

RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

of

CHARLES FRANCIS TANK, Brigadier General

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 28 October 1909, Syracuse, NY

YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE: Over 30 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 30 September 1964

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED

The Engineer School, Basic Course

The Armed Forces Staff College

The National War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES

United States Military Academy - BS Degree- Military Science

Massachusetts Institute of Technology – MS Degree - Civil Engineering

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF DUTY ASSIGNMENTS (last 10 years)

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
Aug 54	Jun 55	Student, National War College
Jul 55	Dec 55	Trans Off, 9 th Army Spt Cmd, Ft Sam Houston
Jan 56	May 56	CO, 4 th Trans Tml Cmd, Ft Eustis
Jun 56	Aug 58	Dep CG, Trans Tml Cmd (Pacific)
Sep 58	Oct 59	CG, 7 th Log Cmd (Korea)
Nov 59	Mar 62	CG, Trans Tml Cmd, (Atlantic)
Mar 62	Apr 63	COS, HQ COMMZ (Europe)
Apr 63	May 64	Dep Dir, J4, USECOM

May 64 Oct 64

Dir, RC Plans & Ops, DCSTNG, HQ CONARC

PROMOTIONS

2LT	12 Jun 34
1LT	12 Jun 37
CPT	9 Sep 40
MAJ	1 Feb 42
LTC	22 Oct 42
COL	23 Jun 45
BG	6 Jun 56

DATES OF APPOINTMENT

US DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

Silver Star
Legion of Merit
Bronze Star w/Oak Leaf Cluster
Purple Heart
Army Staff Identification Badge

SOURCE OF COMMISSION: USMA (Class of 1934)



INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

interview with **BG (Ret) Charles F. BG TANK**

CPT Richard Caniglia interviewed BG (Ret) Charles F. (Bill) TANK on 15 Jan 1985. **BG Tank** was a 1934 graduate of the United States Military Academy.

BG Tank was in the invasion of North Africa (Operation TORCH) as part of the G4 Western Task Force. He was part of the first convoy to reach Casablanca after the assault. Lessons learned from the takeover of the port, according to **BG Tank** included: (1) the importance of a unified command, (2) the necessity of clearing portside to ensure efficient ship unloading, and (3) the training of issuing personnel in a uniform manner so as to standardize the systems used in off-loading and forwarding cargo.

The lessons learned in setting up Casablanca port operations helped make the Sicily takeover somewhat more efficient. After the beaches were finally captured from the Germans, supplies were off-loaded from ships in an orderly fashion by experienced soldiers. Because there were supply depots in North Africa, fewer supplies were brought with the attacking forces. Aerial support for command and control was a large improvement.

The Americans utilized over-the-shore cargo handling in the Sicily operation, using the DUKW, primarily.

This interview with **BG Charles F. Tank** was recorded on 15 January 1986. The Interviewer was **CPT Richard R. CANIGLIA**. BG TANK did not review this transcript due to illness.

BG TANK: I was on duty in the Transportation Section of G4 right at the start of the war. I was called on to make some plans for different parts of the world. When you'd go over to the Army G2, they wouldn't have any information. I remember one, for example, I forget the names of these places, it was just after the Japanese, well, we were planning on the Iriwadi River, in Burma to provide a line of supply into China. Absolutely no information on transportation in Burma. Of course that never went too far because the Japanese took the bottom part of it. When they took that, that's when we finally ended up flying over the Hump until a road was built. but in general, as leaders, we apparently didn't concentrate on gathering information that pertained to transportation planning. When we were going into North Africa, we didn't have any information on Casablanca.

best I can remember, we had couple tourist pictures that showed a ship anchored of a certain size. It was a passenger type vessel anchored in Casablanca, so you knew you'd get something in there. We had very little information. Didn't have any information on the other places: Safi, you mentioned one, Rink (COL Cornelius Rinker), where the Navy was over there eventually. Fedla. And everybody knew there was a railway over there, but they didn't know much about it.

CPT CANIGLIA: How were you able to make your planning estimates without the intel?

BG TANK: Do the best you could with the information you had. Of course, we

knew Casablanca was a fairly large harbor.

CPT CANIGLIA: If we could jump back for a second, to your background. Prior to being assigned to Patton's ' task force, and correct me if I am wrong, you were assigned to be a load plan specialist to work on load plans for the ships.

BG TANK: Oh no, I didn't know a thing about them at that time. As far as being what the Marines call a transport quartermaster, I didn't know a thing about that; hadn't even been exposed to it.

CPT CANIGLIA: Can you describe your background for us prior to . . . ?

BG TANK: I was an engineer officer and when I went into Washington I was assigned to what was called the planning division. It wasn't called that originally, but our initial work was working up estimates for all the planned deployment of US forces. one critical thing, it wasn't the only critical thing, was ocean transport. At that time the Germans were sinking ships faster than we were building. When I say "we" I'm talking about Britain and America. Most of the ships they were sinking weren't ours. They were on our side sailing under British control ; might not be British ships. And we had the United States ship construction programs. So we'd plot out the forecast for ship construction, then forecast what the sinking would be and try to get an estimate of how many ships you had, arid how many voyages you could yet out of a ship in a year's time. From that we would make some sort of prediction as to how fast the US could build up its force; build up and support its forces overseas. Now that was what I was in - as an Indian. We worked for what was known as the Joint Military Transportation Committee and they, in turn, formed the US side of the Combined Military Transportation Committee the other side being the British. On the Joint Military Transportation Committee side we had a representative from the War Shipping Administration, too. So you had the Army, the Navy, and the War Shipping Administration and most of the ships were controlled by the War Shipping Administration. I mean most of the American ships. Their allocation, I mean, not their actual control at sea. The use they were put to was under the War Shipping Administration.

CPT CANIGLIA: Then you were assigned to Patton's task force, the Western Task Force.

BG TANK: They'd been selected to be the American headquarters that is the Army headquarters. We didn't have joint headquarters in those days though Patton's headquarters was selected as the Army's headquarters. They'd been out in the desert training center. And they came to Washington and started planning to go to French Morocco, and that's when I got the word and my initial assignment over there was to help them determine how large a force they could take and how fast it could be built up afterward.

CPT CANIGLIA: Did you get involved in the stowage plans?

