

RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER
of
RICHARD LEW MORTON, Brigadier General

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 19 April 1926, Fort Wayne, Indiana

YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE: Over 26 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 31 July 1974

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED

The Infantry School Basic Course
The Transportation School, Advanced Course
The Canadian Air Staff College
The Army War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES

United States Military Academy - BS Degree - Military Science
American University - MA Degree - International Relations
University of Heidelberg - MA Degree - German

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF DUTY ASSIGNMENTS (Last 10 Years)

FROM TO ASSIGNMENTS

Feb 62	Feb 64	Sec to the Gen Staff, AMC
Feb 64	Jul 65	Student, American University
Jul 65	Jul 66	Student, Army War College
Aug 66	Aug 67	CO, 2 nd S&T Bn, 2 nd Inf Div (Korea)
Aug 67	Aug 70	S&F, Army War College
Aug 70	Apr 71	CO, 8 th Trans Grp, USARV
Aug 71	Jan 73	ACSLOG, AFCENT

Jan 73

May 74

CG, MTMTS (Eastern Area)

PROMOTIONS DATES OF APPOINTMENT

2LT	3 Jun 49
1LT	6 Oct 50
CPT	27 Apr 54
MAJ	18 Jun 59
LTC	25 Jul 63
COL	13 Aug 68
BG	1 May 72

MEDALS AND AWARDS

Silver Star

Legion of Merit w/3 Oak Leaf Clusters

Bronze Star Medal w/V Device and 3 Oak Leaf Clusters

Purple Heart w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters

Air Medal

Army Commendation Medal

Combat Infantryman Badge

Parachutist Badge

SOURCE OF COMMISSION USMA (Class of 1949)



INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

Interview with **BG (Ret) Richard L. Morton**

BG Richard L. Morton was interviewed by Major Terry Hunter at Carlisle Barracks at the Military History Institute on 20 Aug 87.

BG MORTON, in his interview, talks about Lam Son 719. He describes how America got involved in Vietnam, and how he became involved in Vietnam.

He starts out by telling how he went into the military starting in 1944 (during World War II). He speaks on how he was drafted. He relates the assignments that he received from the time of World War II until the war in Korea.

He reports what he did in Korea and the events taking place in Korea while he was there. He makes observations on how the fighting was led. He tells how he went out of Korea and what he did between Korea and Vietnam.

Then he moves on to the education, training, and assignments he received between Korea and Vietnam. He goes into the events leading up to the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Then he relates how he got assigned to Vietnam and how he got involved in Lam Son 719 and the fighting. He covers the moves that were made in Vietnam.

He reflected on the lessons learned throughout his career and the observations he made during his career.

This is the Transportation Corps Oral History Program interview with **Brigadier General Richard L. Morton** at Carlisle Barracks at the Military History Institute. It is 20 August 1987.

MAJ HUNTER: Sir, we're going to focus primarily on Lam Son 719. Would you care to give me your opinion on how America got involved in Vietnam and how you became involved in Vietnam.

BG MORTON: Yes. I've done quite a lot of research on this because I happen to work for an organization called Mandex whose headquarters is in Springfield, Virginia. But they have an office here in Camp Hill nearby. It's staffed primarily by retirees from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. I worked as a consultant there and have been for the last 3 or 4 years. Since all of these people I work with had service in Vietnam, Vietnam comes to mind during every coffee break and it's discussed frequently.

One of the people who works there, Dick Bullock (Richard Bullock) who retired O-6 Corps of Engineers, West Point class of '52, had a theory. At first I laughed. But the more I thought about it, the more I had to research it. Dick was in the MAG [Military Advisory Group] over there in '63, '64 as a Major. If you recall, Lyndon Johnson had just become President of the United States after the assassination of John Kennedy.

The situation in Vietnam was deteriorating badly. Lyndon Baines Johnson called Maxwell Taylor, as I recall, out of retirement and sent him over to Vietnam as Lyndon's eyes and ears. The first port of call that General Taylor made was on the Chief of MAG in Vietnam. Dick Bullock was in attendance at the briefing that the Chief of MAG gave to General Taylor.

According to Dick, it was the most pessimistic briefing he ever heard. The Chief of MAG portrayed the situation in Vietnam as utter chaos that the so-called government in Vietnam could not possibly last more than a few months. It was just a matter of time before all U.S. forces and U.S. civilians there would have to go to Vong Tau and be evacuated. Of course, General Taylor took this information and brought it back to the White House and related it all to the President. Just a few months later, there was the alleged Tonkin Gulf incident followed by Senator "Halfbright" and his tabling of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. That opened the door to Vietnam.

According to Dick Bullock, that briefing given by the Chief of MAG was the start of the Vietnam War. Now of course, the MAG was there already having sustained casualties, including a classmate of mine Reed Jenson (sen). I think he was the first officer to have been killed in action there when he was assassinated by his driver about a year before. All this indicated that no, there had been fighting going on and that was not the true start of the Vietnam War and that's not how or why we got into it.

My theory after some laborious research is that we got there for an ultraistic reason and also to pull French chestnuts out of the fire. To find out how many chestnuts we pulled out, I went back to earliest part of our relationships with France which was worse during the Revolutionary War. They were sky high because France was not a good friend of England. Of course at the Battle of Yorktown, had Comte de Grasse and his fleet not entered Hampton Roads, Cornwallis may have been reinforced and the battle there at Yorktown could have taken a far different turn. But relations with France in those days

was skyhigh. It was kept skyhigh by people like Ben Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, who were always flitting back and forth to France.

Of course, even with Napoleon's ascension after the French Revolution, relations remain pretty good. We were able to buy a large piece of real estate almost at cost. We stayed pretty good until about the time of Marquis de Lafayette. He was another great instigator of French American affairs. He was constantly visiting this country, and getting all kinds of honors and awards, and it was reciprocal. But when Marquis died, relations, for some reason that I've never been able to locate in my research, took a turn for the worse and got more and more sour. Finally, it would have led, in my opinion, to a declaration of war by the United States against France because as you recall at the start of the Civil War, the Emperor of France put Maximilian, a Frenchman, on the throne of Mexico. We were powerless to do anything about it because we were fighting Johnny Reb.

It had a happy ending as soon as the Civil war was over. The French instigation down there collapsed. It didn't remain very good. In fact, it was sour until about 1885 when a Frenchman decided to give us the Statue of Liberty and then things began to pick up. They were never what they had been in the past, a sky-high relationship, but they got a little better. In 1917, they got very good indeed. You go back to that month of March 1917. That's when we began to bail France out. We began rescuing their chestnuts from the fire.

Woodrow Wilson had just been reelected President on the slogan, "He Kept Us Out of War." Yet in March, a few weeks after his re-inauguration, he went to Congress and said "I want to declare war on the Central Powers". Now at that point, the French regiments were leaving the front in regimental strength. They were simply bailing out (including their officers), creating tremendous holes in the front.

At the same time on the eastern front, the Russian Revolution had not begun in that sense. But Kerensky's Government had come to power. People were not happy with the Czar. His wife was a German. Most Russians felt she was under the evil influence of that terrible Monk, Rasputin. Bread riots were occurring in Moscow, Leningrad, and all the major cities. Of course, the Russian Army in World War I did not equip itself very well, starting at Tannenberg.

I think that President Wilson felt that it's just a matter of time until the Allies pack it in and the Central Powers will win. So he decided to throw our weight on the side of the Allies.

Now what we had to gain in that war, I've never been able to find out. My father fought in it. He felt he was fighting the war to end all wars. So, that was wrong. It was to make the world safe for democracy and I don't think we're any safer today than we were then.

But just consider for a moment. If we had not entered World War I on the side of the allies or not entered at all, France would have had the course and with it the French

Empire, the imperial empire including all their holdings worldwide to include French Indochina. There may have been no pulling of French chestnuts out of the fire after that.

But France did allegedly win World War I, which led to the rise of Hitler, which caused World War II. Alsace-Lorraine was returned and all these good things. Then in World War II, France held out for 6 weeks. It wasn't about a year later. Again, we came into the war to rescue France and pull their chestnuts out of the fire.

Now that's an over simplification. We had Pearl Harbor in there and we did not declare war on Nazi Germany as you may remember. Nazi Germany declared war on us and Winston Churchill urged that we make the European Theater of Operation, the primary theater of operations. But again, we pulled the French chestnuts out of the fire. In my opinion, that continued until Dien Bien Phu where we almost came in. We almost came in with no less than a nuclear device if I read history correctly. But cooler heads prevailed. So anyhow, it's been interesting for me for the past few years to try to trace the course of American-French relations and how this relationship caused our presence in Vietnam starting in, you might say, the early 1950s.

MAJ HUNTER: I felt that it was a choice by Dulles and Eisenhower. What was more important, Europe or China? And if we went on the side of Ho Chi Minh, we would have the outrage of the French in Europe and NATO was important to us. We were worried about the Iron Curtain and everything. So we supported the French in Indochina. Then we could preserve NATO. If we supported Ho Chi Minh, we would lose France as that dominant card in the formation of NATO. I think that had a lot to do with it. It was a choice of NATO versus Indochina, I think. For that reason, we supported the French re-invasion of Indochina.

BG MORTON: That triggered a real anger against the Japanese empire.

MAJ HUNTER: True. When they invaded Indochina, the French just left the Vietnamese to fend for themselves and took off. Ho Chi Minh came in as part of the resistance.

BG MORTON: Well, let me see. Many French including some military formations in Indochina in 1940 collaborated with the Japanese because they didn't have much choice when you get right down to it. The Japanese left them armed (the French police for example) because they had a better handle on the country than the Japanese did. They were forced to become collaborationists and were severely punished for that after the French retook Indochina. Well, we've dwelled on this point too long. But it has been interesting for me in retirement to go back and see how did we get into this mess and mess it was.

MAJ HUNTER: And also another point is that Truman lost China to the Communist. Of course we had Chiang Kai-shek on Formosa and we had Mao Tse-tung in Red China after losing eastern Europe to the communist and after losing China to the Communist. The Lord help the President that was in power that lost another country.

BG MORTON: That's right. The human cry was or the major question of those days in the '50s was who lost China?

MAJ HUNTER: So to halt the expansion of Communism, we had that domino effect coming into being. If you look where Johnson came from, he was a much older man. He came from that when the communist stuff was happening. We had this big fear after about '47 (I think it started) that the Communists were going to take over the whole world. So I think this is where we were going to put our foot down. We did it in Korea. We stopped them in Korea and this is another thing we're going to have to stop them again I believe.

BG MORTON: Oh yes. There was no question about it. John Foster Dulles had this containment policy. It was one step beyond rollback. He called it rollback. That got us into trouble in Hungary where the Hungarians said, "Hey, that means they are going to help us if we revolt. They revolted and we gave them precious little help. So we were trying to police the world and make the world safe against Communism. We just didn't have the resources or the will. But we tried on a piece meal basis and Vietnam was one of the fragments of that whole policy of containment.

MAJ HUNTER: Let me back up here sir, first. Going over your military career, I discovered that you were drafted in 1944 and served in World War II. I'm not sure if you served in Europe or in Asia.

BG MORTON: Well it was an interesting story. I was with my parents. My father was in the military. But he'd retired in 1938 and he was living in Canada at the time. When I turned 18, I was drafted by the Canadian forces. My father said, "Look, you're 18. You're going to have to fight either with Canada or the United States." Canada only paid, I think, \$12. 00 a month to the private soldier. The American Army was paying \$21.00 a month. There were innumerable benefits, more than the Canadians had.

So I fled. I did the reverse of what people did during the Vietnam War. They went to Canada to avoid the draft. I was in Canada and was drafted. So I fled to the United States where I got drafted in Detroit, Michigan, one day later in 1944.

So I was a private soldier during World War II. I served in such great places as Fort Sheridan, Illinois; Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; Lafayette College in Pennsylvania; and the STP [System Technology Program] Program. The pre-West Point Programs were still in force. I went to OCS [Officer's Candidate School] at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was not commissioned because on appointment and orders to West Point in 1945.

I was being prepared for the operations Olympic and Coronet (the invasion of the Japanese homeland) as Infantry Platoon Leader 1545. No one was happier when the bomb went off in Japan (packed it in). We saved (I don't know how many million) lives on both sides.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. So you entered the West Point in 1945 and graduated in 1949. Then in June, a year later, I figured that you graduated in June of 1949. In June of 1950, we had the invasion of South Korea. Then you went as a platoon leader in Infantry, I believe, and went to Korea. Then you left Korea, I guess, as a First Lieutenant, possibly, with the Silver Star, and, I think, three Purple Hearts, and maybe some other medal. I might have forgotten.

