

CPT Best: Does that come with more schooling sir? Like CGSC and things like that?

BG Montgomery: I don't know that that's going to do you too much good on developing the command techniques. It'll develop the way that you get things done, because they teach that at Command General Staff College. They teach excellent thought processes there in estimating of situations and things like that. I'm going to go into that in a minute when we start talking about the way your military experience can help you in civil life. I think your command techniques are basically the same as I mentioned before in a company, battalion, or group – it's just on a little bigger scale. You can't exercise quite as much hands-on leadership as you go on up the scale; you've always got to think in terms of working. If you've got a group, you've got three or four battalion commanders. If you've got a battalion, you're dealing with three or four company commanders. If you've got a company, you're dealing with a couple of lieutenants and two or three key non-commissioned officers and platoons. You see, it's a matter of progression, using the same techniques but a little differently and your vision has just got to expand -- that's all. The techniques are basically the same.

The next question here is, "Discuss how command assignments can prepare or fail to prepare an individual for employment in the private sector." In the tech services, particularly in the Transportation Corps, the command assignments will definitely prepare you for employment in the private sector. Here again, among other things, another industrialist that I remember running into in a case history one time said he would pay more for the ability of an executive to get along with people than he would for any other quality. Now don't substitute for that to win a popularity contest; I think that he meant, to get along with other people was in the context of getting people to do things for you. In the final analysis, that's what you're doing when you're commanding; you're working through people to get people to do things for you. That is going to work in civilian life just as well as it worked in the military; in fact, you'll probably have a better appreciation of the effect of some of your actions on the people working for you as a result of having had a command assignment than you would if you had never served in the military. Certainly, the qualities of a successful Army Officer will stand you in good stead in civil life; loyalty to your boss, heck, if you're a president of a company you've got a chairman of the board you've got to answer to. If you're a general manager, you've got other people you have to answer to. So you've got the loyalty going up, you've got the loyalty coming down, which you exercise all the time in the military. The matter of personal integrity -- that is one area in the civilian life that disappointed me after I retired from the Army. I was a vice president of a major steamship company, United States Lines, a large international terminal service company and had done a lot of consulting. The thing that I noticed the most was the lack of integrity compared to what I had run into in the military. By comparison, in civilian life people are out to cut each other's throats, to a much greater extent than goes in the military. I think the mere fact that you

don't engage in that type of thing in civilian life would make you stand out like a light; particularly if you have the right people around you that say here's a person who's interested in doing the very best he can, he's obviously interested in seeing that he's successful but not at the expense of other people.

Our planning techniques come into play that we've learned in the military and can be used in civilian life to an extent -- they're just not in the same ball park with us. I'll give you one concrete example: when I went with United States Lines after I retired, we were making a tremendous move from conventional ships to container ships. This was the second largest steamship company in the United States and it was the Cadillac of steamship companies. They had break-bulk ships but they were making the jump into container ships. They had gone ahead and ordered container ships which were going to come on stream in about five or six months. They had all of the support equipment and some of the things that were done there were so incredibly stupid that it showed a lack of planning, a lack of coordination. That's one thing that we do learn in the military -- is the requirement for coordination, we over-coordinate. It is necessary, the only thing worse than over-coordination is no coordination and this thing was no coordination. People had orders -- incredible -- but 40 foot chassis to arrive concurrently with 20 foot containers, and then the 40 foot containers arrived next and then the 20 foot chassis. In other words, they didn't marry up the chassis of the same size as the containers and then they couldn't be married when they arrived. At that time, you couldn't put two 20s on the 40s. One of the projects that I took over in that company was basically getting ready for the transition from break-bulk to containership operations. My planning was relatively simple, exactly the way we did it in the Army, backward planning. People would say to me, well how do you know when something is going to happen. My point was, you don't know. You have an X day or a D day, or a Q day, call it anything else, but you know how much time it's going to take. So, if you want something to happen or you know it's going to happen 120 days ahead of time, hence, what are you going to have to do today to get ready for that thing. I can recall plotting our actions. The people were absolutely amazed that a person could do that. It never occurred to these people, many of whom were extremely well educated; they were Marine Engineers and systems people that this could be done. Well, we've improved quite a bit since that time; this was strictly the military techniques of an amphibious operation. It was very applicable to a commercial type of activity.

How do you manage staff meetings? Some of the most disorganized staff meetings that I have ever seen in my life took place in civilian life -- everybody talking at once, no agenda, sitting around there arguing back and forth. That's fine for a brain storming session, you know sometimes you get some good things there, but not for a regular planned meeting. Organizationally, we're very good or better as military men. Some of the organizations you see there in civilian life with absolutely amazing spans of control, or no spans of control, things of that nature. I can't give you a full picture of everything you've ever done in the military, but I'll tell you this: You can sit down and take your military experience and write one beautiful resume that's applicable to almost any civilian type job.

The obstacles that an Army officer has to overcome when he goes to work for private industry, poses very interesting questions. First of all, and a person, I believe, should be absolutely firm in their convictions on this, is this matter that you are drawing retirement pay, therefore, you should work for less money than someone else. The President of the United States Lines, who is now deceased, when we were having a discussion on my working for him, he had offered me a certain amount of money -- a starting salary. He said, "Monty, that with your pension, (which is a term I don't like; I prefer 'retirement') is going to give you X amount." I turned to him and said, "Alec, you have stocks and bonds don't you?" This was in the early sixties, he said, "Yes." I said, "Do you take that into consideration when the Board of Directors starts figuring out your salary or if your wife happened to have money, or your father was smart enough to die and leave you a lot of money? Did that go into your thinking when it came to how much pay you were going to get here?" He said, "No," and I said, "Please forget my retired pay. That doesn't have a darn thing to do with it. I should be paid what I'm worth, without regard to how much money I'm getting from the military."

Another technique (because we do draw retired pay) that we can do in the military that a lot of other people can't is something one of my former bosses did, quite successfully. He said, "I don't even want to talk salary with you people; I'll go in and start working for you for a month. After a month, you tell me what you think I'm worth and if it's nothing, we'll shake hands and that's it." If you can afford to do it, that's a pretty good technique too. But one of the obstacles as I say you overcome is first of all the matter of your retirement pay which some people look on as an excuse to pay you less money than somebody else who's doing considerable less than you'll be doing in the new company. The other thing is that your military experience has no applicability to the civilian job, which is sheer nonsense. Here again, I quote Peter Drucker, who is probably the best known, if he's still alive, management consultant in the world. He gets several thousand dollars for a one-day conference. He'll go in there and when people ask his advice on a company, he'll turn to the president of the company and say, "Do you know what you're in business for?" Usually, he'll say, "yes, I make widgets" or something like that. Then Peter says, "No, that's not the purpose; that not why you're in business. You're in business to put people to work." Now this is a slight exaggeration however, it's people that I'm emphasizing here and it's people, learning how to work with people to get the best out of them--what you've been doing for twenty or thirty years that should command a good price in civilian life. There's a definite requirement for the military approach; for our techniques. In any civilian activity that I have ever been exposed to, I've never seen one of them where there wasn't something in my military career that wouldn't help them in their approach to things, which included international consulting I might add.

I jumped around I realize on some of this. I don't know how we're going to get this in. Have I covered all the bases?

CPT Best: Yes, sir

BG Montgomery: I think I've covered everything that's here (in the interview plan).

CPT Best: You sure did sir. As far as going strictly by this format that wasn't important.