BG TANK: No. No, you take the actual assault echelons. That goes down to division level. They do that. They were allocated certain ships and they worked with those ships under the naval amphibious forces. I had nothing to do with that. The only time I got in with that was . . . The assault echelons were loaded out mainly from the Hampton Roads area. Mind you, I was on duty in Washington and we had a misunderstanding, let's call it that, as to the responsibilities down here (Hampton Roads port of embarkation) for loading out those assault echelons. Now you probably know the doctrine. The Navy, more or less, is in charge of that and there must have been some sort of a misunderstanding down here because I remember I was called in the office and told to go down to Hampton Roads and straighten it out. Now, what I could do with a bunch of admirals and generals I don't know. Of course, when I got off the airplane I was told everything had been settled. So everybody was happy and I think the misunderstanding came between the local Army authorities, port authorities down here, their responsibility toward loading out those assault echelons, and what the Navy amphibious command thought, and I'm willing to bet that's what happened but I didn't get into it. When I got down here, as I say, I was told everything was calm and peaceful and I stayed one night at (what's the name of this river over here that on the other side they had a hotel, down there with Navy headquarters in it?) stayed one night there and went home again. So the loading out of the initial echelons was down here for the most part. I didn't have anything to do with it.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were you just planning how much could be sent overseas to support an operation?

BG TANK: Yes. It was your follow-on echelons. And of course Patton's headquarters had a troop list, and it was up to them to take troops off that as they wanted. And when you'd tell them that you could only take so much because you can only load so much equipment, they'd said, "We'll double bunk them". Well I said "Yeah, you can double bunk the men, but you can't double bunk the equipment". So the limitation was always how much equipment they could bring with them; equipment and supplies. And they worked it out, but I mean they had to come to realize that although the Army made a certain amount of troops available to them they could only take them so fast, because at that time shipping was the ruling consideration. I never have been a transport quartermaster. I know how it's done, but I learned that later.

CPT CANIGLIA: Books contain a lot of information about problems they had down here at the port.

BG TANK: Well, as I say, I told you the only one I know and I suspect it came about because of all well-intentioned people who were not necessarily recognizing their various responsibilities.

CPT CANIGLIA: As I understand it, you went over in the first convoy.

BG TANK: The convoy I went over in, the ships I went on; let's see, we loaded out of New York City; out of Port New York. We came in two or three days after D-Day and we came right directly into Casablanca, because by that time they had seized the port.

CPT CANIGLIA: How was the decision made that you were going to go that early? You were in a planning office and now you're on a D + 3 convoy. Did you change jobs?

BG TANK: No, I was in the same one.

CPT CANIGLIA: Same job?

BG TANK: Oh, wait a minute. I see what you mean. Yeah, I was transferred to the Western Task Force headquarters, that's what you mean. Yeah, I left the Chief of Transportation's Office. I keep calling it the Chief of Transportation, but actually I don't think that that was his title at that time. See, in those days you ran through the reorganization of the War Department and came up with the Army Ground Forces, the Army Air Forces and the Army Service Forces. And headquarters of the section I was in went through various titles. When I first started, it was the transportation section of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, War Department. Then it became Transportation Section headquarters - Army Services Forces. Now actually, there's another headquarters in between. It didn't come out full blown as the Army Services Forces. Initially, it came out as something in between, but then pretty soon it was Army Services Forces. That's when we had the three major commands in the United States; the Army Ground Forces, the Army Air Forces, and US Army Service Forces. Army Services Forces is what it was called as I understand. Eventually the Army Services Forces became the Transportation Corp Headquarters. Now this is later, when I left it didn't have that name. I think it was still called the transportation section of headquarters, Army Services Forces when I left it.

CPT CANIGLIA: Why were you transferred to the Western Task Force?

BG TANK: I was going with them.

CPT CANIGLIA: But then you changed responsibilities, or were you doing the same job, just with the Western Task Forces?

BG TANK: I was sort of on temporary duty for the last couple months that I was here with Patton's headquarters, in the old Munitions building. So, Patton and his staff came into the Munitions building, which was before the Pentagon. I was still on duty in the transportation section, Army Services Forces (I'm not sure just what the title was) but then I got orders; I transferred from that to HQ, Western Task Force. And I went overseas.

CPT CANIGLIA: Sir, I'm trying to find out what your new job was with the Western Task Force.

BG TANK: Oh, I see. I was in the G4 section of the Western Task Force that was later in the old First Armor Corps HQ. We had re-enforcing compliments and the whole thing was the Western Task Force HQ. After we were in French Morocco awhile, we went back to HQ, First Armor Corps, I believe for a while. Then, when we went to Sicily, we changed to HQ, Seventh Army. And all the while I was the transportation officer of G4 section, of course, for the various headquarters.

CPT CANIGLIA: You were the transportation officer, in the G4 section of the Western.

BG TANK: I wasn't a transportation officer. The G4 section was divided up into a . . . - we had a supply officer, a maintenance officer, and a transportation officer. There were three sections in the G4 section.

CPT CANIGLIA: What were you responsible for as the..... ?

BG TANK: Transportation.

CPT CANIGLIA: All highway, all rail..... ?

BG TANK: Transportation, period. The G4 section had roughly three sections, one was supply, one was maintenance, and one was transportation. And there was a little bit of difference between the three of them. The transportation section actually operated a little bit. Not much but a little. 'Cause (you) see, you go down to the special staff sections and we didn't have a transportation section. We didn't have one while I was working. Where-as you did have a . . . - you always had a quartermaster, and you always had an ordnance officer, always had a signal officer, always had an engineer supply officer. So, supply was handled down in your special section. We didn't have a transportation section. So, there was a little difference there.

CPT CANIGLIA: Transportation officer under G4 did about the same thing that he does today?

BG TANK: Well, I'm not sure I know what he does today.

CPT CANIGLIA: Can you describe what you did?

BG TANK: For example, in all the routing of the ships in, I was in that day-to-day, as to where they were coming in and so on and when they were leaving. That was operating in a sense there.

CPT CANIGLIA: In North Africa, did you get involved with the highway plans?

BG TANK: No, because in North Africa, as soon as they settled down, the base section took over. I didn't have anything more to do with it.

CPT CANIGLIA: ABS, is that right? Atlantic Base Section?

BG TANK: Yeah. I had nothing more to do with it then. 'Cause at the time I was a true staff officer. Then we were more concerned with actually planning to go to Sicily. We got rid of our responsibilities in French Morocco and moved over to some place east of Oran, I remember.

CPT CANIGLIA: Now, Sir, you were an engineer officer, originally. What kind of training did you have that would have helped you, qualified you to be chief transportation officer?

BG TANK: The ability to think and write. Just a trained Army officer. I mean I had no special training in transportation.

CPT CANIGLIA: Do you think it's important that we do?