BG MORTON: I had the Bronze Star, V Device, and nothing else. My service records, all my private papers, my class ring, my watch, and wallet vanished during the evacuation. I left Korea on a stretcher and that was the second time I'd done that because my parents were in Korea in 1930. I got the measles and was evacuated on a stretcher. So the third time in 1967, when I left Korea, I was very happy to walk to the plane and fly out on my own.

MAJ HUNTER: I was going to ask you sir. Being a highly decorated, so to speak, 1st lieutenant, do you think that had any impact as your career progressed?

BG MORTON: Yes. I think so. I was commissioned Transportation Corps. But in those days, you had to spend 2 years with what was called the Carrier Branch. I picked infantry because I had been trained as an infantryman during World War II. It was the only way I could get airborne. Being young and full of vinegar, I wanted to take the parachuting course at Fort Benning. It was the only way I could do it. Little did I know the North Koreans were lurking in the background and they ruined one or more days for me over there. When I was discharged from the hospital in Japan and sent back to the United States. I think I was the first or second officer on the post of two thousand who was back from the Korean War. I was still walking with the cane. Everyone seemed to go to me for advice from 0-6 on down because everyone had yet to go to Korea.

MAJ HUNTER: What year was this sir?

BG MORTON: That was August of 1951. When I got to Eustis, the post was unsure what to do with me. I was Transportation Corps. But I had not been doing any TC training and I was originally assigned to TRTC. That was the old Transportation Replacement Training Center where we gave an eight week (I think it was an eight week) basic. I became sort of a Special Assistant to the Commander of that organization. He had me build mountains for mountain fighting. Fort Eustis is really not the place to train for mountain fighting, build rifle ranges, known distance and infiltration courses, bayonet and grenade courses and the like. He put my experiences, I felt, to a rather good use. This was before I was assigned to the Basic Course there.

MAJ HUNTER: Was this General Muller?

BG MORTON: No, Harold K. Duffie was the Commander in those days and Colonel Foot was the Commander of the TRTC. He used to confide in me. It was great there for training truck drivers and railroaders and all the like, but not for basic training. Fort

Eustis simply lacked the facilities in 1951 to do a good job. We built a might fine obstacle course for the people.

MAJ HUNTER: I see. So you had a CIV [Civilian], I'm sure.

BG MORTON: Yes. Again it was a great rarity in the Transportation world.

MAJ HUNTER: So in 151 you were probably the first one to come back for all those decorations: The Bronze Star, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart.

BG MORTON: Yes. I was assigned to give series of lectures, too, around the post to various organizations on the climate, the culture, the language of Korea, and what to expect.

MAJ HUNTER: Were you at Pusan or were you? Where were you when you were wounded? Were you on advance or were you still in the withdrawal stage?

BG MORTON: No. We were on the advance "Operation Killer", February 10, 1951.

We were just south of Seoul, closing in on the Han River, Hill 201.

MAJ HUNTER: This is Fort Incheon.

BG MORTON: This is well after Incheon. I got over there just as we were falling back into Pusan perimeter in 1950. We went through the grim days of the Pusan perimeter. Then we had the breakout where the 7th Cavalry Regiment dashed 124 miles to link up with the Incheon invasion at Wonsan. Then we went north. I got as far as Wonsan in North Korea where the 8th Cav had it's massacre on Halloween night of 1950. I'd operated around that area, Youngbeong, the Wall City. In November 1950, of course MacArthur announced the great invasion or the massive compression and development with 10th Corps on the right and 8th Army on the left and the Chinese in the middle. We watched in horror as the 25th Division replaced us and walked into a buzz saw. We were put then in Taejon that was in the center of the peninsula where the II Corps simply evaporated. Suddenly there were bugles in the night and green tracers. I'd never seen green tracers. But this was still in North Korea, November or early December. 'Then there was the great evacuation from Kounree, well below Seoul, and then coming back "Operation Killer", which began in late January 1951. That's where I got hit for the third and last time.

MAJ HUNTER: Then you went to Fort Eustis. First you went to Japan where you recuperate. Then you went to Fort Eustis as a Special Assistant. Then I assume you entered the Basic Course. It's called TOBC [Transportation Officer Basic course]. Then from there, where did you go?

BG MORTON: Then I was assigned to the staff and faculty of the T School because the Transportation School had just gotten its charter to teach air transportation for the U.S.

Army. We were running 2 courses concurrently for some of the divisions who were to take part in a big operation in Texas called "Longhorn". The selected people from 2 National Guard Divisions or Reserve Divisions came to Eustis in great force. We taught them weights and balance of aircraft. In fact, that was the start. The mock up area is still there and I got involved in that through Colonel Archer, who was then the Deputy Commandant. I spent 3 years at that.

I was delighted because I no sooner got there than 2 of us were put on flight pay. At one point, Jim Bails, another first lieutenant and I were the highest paid first lieutenants at Fort Eustis. We were getting \$220.00 basic pay. So this was \$100.00 in addition. I was able to buy a car. It was wonderful. I was really coming up in the world. As I told you before, the American Army was getting \$21.00 a day, once a month, when I joined up. There I was getting over \$300.00 a month. I even bought a house in Williamsburg. So I was very reluctant to go to the career course, TOAC 8, because that meant the end of my \$100.00 a month. But I had just been promoted to Captain. So I went.

MAJ HUNTER: After TOAC, where did you go?

BG MORTON: After TOAC, I was assigned to the University of Heidelberg. This is an interesting story there. I received a call from (in those days) Career Management. They said it looks like you've got a choice. The Military Academy wants you to be an instructor in German because you had good grades in German. We'd like you to go back to Korea for a second tour. Now I'd like you to call me back in 24 hours and give you my druthers. I told the Colonel that I was going to make an agonizing reappraisal and give him the decision on the spot. The Korean War was over by then. But I had seen quite enough of Korea. So I opted for the instructorship at West Point and the equivalent of a Master's Degree. I have taught German since in various capacities. I taught not only at West Point but the University of Maryland. I even tried filling in at the high school here. It's been quite rewarding.

MAJ HUNTER: When did you go to the American University? I missed that.

BG MORTON: Yes. I went to the American University for 3 semesters to get a Master's Degree in international relations. That was February '64 to June '65. That was after my tour with the Army Materiel Command with General Besson.

MAJ HUNTER: Now, from there I know you came to the War College as a student. A bio is what I need.

BG MORTON: No. That's right. After I went to American University, I was very fortunate. I came out on the list to the Army War College. I was disappointed because I had bought a house in Washington. I thought if I ever came on one of these lists, I hoped it would be ICAF or the National War College. So off we went to Carlisle we loved it. The school system was great in those days. The people were friendly. It was a small post. All students lived on the post in those days. You walked to class. It was five minutes, if that. We just fell in love with the place, good trout fishing.

MAJ HUNTER: Then from there you went to Korea.

BG MORTON: That's right.

MAJ HUNTER: You were in command of the S&T Battalion.

BG MORTON: Right, the 2nd S&T Battalion.

MAJ HUNTER: And then you walked to the plane that time.

BG MORTON: I walked to the plane and came back to the faculty. I'd left my family here in Carlisle. so I was overcome with joy when they said you're going back to Carlisle to the faculty of The Army War College because my family was right here, just behind the Sunnyside Restaurant, which you probably saw here. We'd bought a house there. So they were in that house during the tour I had in Korea. They were in the house during my three years on the faculty here and they stayed in that house when I went to Vietnam.

MAJ HUNTER: What did you do on the faculty? What did you teach?

BG MORTON: I was the world environments, the United States, and the international environment. I was CINC [Commander in Chief] as an 05 and 06.

MAJ HUNTER: Ok, I guess you got your Degree on International Relations.

BG MORTON: Oh yes. That was very important.

MAJ HUNTER: Now after that assignment, you went over to Vietnam to command the 8th Trans Group which was involved in Lam Son 719. My first question on Lam Son 719 is that I'm confused about the command structure. You have Brigadier General Arthur Sweeney, who is in Da Nang as the Support Commander.

BG MORTON: As you recall or you may not recall, there were I think four support commands in Vietnam in those days: Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh Bay, and what was the other? I guess Long Binh. My memory is starting to fail me. There were four. General Sweeney had, in December of 1970, been taken up to Da Nang Support Command which was bigger than the Qui Nhon Support Command. He left, as Commander there, his Deputy, Bill Applegate who was a TC officer and my classmate in TOAC 8 at Fort Eustis. But Bill was not there long. His tour was up and a colonel from the Corps of Engineers replaced him. Now of course, one of the reasons Sweeney went up to Da Nang was (unbeknownst to Sweeney at the time even) was this forthcoming invasion of Laos which General Abrams had just sold to President Nixon as America's last offensive in the war.

MAJ HUNTER: In this book, we have a mention of Colonel Konopnicki and yourself. He was in charge of the 26th General Support Group. I'm trying to figure, in a support

command, which is an 0-7 command. I'm sure you had some 0-6's and below. One is going to be your command and on is going to be Konopnicki's. It must have been some other. I'm trying to think of some subordinate units to that or how many units were involved. I get confused also with Lieutenant Colonel Rosenbaum, who is the DISCOM [Division Support Command Commander.

BG MORTON: Rosenblum.

MAJ HUNTER: Rosenblum.

BG MORTON: Rosenblum. Oh, DISCOM.

MAJ HUNTER: I know what DISCOM is. It's the 101st Airborne DISCOM. He got involved with General Sweeney. He goes up to General Sweeney and he wants to know can they support this invasion. He asks if he's cleared for that and they discuss it. He said "I am a DISCOM Commander. I cannot support it. Mat, can you do to help me?" From there, I kind of loose track. The author is not a military person.

BG MORTON: I think, today, William Nolan is 24 years of age. He was 6 at the time.

MAJ HUNTER: He does a good job. As a civilian, he does a good job. His acronyms are kind of bad.

BG MORTON: Yes. Let me see. He started work on that when he was 18 years old and I am astonished by what he did. He sent me the first 350 pages that he had done. I corrected it almost savagely because he had built his whole book around this SPEC4 Carney, who was sort of an eight ball. I'm being charitable and I said, "Listen. This is not going to fly." I was delighted that he accepted my corrective criticism and he changed it. But no. He did not really detail the change of command.

Rosie, who is one of my students here in 1969-70, was the DISCOM commander of the 101st Airborne which set up at An Khe. Of course, An Khe was supporting all kinds of units. So his concern was, "Look. I'll get my DISCOM in there. But I can only support those elements of the 101st Airborne that are working out of here. If anybody else comes, I can't hack it."

MAJ HUNTER: You can't support the ARVN [Army Reserve, Vietnam] basically I think.

BG MORTON: Well, not only the ARVN, but the other combat units and all the combat support units that went in there.

MAJ HUNTER: Well, under Da Nang, you were in Qui Nhon.

BG MORTON: I was in Qui Nhon.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. You don't go to Khe Sanh? You go to Quang Tri?

BG MORTON: Quang Tri.

MAJ HUNTER: There's Quang Tri and Qui Nhon is way down here. Okay. There it is. So Da Nang is in between them.

BG MORTON: See, on the 7th of February, that was only 30 days before headquarters 8th Transportation (Group was to stand down and be sent home. The 2 battalions we had there were to be merged into one giant battalion and cut by a couple of companies. I got this call.

MAJ HUNTER: The battalions were the 37th and the ...

BG MORTON: No. Those were the battalions that were up here. I had the 124th. What was the other one? That one had stepped down, but we were standing down units all over.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. So you were standing down. You were losing troops all the time I guess.

BG MORTON: Yes. It was a very dicey situation because in November, three months before, we had had a tremendous monsoon in the Qui Nhon area to include the Central Highlands. In the middle of the monsoon came a great typhoon and a section of the An Khe pass collapsed. By a section, I mean it must have been a half cubic mile of road and mountain that just simply went down into the pass. This interrupted the MRS [Military Railway Service] between Qui Nhon and the Central Highlands. Those people weren't living off the land, but they were being supported by air. When we did get the highway restored, we were playing catch up ball all the time to fill up class three there for the Air Force and the Army units and to say nothing of the other classes of supply.

About the 7th of January, I was required to send one of my companies north to the Da Nang Support Command. I was livid. I mean this was cutting me off at the knees. I said so and everyone said "tut tut." We remained in communication with the Company Commander of that truck company that went up there. He was hauling for the better part of three weeks, beer and sodas. So I was cross. Why did they take this truck company to haul PX supplies?

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. Now when do you come in really involved with this? Operation Dewy Canyon was from what time to what time?

BG MORTON: Well, actually, the invasion crossing the border took place on the 7th of February. That's when the ARVN jumped off. There'd been a build up phase of course as they built the base camp at Lang Vei. It was right on the border. Of course, ARVN had stockpiled all kinds of materiel. We stocked all kinds of materiel. On the 7th of February 1971 the ARW actually crossed into Laos.

