

RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

of

FREDERICK VOORHEES, Brigadier General

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 29 October 1904, Knoxville, Tennessee

YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE: Over 20 years

DATE OF RETIREMENT: 31 December 1959

MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

The Infantry School, Weapons Course
The Infantry School, Air Transportability Course
The Command and General Staff College
The Army War College

EDUCATIONAL DEGREES:

George Washington University – BA Degree – English Literature

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF DUTY ASSIGNMENTS (Last 10 years)

<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>
Mar 46	Jun 47	Instr, Armed Forces Staff College
Jul 47	Sep 50	Corps Trans Officer, V Corps
Aug 51	Apr 53	A/DCSLOG, DA- Pentagon
Apr 53	May 54	CO, Hpt Rds POE
Jun 54	Sep 55	CO, 7728 th TTU, Newfoundland
Oct 55	Jul 56	Commandant, US Trans School
Jul 56	Sep 56	CG, Arctic Group
Sep 56	May 57	Commandant, US Trans School
Aug 57	Nov 58	Army Trans Officer, 8 th Army Korea
Nov 58	Dec 59	A/Chief of Trans, DA-Pentagon

PROMOTION

DATES OF APPOINTMENT

2LT	13 Nov	25
1LT	9 Apr	30
CPT	15 Jun	34
MAJ	27 Mar	40
LTC	22 Jun	42
COL	30 Dec	44
BG	1 Aug	55

MEDALS AND AWARDS

Legion of Merit w/Oak Leaf Cluster
Bronze Star Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster and Navy Gold Star
Army Commendation Medal

SOURCE OF COMMISSION CMTC (Citizens Military Training Corps)

-

INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

Interview with **Brigadier General (Ret) Frederick T. Voorhees**

Brigadier General (Ret) Frederick T. Voorhees was interviewed at Fort Eustis, Virginia, on 8 May 1985 by CPT Bruce Wilhelm. **BG VOORHEES** entered active service in 1940.

BG VOORHEES served as Beachmaster for the 14th Corps during the occupation of Guadalcanal. He was responsible for the off-loading of all ships and clearance of the beaches and he discussed in detail the problems encountered in operating the clearance activity in Guadalcanal, New Georgia, and Bougainville. At Guadalcanal, facilities and equipment were nonexistent. **BG VOORHEES** described the supply, transportation, and personnel problems encountered as well as enemy action that affected clearance.

New Georgia provided **BG VOORHEES** with better port facilities, off-loading equipment, and little enemy action. He discussed the improvements made here over the operation at Guadalcanal, and compared the ship clearance operation of Bougainville to both Guadalcanal and New Georgia.

The effects of malaria, lack of replacement parts, and utilization of untrained personnel are all pointed out during the interview.

Lessons to be learned include: the benefits to be gained from one unified command in joint operations; the need to consider the condition of the ports to be worked at destination; and the importance of having adequate facilities for troop support, to include medical, rations, and billets/hygiene.

This is an interview being conducted with Brigadier General Frederick T. Voorhees, United States Army (Retired) on 8 May 1985 at the United States Army Transportation School, Ft. Eustis, VA 23604. Interviewing officer is CPT Bruce A. Wilhelm.

BG VOORHEES: I backed into the port business down there. I had an infantry battalion in the 25th Division at Schofield at Pearl Harbor. But before I went into the Army, I had been in the National Guard that was called out and then I got out of my outfit and got into a Regular Army outfit. I had also, in my civilian life, been in the stevedoring business quite a bit. When we loaded out for Guadalcanal, knowing that we would have to go ashore over the beach, I was able to influence the loading of my battalion so that we got out fast and without any trouble. It was much better than any other battalion in the division. Most of them [battalions] were on separate ships and, as a result of that, my general made me the beach master for the division. Then our division got out better than everybody else. There were four or five other divisions there - some Marines and some Army. Eventually it got to the notice of the Corps Commander and I became the beach master of the 14th Corps. I got a regiment of corps troops, for the colonel who was to be the beach master had gotten sick and was evacuated.