BG TANK: Oh, sure. We started WWII without a Transportation Corps and the functions of the Transportation Corps, now leave out all this aviation business, because I happen to be one that thinks that possibly transportation has been hurt by its interest in aviation maintenance. But that's beside the point. At the start of the war, the quartermaster had sea transport. The old Army Transport Service, they had all the trucks. The Engineers had the railroads. Of course, there was no aviation at that time, so that about covers it, doesn't it?

CPT CANIGLIA: And the Navy had the boats?

BG TANK: Well, we had the army transports and I was looking at this movement control business. I don't think we had that. Now the quartermaster had it back in the old days. The quartermaster did it. I say Quartermaster Transport Office, but we didn't have movement control as well defined at that time as the British had. The British were pretty good at it. Matter of fact, we did most of our learning from them in the early days. In the British HQ you would have an officer named 'Q movements' and he was quite a potent guy. And we didn't have anything like that. Incidentally, in the British army, every time I ran into one those people, the real powerful ones, they were all engineer officers. Now don't ask me why, but they were British engineer officers. I don't know why that was.

CPT CANIGLIA: New setting, sir. You're just pulling into Casablanca, on the boat. D+3 I think you said.

BG TANK: Well, don't hold me to that. We were held off. We didn't land, as I remember, as soon as they had hoped, maybe because they had to unload the first echelon ships also. That didn't all go over the beach.

CPT CANIGLIA: What did you find when you arrived? You got off the boat; you had a convoy, the assault convoy I assume, off-loaded prior to you getting there. What condition were the beaches and ports in?

BG TANK: Well, the beaches we weren't using. And we went in there in November and that's the North Atlantic. Matter of fact, there were a lot of misgivings about whether we could get in, because the winter in the Atlantic is no place to be going over-the-beach. So, we more or less felt unless we had a protected harbor, I mean protected from the elements, we couldn't do it. But when we got in there; in the first place, in the port of Casablanca there had been a lot of merchant vessels, just ordinary freighters, lined up at all the piers. And I think it was the US Navy that dive-bombed and sunk them all right along-side the pier, so you couldn't get into any of them. And then the French had the *Jean Bart* that the Navy was quite concerned about. That was a French battleship with larger guns on it than anything there was in the US Navy, and the US Navy sunk that right at the pier. And she took up about one whole side of a pier. They raised it, but it was sunk at the time we came in. For a time you couldn't use the commercial pier.

There was one pier known as the phosphate pier where they handled phosphate in bulk and, of course, they had to stop. The pier was covered with piles of phosphate, so you couldn't clear off that pier very well. A pier built to handle phosphate isn't built to handle general cargo. There were mountains of phosphate waiting to be shipped somewhere, only it wasn't moving. That was the only place that didn't have freighters along side of it, so that was the only place that didn't have sunken ships along it either. So, until those ships were raised at the commercial pier you couldn't come alongside anywhere. And then there was other debris in the harbor, too. The French had some submarines. They either scuttled them or we sank them. I can't remember which. We had a limited supply of barges. And we didn't have very many tugs.

CPT CANIGLIA: You had some of these? (Shows **BG TANK** a picture of an LCP-R landing craft).

BG TANK: No, not them. The LCMs all went home with the transports. The transports, I'm sure, had them on but they went home with them.

CPT CANIGLIA: You mean the assault convoys?

BG TANK: Assault echelon, yeah. So, we didn't have any then. Initially, of course, the biggest problem in going into French Morocco was lack of joint planning. I hope we have solved it now. We've been running schools and everything for years now. There

just was no joint planning, or any evidence I ever saw of it before WWII. There wasn't any real extensive joint planning done in preparing to go into French Morocco to my knowledge.

CPT CANIGLIA: Can you give me some detailed sticking points?

BG TANK: Yeah, the most important one, I think, is the need for joint headquarters. We've got them now.--And-officers trained to work on joint headquarters and know the other service's capabilities. We're doing that now; we didn't then. The other thing is all the supplies we brought over. When we started unloading them they embarrassed us, because we didn't have any place to send them. An old rule about the capacity of any port, I think that goes for airports, too, is it's not where you bring it in, it's where you get rid of it. If you don't have depots, or whatever you want to call them, to receive it, it stacks up in your port. And pretty soon you're chock-a-block and that was our difficulty there. We had tremendous amounts of gasoline, for example, in cans and 55-gallon drums. Most of ours was in drums. The British were using little damn jerry cans and most everything else, not our nice 5-gallon cans that don't leak, but these flimsy damn things. I mean that's the best they had. I don't mean that as criticism. Well, we loaded those 55-gallon drums on railroad cars and rolled them out of the city for maybe four or five miles, and just threw them off the cars, and brought the cars back and got some more drums and took them back out. Nobody guarded it or anything else. It just went out there. Anything to get it out of the port. Bombs. I remember Patton going down there one day, and he said, "Tank, I told you to get rid of those bombs yesterday," and I couldn't tell him, "Look, those aren't the same bombs. We did move those out. These are different ones". But nobody wanted the bombs. And when they don't want them and you don't have people to take care of them, they just stack up.

Supply. Now I hope we don't make the same mistakes. In the days just before the war, the little bits and pieces that go into an automobile of any sort, they were buying them locally. And by that I mean such things as; points and fan belts, and spark plugs, and things like that. The supply system was letting the local bases, the local forts and so on, buy them locally. So, their supply history showed zero. Now I'm reconstructing this. So, we get overseas. We don't have points, spark plugs, and fan belts and these are the things we wear out everyday. But we had plenty of rear ends for trucks and that's a big bulky item to handle, see? But nobody wanted rear ends for trucks because, hell, if you lost a truck for a rear end you didn't need one. You probably could salvage more workable, serviceable rear ends off of trucks that wore out for some other reasons if you needed one. So your supply inventory was all out of order. And we were handling - it was hard to do - these big repair parts that weren't needed. And the things we really needed weren't there. I've never seen a G4 fired for having too much. They'll take his head and ears in a minute if he runs out of something. But if he overloads the damn system, I've never seen a one of them criticized for that yet.

I think of these things when we talk about the modern war. You're going to fight in little islands and stuff like this. How you are going to have a responsive supply system that

isn't overburdened with a lot of unneeded things, I don't know. I don't know the answer to that.