Now on the morning of that day, I knew nothing of this, absolutely nothing. I was in Qui Nhon. I got a call from a Major General in Long Binh at Headquarters USARV, saying "You are about to get a call from General Art Sweeney and do what he says." So I thought that this is very mysterious. About an hour later, the phone rang and it was Art Sweeney. He said, "You've probably already heard from General X. I need you and I need you desperately I'd like you and any two people you want to bring along to give me a hand for a short period of time in a dicey situation up here in Da Nang."

Well, having gotten word from headquarters USARV, "do it," I selected my Sergeant Major and a Major Bill Lee who was exec of one of the battalion's black officer, very competent. I really knew the mode of transportation game and off we went. We flew directly. There was General Sweeney's plane waiting for me at Qui Nhon that afternoon. he flew to Quang Tri, we landed, and we were taken to the headquarters of that 26th General Support Group, Emil Konopnicki. It was not until Konopnicki briefed me that I had any indication that we were invading Laos.

Of course the reason for me going up there was the motor transport situation and the highway net. It was coming apart for reasons mentioned in the book which I furnished. The planning was bad.

If I may, on that point, I'd like to make a flashback, back in 1965. General Westmoreland, recognizing the fact that the Ho Chi Minh Trail was becoming more and more of a threat, came to the same conclusion, I think, that we all came to. The best way to stop that is to throw II Corps across Indochina or from the Gulf of Tonkin all the way to the river, the Mekong. I mean II Corps abreast.

Well, first of all, we did not have the troops at the time. Secondly, his charter was to quell the revolution in South Vietnam. So he had even less flexibility in that score. Third, his logisticians figured that out very quickly. How could you support II Corps there. Look at your ports and look at your road network. It can't be done without a tremendous engineering task to build ports and roads. So Westmoreland gave that up as his dream. But it should have been done. It should have been done.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. Well, on 7 February you were up in Quang Tri. You had been brought up there by General Sweeney personally. You've met Emil Konopnicki. You and your Sergeant Major and this other Major have assessed the situation. What do you do? You bring another battalion up from Qui Nhon or what do you do?

BG MORTON: Well, you remember my heart was still in Qui Nhon. These guys had gotten themselves in a mess. My first attitude was they can get themselves out of this mess. But next morning almost, well at breakfast, in came General Sweeney of whom I had the greatest respect and continued on the same gain as Konopnicki. Listen, we've got a problem. We could use your expertise if you have any to help bail us out. As it said in the book there, the invasion plans were kept ultra secret, at a very high level. They really never got down to the Action officer level where any Logistician Action Officer type could say, "Hey listen, you have half the number of truck companies. Your

road network won't support this. Your ports are too far south. It's not going to work without a lot of things.

Of course, these plans were kept sensitively secretive to prevent a leak to the North Vietnamese. Well we know today that the NVA [North Vietnamese Army] were aware of this just as soon as MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam] and the Joint General Staff of the South Vietnamese had come up with this. There was a tremendous leak. They were waiting for us. So keeping it at the General Officer level, so to speak, really did not accomplish what it was intended to do.

MAJ HUNTER: Was there any that you know of? Before I ask that question, let me ask you this. What is it? What is there for the reader? This is designed for the TOBC [Transportation Officer Basic Class] student at the Lieutenant level. What is the difference between USARV Headquarters, and MCV Headquarters?

BG MORTON: Creighton Abrams in those days, who succeeded General Westmoreland, had his headquarters at Tan Son Nhut Airforce Base which is practically in Saigon. He was the overall Commander, U.S. Army COUMAS Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. They were the tactical headquarters, the Administrative Headquarters. The Administrative Headquarters was USARV [the United States Army, Vietnam] and the former Commandant of the Army Wary College, General McCaffery was the Deputy Commander, but commander of USARV. It's a very intricate relationship which led to a lot of misunderstanding and backbiting and mass confusion. I'll be honest. After the invasion of Laos, I went to Headquarters, USARV. There was always bickering between the 2 organizations.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. I was going to ask you. You were saying that there were no Logisticians, in your opinion, involved in the planning process. Do you know who was on that staff? I was wondering who was the DCSCLOG [Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics] or it must have been somebody there that could have for some reason said, "Hey, wait a minute. This is not going to work. We don't have the ports. We don't have the highway network."

BG MORTON: Yes. We don't want to poke a finger. We did have a very good General Officer on the staff at USARV who recognized some of the shortcomings. Whether he made them known to General Abrams, I never asked him. I should have because I became very friendly with this General. I'm sure that he pointed this out and this was sort of a "come as you are" party. We couldn't take resources from other support commands. But we did finally in desperation. So it just went from there.

MAJ HUNTER: It just seems to me (from what I read, I'm not as abreast on this as I should be on this) that you have MACV, the tactical, the talk, in the planning stage. You also have the 24th Corps involved (who was also involved) and the 101st Airborne. Those units were pretty much involved with this. The rest of the units were kind of periphery and I don't know how. The American units were not to cross the border. Should there be a test of Vietnamization, at its best to see if it worked? And we were

going to air support only. But as you said, "Rosie heard from the G-3 or Lieutenant Colonel. I think Brand or Band kind of told him that something was up and could we support a large force. He said, "How large a force of ARVN?" He said "Three to five divisions", and he said, "No way."

BG MORTON: He was lucky to support himself in those days.

MAJ HUNTER: Exactly. He said, "I'm going to need some help." He goes to see Sweeney and Sweeney said, "No. How did you hear about this? Are you cleared?" So he pulls the shades down. And it gets to that point where Sweeney begins looking around. He said, "Who can I get some help from?"

BG MORTON: See. You just identified the problem. There were so few people cut in on this, that it began rolling without every proper hands on the throttle. That's what I would think.

MAJ HUNTER: Well, sir. How do you feel? We have the Transportation Corps, the Ordnance Corps, and I think the Quartermaster Corps that make up the logistics arena. Did I miss anybody? I think of Logistics. Do you feel there should be just a Logistics Branch as opposed to these three separate branches? Obviously, somebody is out of the net here considering the Transportation assets for this invasion.

BG MORTON: No. That was not the problem that we were dealing with in isolation. I would not really say that we should amalgamate these three necessarily because Logistics has become highly specialized through the years. With the coming of technology and all this and all of this, I'd leave them the way they are and at the higher ranks. I would give people cross training. But I would keep them separate from now on.

MAJ HUNTER: Well, now that your hindsight is 20-20, what could have been done to make this operation successful or not even do the operation at either MACV, or the 101st Airborne, or at the Corps level? When you go to the Staff College at Leavenworth, you learn about Corps and Division staffing. You do have a Transportation Officer on the DCSLOG staff. You do these briefings. Why wasn't that red flag waved at you at the 101st Airborne level or at the 24th Corps level? Did they have it? Could they have prevented this?

BG MORTON: Well, to begin with, you must understand I got there after the think tank had been launched.

MAJ HUNTER: But you'd seen all these problems. Now it's too late.

BG MORTON: Well, there are problems, even if you're on a net. Even if it had gone real well (which it didn't) there would have been problems. I guess, fundamentally, it was sort of a last gasp featured as the last American offensive action in the Vietnam War. General Abrams had sold it to the President. Hell, the senior officers were all Regular Army ingrained with this "can do" attitude regardless of the adversities. We were going

to pull it off for the President, the Commander in Chief (make him look good). But given the situation on the ground, it was not well. I don't know if you have a question on this. But I would like to address the MSRs [Main Supply Roads].

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. I was coming to that. So at the planning stage anyway, you were not involved until, literally, that was already under way. You were kind of a band-aid approach or fix it approach. You were kind of called in.

BG MORTON: I was brought in as kind of a consultant. As a consultant, I was supposed to spend X days there and tell them what was wrong. They didn't need an expert to tell them what was wrong. But it evolved that General Sweeney pulled some strings and got me. Then finally my entire headquarters was there permanently.

MAJ HUNTER: I was going to ask you how was the command in control with your people. Did you maintain admin control over you people or did you have to give them all up to Colonel Konopnicki?

BG MORTON: No. This was again a dicey relationship because I was subordinate to Emil Konopnicki because he had been operating in that area for almost a year. He knew the way of the land and he had been on the initial planning of Da Nang Support Command for this invasion. I was senior to Emil by about a year, I guess. The staff at Da Nang Support Command was trying to figure out some way that I could be declared by direction of the President, subordinate to it, to him. That didn't work. So what finally happened was Art Sweeney said, "Please regard Emil Konopnicki as my man here in Quang Tri and subordinate yourself to him if you would do that." Now this was an ad-hock relationship. It's wrong. Emil and I had words at times. As a matter of fact, we had words frequently. But given the situation, I don't know how else we could have without putting me in charge of the 26th General Support Group, which Art didn't want to do. It would have been a tremendous slap in the face to Konopnicki. So this was another ad-hock band aid approach to the entire problem.

Yes. Emil and I had arguments. We began hauling ammunition into the ASP at Quang Tri at such a rate that his people could not unload the trailers. And pretty soon, we had almost every 15 ton semi trailer in Vietnam in ASP 101. You couldn't bring another one in and I needed the trailers. I mean you'd fly over that in a helicopter and there was every trailer in the far East setting there with 15 tons of ammo on it and more coming in all the time at Da Nang and at Eagle Beach.

MAJ HUNTER: What was Konopnicki's mission to General Support? What was his mission?

BG MORTON: It was to take the tools of war from where ever we got the men at these various ports. It was to take them to Vandergrift, the way station, and to An Khe in support of the U.S. forces, who were in support of ARVN which include transportation, maintenance, supply, administration, the whole bit.

MAJ HUNTER: And your mission was to move it from Vandergrift and these other places.

BG MORTON: No. It was from Da Nang northward all the way to An Khe and Da Nang.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. So you were to move the supplies from Da Nang to the harbor to Konopnicki's General Support Group to this area. Whose job was it to get it from there to the troops in the field?

BG MORTON: They went, for example, from there to Rosenblum's DISCOM at An Kay. That's an example. The 5th RCT had a small DISCOM and 24th Corps had a DISCOM. Everybody had a DISCOM and to a large extent ARVN, especially with ammunition. They used ammunition as if it were going out of style.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. So if I hear you correctly, your job was to get the supplies, primarily class 5 from Da Nang to the DISCOMS. It was the DISCOMS job to get it from there.

BG MORTON: Well not only class 5, we would haul beer. I mean everything.

MAJ HUNTER: Alright sir. That was your mission. On your MSR (route 9), I know in the book here, you mentioned that there was a problem with elephant grass. You wanted to use a Rome plow, I believe.

BG MORTON: That is true. You know that just went through that stuff and buried it.

MAJ HUNTER: It just says you tried to have a Rome plow and a company to level the underbrush to have combat units assigned to sectors along the road to prevent ambushes. It's not an explanation as to why the Engineers were not dispatched.

BG MORTON: Well the explanation was that at that time, we were down to one Rome Plow Company in entire Vietnam war. There had been (I don't know) maybe a dozen the year before, but you know another. I'll have to go back in history. We started by running combat forces into Vietnam and then we brought the Logistics in. Then we reversed that when we evacuated Vietnam. We took out the Logistics first, combat units. It was just one of those things because the Combat Commander said, "Well, I can't operate unless I have 3 brigades, you know. So they got 3 brigades. But meanwhile, in the support commands, all these Quartermaster, POL units, and maintenance battalions were being stood down and sent home. So really the logistical tail was getting weaker and weaker and it couldn't have been much weaker at the invasion of Laos.

MAJ HUNTER: Well it says here also that this highway turns to one lane dirt road from Vandergrift to the Laotian border. Now were you involved with that or was 8 miles an hour your top speed?

BG MORTON: That was really speeding to get up to 8 miles an hour.

MAJ HUNTER: You also had problems with the Vietnamese convoys as well.

BG MORTON: They were terrible. May I address the road because that's the key. The road is the key. And anybody that's interested in motor transportation operations had better always study the road. I mean no matter what kind of equipment you have, if you don't have a road, you're not going to move.

I want to go back and begin history when I was a student at the University of Heidelberg. In Heidelberg in those days, were innumerable Germans, males, as students and also on the faculty, who had had tremendous experience on the Russian Front, Eastern Front as they called it. I sought them out when whenever possible to talk to them of their experiences. Because in those days I felt that it's just a matter of time before we and the Ruskies lock horns. We may be operating. God forbid, we may be operating in the Soviet Union and without exceptions. The Germans, whether they were in Logistics or had been in a combat arm, said we had a lot of problems in the Soviet Union. The cold, initially, was a problem until they got better clothing. Partisans were very difficult. Partisans did a frightful job on the German Army. But the biggest problem that they all had was with the roads. They had these maps of western Soviet Union that showed a big red line. They'd get to this big red line. It was a cow path. It was wide enough for a horse.