CPT WILHELM: So then you're saying, sir, that basically you were put in charge of port operations based upon your civilian experience prior to being activated in 1940.

BG VOORHEES: That's right. I ran all the port operations at Guadalcanal, over about 40 miles. We had about five different unloading points that started with the one at Lunga and Tenaru where the Marines had gone in, and then expanding down to Kolu Point and the Matanikau River up the other direction and Balesuna River down beyond Koli.

CPT WILHELM: Sir I have some questions and they're based somewhat on major marine terminal type operations. What I want to do is know how you actually employed these particular type operations or how they affected your operations in Guadalcanal. What I'd like to lead off with is prior to your departure from New Caledonia with the Americal Division.

BG VOORHEES: We never were down there. We went directly into Guadalcanal from Hawaii.

CPT WILHELM: From Hawaii. How well was your regiment trained and was it prepared to assume port responsibilities upon your arrival at Guadalcanal?

BG VOORHEES: We didn't have anybody assuming port responsibilities. We had to depend on troop labor drafted from the front lines and the fighting troops. We had no port troops whatever, didn't have any for months. In fact, not until after Guadalcanal was over, or nearly over, did we get any port troops at all.

CPT WILHELM: So you didn't have what they now know today as a Terminal Service Company or Terminal Transfer Company?

BG VOORHEES: We didn't have any of those troops or any of the equipment.

CPT WILHELM: What major problems did you encounter from an operational standpoint when you relieved the Navy and Marines at Guadalcanal?

BG VOORHEES: Well, we relieved the First Marine Division and took over the area where they had been fighting. All of our people went up there and I had quite a few trucks in my battalion. They went to work in clearing the port. Then I became beach master of the 14th Corps and assumed command of the 101st Quartermaster Regiment, which had two truck battalions and one supply battalion. Half of the trucks they had were on the deadline from running around in the mud and no maintenance since they had been there. I also took over all the island dumps.

We had two basic problems. First, there were no roads and what trails we had were belly button deep in mud. It was the rainy season; it was raining a great deal. Before I got there, there had been a big problem in coordination between the Navy and the Army. The Navy had what few boats there were, which were mostly pontoon barges with motor units on the back.

We had to use troop labor entirely. At one time, we got so far behind on our convoys that I had to set up a field mess on the beach capable of feeding about 2,000 men. We would send what trucks we had up to the front lines, right after the morning stand, to where they were prepared to repel a banzai attack. All the people that had been working all night on the front line went down to the beach where we gave them a good breakfast and they worked them to the limit all day. Then we fed them a little supper and sent them back to work all night again. It was a different crew each day. The Corps GI had a rotation system of which unit would send down the men. We received fresh men everyday to work. Some would be taken out to the ships and some would be working on the barges, and some unloading barges ashore.

In spite of unskilled labor in the ships and inadequate number of barges, we were able to haul stuff and pile it on the beach faster than the beach could be cleared. That soon

became an awful problem because we had these mountains of freight and packages of all kinds, all break-bulk. The roads were so bad and the trucks were so scarce that we couldn't haul it away fast enough. We didn't have anybody that knew anything about the supply system or sorting one thing and another. The dumps eventually became very congested and nobody knew what was in them. Often we had an unusual package that wasn't handy to handle. For instance, once the Navy brought in half a dozen pedestal mounted 6-inch guns they wanted to mount here and there to defend the shore in case we got an attack by sea. Well, those things weighted twelve or fifteen tons apiece and we had no cranes, no heavy lift gear. Finally at some point the barge one was turned over when they put it out with the ship's heavy lift gear. We got the rest of them ashore and then we couldn't get them off the barge very conveniently. I had to rig snatch blocks on the coconut trees and put the biggest 'cats' we had in the Engineer outfit heaving on the leads to get them off of the barge and onto some equipment that could haul it to where they planned to emplace it.

CPT WILHELM: My next question is, did the Navy or Marines develop the harbor or port to any degree when you first went into Guadalcanal?