Lack of joint planning. Obvious, all the way through, they hadn't worked together. Of course, inexperience, a lot of supplies nobody wanted at the time, and they just had to get them out of your port. I always remember in the initial stages, they had a coding system for supplies. There was a paint mark on a case that meant rations. You could recognize gasoline. You could recognize bombs. I still remember, I think, three black dots. That was Special Service Forces. I don't know what was in there, maybe tennis rackets for all I know. But I wish I could remember some of those codes. Each supply service had a different color. That was another thing. I can't remember the colors now. I think the quartermaster had green. I think ammunition/ explosives were yellow and the engineers had a special color for their supplies and so on. Now, the people that were working the port were part of the base sections. They had never been told about that color system. I remember getting them down one day after I'd been there a couple days. I found out what their difficulty was. I explained the codes to them and they went to work on that. Then they knew where to send this stuff. No planning done ahead of time and no coordination. They didn't know the color-coding. I tell you, when I left the United States I didn't know them either. I had to find them out over there.

CPT CANIGLIA: When you got off the boat and you saw the port for the first time, did it impress you as a confused place or a place that was orderly under the circumstances?

BG TANK: Well, it was under Army control, so I don't know what you call confused. We immediately started hiring a bunch of Arabs to our labor force because we didn't have enough of our own. Another item of confusion is; we had a couple of air raids. Now, the air raids didn't do any harm, materially, except, every American ship in port would start opening up with its artillery, and even the freighters had one gun on them. And we had a real problem getting control of that situation, 'cause you'd lose a night, see? One plane would come over; just a rumor of an attack, and someone would yell "Air raid!," and all the lights would go out and maybe some guns would fire. You didn't get any work started again till daylight. You'd lose a whole night. So we finally got an agreement. We put up a bunch of lights on a building there, maybe five, six stories high, that was in the port. And we finally got an understanding that when the lights were on - up on top there was a sign, an electric sign - there was no air raid; keep working. If there were a real air raid, we'd turn the lights out. Well, that worked after a while, but we lost quite a few nights just through some rumor, and somebody would yell "Air raid!" Everybody would vanish in the dark.

CPT CANIGLIA: As G4 transportation, then, it was your job to organize the transportation assets, to get the port cleared; bring the ships in, and then get the port cleared?

BG TANK: Yeah, I'll say so for a few days. Yeah.

CPT CANIGLIA: As far as where the supplies went.....

BG TANK: Well, initially there were depots. I call them depots. You were talking about putting a sign up around the field and that was a depot. And these were under the control of the various supply officers of the Western Task Force. See, the base section wasn't operating yet.

CPT CANIGLIA: Let me ask a grand question. How did you operate? How did you organize the trucks, the trains, and the ships?

BG TANK: You didn't have to organize the ships. You just tried to reach an agreement as to when they were going to leave. See, they were coming in convoys, so one convoy had to leave before another convoy could come in. And during the short period that I had time with it, those were set up ahead of time. They knew about how many were coming. As far as the trucks, they were only running from the city to a few miles outside the city and dumping off whatever they were carrying; came back and got some more. The railroad only went a little ways. We didn't have an operating railroad, yet. I was only there for a little while before the base section took over.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were you there with COL (?) Parrish?

BG TANK: I guess he was the port commander. I didn't know him very well because he never really got to operate. And that wasn't COL Parrish's fault. He didn't have any experience in this either. If I recall, COL Parrish was a banker from somewhere in the south. Wasn't he? That was his background.

CPT CANIGLIA: I understand there was some problem between Colonel Parrish and the G4, COL (?) Muller. (Colonel Muller retired as General Muller).

BG TANK: Well, if General Patton had told Colonel Muller to get it straightened out, I imagine, he turned to his G4. As I say, the base section wasn't operating yet.

CPT CANIGLIA: What needed to be straightened out?

BG TANK: Well, the base section, as such, had no training ahead of time. Operating training, I mean. They had never been on a maneuver with the troops who were going to use any of those things to the best of my knowledge. They all met over there in Casablanca.

CPT CANIGLIA: So it was on-the-job training?

BG TANK: You might say that. I went down there and worked from the port headquarters itself; their pier officers and so on, and I was working with them. I got in the room and said, "Hey, you know those green marks mean this. These red marks means this." They didn't know it. I said, "Let's just load them out that way.

CPT CANIGLIA: As I understand it, Colonel Parrish was not relieved, but rather was removed from active work at the port, and you were placed in . . .

BG TANK: Initially the port headquarters, as such, was not allowed to take over. That's right, the port headquarters. But the officers in the port were down there working.

CPT CANIGLIA: And you took over supervision of the port?

BG TANK: No, they had their own superintendents. I worked with their supervisors. Now let's see, in the port you'd have a port commander; didn't have to work with the port commander. They were organized, I guess, more or less like a ZI (zone of interior) port with the port headquarters way up here, pier operation down here (motions with hands). I was working down at the level with the pier operations. I was working with those people. Little things like, to the best of my knowledge, we got no advance manifest from any of these ships.

Yeah, the POL (petroleum, oil, lubricants) part was, as I say, you run it out on the railroad cars and throw it off the cars. That was the POL dump for a while. Anywhere you could get rid of it to get it out of the port.

CPT CANIGLIA: Can you describe how the truck operations worked? Did you have enough trucks and drivers?

BG TANK: Well, you didn't have enough of any service troops initially, probably, but you never do. And we used a tremendous number of Arabs as local labor. And no use rehashing something that's 40 years old. I think it was, myself, I think it was a poorly trained truck organization that we had, in that particular unit. I wasn't a part of it, maybe it was being used too heavily, I don't know. They let their maintenance go, I could see that.

CPT CANIGLIA: That wasn't the only truck unit you had, was it?

BG TANK: Yeah, we had one truck regiment. And initially, because they came up with the bright idea . . . , - originally they were equipped with 2-1/2 ton trucks. And it was obvious that if you equipped with 3/4-ton trucks rather than 2-1/2 ton trucks you could bring more trucks on a limited supply of shipping. So they equipped that regiment with 3/4-ton trucks. Well, any time you change equipment in the unit, all your maintenance people don't know what to do because it isn't the same. It'd be just like taking a Chevrolet company down here and making it Ford over night, and going to work on Fords the next day and they're all Chevrolet mechanics, see? So, they went overseas with 3/4-ton trucks, as I remember. But, yeah, we had a very fine engineer regiment along with us. GEN Patton made the decision he was going to take the engineer regiment with him and there wasn't any room for their equipment. The colonel for that regiment used to fuss and he said, "You didn't even find room to put my jeep on," which we should have done. From the speed with which they would have to go into operation, they probably should have been organized and trained ahead of time. I'm talking about these service units, the base unit, but they never were. They had trained as separate units, I suppose. But to the best of my knowledge, they had never trained as an organization before they met in Casablanca.

Now that's my impression. You asked me where I came from into this. I was on duty in the War Department in the Munitions Building. I was sent over to work with the planning staff and then I went overseas, so I didn't see any of these people in the field either.