I can remember one Armor major telling me he started down this road and they had thrown up the ground. So there was a crown in the road. But the tracks of the Panzers, the MARK IVs, were such that they were below the track, the crown level. The vehicle would belly up on the crown. Pretty soon held have 5 or 6 tanks with the treads spinning. But they weren't going anywhere. The roads were terrible.

In the summertime, they were talcum powder. It evaporated. They simply blew away. When it rained, they were absolutely impassable. It'd take twenty horses to pull a MARK IV out of the morass. In the winter, they froze quickly. If you had a vehicle, whether it was tract or wheel that was stationary on one of these mud morasses, that's all you did with that vehicle for the winter. You just left it there until it thawed out up to the axles in solid ice. So the road was everything.

I have always paid careful attention to the roads, not only abroad, but in the United States because they are the lifeline of any military operation that we will ever have. So we get to the road in Vietnam. The road was primarily QL1, which is the premier highway in Vietnam, at least in South Vietnam.

I understand it was in North Vietnam too. The French built it. QL1 ran the length of the coast right from the Chinese Border all the way down to the Delta following the coast. It was paralleled by a narrow gage railroad that was out of action. There was a stretch between Cam Ranh Bay that ran up through Tui Nhon and Qui Nhon. Maybe once a month, they'd get a train over and then the VC would pull up all the rails up. That was

the only section still going while I was there. The rest of it in some places you couldn't even find where the rail bed had been. So we were primarily constricted to road operations and the whole invasion was a product of what we could get over the road.

So the road ran from Da Nang. It was a fairly good two lane metal macadamized up to Quang Tri and Dong Ha. At Quang Tri, there was an old Marine Corps combat base there. A few miles north of there, there was another Marine combat base, Dong Ha. But they had been semi-unoccupied for about a year. The ARVN had come in and stripped them of many of their facilities to include ripping plumbing and pipes out of the ground. So they had been sort of vandalized. But suddenly, they became major American cities. At Dong Ha, you picked up at the Dong Ha combat base. You picked up QL9 which was a two lane macadamized road running all the way, I guess, about 12 to 15 miles to a place called Ban Me Thout.

There had been a village there before the war. I think the village was Cam Tho. The Marines had that as sort of a forward combat base and they had left a small airstrip there which still had the aluminum planking in place. It was at the start of the invasion. Of course it started to build up. There was nothing there. We simply put barbed wire around it and began hauling things in, bulldozing revetments for the ammunition and for the berms for the huge class 3 bladders.

So the QL9 was an macadamized road. But as you pointed out, no one had done anything at roadside. They had let the jungle grow up including this elephant grass which like bamboo will grow several feet a day during the rainy weather. So in places, driving through a canyon with jungle grass on both sides, it took no skill for an NVA soldier to come up and simply underhanded toss a grenade into a truck and this of course happened. In addition to that, the road, I think, was built by Venille Corporation or maybe it was Pacific Architects and Engineers. It was an American outfit. They'd done a good job on it.

But no one had maintained it after it had been put in. So there were sections that were washed out (culverts that were one lane), very difficult. A lot of work had to be done to restore that. But it ended and it ended at Ban Me 'lhout. At that point, QL9 became a jungle track. It ran for about 40 miles, zigging, zagging, hairpin turns all the way up to the highlands terminating, not at An Khe, but going across over the border and I think all the way to the Mekong River. I never trace it that far. The French built (and interesting enough) in places beyond An Khe they couldn't even find it. one Army Engineer went around with his bayonet poking. Finally he found gravel one day at the border. He said, "Hey, here's the road!" That was the state of maintenance of it.

The worst thing about the stretch from Ban Me Thout to An Khe was, of course, the fact it was one lane and the base was laterite. Now if you mention laterite to an Engineer, they get all excited because laterite is an ideal soil (they tell me) to make your subgrade for a road. It wears extremely well. You put your gravel on top of that, then your concrete or macadam on top of that. You'd have a first class road if you can find laterite. Well if anyone needs laterite, they need only to go to that area of the world because

there it is. When it's dry, it is a very fine red dust. I stress the word red because they tell me it is full of iron.

Now this iron dust and vehicles do not mix because it gets into every moving part and quickly destroys them no matter how soundly it's built. And for the troops along the road who are subject to this rain of red dust, it gets in your eyes, nose, ears. Your food tastes of laterite and the like. And of course at Khe Sanh, it is built on solid laterite. With all these choppers coming in, bumper to bumper, there was always a cloud. You could see that cloud 40 miles away in a helicopter. The cloud must have gone up to six or 7 thousand feet, a red cloud. It looked like someone had detonated an A Bomb over An Khe and this mushroom cloud of red was constantly there. You couldn't miss for navigation because the cloud was always there, and was visible from everywhere. Even out at sea, the Tonkin Gulf, you could see where An Khe was, which is a heck of a distance. But it was that high.

MAJ HUNTER: What's the difference between An Khe and Khe Sanh on the map?

BG MORTON: I'm sorry if I've been saying An Khe is down near Qui Nhon. That is for the 4th Division, Khe Sanh, the old Marine base at Khe Sanh. I was also supporting An Khe for so many, many months where the 4th Division was. Khe Sanh was the scene (almost Dien Bien Phu) that caused Lyndon Baines to panic and send a brigade of the 82nd over there, controversial thing. They sent the wrong brigade. In any event they restored the old Marine Corps Base at Khe Sanh and, but still back to the road.

MAJ HUNTER: Let me ask you. You call it QL9. What's the QL?

BG MORTON: I don't know. I think it's a French term meaning highway or something. I really don't, that's a good question.

MAJ HUNTER: We call it Route 9.

BG MORTON: Or it might be Interstate 9, County Road 9. I think it's French. I'm not a French speaker. I don't know. Maybe it is Vietnamese, who knows. But in any event, the road literally ended at Ban Me Thout. You still had 40 miles to get to Khe Sanh and Lang Vei and the Laotian border, about 50 miles away.

It was one lane. Now the Marines, when they got in there in the late 160s, put in bridges and new culverts. They never paved it. You couldn't very well do that. It was still one lane. But they pulled out, you see, after they broke the siege of An Khe and Khe Sanh. No one ever went back in there to do anything. So about two and a half years had gone by before anyone had done any maintenance there. It ran nowhere.

Now here is an interesting point. When I was Assistant Chief of Staff, Logistics, for Allied Forces Central Europe, we had 7 nations represented in the headquarters. Right across the street from our main gate was a huge mansion which was the French Mission to Allied Forces Central Europe. De Gaulle had kicked that headquarters out of

France. It had been in Fontaine-bleau. France, not being in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] could not be part of our headquarters.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. You mentioned that the French Mission was across the street from the AFCE [Allied Forces Central Europe] headquarters. It had been at Fontainebleau. They were kicked out and they weren't a member of NATO. So they had to be across the street from your headquarters.

BG MORTON: They were across the street. It was always embarrassing what you could release to the French. The French were always fighting for more information and it was embarrassing and awkward. But that's the way De Gaulle wanted it and that's the way it still is. Whether we liked it or not, it was unfortunate. But that's the way it was.

Now the Commander of the French Military Mission to Allied Forces to Central Europe was a Brigadier General of the French Army. As a Lieutenant in the 1940s after World War II, his first command was the patrolling and fighting along QL9 between Ban Me 'Ihout and Khe Sanh. He was, of course, terribly interested in my experiences on that road and I in his.

He stated at the time in 1947, when he first got there, the only purpose of the road beyond Ban Me Thout and Can Tho was to service a very large tea plantation near Khe Sanh. It was a tremendous tea plantation. I guess the trees that we hadn't bombed are still there. I don't know how many thousands of acres it covered. But it was up there in the Highlands. Then there was a little village of lang Vei right on the border that our Special Forces were using as a base camp. He said that to best of his knowledge, no vehicle ever went across into Laos and on to Chipon because the road was so overgrown and that was 1947. It was senseless to operate. In fact, even the VC in those days, the Viet Minh weren't operating there.

So his area of operations ended right there at the Laotian border. But he had many tales to tell about that road. As far as I could tell, it was in the same sorry state in 1971 as it had been in 1947 simply because the tea plantation, due to the war, the French management quit and that was it. There was no need and the jungle took over. Let me tell you. Jungles take over quickly. Sometimes in a matter of a few weeks, you've lost your road. Since it was not a surfaced road, you can imagine what happened to the sub-base of that thing.

MAJ HUNTER: Right.

BG MORTON: So this road, one lane, 40 miles, switchbacks, hairpin turns, was the MSR [Main Supply Road] for an invasion force of U.S. plus 40,000 Vietnamese people. It couldn't hack it. Even if it had been 2 lanes, it would have been very difficult. Then the decision had been made. I mean it was locked in concrete when I was there. ARVN and the U.S. had to share it of course. But ARVN was given the priority for times. They were able to select the times and what was left was the time I could use that road. Well, ARVN took the best times for their inbound movements. Then the road was closed for

an hour. Then you would have your outbound movements, let's say, for 6 hours. So they took the good times. They left the night times and Charlie to the Americans. This was one of the things I set out to change and I had no luck whatsoever. I went to meeting after meeting and complained bitterly. I was very distressed that my higher did not back me up on that. They never came to my rescue.

MAJ HUNTER: Now who was your higher other than Sweeny.

BG MORTON: Well, everybody was my higher.

MAJ HUNTER: Who did you report to? Who was signing your report card? Was it Sweeney or was it somebody back down there in Da Nang? I mean down there in Qui Nhon? I'm trying to keep this command in control situation. I see there is a definite problem.

BG MORTON: I don't think I was rated by anybody during that. If I was, I am not aware of any rating that I got during that period. I really am not. Well, in any event, you had to report to somebody. I think Art Sweeney was. Theoretically, Emil Konopnicki was. But he couldn't write an efficiency report. He was subordinate to me. So it would have been Art Sweeney. But over in 24th Corps, neither the Commander nor his Deputy ever stood up for me. General McCaffery, who is an old bosom buddy of mine from going back to the Korean War, was unable to do anything about it.

Once they had promised ARVN this, ARVN took this as engraved in stone and they weren't about to yield. Konopnicki had tried to get something done. He said, "Go ahead Dick. You can try. I tried. I tried and I think I ran into the same stone wall he did." Once the thing started, no one wanted to rock the boat so that ARVN could say, "Uh huh. If we had the road during daylight hours, we would have swept on Hanoi," or words to that effect. So it was a lost cause by the time I got there.

MAJ HUNTER: Do you have anything else to add to the MSR problem other than the problems with the Vietnamese in the daytime and the horrible road conditions? Is there anything else you want to add to that? I want to ask you another question.

BG MORTON: Yes. There was one other. You might say it was a boondoggle. There was this elaborate project that the Engineer group commanded. It was commanded by a good friend and classmate of mine. The project was to put in the aluminum planking at Khe Sanh which would enable the C-130s to get in there on D+. Well, it never happened. There had been a problem of getting the aluminum planking up there: the weather, enemy action. The thing was about 15 days late. It was the Air Force that said, "Huh, the Army can't do it." There was a tremendous problem back in Saigon on that one.

The thing finally went in and then came in the first C-130 Bladder Bird. They were good. I guess they brought in 10,000 gallons in a trip. I guess the third one that came in, the nose gear broke and this C-130 tore up 1,500 feet of runway. I'm surprised the whole

thing didn't go up in a fireball, but it didn't. But there we had all this work that had been done on the runway under enemy fire coming in, all destroyed in seconds. So we were in areas of class 3 when that happened. We got even further behind after the abortion.

MAJ HUNTER: I want to read a quote to you real quickly, if I can find it. I just says that if my memory is correct, that we were stupendous in supplying. General McCaffery could rightly report with pride, quote, "The support of the operation was one of the major logistical feats of the war. The equivalent of more than four divisions received supplies that traveled from the most part over a single road and into a single airhead."

Now how was this accomplished sir? It was very painstaking I know. But you are saying that the log tail had been pretty much stood down and sent back to the States. It must have been something really heroic and things that were done at company battalion, group level, that probably will never go down in history other than say that it was done well and job well done. But still, tactically, the ARVN lost. Lam Son was, as you said, an abortion.

BG MORTON: Yes. Well, let me address that for a moment. The plan was that they would go to Chipson to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail. What a trail it was. I must give the North Vietnamese credit. The pipelines and the pumping stations were in caves in solid rock. We captured a major who had a section of the pipeline there. It wasn't one line. It was three. They could switch around if something got blown up.

One of the questions put to him was, "Okay. You get in ARC LIGHT (B-52) strikes and you loose about one-half kilometer of pipeline. How long before that pipeline could be put back?" He would say "Less than a day," because they had the Coolies there who would just put it back together. We could not bomb the pumping stations. If we could get a pumping station, it would have been another matter. But they were, as I say, in solid rock.