BG VOORHEES: No, we had a smooth, sandy beach with a gently shoaling bottom. There were no piers, no roads actually down to the beach and the ships had to anchor over half a mile out when they came loaded in order to get any water. We had the barge between the ship and the shore. The Navy Boat Pool, run by Navy Base Lunga, operated the boat pool. They had fifteen or twenty pontoon barges with twelve pontoons per barge, mostly. Some of them had twenty. They had eight or ten LCM6s [Landing Craft, Mechanized, MKVI] and a few LCVPs [Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel] that weren't very good for freight. They had men in the boat pool to operate these craft and that was done under the supervision of the boat pool officer who was on duty on the beach all the time. He was supposed to instruct the coxswain on what to do. We were not supposed to mess with giving orders to Navy personnel, but we frequently did, but on a basis due to a great rapport with the boat pool commander. I moved into the same tent with him and we got together and agreed on what we were going to do the next day. We accorded each other the right to instruct our people in our absence since we both had to move up and down the various beach areas where we were working. If his people sent for him to come up in a hurry and explain something, I always said that he was not available right then. I would come if it were an emergency. He did the same if my people hollered for me. So we kept the management off our backs pretty well there for several months.

CPT WILHELM: As far as the chain of command was concerned, was he responsible to you or were you responsible to him?

BG VOORHEES: No, nobody was responsible to anybody. I worked for the 14th Corps and he worked for the Naval Base Lunga.

CPT WILHELM: So there wasn't any unity of command as far as one person being in charge of the actual port operations?

BG VOORHEES: No, and it was a big problem before I went there. But after I saw what the problem was, when I got this responsibility to furnish the people and trucks and some of the expertise to do the unloading, the problem was lessened. Commander [FNU] Holtzman, who was running the boat pool at that time, came ashore as the navigator for Commodore Reifschneider's Task Force, who made the first landing with the Marines. They then put him ashore with the boats off of the task force to start the boat pool. We got along fine, still do, and we did with the best we could with what we had. Half his boats were in the shop at any one time and half of my trucks were in the shop at any one time. Neither of us had any spare parts available nor the mechanics did the best they could with nothing. Then the dumps behind the beach kept getting higher and higher because we didn't have the means to clear them. This applied to every category. We had oil drums stacked as high as you could stack them with gasoline inside and we had all this around clear patches in the jungle full of bombs. We'd get whole shiploads of bombs and put them in the truck and drive them out there, drop the tailgate, and make a quick start and let the bombs roll out and clunk against each other, staying where they set on the ground. Then the aviation people would come, pick them up later, and put them in the planes. Initially, when they got Henderson Field big enough to fly B-17s off of, they got some bombs up there. Up to that point we had no gasoline trucks, no pumps. In fact it was even before the days of the oil drums. Everybody would have to go down sometimes and help top off a B-17 with 3000 or so gallons of gas out of 5 gallon Gerry cans. They'd have a trough and everybody was up there pouring gas and it was running down going in the funnel into the airplanes. It's a wonder they didn't burn a lot of them up.

CPT WILHELM: That is interesting. Sir, how did enemy actions affect your port operations, either enemy air, naval fleet activity, or even ground actions?

BG VOORHEES: We couldn't have any operations at night. The Japs had air superiority every night after sundown. We didn't have night fighters in those days; it was before the days of Radar. They would come in and we had anti-aircraft units there with searchlights and they'd get the bombers in the lights but they were flying too high for the ammunition to get up there. They'd shoot like hell and things would all burst under the bombers. We were just freewheeling every night. When I signed out of my battalion to go over to the regiment, I'd been on the island about 3 months, and I looked in my unit diary and we had been bombed 89 times. In order to avoid losing ships, they sailed at sundown and went into a deep gulch in Purvis Bay over on Florida Island where they couldn't be bombed very well and spent the night and came back in the morning. We didn't work at night. We tried to rest up and get ready to feed the thundering herd that we got from the front lines in the morning so that they could work all day.