CPT CANIGLIA: Let me go back and clear up a couple points. In talking about Casablanca damage, one book says that it was almost none, another says that 70% of the port facilities were useless.

BG TANK: I put that together from this. I say they had all of these merchant ships along side every berth and they'd all been sunk. Now some of them may have been scuttled, I'm not sure, but I think they were all sunk.

The Navy just dive-bombed every one of them, I think. So, when you went into that place, as far as an along-side berth to the best of my recollection, it was a hundred percent useless.

CPT CANIGLIA: How about material handling equipment? Did you have cranes on the piers, forklifts, or things like that?

BG TANK: No, I don't remember any forklifts. We didn't bring any that I know for sure, but European ports have fixed craneage. We don't do it in this country so much. But that's their custom, and they had fixed craneage over there, but some of the places didn't have it. I'm talking about a gantry crane that goes along on a railroad track and reaches out.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were the piers large enough for the trucks to turn around on?

BG TANK: Oh yeah, Casablanca is a fairly modern port. But once you unload a few ships you've got everything covered 15 feet high with supplies, or 10 feet at least, and then you don't have any room left. If you take what you can load into a liberty ship in the way of 55 gallon drums and stack them out on a pier; it's in that ship 40 feet deep. That's 400,000 cubic feet of stuff out of one ship. Now let's see, if you made it 20 feet high, that's 20,000 square feet. You've got a pile of stuff.

That's one ship. So you've got to have some system, as I say, of getting it out of your port and having somebody receive it; some other organization receive it, and send your transport back to you.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were there any port companies?

BG TANK: We had two good port companies, but they were real good ones.

CPT CANIGLIA: 382, 384?

BG TANK: I don't remember, but I think that we had two of them. I don't think we had more than two. One of the best operating outfits we had was that 20th Engineers. They

could do lots besides just unload ships. In fact, they were over there on that phosphate pier and they were the ones that, somehow or other, got lanes cut through the piles of phosphate so that you could clear stuff away. They were a crackerjack outfit.

CPT CANIGLIA: Control of the port. The Army was in charge of off-loading the ships, is that correct?

BG TANK: Yeah.

CPT CANIGLIA: But you said the Navy controlled the port.

BG TANK: Always does. Now that was another thing that wasn't too clearly understood. Control of the port. In peacetime it's your Coast Guard that does it, but in wartime, under the Navy, it's your port captain. That would be a naval function. When you have a joint headquarters ahead of time, everybody knows everybody, and they know what each is suppose to do, and how they can do it, and so on. Well, you get pretty smooth. But when you have an Army base section and a Navy base headquarters which meet on the shores of French Morocco; that's kind of late to get training.

CPT CANIGLIA: I read someplace in the book the following quotation, "despite the favorable port conditions, cargo operation at Casablanca got off to a bad start amid haste, confusion and friction that soon culminated in an acute attack of port congestion." Would you like to comment?

BG TANK: Most of the confusion, as I say, was due to lack of joint training as far as I'm concerned. Everybody was well intentioned. But if you start with an organization that has never functioned together, well, I think you're going to have a little confusion. But as far as I know most everybody was trying to do the best they could.

CPT CANIGLIA: As I understand it, COL Parrish was shoved off to the side by COL Muller, who thought that COL Parrish was doing less than a good job. Were you told to take charge of the port, to assume direct charge of the port?

BG TANK: Yeah, that was the unloading operation, right? I did. I worked with the officers in the port headquarters, pier superintendents and the rest of them.

CPT CANIGLIA: did this cause a morale problem?

BG TANK: Could be, I don't know. I wasn't aware of it. Let me put it this way, the people I worked with, as I say, were trying one hundred percent to do a good job. They had not been confronted with this type of situation. You know, we had some skilled pier superintendents but they had been trained on the piers of New York, nothing like this.

Take your port transportation officer. He was used to putting in his order for transport; tomorrow I want so many cars and I want so many trucks and so on. We didn't have that stuff. These people were trained, I mean the ones that had port operations experience -

hands on experience, were trained to do it in a civilian environment where everything you want is there. You know, you got a whole backload of longshoremen out there and all you do is tell them how many you want and gangs come down. Order 15 gangs for tomorrow. We didn't have any of that stuff. So, it was an entirely different situation from what they'd been trained to. Now, you get down to the men that were doing the loading and unloading. They were doing what they had been trained to do and they could do it fairly well. They put that port chock-a-block.

CPT CANIGLIA: As I understand it, when you finished off loading the D+5 convoy, Patton congratulated everybody and said that it was thought to be impossible to unload it so quickly; thought that you had done a good job.

BG TANK: Maybe, I don't know.

CPT CANIGLIA: If Patton complimented me, I'd be impressed.

BG TANK: Well, now wait a minute, you're just reading that out of a history. I don't know what he sent out from his headquarters. I do know one thing. The transports had troop equipment like the kitchens and so on. And the freighters had the other stuff and the transports, of course, were bigger ships. They had tied them off against the breakwater on the other side; they weren't even near a pier. And the freighters were in on the piers. Well, not on the pier because they had those sunken ships, but, anyhow, closer in. And so, when it got to the time to clear the ships out of there (port), those transports went home with some of the kitchens on them. Now that was one mistake we made. We should have gotten those kitchens out of those transports. I'll tell you we never heard the last of that when those kitchens went home. They went all the way back to New York; port of New York, I guess. Those ships went home with some other equipment on them, too.

CPT CANIGLIA: Did you have trouble getting the ships unloaded before they had to leave?

BG TANK: Yeah, mainly because when you fill up everywhere in the port with stuff 10 ft high, where do you put the next stuff to come out of a ship? Well, nobody wanted these supplies. I don't blame the quartermaster. He didn't have the troops there to handle the stuff. They didn't have the troops with them to handle that stuff.

CPT CANIGLIA: When you went into Sicily, were you able to convince the combat arms folks that you needed more service troops?

BG TANK: Look, when they went into North Africa, we had the assurance of the State Department - the French weren't going to put up much resistance. But suppose they had put up resistance. There was a hell of a lot of French military in North Africa. Now, I remember a good friend of mine saying to me a few days before they took us, "Bill, I think we probably won't come out of this." Now he was an Engineer colonel at that time;

a pretty savvy guy. That was his assessment. I remember talking to the chief of staff of the Third Infantry division and he felt about the same way at the time.

I remember talking to him at Camp Pickett. And I remember sitting there talking to the chief of staff and as far as he was concerned this was going to be one bitter fight. Well now, when you have commanders thinking that and you're talking about bringing in a lot of service troops..... When we landed they put up more or less a token resistance. But nobody knew that ahead of time. You talk to anybody about taking an infantry battalion out and putting in a bunch of service troops, well, you're whistling 'Dixie'. A lot of people felt that going into North Africa was going to be their last time on earth.