We took this major. The Air Force took him up in a spotter plane (one of those OB-10s) and he pointed out the location of some of the pumping stations. The B-52 ARCLIGHTs came in and they dropped 750 pounders around there. But I don't think they really stopped much. They were tremendous, great mountains. So it was quite a trail. The North Vietnamese had the logistical advantage there because they had depots enroute in addition. They had farms. You talk about living off the land. They had their farms along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We started with nothing and then built up.

How did we do it? We took people like "Morton" from another support command. I had drivers who were flown in. They had been lifeguards at the pool (well anywhere down south) the special service types (trombonist, flutist, some Army bands). It was a jury rigged proposition. As Emil Konopnicki used to say, "It was a lashup. Anybody that we could get, got behind the wheel of a truck or was given a wrench or a shovel."

MAJ HUNTER: The way the maintenance was with all that red dust getting into those filters.

BG MORTON: Yes. Well that was terrible. We were supper saturated. I think it was the 63rd Maintenance Battalion. I roomed with Colonel Miller at Quang Tri. Colonel Miller simply went under. Well we just brought vehicles in there that I'm surprised if they're not still there. There were so many that were deadlined as the result of this terrible laterite that got in there. It was rough on equipment.

MAJ HUNTER: In your opinion though, sir, would you think that your mission and Konopnickils mission was a success? Have you got these 4 divisions supplied on ARVN or USAR?

BG MORTON: Yes. Logistically by late February, early March, we had caught up. We never really had a surplus of class three. That was a real problem. But I don't think anyone lacked for any other class of supply.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. I saw that in the report. It went through so many thousands and thousands of gallons.

BG MORTON: Yes. This is very interesting to note. The primary target of the NVA Sappers at Ban Me Thout and Khe Sanh was always class 3 because it was always so easy to get incendiary device against a bladder. You had a fireball you could see in Saigon and there went 10,000 gallons. So that was a real problem hauling class 3 and we were hauling class three. You won't believe this. In 1,200 gal water tankers, someone found some water tankers back in a depot, I think, at Cam Ranh Bay and we were hauling it in water tankers. It was very inefficient. But we had to move it.

MAJ HUNTER: Now how would the ARVN resupply if not by helicopter, from the border inward to Chum Phon?

BG MORTON: Well, that was the ARVNs problem. We could not take anything across the border. That was strictly for the boatmen. I think only one U.S. type got himself into Laos. He didn't mean to. I think he was shot down in a helicopter. I think there's a chapter on that or a portion of that in there. So ARVN had to pick this up at An Khe and Long Binh, and do it themselves.

I really believe some General Officer saw this red line on the map just like the German generals had done in World War II in the Soviet Union. He said, "Hey look. There's a major highway. No sweat."

MAJ HUNTER: And you can see the difference. Here's solid red and here it goes to red and white. So you would assume that from here to here is all the same.

BG MORTON: It's the same. You would assume that. But let me tell you, it was not the same. Let's check that miserable place right on the border where the Special Forces had a camp.

MAJ HUNTER: Would it be in the index?

BG MORTON: Yes, Lang Vei. But beyond Lang Vei, the road didn't exist. That's where this soldier and the Engineers were probing and he found gravel. It was the only indication that QL9 went on beyond that point.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. Did Lieutenant Colonel Alvin Ellis take the brunt of everything? Was he the main guy for the 39th Trans and the Pacific Trans? Are they the main guys?

BG MORTON: Yes. Because Al had to run all the convoys between Can Tho (that is Ban Me 'Ihout and Khe Sanh and as I mentioned the one lane road), mostly at night. He had ambushes and we lost, some people as a result of that. Everyone was always on poor old Al. But he ran many of those convoys himself which an O5 didn't need to do. But he wasn't about to sit back. So all the criticism that is leveled at him in Noland's book is unfair. Much of it comes from this guy who was disinfected from the word go.

But there was never a fragging incident there. I tell you. That was a pretty tight group there at Can Tho. They were living in bunkers and holes in the ground. It was all for one and one for all. They stuck together, especially the drivers.

MAJ HUNTER: Right. So they were the ones that primarily took the brunt of getting these supplies from Ban Me Thout and Can Tho down to Khe Sanh.

BG MORTON: Right -

MAJ HUNTER: Now did he report to you or did he report to someone else?

BG MORTON: He reported to me. When they decided that headquarters 8th Group is terminated in Qui Nhon, the Company was flown (small world) by my cousin, who had a C-130 Squadron over there to Quang Tri. I got my staff, and my kitchen, and the Headquarters, Headquarters Company. I was assigned 2 new battalions: the 39th which was ours, and the 57th, Lieutenant Colonel Francois.

So I then had 2 battalions and the 11 companies because by then, I had 2 more companies. I talked my people at USARV into bringing up from Qui Nhon with tremendous repercussions in Qui Nhon. As I say, they had fallen behind. So by taking two more truck companies, it was a disaster. But by then, my loyalties had switched because there I was. But what could I do?

Of course I brought up a lot of gun trucks. We built up almost to a company of gun trucks, 50 task vehicles. You can see those guns. Some of the gun trucks were on the invasion of Laos. They are there at the museum. Eve of Destruction is one of them. Everyone had a name.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. It says that they had a name for them.

BG MORTON: Yes. The gun truck crew would choose the name.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. So now I've established that this battalion reported to you and he had 5 companies subordinate to him, I would assume.

BG MORTON: Oh, I would say AI had parts of 6 because some of these companies, as I say, would organize a platoon of water trailers and fill them with class 3. So it was a hodgepodge. But let's say parts of 6 companies.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. Then we had Frank Francois. What was his mission?

BG MORTON: His mission was everything from Da Nang to Ban Me Thout.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. Now I've got a clear picture.

BG MORTON: So it was divided into two halves. I was in the middle. I would pull from Da Nang and push to Khe Sanh.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. Now it's clearer. Okay sir. We've already touched upon this. A TC [Transportation Corps] General once mentioned that one of the things you learn at West Point was the principles of war. One of the principles is the acronym MOS [Major Operating System] MOUSE.

BG MORTON: I learned the Nine Principles of War and everyone said learn MOSS COMMS [Communications]. Then all you have to do is when it comes to a test, put that down. I could not think of the third. I remember sitting there.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. Well, my question is, as you mention, is U in there and it stands for Unity of Command.

BG MORTON: Oh, have they changed it?

MAJ HUNTER: MOUSE, M-0-U-S-E, U is Unity of Command. Unity of Command in Vietnam is one of the things that was violated to a T, whereas you had Eisenhower as the force in Europe. The British and the French and the Canadians were all subordinate to Eisenhower at SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe]. They called it the Headquarters. You had MacArthur in charge of the Far East whether it be in Korea or the Pacific during World War II. Yet Westmoreland was not superior to the Vietnamese generals. He was equal. He also did not control.

BG MORTON: It's COUMAS [Commander of U.S. Army Military Assistance Command].

We stuck with that for political reasons.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. It's like the Air Force and the Navy. They really didn't report to him either. If you wanted Naval gunfire, etc., they did their thing. So you had the Air Force doing their thing out of Scott Air Force Base or some place, or some place in the States.

So my point is I'm trying to allude to here. It seems there is a disunity of command. The primary example is the road network. On the MSR (on Route 9) what are your feelings? Could that have been resolved, do you think? Would that have helped? I guess that is what I'm thinking.

BG MORTON: Well, we went through this torturous thing to make it a Military Assistance Command rather than the U.S. Army Command. We were Vietnamizing the war. That was the word of the day. Vietnam had to carry on. So we could not put ourselves in a superior position. I don't think we wanted to either. But disunity of command was not the only principal of war that was violated. Surprise was violated, for example. There was no surprise whatsoever. I'm not prepared to discuss this. I imagine we violated all 9, one place or another.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. I see your point. Your point is that definitely that we didn't want to be superior to the Vietnamese.

BG MORTON: No. We did not.

MAJ HUNTER: It wasn't political. Okay. So I keep seeing that as a problem logistically.

BG MORTON: You could not order the Vietnamese to do anything.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. Again, I'm seeing a supply problem from the border forward plus the road in between Khe Sanh. So you really had your hands tied to try to win this battle and it really was two driving forces trying to win this. Let me ask you some other questions about Lam Som. The difficulties that were encountered were many: the road network, the surface as well, the red dust as well as the elephant grass on the side, the NVA to the ARVN wanting the roads in the daylight, and you had to have it at nighttime.

BG MORTON: Oh yes. There is one other I'd like to add at this time. It's the ambushes along the highway between Quang Tri and Ban Me Thout on the paved portion. I think there were just as many there as there were between Ban Me Thout and Khe Sanh. We had a number of U.S. brigades operating in the 5th RCT [Regimental Combat Team]. For example, there was the 101st Airborne that had some brigades. These guys were 25 clicks off the highway headed north to operate against the NVA leaving the highway naked and subject to ambush. So my contention was, "Hey, instead of going way up there to the 17th parallel, why don't you stick around the road?" Oh the combat arms types, "No, no, no. What we are doing 25 clicks from the road has a great bearing on that road." It had no bearing at all. The NVA could just get around that anytime they wanted to send an ambush team down. We were so thin on the ground at 25 clicks from the road that anybody could get through.

MAJ HUNTER: So you are saying then that the command in control, I guess with disunity within the Corps Commander, the Division Commander, how could this problem be corrected? I'm saying the Combat Arms types. I understand that. But you suppose they would all come together as some general staff.

BG MORTON: Yes. But you've got to appreciate the political situation that prevailed. This great wall of secrecy (the lashup) occurred as we discovered we didn't have enough of this and enough that and more things were brought in. It was like a table full of marbles. I guess General Abrams was trying to keep all the marbles on the table. When he tilted the table, some marbles would roll off and then he'd have to correct the other way. I'm surprised all the marbles didn't fall off.

How could it have been avoided? At the start, you could have sat back and said, "Now here's the problem. Here's the mission. Here's what we've got to have to accomplish that mission." I'm a great believer in the 7P formula. Proper prior planning precludes piss poor performance. We didn't have the proper prior planning. So before we even got to square one, the marbles were rolling off the table.

MAJ HUNTER: It seems all the knowledge you learned at Leavenworth or here at The War College (I don't know what goes on at the War College, but I know at Leavenworth all the staffing you do), you learn how to work with the logistics people.

BG MORTON: That's the way it's supposed to be. If it's done that way, it works.

MAJ HUNTER: I'm hearing all these horror stories from you. I'm just thinking that's not what we learned at Fort Leavenworth.

BG MORTON: Yes. Given a perfect world, it always works what you learn at Fort Leavenworth and the War College. But it was not a perfect world in Vietnam in 1971. It was a disastrous world.

MAJ HUNTER: Was there any other problems encountered in supplying ARVN forces? You mentioned supplying. I guess the 39th was supplying Khe Sanh. Who was in Khe Sanh Corps if it was the ARVN's problem? Did we have any other problems?

BG MORTON: I did not get into direct ARVN resupply. But before I got there, there was a tremendous problem that apparently existed. They had been, for 30 days, prior to the invasion, taking ARVN supplies and U.S. vehicles up to Khe Sanh and to Long Binh, and putting it on the ground there. ARVN was requisitioning that from the U.S. I remember General Sweeney was livid in his rage because this ARVN general (I don't remember what division it was, whether it was the Marines or the Airborne) had double dipped. They had taken twice as many rations on 2 occasions that they weren't supposed to. Sweeney told McCaffery, "He double dipped me twice." So we kind of lost control of the issue of supplies once they were in place in the Highlands.

MAJ HUNTER: See, there was a great push. We were robbing Peter to pay Paul. We were taking away from Quang Tri and those other places to get it up there. I guess I need to ask you. This was for lack of a better phrase, a disaster, when it comes to Vietnamization. Do you think logistics had anything to do with it or do you think that we were successful in that arena?

BG MORTON: Oh, I do. I'm not saying that as a self-serving statement. We patched and we lashed up and we banded and we got the job done. The problems that were encountered on the sharp end were, of course, the fact that the plan had been compromised. The NVA were aware of the forth coming invasion and had already taken steps before we even hauled things up to counter it.

The second thing that went so terribly sour (and we did not know this for years later) was that Thuen Ke briefed the South Vietnamese generals and limited them to, I think, 5000 casualties. At that point, they were to knock off the battle. Now we were not aware of that. General Abrams was not aware of that. That was close hold information by the Vietnamese Generals. Now had we known that a casualty number, 3000 or 5000, whatever it was, they were going to terminate and bug out.

I tell you. We would have had a riot on our hands and I mean riot in the American ranks. Here we were doing all this and they had decided that we're not going to take any more casualties than this. Then we are going to bug out and that's exactly what happened. By mid-March, we were abundantly aware of the fact that they were not seizing the objectives on time or intact or anything like that. This great plan to go to Tchepone, cut the Ho Chi Minh trail, and then come back through the A Chau Valley was Charlie's territory. You could see that was coming off the tracks. We did not know why that they were not being addressed. But the fact was each commander in the Vietnamese forces that made the invasion was told that you had a quota of so many casualties. When you hit that thing, stand down, back up.