CPT CANIGLIA: With your limited resources, in port, I understand you experimented on a couple different ways to work ships. Was it better to work one ship or to work many ships at the same time?

BG TANK: I don't remember about that. That may have come later.

CPT CANIGLIA: The history books talk about the Sixth Port officers, who must have been the civilian folks you mentioned earlier, who wanted to work one ship at a time,

BG TANK: That might have been; I don't know. I don't remember that coming up.

CPT CANIGLIA: How about native labor, sir?

BG TANK: We had lots of them. And they were invaluable, of course. You needed the manpower. You know, you unloaded the drums of fuel and they'd just roll them . . . for a hundred yards somewhere; let them come to rest; stack them up. I don't remember any materiel handling equipment. We didn't bring any in, I'm sure. Quite sure. There wasn't any there except, as I say, those cranes that were dockside and you couldn't move them around. I mean you could roll them up and down the dock, up and down the stringpiece, but you couldn't take one here and put a roller on a different pier. But the native labor worked well for us. They didn't sabotage. They'd steal, of course. They were hungry. Used to be an old saying, when you stand along-side an Arab with a robe, you knew he was cracking a K ration in between his knees. They'd steal food. One thing we never ran into, I never did, was a hostile population no matter where we were. That didn't mean they wouldn't steal things they needed from you. But they wouldn't sabotage you. They wouldn't kill a soldier if they caught him out alone or something like that.

We were feeding ones that hadn't been fed by the Germans for a couple of weeks before that or something. He would sell to the Germans as well as he would sell to the Americans. They were just doing business. He just wanted those cigarettes and whatever else he could get.

Now joint planning and joint training. Training. We didn't have that. If you want to get on in your career, you want to get on the joint staff.

CPT CANIGLIA: Got to get a career first.

BG TANK: Well, if you get an opportunity to get on one of these joint staffs, don't turn it down.

We had to settle over in Casablanca. We didn't have an agreement for port security and so on between the Army and the Navy. It hadn't been settled ahead of time. You're in the situation already and now you're trying to settle who does what to whom, see? It's a little bit late to be doing things like that. But this is one of those things that threw this business out with us. When we got those air raids, see? Then we sat down. Who is supposed to determine if we're under an air raid or not? Army does it or the Navy? Each side felt they were the ones who were supposed to do it.

All this artillery that I say was firing in the port were all out on ships, you know. They might have been merchant ships, maybe not Navy ships, but merchant ships. But there wasn't any, I don't think we had any, Army artillery around us, any anti-aircraft. When I say 'around us', I mean right in the port area.

(on the period between 8 Nov 43 and early January 44).

Well, in between that time, they had the Casablanca Conference and I was called off to work as a transportation planner in the Casablanca Conference. After that I went with GEN Somervell on a two or three (I don't know how long we were gone) trip all through the east. We got over as far as India. Well, during that whole period, and when I wasn't even in the area, is when the base section took over. I don't remember when the Casablanca Conference was. The ANFA Conference it was called. A N F A. That was the first of those when Churchill and Roosevelt got together, and then later on it included Russia., And the first one they had was at the ANFA, which was a big hotel or something like that near Casablanca. So, it was called the ANFA Conference. As I say, I got called out of my job to go up there and work for just a couple of days but then Somervell said, "I want you to come with me". So, I went with him and we went all through the Near East and the Middle East area, ended up in Calcutta and up where they were flying the Hump. Then I came back and rejoined the headquarters. Well, by that time headquarters was completely out of it. The base section had taken over and I was gone all the time that was going on. So, I wasn't even there.

CPT CANIGLIA: Would you care to relate some experiences about planning, going into Sicily; what we did there? Maybe, how we applied what we learned in North Africa?

BG TANK: We did a little better. One thing, we did exist there over the beaches for some time and they were all under the charge of an engineer shore regiment. We didn't have the engineer shore establishment you had out in the Pacific. We only had the shore regiment. We didn't have the boat regiment. The complete outfit, you know, with the boats and the shore regiments; we just had the shore regiment. And we were the main operators of the beaches for some time in Sicily. And they operated under the G4 section of Seventh Army. They were our base section, as best we had. We didn't have a

base section. So they were the ones who did it down here. And then we got up to Palermo and the first day we got into Palermo, that night, the Germans gave us time to get some ships in there and then they gave us one hell of an air attack and sunk everything that we had tied up. But we weren't as bad off. Our supply base was closer; was in North Africa. We weren't so tied down with the tremendous amount of supplies that we were when we went into French Morocco. Initially we weren't.

CPT CANIGLIA: Because you didn't have to send massive quantities and big convoys?

BG TANK: We depended on the fact that they had supplies over there in North Africa. And another thing we did which we hadn't before; it wasn't feasible probably before. We had a few small ships. They called them coasters. They're about three or four thousand tons, something like that, instead of ten, loaded solid with rations. That's what you really needed was rations. I don't think we had any fuel, solid fuel. I can't remember. But I do remember the rations and it turned out that's what we needed - lots of food. When you are moving you don't shoot, and when you are held up you don't use as much gasoline.

CPT CANIGLIA: What was your involvement in planning Sicily?

BG TANK: Same thing. Planning the initial echelons. Now, when we went into Sicily I had a complete list of what was on, in general terms, every ship in the assault echelon. We made some use of it. We had the Second Armor division in what they called floating reserve.

And they decided they wanted to put them in at Gela. I remember they wanted to know what ships they were on 'cause they didn't know what . . . So, they put them right in there out of the planned unloading sequence so we could get the Second Armor in there. 'Cause when we landed in Sicily, as I remember, the damn Herman Goring division, which was an armor division, and one of the best division the Germans had down there or any place, had just completed some maneuvers down there repelling an invasion. So, they were setting there. And the First Division, First Infantry, ran into something there. And so, yeah, we knew what was on the ships, but again, discharge was more or less under the Navy under the Amphibious Command's control at that time. The command hadn't shifted yet. What does the good book say?; landing forces firmly established ashore?

CPT CANIGLIA: Firmly established ashore. When do you get to that point?

BG TANK: You get to that point when he goes to shore and says I'm in charge of the shore.

We went ashore before we were firmly established. Damn near got captured. The Germans damn near took Gela back the first night. It was kind of impressive when you walked out there that second morning and there were some burned-out German tanks over there a few hundred yards.

We had a signal officer who decided he was going to go from Gela. This was, I guess, the next day. The only thing he met along the road was a German tank. He came back. No, the road wasn't clear yet. I remember American destroyers firing direct fire on German tanks.

CPT CANIGLIA: Direct fire?

BG TANK: Direct fire.

CPT CANIGLIA: Leveled guns?

BG TANK: Yeah, I mean they were aiming at the tanks.

CPT CANIGLIA: Naval gunfire. They could see the tanks?

BG TANK: They were a couple miles away, but that was part of the naval gunfire, of the amphibious operation.

The ocean there is fairly shallow, see? So, when the Germans bombed us and sunk some of our ships, the ships didn't go out of sight. They were sitting out there in the water, maybe in 30 ft of water. Well out of the water. I'm talking about the freighters, now. The destroyers were inside of us. We're out here in the anchorage, I mean the freighters were. The destroyers were inside of us firing. Inside of us. Between the beach and us.

But in Sicily I think the nearness of our bases simplified things a lot. And we had more experience. All the troops we took into Sicily had experience. The ones we took over to French North Africa, they didn't have maneuvers, that's the big difference. The Navy had more experience.

CPT CANIGLIA: Did you get involved with beach operations in Sicily?

BG TANK: No, the engineer outfit did that.

CPT CANIGLIA: So, after you did the planning, what..... ?

BG TANK: You coordinated what ships would come in there to be unloaded and control which way they were going to go. Then you had to communicate with the beach or port authorities and let them know what was coming.

We'd fly down there in a Cub. That's one innovation we used there and that was the first time we used it. They used it in the Pacific a lot, in later years, of course. Most of the Pacific fighting came a little bit later. Another was this idea of specially loaded ships. The only part we did on that was, as I say, rations. We had so many small ships loaded with rations. And they were a Godsend because you could bring them in to some little port and at least you had a supply of rations coming ashore.

CPT CANIGLIA: What do they mean by the term combat loader?

BG TANK: It's loaded to come off in a prescribed order; all the equipment on there.

CPT CANIGLIA: So, that's not a ship that has been modified, it just loaded in .

BG TANK: Oh, well, the ship normally is modified because essentially it's set up to carry equipment as opposed to carrying general cargo boxes and stuff. So, one modification is they've got more decks in them. The capacity of a combat loader is determined more by square area rather than cube. How much square area you've got to park vehicles on.

I think that what it had come to is, a ship that had been adapted would be called a combat loader. Now the British used to do a lot of that. They would put false decks in the freight ships, so as to load more. The bottom holds in a freighter are deep. Well, you put in a false deck, a false platform, and then you'd double the capacity for vehicles. And during the war, they would leave those ships. The British would leave those ships in that configuration.

CPT CANIGLIA: What were your problems in Sicily as far as your job went?

BG TANK: I didn't have any problems. That was an easy victory there. We didn't have the tremendous numbers of supplies. We had a little more flexibility in as much as we had extra rations available. We had better trained troops and better trained supervisors, too, not just the troops here but I mean all up and down the line. They knew a little better how to do their jobs.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were there any problems?

BG TANK: I don't remember any real problems.

CPT CANIGLIA: Did you get involved at all in highway/rail in Sicily?

BG TANK: We did. Yeah. We took two little switcher trains, engines I mean, into Sicily. Took them in on, you showed me that picture, we took them in on LCTS.

Yeah, two of them. And we, of course, always inherit some equipment and we used it, and it was very valuable as far as we could use it, but especially when we got to Palermo and turned east towards Messina. The Germans dropped every railroad bridge and the action was going so fast we never got any of those bridges repaired, so no railroad was used. Every stream that flows out of those mountains and into the Mediterranean, well, they just dropped the bridges on them. But to the extent it could be used it was; the railroad was used. Then we had parts of the railway operating battalion. Those people always did a good job; the railway operating team. But, again, they were only used for something they knew how to do - run a railroad and they knew how to do that. They were trained people.

CPT CANIGLIA: They were all civilians that were drafted?

BG TANK: Well, yeah. Well, most of them were. In those days, your major railroad companies would sponsor a reserve unit, and they would furnish the people for it and so on. And when the unit was called to active duty, why, they just left the railroad and put on uniforms. They knew each other. They knew what each could do and they were good outfits. Just thinking, we didn't have any particular problems in Sicily. Didn't like them blowing us out of the water in Palermo, day after we got in there.

CPT CANIGLIA: Let me turn it around, sir. What things went best?

BG TANK: I don't know. Can't say one went better than another did. Of course, we never did have an operating base section, I'm talking about up until the combat ended in Sicily. We never did have an operating base section, as I remember. There was one there eventually, but I don't think there was one initially.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were people apprehensive about the logistics-over-the-shore?

BG TANK: Oh, yeah, very much. That was a combined operation. There were actually more British troops involved than American troops, I think. And the British troops were to come in around Syracuse and around that area down there, the southeast corner of Sicily. And they had ports down there. In their initial grab they were going to get some seaports. And initially, the Americans were supposed to come around and get Palermo. And when the plan got to Army group headquarters, the Army had the two forces that weren't mutually supporting. So, they turned it down. Then the plan came up that the Americans would go in on the left of the British. The British didn't move their area, see? Well, that put us into Licatta, the little places like that. And so, apparently no ports. With this plan we were supposed to go across Sicily and get ports later. So, yeah, there was a lot of reservation on that because if we were held up for some time, we were going to have to support ourselves over the beaches for a considerable amount of time. I think Patton said he'd do it provided they gave him 600 DUKW's or something like that. You know what the DUKWs are?

CPT CANIGLIA: Yes, sir.

BG TANK: I don't know who told him about the DUKW, but he practically spoke for all the production in the United States - 600 DUKWS. Well, he got his 600 DUKWS, too. And then we didn't use them all. So, we went in and it was in the initial planning agreement that should things go bad on the beaches, the Americans would be allowed a certain use of the ports, which the British were going to capture in Syracuse and that area. I can't remember the names of all the towns and cities. In the initial agreement there were two things: one was the DUKW, and the other was that we have an amount of tonnage that we could bring through their ports, if needed. Well, we never used it 'cause everything went.--so nicely over where we were. So, we never got our lines of communication--!crossed with the British. They always were separate.

CPT CANIGLIA: How did we get along with the Brits?