MAJ HUNTER: But so tactically, it was a failure. But you think on the log side of the house, it was a success.

BG MORTON: On the log side of the house, it was a success. It had one other fairly, well mid-range advantage. We did cut the trail and learn for the first time the magnificent supply routes that the Vietnamese enjoyed going all the way down into Laos, Cambodia, and in the southern part of South Vietnam.

We were really unaware of the elaborate system that they had, truly amazing. This Vietnamese told me later that they stumbled on a river. I guess on the Tchepone River, the Vietnamese had a dam across that. The river bank for about four kilometers under water, from shore to shore, had but 55 gallon drums submerged about two feet under the surface. It was an underwater depot, all loaded with class 3. I mean they had a will.

MAJ HUNTER: So I guess what you are telling me is they were (besides the will) going to win this war.

BG MORTON: There was never any question in their minds. I saw so many bodies not only up in the Khe Sanh, but the Central Highlands west of Qui Nhon where they'd have this Vietnamese thing tattooed on their foreheads, "Born in the North to die in the South." These 18 year old kids that were drafted had that tattooed. They were sort of like the immortals of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. You were talking about how great the Ho Chi Minh Trail was in A Shau, how well supplied they were, and how they had the will to fight and supplies to fight, and that there were people that had, on their forehead, tattooed, "Born in the North to die in the South." That's kind of comparable to Koumeini's suicide truck drivers, so to speak. Do you want to add to that sir?

BG MORTON: Yes. I wanted to just say a word about the Vietnamese in defense of the ARVN. They weren't bad. They had some real fighting units. But you've got to remember that they were compromised. These units walked into a buzz saw. The NVA knew they were coming. They knew the time and they knew the place and they were on their own terrain. A lot of these units performed very well indeed. Others did not perform well. Of course we will never know what they would have been capable of had we not lost the country.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes sir. When you had the difficulties that you encountered with the MSR and the trucks and everything, I was going to ask you how were they handled and how they were solved? But I guess you would say that you raised sand with General Sweeney and General McCaffery to no avail. Was there anything else done to try to work this out between the two, between the ARVN forces and the American forces?

BG MORTON: No. It was not at my level. That could not be done at my level. It could not be done really at the 24th Corps level. This was something that was at the Saigon level. I'm sure that USARV and MACV, for political reasons that were unknown to me at the time, became clear as the years went by. They had to make do with the situation that prevailed. It was not a good situation for us.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. Do you have any TC units that were co-located with the ARVN to help liaison the supplies?

BG MORTON: Speaking only of the U.S. Army truck units there, no. It is just as well because other maintenance units and the like that were co-located with ARVN had the reputation, of course, of sticking all the spare parts. Anything that could be taken off of a vehicle was taken off a vehicle. This happens sometimes on the road. I take a battery out of a moving truck just like they still do in Korea at times. Orientals are pretty good at that. But we had no great firefights with the ARVN as some units did.

MAJ HUNTER: They mentioned in here that some guy heard that they would take your mirrors off your truck if you're not careful. This one guy caught a Vietnamese guy around his truck. He literally beat him. It turned out that it was some Vietnamese General trying to guard a truck so it wouldn't happen. It happened to a major.

BG MORTON: I was passing through Quang Tri in my jeep on QL1. There were a bunch of kids on the side of the road. The next thing I knew my sunglasses were gone. We had a driver who was coming up through Hue, the old imperial city, in a convoy and he had his arm out of the truck. It was a hot day of course. Suddenly this Vietnamese child had his wrist watch. Our driver grabbed his M16 and put about 5 rounds into this

kids shadow. Fortunately, it missed him. We'd had to court martial the driver for that. But it's very difficult getting along with your allies if they are going to steal you blind.

There were a lot of hard feelings with little cases like my sunglasses, a wrist watch, a rear vision mirror of a truck, a battery. Then word gets around, "These ARVNs are not to be trusted."

MAJ HUNTER: They're our allies. That's the problem.

BG MORTON: Who needs enemies if we've got allies like this.

MAJ HUNTER: Let me ask you another question that I read somewhere. I just want to get your feelings on this. I'm doing a parallel in my head here between the Korean War and Vietnam War. One thing that happened in the Korean War is that we had KATUSA. I meant by the KATUSA that we would take an American cadre and we would fill our replacements with Koreans.

BG MORTON: Yes. I'd like to talk to that one if I may. My battalion squadron in those days in the First Cavalry Division in the dark days of the Pusan perimeter was the first American unit to be given KATUSAs [Koreans Assigned to U.S. Army]. We got 22 of them on the first week in August as I recall. In any event, of the 22, only 2 of them had been given marksmanship training. Most of them had never had a rifle in their hands before. They were literally handed a rifle and marched up to our battalion. My company got 10 of them and I was platoon leader at the time. I got six of them that never had spoken a word of English. We tried everything possible the whole time I was there. I became Company Commander after a while. I finally could not condone sending these kids down to be a counterpart of an American in a foxhole because it didn't work.

There was a communication problem. Some of the GIs would not cooperate with the program. They'd show an 18 year old Korean a can of C rations and say this is a jeep. They'd show him a bayonet and say mortar round. That just screwed them up. We had about 4 days after we got our first. This Korean in our platoon was being shown how to clean a rifle because it was raining all the time. He saw Americans holding the M1 rifle up so they could look through the bore. So he held the rifle up and couldn't see anything. So he reached up and pulled the trigger. He was listed as KIA. But it was a frightful accident. Well, it didn't work. I put all mine in a platoon. I called it the Korean Platoon and that was the best way.

Now today, a lot has happened, the KATUSA. He's the pride and joy of the class that's been called up (the eighteen year olds) because the KATUSA must have a high school education before he is assigned. He must be able to speak English. In other words, it's a real plum for a young Korean to be assigned as a KATUSA. In those days, it was like the invasion of Laos. Everything was thrown together and the KATUSA program did not work.

I remember in one attack with my 6 Koreans, only one of them arrived on the hill with me and my platoon. The rest of them had gone the opposite direction. It didn't work, not in those days under those circumstances.

MAJ HUNTER: Well maybe in '50 and '51, but I have read where it did work.

BG MORTON: Oh yes. They began giving these kids basic training at least before they sent them up there. I mean they were sending them up to be as cannon fodder back in Pusan perimeter days.

MAJ HUNTER: I remember a guy saying, "How did you get drafted?" He said, "I went down to mail a letter and then I got surrounded by all these troops. The next thing I knew it was like being shanghied so to speak."

BG MORTON: The invasion of Inchon, which of course was by the Marine Division. But as soon as they had seized Inchon, in came the 7th Division and took the area south of Suwon and Osan. I think close to 40 percent of their spaces were KATUSAs that had been literally taken off the street of Pusan. They were sent to Japan on boats (on LST, loads of them), just shoulder to shoulder. They filled out the 7th Division which had been depleted to build up the other units there.

MAJ HUNTER: Well, I was thinking that by using the KATUSAS, they learned our system. They learned how to fight our way. They learned doctrine so to speak. An argument has been made that we should have done the same in Vietnam. That would be a different acronym of course. We could have taken the Vietnamese. We could have put them in our Army. We could have fought the battle. I'm thinking of it now as '64 to '68 before TET. We could have had them in our system when it came time to Vietnamize the war.

BG MORTON: No. A mistake had been made prior to that which would've precluded what you are saying. It might have been a good idea. The problem with ARVN was that every division, every regiment, the RFPFs [Regional Forces, Popular Forces], the National Police, were all locals. For example, the 44th division that we had there at Qui Nhon were all trained, equipped, organized, conscripted in Vien Dien Province right there. They had their families and everything else. To get them to move to another Province required the President of South Vietnam to issue a direct order. They were responsible for that area and of course the U.S. forces, any of our divisions. They were here. They were there. They were in the Highlands. They were in the Lowlands. So the die had been cast before anyone got that idea.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. I'm just thinking that in the very early stages, in the very beginning.

BG MORTON: Yes. Had we done it at the beginning, we might have done that and with some degree of success.

MAJ HUNTER: But I was just thinking that when we began to Vietnamise the war so to speak, we could have used those guys as our Corps. We could have taken those guys out. Then we could have had an ARVN advisor so to speak with the Vietnamese.

BG MORTON: Yes. Well, when we started doing that, it was too late and we did it in such a small way. For example, a War College classmate had a helicopter or aviation group. They were training Vietnamese helicopter pilots. In many helicopter rides I had in '71, there was a U.S. Warrant Officer in the left front seat and there was a Vietnamese, a little guy. You see him in the right front seat. We started too late with the Vietnamization. It was like 10 years.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. It was just an idea I wanted to explore with you.

BG MORTON: Yes. Well, I'm agreeing with you. If we had done it right off the bat, it probably would have had a modicum success. But starting when we did, it was too late.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. As a retired General Officer, if you give any advice to a Second Lieutenant (duly commissioned like maybe your son if he is a Transporter, but any Transporter, 2nd lieutenant) what could you tell him? Is there any words of wisdom out of Lam Som 719 first off? Then I guess the first thing you are going to mention is the road network, pay attention to the roads.

BG MORTON: You can have the best equipment that the United States Army can buy. If you don't have a decent road to put it on, you've got nothing but problems. The only other piece of advice at that level that I could give is hope that you are blessed with an old sergeant who knows water transportation and maintenance. If you've got one of those, you're in business. You're going on to greatness. If you don't, you're going to struggle.

MAJ HUNTER: Is there anything else you want to add about Lam Som 719, any lessons learned that we could impart to the Corps?

BG MORTON: One springs to mind, there. Incidentally, after the 8th Motor Transport Group stood down at Da Nang, we had a ceremony. All the colors were wrapped. The Sergeant Major and one other man were rotating. They took them back to Fort Lee maybe. I don't know where the colors were from. Was it Eustis?

MAJ HUNTER: Now they are at Eustis. They go to Washington to the Institute of Heraldry.

BG MORTON: Is that where they go? Well they came back to the United States and the Sergeant Major is proudly taking them out. I forget the exact day in April that was. General Sweeney asked me before I went to take this job in the log in USARV at Long Binh. Please stay there in Da Nang and use his outer office to do it to write "Lessons Learned," a critique of the thing and I wrote. I spent more than 2 days at it, I think, three or four days of getting it ready. It was a many page thing which I thought would be

preserved. Now I pulled no punches. I called them as I saw them. If something would sour, I said, "Here's what went wrong and what should be done." It was a classified secret of course. Marty doesn't have it. Now he's got the 24th Corps After Action Report. But he does not have my After Action Report. I think what I wrote was so inflammatory that it burned fingers. It was put in the burn bag somewhere and Ollie North shredded it. I really don't know. But a number of things spread out.

We truckers got into the assignment of radio frequencies after the Combat Arms took theirs. We were assigned the high end of the spectrum. Of course the higher you go on the spectrum, the less range you have. My convoys were spread out over 40 miles and it was difficult especially in mountainous terrain there and around the Khe Sanh area to communicate. That was a terrible thing. I remember writing in all caps, "ONLY THE LOWER PART OF THE SPECTRUM SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO UNITS THAT ARE SPREAD AS WIDE AS THESE MOTOR TRANSPORT COMPANIES." It's just one of the things.

MAJ HUNTER: You couldn't ask for the Command Control. Now we call it C-3 [Command, Control, Communications]. You do have a common problem between the two battalions I guess.

BG MORTON: From Convoy Commander to the last truck in the convoy was sometimes a problem. You've got to remember that this is mountainous terrain. Once you leave Ban Me Thout, you're going up into the Highlands, the Jungle Highlands.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. So you had a communications problem. Are there any other "Lessons Learned" that pop out in your mind that hit the burn bag.

BG MORTON: Yes. That's general support maintenance. We're into three classes of maintenance now, I believe. There's the Unit Maintenance and then there's the Direct Support. Yes. Well, it was the Direct Support Maintenance, maintenance that cannot be performed by the Motor Transport Company. You've got to have adequate backup when I think back to the Colonel Miller and his 63rd Maintenance Battalion. This guy was just overwhelmed. It would have taken 2 battalions under ordinary circumstances. Due to the environment and laterite and enemy action, it really had taken about 4 maintenance battalions to handle the overload that we imposed on them. Now whether your drivers are performing the best maintenance possible at the company level or not, you still have to have some backup support. If you don't have that and the vehicle goes and it's been sitting there in a shed or out in the open for 30 days, you have lost a task vehicle. You only have 60 to begin with. You never really have 60. So it's just one after the other. You lose them for 30 days and it's a hopeless situation.

We finally got, I think, 100. General [Major General Walter] Woolwine was able to get through to our depot at Okinawa. He got us 100 rebuilt five ton tractors which arrived without batteries. They had to be pulled off the LSTS. But they were a godsend. But the point was, we shouldn't have had to do that. They, in turn, went into this laterite and wound up at Colonel Miller's 63rd Maintenance Battalion, a sad situation.

MAJ HUNTER: So your maintenance was a problem and, "commo" was a problem. Is there anything else?

BG MORTON: Oh, everything was a problem.

MAJ HUNTER: Well, I know the whole thing was a bandaid approach. But I'm trying to think what else, "Lessons Learned," that we could discuss. I guess to me, as an outsider looking at this, and I'm combat arms and I'm looking at this. It is in the planning stage and having a Transporter or Logistician right there in the very beginning?

BG MORTON: You've got to in your proper prior planning, which precludes a lousy performance, have people engaged in that planning process, who through their experience and or training (preferably their experience) are able to spot potential problems in advance and say "Hey look. If we do this, then we can't do that." Now this was not done, especially at the lowest levels where people could say, "Hey, on these frequencies, I won't be able to communicate." No one had said that. This road is one way 12 hours a day. Well, it's not even 12 hours a day yet. You lost an hour for the transition. The jeeps had to go up and down. It would seem, as everyone cleared off the road, they couldn't communicate with the base stations.

MAJ HUNTER: One of your principles of war, but always before you could be in operation, you do a RECON [Readiness Condition], at least a map RECON, if not an actual RECON. It's obvious that nobody here at this level had done any RECON at that level.

BG MORTON: No. In the interest of surprise and security and all those good things, it was not done.

MAJ HUNTER: Yet, they were so compromised.

BG MORTON: It was a map reconnaissance. But as you just pointed out, it looks like a real fine road going up to the Central Highlands.

MAJ HUNTER: It sure does. You can't even tell.

BG MORTON: I had some pictures of that hog trail. I can't find them. But let me tell one amusing story, permit an old soldier a war story. I was aware of this. But I didn't know it had happened. One morning I received a frantic call from Da Nang Support Command. I was at Quang Tri at the time. It was from a major. He was really trying to do me a favor. He said, "Colonel, you have a 15 ton trailer which is down for maintenance and it's for lack of labor. He said, "General Sweeney will not countenance anything down for lack of labor." I mean that is SOP in the Da Nang Support Command. Well, it had been the SOP when Sweeney had the Quin Nhon Support Command, too. I hadn't seen the report and I said, "Major, I'll be back to you. Let me check." So I got Al Ellis on the phone and asked whose trailer it was. Al said, "Yes sir, it's true. That trailer is in a valley 150 feet straight down from a hairpin turn where it went over the edge. We just don't

have the labor to even fetch it back in the road and bring it in for you. Furthermore, there's a fire fight going on there right now. So I told General Sweeney this and he laughed. He said, "Well, there are exceptions to every rule." So if you can't get at the thing, I guess, it's lack of labor. Of course I could have said it was for lack of parts like we don't even have the main part to work on.

MAJ HUNTER: Sir, you left Lam Som now, left Vietnam. I guess that after Lam Som, did you go back to Qui Nhon or did you go back to Quang Tri? How did you stand down? The whole thing kind of fell apart.

BG MORTON: By the 4th of April, we were retrograding. We were hauling more out. By the first of April, we were hauling more out of Khe Sanh and Vandergrift than we were bring in. By the 4th of April, about 90 per cent of our movements were east and south bound. On the 5th of April, I left in disgust. I had put in for a two week leave. There was a new program you could take, a mid tour leave. I had already booked with Trans World Airlines or some airline. In fact I was on the first flight of this brand new airline, all the way back to JFK.

MAJ HUNTER: I was thinking of Honolulu or someplace.

BG MORTON: Oh no. We even went to Anchorage. Then Chicago was the next stop and then New York. My wife met me in New York. Oh, it was very reasonable. I think it was \$400.00 to go all the way and it was a reserved seat. Yes. It was very reasonable because this airline wanted to crank up the business. What was the name of that? It had something to do with Green Tail. It was Trans America Corporation. They got out of the business after they lost a billion.

So anyhow, I had told General Sweeney already in early March, "Sir, if you don't mind and possibly spare it, I've already booked. Of course by the first of April, Sweeney realized that, as we all did. There would be no invasion of the An My or A Shau Valley. ARVN was packing it in and we were retrograding. So he said, "Sure."

I went down to Tan Sun Nhut and Saigon and flew out of there. I spent 2 weeks, came back, and got back with my new job as Assistant Chief of Staff of Logistics at USARV. I came out on the list for Brigadier General. About 6 weeks later, I was assigned to Allied Forces, Central Europe. I had the same job, Assistant Chief of Staff, Logistics.

MAJ HUNTER: I can't think of the name of the barracks. Was it Thompkins Barracks in or near Heidelberg?

BG MORTON: Oh no. It's in the Netherlands. The Allies first introduced it as Brunsen in the Netherlands, about as far south in the Netherlands as you can get. See, De Gaulle gave all those headquarters SHAPE, which was at Versailles and Allied Forces, Central Europe which was in Fountainebleu, something like one week to get off sacred French soil. Talking to the old timers who had made the transit there, they had classified containers sitting in the marketplace of Brunsen with tamps on them and MPs guarding

them. They had no place to put them. The Dutch government permitted the headquarters to go there because South Limburg province is like Harlan County Kentucky. It was a distressed area and they welcomed the business. The houses were empty, very nice.

MAJ HUNTER: So then you were in Holland. then from there you went to either called MTS or MTMC.

BG MORTON: Yes. Whatever you want to call it.

MAJ HUNTER: Bayonne is that where it is located?

BG MORTON: It is now. In those days, it was at the old Brooklyn Army Terminal which was built in World War I and it was falling apart. The Army tried for 10 years to move it over to Bayonne. But politics and the Union just fought tenaciously to keep Brooklyn. Meanwhile the terminal was collapsing. The postal service had most of the terminal.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes. That's what I heard. What I was going to ask you was in your career, it seemed you were really termed a fast riser. I think it didn't hurt to have the Silver Star or the Purple Hearts or anything else. It didn't hurt your performance.

BG MORTON: Well, see I got ahead of my peer group by going to Korea. At least my West Point classmates went to Europe. So I got almost a year's jump on them being promoted to First Lieutenant. Then I made a secondary zone promotion to Major while I was teaching at West Point. Certainly I was zoned to make Brigadier General.

MAJ HUNTER: Exactly, that's what I was thinking. I'm not very familiar as to how general officers get promoted and why. How does one know by the time they make BG? I'm sure you already have your 20 years in. As a factor of age, I know you can't be over a certain age.

BG MORTON: There's an exception to everything that you're going to say and I've seen them all.

MAJ HUNTER: I'm just thinking. How does a General know it's time to retire or to hang in there for two star. I can think of a certain General who made his one star and he was sent out to pasture at Fort Lewis. All his peers got promoted when he got promoted. They made their second star within a year or two. Here he was five years later and he's still a one star and he kept in there. He was a real hard charger and he's got his second star now. I'm just wondering. How does a general decide to retire? Why did you stop at one star and not go for three if you had any choice at all?

BG MORTON: It depends on the individual, his wife, his family, his assignments, his goals, ambitions. It's very difficult to say. You cannot say that this guy is going to get a star, and I know him and he's going to work, and he's going to get a second. Meanwhile, his wife hates it. His family is anti-military. He gets a good job offer. I've seen them all.

MAJ HUNTER: I was going to ask you. Did you think that you were a second star on the horizon and you decided you just didn't want it?

BG MORTON: I wouldn't have taken it. I wanted out.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay. That's what I was looking for. I was trying to find out if you were nominated for a second star and you turned it down or what you decided. I'll put my 20 in and it's time to get out.

BG MORTON: I had three wars, three purple hearts. For most of the honors and awards you can get, where did I have to go? It was the DA staff.

MAJ HUNTER: You were happy here at Carlisle. So do you want to add to this?

BG MORTON: Yes.

MAJ HUNTER: Go ahead sir.

BG MORTON: I'd like to give you four lessons learned.

MAJ HUNTER: Is this out of your career?

BG MORTON: War.

MAJ HUNTER: Of war. Oh, yes sir.

BG MORTON: The Army War College library right over there is filled with books that have been written mostly by military, some civilians since the end of the hostilities in Vietnam, and they're all really phrased in the context of "Lessons Learned." And some of those, a lot of people have made a lot of money doing this. I have read many of those books. I still have my library pass. I can go into the classified and read this. I am appalled, really, because I only learned 4 lessons in Vietnam and I didn't learn them in Vietnam. I learned them in Korea. I really learned them in Vietnam. Generally there were only 4 and I'd like to pass them on to you for whatever they are worth.

MAJ HUNTER: Please do.

BG MORTON: The first one is limited wars are fought by people with limited minds. Now we went into Korea and finally decided we don't want to win. So we settled for a tie. I don't know if we even got a tie out of that because all we got is an armistice. As long as Kim No Son lives, we've got a problem. Kim No Sung's successor is his son who is equally fanatical. I see grave troubles ahead, perhaps in 1988, in the Olympics, because Kim No Sung fancies himself as the ruler of all the 50 million Korean people and bills himself that way. He just can't sit still and watch the Olympics go on in Seoul. He will not be able to do that.

MAJ HUNTER: Do you realize, sir, that they've acquiesced now there?

BG MORTON: Oh, they'll give a few preliminary archery rounds.

MAJ HUNTER: Pretend the events are going to take place in North Korea.

BG MORTON: Yes. But that's not going to satisfy old Kim. But anyhow, what did we do in Korea? We fought this limited war. We killed 55,000 Americans doing it and about a million and a half other people, mostly civilians. We, in my opinion, didn't even get a draw on that one. It was a limited war in Vietnam. We killed 58,000 of our own people; many of them after truce talks had begun.

Why do we do these things? When I was on the faculty, we'd have the faculty here at the Army War College. We'd have all these people come up, the senior people in Washington: the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Service Secretaries, and the like. All the students and faculty asked the question? Why are we doing this limited war? Why don't we go into Hanoi and end it? We are building bridges. We are building bridges to Poland. We are building bridges to Hungary. We are building bridges to China. But we're killing a thousand Americans a week building these bridges was my contention. Limited wars are fought by people with limited minds.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. What about number 2.

BG MORTON: Number 2 is MacArthur said it best, "There is no substitute for victory." Leo DeRocher said it second best, "What you've got to do is get your score on that board higher than the other team's and the next day, nobody asks you how." This is true. I mean we committed (and I'm certainly not defending) atrocities. But we were victorious and we committed atrocities in that war that were probably graver than My Lai. But at the end of the war, we won. And no one asked you how or why. You know I'm not defending atrocities. But by golly, if you are going to make a commitment and risk the lives of young Americans, you've got to go for victory. And if you don't get victory, you've gotten feeble.

Third thing is strategic air bombardment. It helps, but it does not have the impact that we are led to believe. I remember most of my high school classmates were drafted as Infantry rifle replacements. We wound up in Italy. They were told by the 15th Air Force that they probably won't have to fire a shot because the 15th Air Force is going to put a strangle hold the Northern part of Italy. Nothing is going to get through to Kesselring [Albert, Ger. Field Marshall] and his Army group in Italy. Well, the 15th Air Force raked over Northern Italy for a year and a half. We didn't even move forward. I mean everything got mucked.

Meanwhile, the 8th Air Force was doing this strategic daylight bombardment of the continent itself, Germany. The casualties those guys had in the B24s and the B17s was just incredible on some of those raids. They said, "We will bring Germany to its knees." After the war in 1947, the strategic bombardment survey was completed. They found

that Nazi Germany between February '42 and February 1945 had increased production of war materials 444 percent in spite of the daylight bombardment by the 8th Air Force and the night bombardment by the RAF. All my classmates who went in the Air Force I always throw this stuff at them. Your Air Force did nothing in the war against Nazi Germany. They would point out, "Well, if it hadn't been done, maybe production would have increased 800 percent or maybe a 1000 percent." They might have a point there.

But what I'm trying to say is that strategic bombardment did not win in Italy. It did not win on the continent. Then came Korea. The 5th Air Force was going to put this strangle hold over the narrow waste north of Peking. Well, all they left is about two million Chinese and the equipment to come through their strangle hold.

Then in the war in Vietnam, we had the arc light strikes on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. I mean we could feel that a 100 miles away, an arc light. Sometimes we were fortunate. I remember an invasion of Laos. One day we were briefed by a Colonel Holmberg, 5th Air Force. They had just (whether it was good luck or good fortune or they really had the sensors right) an arc light

strike that hit a regiment, an NVA Regiment moving up. ARVN went in the next day and there were 4 survivors out of over a thousand bodies. That was a good hit. But that was an example.