BG TANK: I guess there been a lot of history written about Montgomery, but, I don't know. Down at the working level, we got along fine, I thought. I had a lot of service, not a lot, but considerable service working at the staff level on this joint and combined military transportation. They're very capable officers, the ones I ran into. Very capable ones and as far as getting along with them all, we worked very well together. One thing was, I remember this over in Algeria, and we stuck to our habits. They stuck to theirs. We'd wrap everything up at four or five o'clock in the afternoon. We didn't do much more. Those rascals would go back after dinner and do about another four hours of staff work. Then they'd come in the next morning with a brand new stack of papers, see? Catch you cold because they'd done four or five hours more work. But there's nothing wrong with that except, the one who writes the staff paper will get most of his ideas in. So their working hours were different than ours.

As far as the troops, we always got along with them. When we were in Italy, right along side of us we had the Fifth Army with a British corps in it. So we were always running into them.

CPT CANIGLIA: Later, you were in charge of an engineer battalion.

BG TANK: Yeah, I had the 10th Engineers, which is in the Third Division.

CPT CANIGLIA: And you took them into southern France?

BG TANK: Yeah, we went to Rome. Then they pulled us out. Then we went to southern France.

CPT CANIGLIA: So, now you had experience planning amphibious operations and logistics, and suddenly you were on the other end of the spectrum - a user.

BG TANK: Yeah. My battalion was combat loaded. Of course, I mean the engineer battalion. We were combat loaded when we went into Italy, when we went into Anzio, and again when we went into southern France. Well, by that time the Third Division, as far as combat loading, I think they could almost do it in their sleep. Planning. I'm talking about the planning. How good they were the first time, I don't know. I remember when we were going into Italy, I called up the division G3 and he said, "Oh, what are you getting so excited about? This is just an administrative move."

CPT CANIGLIA: I also remember that you landed in southern France and lead a reconnaissance element as a lieutenant colonel trying to capture a bridge.

BG TANK: That was quite a ways up in France.

CPT CANIGLIA: I think you won the Silver Star at that time.

BG TANK: They blew the damn bridge up in our face.

CPT CANIGLIA: Can't win them all, sir.

BG TANK: In the early days during the war, a lot of our canned goods – we hadn't gotten around to painting them brown and stenciling in black ink, see? So, it had the commercial wrapper on it. You get them out in some damn dump and they'd stay out there in the rain and so on and all the wrappers would go off of them. So, when it gets down to the mess sergeant, he's got a bunch of tin cans and no damn marks on them. Now that happened. And I don't mean one or two cans, I means every can with no wrapper.

Well, you know out in the Pacific as the war went on there, they went to specially loaded ships. Now these ships weren't specially constructed, that wasn't available to them, but they would know that this freighter out here had a certain predetermined loading on it. I don't think you could get it off there anyway you wanted. You had to discharge it, see? And then they had about four or five different classifications. This ship had such on it. This type of loading was this and this was another, and this was another. And the only thing was they didn't like to take it ashore in their damn jungles and so on and they wouldn't unload these ships. We had the damnedest tie up of ships out in the Pacific. Just setting on the anchor.

And they'd tell you frankly, if you'd go out and see them face-to-face like this; I mean the people, . . . "We don't want to unload them. As long as it's on that ship we know what's there. We take it ashore and we don't know what we've got." And once they got it ashore they'd lose track of it. So that was the trouble out there during WWII.

You know, when we went into Sicily, we also built flight decks on LSTs and flew our artillery spotters closer. They built some sort of superstructure on the LST and launched our artillery planes off of it.

CPT CANIGLIA: Could they recover the plane?

BG TANK: I don't remember. I don't remember whether they could or not. I don't remember that. But I do know they wanted to get them over there and they brought them over on the LSTS.

You know, over there in Sicily for work up the coast it would have been nice if we had had a few LCTs there. You know, to leapfrog up the coast. I mean just for supplies. Instead of trucking them all on one road all the way out of Palermo all the way to end of the island, why, we could have just taken the LSTs and gone up. And you can always find a beach somewhere to come in.

CPT CANIGLIA: Didn't you use LCMs and LSTS? I know you did several landings in back of German lines to break out.

BG TANK: Yeah, Third Division did. Yeah, but they were only used for the assault part, they weren't used for resupply.

CPT CANIGLIA: They weren't under your control?

BG TANK: No. Oh, no. They were part of the Navy.

CPT CANIGLIA: How did you communicate from Sicily back to North Africa?

BG TANK: Wireless. Telegraphy.

CPT CANIGLIA: Was that Navy?

BG TANK: No. Army. When we got to Palermo, when we had the beaches still running, we didn't have any communication with them. We had to go down there and talk to them for a long time. Liaison was the best communication we had, cause you could fly, see? There's nothing to hamper you flying. No danger and nobody would shoot you out of the air.

CPT CANIGLIA: Were the Italians friendly?

BG TANK: Oh, yeah. The old saying was, after we got in there; all you had to do was hang a ration up on a flagpole, and you'd have the whole Italian Army there. Their heart was out of it by that time. No, the Italians had had enough of the war by the time we got to Sicily.

Another thing I remember when we went into Africa. General Patton could get anything he asked for. So, they wanted the latest equipment. So, they equipped the troops with some new radios or something. Well, this is fine. Except the supply system didn't back up that new radio and the repairmen had never worked on it, didn't know how to fix it. The people operating it didn't know how to operate it. That's a poor time to change equipment. I remember that. I don't know if you have ever seen any of that in the writing.

CPT CANIGLIA: No sir.

BG TANK: But you know every time they'd hear about some new equipment coming out; "Oh, we want that.", see? So, okay, suppose you bring in a new radio? As I say, your parts system doesn't support it yet. Your signal repairmen haven't worked on that equipment. Your operators haven't worked on that equipment. That's a funny thing to take into combat.

You know when we went into to southern France, I think I'm right on this, I ended up using Michelin road maps. We ran out of our map supply there 'cause we went so damn fast. We didn't have any maps. We were using Michelin road maps. One of the best port units was that 20th Engineer Regiment. And they weren't about to work for any port

outfit either. We gave them this area and said , that's your job and they did it. So you had different units in there.

Feeding the Arabs was, of course, more important to them than paying them.

What I was doing was what they call movements control today. Find out where the trucks were, tell them where the cargo was, and see that the stuff went between them and who was running the pumps at that time. The special staff sections of the Army, of the Western Task Force, the quartermaster, and the engineer, the Signal Corps. If I wanted to talk to somebody about where they were going to receive the gasoline, I'd go talk to quartermaster and if there's something else, talk to somebody else. So I guess I was doing what they call today movements control. But I wasn't running the port as such. The operating elements of that port were running it.

CPT CANIGLIA: And you were just coordinating their efforts as far as clearing the port out and deciding what ship was going to come to what berth?

BG TANK: Well, you know, they probably made those decisions, too.