MAJ HUNTER: Can you tell the reader, that will be reading this, what an arc light is?

BG MORTON: Oh yes. An arc light is a strike of three B-52s. I don't know how many hundred bombs each one of them carried, depending on the size and weight of the bomb of course. They would strike from such an altitude that the NVA could neither see nor hear the aircraft. Their first inkling that they were under an arc light strike was the jungles simply erupted in a fiery inferno.

MAJ HUNTER: I've heard the same story. I knew the guy that was in Vietnam and he told me in the morning his coffee cup literally danced across the entire table. He had to catch his cup before it was spilled. He found that the bombing was going on 75 miles or something or even further.

BG MORTON: Yes. Well, as you recall the siege at Khe Sanh in '68, we sort of got concerned about that. We had arc light strikes all around Khe Sanh. In '71 when we re-occupied Khe Sanh, the bomb patterns were all there. These 750 pound bombs exploding in laterite dug craters that were about 50 feet across and 30 feet deep. They were about one third to one half filled with fresh water. That was a fortunate thing. The troops would bathe and swim in miserable, dusty conditions there. They shook the earth.

In reading and talking to NVA people, two things they feared most were our Phoenix Program (which almost wiped them out and very controversial) and arc lights on the Ho

Chi Minh Trail. Now fortunately, many of our arc lights blew up jungle. But those that did hit a depot or a regiment moving down, very bad.

I recently read a diary of an NVA battalion commander that was captured. He left North Vietnam with 400 men. Each day something bad happened. He had one man that was bitten by a cobra and he died. Another one was eaten by a tiger that was not the Air Force's responsibility. Then came an arc light strike and it didn't hit them. But they were in a valley. It hit the mountain and the landslide killed about 65 of his people. He wound up in Cambodia in the Parrot's Peak with something like 52 of his original 400 people. So that's an argument for strategic bombardment I suppose. But it doesn't stop it. You see he still got through with enough people to be somewhat effective. So that's three of them.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes sir. What's the fourth one?

BG MORTON: The American Army, in my opinion, is trained, equipped, organized, and motivated if they are up to strength, properly trained, have the weapons that TO&E (Table of Organization and Equipment) calls for, and are assigned to the sectors which are called for in the doctrine. The American Army is unstoppable on the offense.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes sir.

BG MORTON: I mean one guy gets up and it goes the whole way. It is the same way on defense if they are up to strength (two up, one back, hot meal, all the weapons and equipment). You can't get through. Now if there is an exception to that, you've got a problem. I saw that in Korea. As soon as somebody got behind us, it was bad.

In other words, I'm trying to say an American does best if he's got Americans on his right, Americans on his left, Americans behind him, and everybody beyond that line is dangerous. He's an enemy. You could shoot at him. We didn't have that in Korea to some extent. In Vietnam, we never had that and that caused more unpleasantness than you can imagine.

I bring that up because I'm the Logistics Consultant to this Airland Battle thing. I see difficult times ahead because in the Airland Doctrine, we are going to be separated. You don't know who's out there. Is it friend or foe? It's going to be confusion. I think we have not addressed what could happen in the Airland Battle because of the traditions of the American Army. I hope we can correct some of the things.

MAJ HUNTER: Getting back on the COMMZ, you're prone to a nuclear strike.

BG MORTON: Oh, I'm deeply into Spetznaz (special operations). I've been watching the formation of these Soviet Spetznaz brigades. They are doubling every year because the Soviets are well aware of the difficulties of American Forces when someone gets behind them. The battle of the Bulge is a good example. I had some high school classmates there. You know the Germans landed their Spetznaz (Sonder Kommando)

outfit. They changed street signs, the road markers, the headquarters signs, and cut wires. It was absolute confusion. We didn't know what was going on and they were behind us before we knew it.

Of course, we were awfully thin on the ground with the Battle of the Bulge. One division was occupying a hundred miles of frontage. So I think the temperament of the American soldier is such that there are good guys on his right, good guys on his left, good guys behind him.

MAJ HUNTER: He could focus his energy on a certain thing.

BG MORTON: Yes. There was the enemy out front. But if you don't have that, the American is confused. It's not the private soldier who's confused either. It goes all the way up to the top. What do we do? Is he a good guy or is he a bad guy? You lose your fighting strength.

MAJ HUNTER: I think also it's like you don't have the support of the people. I think when the Americans came in France and Belgium the people were the liberators so to speak. You had a lot of support from the indigenous population. But you had a situation in Vietnam where your sunglasses were being stolen, your watch was being stolen, and you're being taken, or you feel like you're being used. Again it's going to be a morale problem. It's going to be hard for the soldier and he doesn't know where the enemy is (VCs). I hate those words "Dink and Gook." How can you talk to your ARVN? You've got an ARVN major here and you're calling him "Dink."

BG MORTON: And he might be a graduate of West Point. Yes. It's a sorry situation. But you've got to remember in this Vietnamese thing, in 1954 when the Republic of South Vietnam was born, there was no government in South Vietnam. There was a government in North Vietnam. There was no government in South Vietnam. For 10 years, they fiddled about trying to get one. It's all these conflicting organizations that you're loggerheads with: the dog died, the crow crowed, the Buddhist, and the Catholics. They were always squabbling and they never did put their act together up to the bitter end of April '75. They were still squabbling. I don't know.

MAJ HUNTER: At least I've got to say one thing. At least you didn't have the atrocities that took place in Cambodia with Pol Pot.

BG MORTON: Oh, Pol Pot is a fine chap. I think he's still alive. I understand he's gone to China.

MAJ HUNTER: But still I mean you can see it was a Vietnam to the Vietnamese, that we were the outsider in that country. You can kind of see Ho Chi Minh maybe as the George Washington of the Vietnamese. You can see that parallel. But you can see that all Ho Chi Minh wanted to do was just unite his country and make Vietnam for the Vietnamese as Mao Tse-tung did for China throughout all the foreigners.

BG MORTON: We would have had no objection to that except Ho Chi Minh was a Communist.

MAJ HUNTER: It's been said that the reason he was a Communist was because he first came to America for aid because we had supported him during World War II.

BG MORTON: Yes. We were very friendly with him during World War II.

MAJ HUNTER: He lived in America in fact. The problem was we turned our backs on him in deference to France and NATO. Where's he going to go for arms to fight the French? So here we are supporting the French. So he became a Communist.

BG MORTON: Yes, pulling the French chestnuts out of the fire.

MAJ HUNTER: Yes sir. So I think at least he may have had his re-education chance. But at least he didn't do like Pol Pot did, just go ahead and liquidate everybody. Well, sir, we've covered your four points. We've covered Lam Som. We've covered your career so as far as the schooling and Korea. We've covered advice to a young TC lieutenant that he had better hope he gets a good motor sergeant, or platoon sergeant, and take care of his maintenance.

BG MORTON: Yes. Let the Sergeant do it and you will go on to glory. That's what Sergeants are for.

MAJ HUNTER: I think that's the problem I had as a Lieutenant. We had this problem in Vietnam. We had this shake and bake. The guy that came made E-6 in a matter a couple of years. You had the Captains that made Captain in two years. So you had inexperienced motor sergeants and inexperienced company commanders. So it's difficult to have the leadership and experience that you needed so you could rely on your motor sergeant. Sometimes they were almost as young as you were. That was a problem that is not a problem today. I think they slowed the promotion system down somewhat.

BG MORTON: Oh yes. Well, many of our policies during the Vietnamese War were simply policies that were in existence then one year in the country and you were gone. It's amazing how the Vietnamese sort of resented that. They were there for life. They'd see their counterpart. They'd come and 11 months later, they'd be gone back to the world. They resented that.

MAJ HUNTER: My uncle made a comment one time. He was a World War II veteran and he said, "You know when I went over to fight in the war, we fought in both campaigns, the European Campaign and the Pacific Campaign." He said, "You know when I was over there, I was over there until the war was over." If we sent some of those Americans over there and told them they were going to stay over there until the war was over, I bet that war would be over real quick if they knew they couldn't come home. That would definitely motivate somebody.

BG MORTON: Yes. I've thought about that too. The British started in '39. I've run into many Brits who were in Palestine '39 when the war broke out and it was 6 years before they got home. Some of them wound up at the end of the war in Burma, some of them in Northwest Europe. I don't know. You think our nation's youth would stand for 6 years of war without seeing home. I think we are too spoiled.

MAJ HUNTER: If you read All Quiet on the Western Front, the guy in the end had been there. They say he was an old man. He went there when he just got out of high school. By the time he'd been there six years, he looked like an old man. He'd been in that combat with all that stress for all that time frame. It said in this book here the guys were really there in '66 and '67. We were hot to trot, ready to kick butt, take names, carry the war into Hanoi, finish this thing up, and be home by January 1 of '68. They figured it was going to be at least at top end, a two year war.

BG MORTON: It was the same in Korea. We were going in there, we are going to show the flag, send this task force in there, show the flag, and it will all be over. Well, it's still on.

MAJ HUNTER: Well sir, I need to bring this to a conclusion. I want to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule and coming in here to the War College. For me, it's been quite an experience to see this place.

BG MORTON: Well you are not in the War College. You are at the Military History Institute. This was the War College when I was a student. The building was just being constructed.

MAJ HUNTER: I'm trying to think. Do you feel that your career in the military was well served by being a Transporter or do you sometimes wish you had stayed in Infantry or something. The Transportation Corps is a strong Corps and now it's very small.

BG MORTON: It's almost out of business from what I hear.

MAJ HUNTER: But any event, I think my father was Transportation. I know they've got some good officers in there. I think they've got a very strong specialty that is sometimes overlooked by the Combat Arms type.

BG MORTON: Oh yes. You've got to remember the Combat Arms type is like a catcher in a baseball game. He's squatting behind the plate, doing his job. When he needs something, he goes like this. The Umpire slaps a ball into his hands and he throws it to the Pitcher. Now if the Catcher ever puts his hand back and no ball arrives in his hand, he gets up and he stomps around and starts screaming at the Umpire. That's the position of the Technical Services as opposed to the Combat Arms. Combat Arms expects it.

But I'll tell you. The sorry thing I observed during all my tours was the gulf that exists between Combat Arms and Technical Service types. Now I was both. So I lived in both

worlds and the animosity that existed. I was also with the Canadians for 2 years and they've got the same problem. The Combat Arms looks down on the Services and the Services don't understand why. They never seem to get their act together that they've got to pull together or they've got nothing. We still have not arrived at that point in the American Army. That's why this Airline Battle disturbs me greatly because you've got to have all for one and one for all, pulling together as a team if we are going to pull that off.

MAJ HUNTER: But how do you see the future of the Transportation Corps?

BG MORTON: I don't know. It seems to me, at least for motor transport, we've got to have it. In some parts of the world, we're going to have to train, equip and organize the Corps. I'm not sure about the railroad end of it. I was never sure what we were doing in the railroading business at Fort Eustis. I know we sent a lot of railroaders over to Vietnam. They didn't have any railroad except the one spur to Korea and they were all RTOs [Rail Transportation Officers]. Every little village had an RTO. I often wondered what they did. I never learned it in the Basic Course and the Advanced Course. But there were a lot of them. So what does that really leave.

It leaves motor transport and ports, the over-the-beach concept dead. It is a very inefficient means of moving supplies and equipment. Incidentally, we never did in our discussion here get into the port problems, Da Nang, the Eagle Beach Ramp, and the Dong Ha Ramp. We were hurting for ports. If you read the 24th Division After Action Report, they were more concerned about port throughput than they were about motor transport.

MAJ HUNTER: You mentioned in the beginning there that had a logistician like with Westmoreland doing the same thing. You don't have the ports up there. You don't have the road network up there. You mentioned the ports were a problem. I just assumed that by the ports, you said that you had it coming to Da Nang and from Da Nang. You had it moved forward. So you used that port.

BG MORTON: The ocean shipping could use Da Nang. But they couldn't use anything else. So you had to break-bulk at Da Nang and then send it up by LST or U Boat to the Eagle Beach Ramp which could take 2 LSTs or to Dong Ha which couldn't take LSTs even. It had to go U Boat. So hauling stuff that length on the roads from Da Nang northward was inefficient. But we had to use a combination of ramps and convoys from Da Nang.

MAJ HUNTER: Well, back to the future of the Transportation Corps.

BG MORTON: I've been out for 13 years. I don't think I'm qualified to comment.

MAJ HUNTER: Okay sir. Well, sir, on behalf of General Elam, the current Regimental Commander of the Transportation Regiment and the Commander of the Transportation Center, I want to thank you for making yourself available for a second time to be interviewed for our Oral History Program. It's been a pleasure.

BG MORTON: My pleasure.