CPT WILHELM: How about naval fleet activity?

BG VOORHEES: Oh, there was quite a bit of it. Thirty-one Knot Arleigh Burke and his Little Beaver destroyer outfit were fighting every night around there - several islands, Columbangara Strait, and various places around. Sometimes at night the Tokyo

Express, composed of up to 8-inch cruisers, would come down and shell us good and thoroughly and we dived in the foxhole and hoped for the best.

CPT WILHELM: Did you ever receive word directly from the coast watcher units located further north?

BG VOORHEES: Oh, indeed. The G-2 people got word from them all the time until they got captured, shot, or something.

CPT WILHELM: But, that word would get down to you?

BG VOORHEES: Oh, yes. We knew when they were coming. That wasn't the problem. The problem was what to do about it after they got there.

CPT WILHELM: This may be somewhat redundant, but you weren't then afforded any opportunity to perform any type of, say, a ground or water reconnaissance prior to your arrival at Guadalcanal in the port areas, to actually set up an operation the way you would want to?

BG VOORHEES: No. There was a makeshift operation left over from the Marines and a new Americal Division personnel who came up from New Caledonia. Some of them got there just before we did and they had laid out some dump areas to put the groceries and things like that in. They had a couple of towers on the beach where they could survey what was going on and give some instructions. I just took that over and we learned all there was to know about the terrain and waterfront after we got there. During that time we were still working the Guadalcanal beaches pretty heavily and are units were coming in to go forward. We did build some finger pier type jetties which landing craft, LCUs [Landing Craft, Utility] (we finally got about a dozen LCUs) could come against these things and you could run trucks out there and unload them. In fact, we finally got one that LSTs [Landing Ship, Tank] could come up to, but it had to be built out quite a few yards in order to get the water that would even hold an LST.

CPT WILHELM: Who actually performed the construction of those finger piers?

BG VOORHEES: We had two Seabee Heavy Construction Battalions. They had a lot of big cats and a few cranes and a bunch of bulldozers and graders. They did most of it. They also worked on the roads and eventually got them fairly good. They built some bridges over the rivers so we could get over them without fording.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, you touched on the weather a little bit, but what effects did the weather play on port operations; i.e., the wind, fog, rain, and temperature?

BG VOORHEES: Well, it was hot. The temperature at Guadalcanal wasn't too bad. It was much worse at Bougainville and New Georgia. But the temperature and the humidity would be up to 90 or so at Guadalcanal. At times we'd have torrential rain, lots of lightning and sometimes [wind], though there wasn't enough wind to bother the beach

much. But it was enough so that one time I saw as many as seven water spouts out in the roadstead off the beach.

CPT WILHELM: Can you elaborate on waterspouts?

BG VOORHEES: It's a tornado over the water where the water just sucks up into a column and travels at a slow speed, usually. If you run into it with a boat you might be in trouble, but I didn't.

CPT WILHELM: You did touch on the fact that there weren't any actual road networks that existed in the area.

BG VOORHEES: No. They tried to build one main road parallel to the beach and inland a little ways to go from one end of our division area to another. There were a lot of swamps and jungle around there and the various unit camps were not always very close together. They finally built a road that would connect those, which we could haul over, and some fingers off of it heading off into the bushes where the fighting was going on. In general, the transportation was very bad. One time a typhoon came near by and it rained an inch an hour for 24 hours. The rivers all got big and washed out all the bridges. Then we were back to zero again.

CPT WILHELM: What were the type vessels, whether they be the U.S. Navy, U.S. Flag, etc., from which you primarily discharged cargo?

BG VOORHEES: Well, rest of our supply ships eventually were Merchant Marine, mostly Liberty ships, some C1s, and occasionally a C2. Then, various Navy supply ships came up. We had dry bulk supplies mostly and no refrigerator. We were living out of cans: mashed and dried potatoes, powdered eggs. The supply system was unbelievable. It was run from Washington apparently. When we went south, [Major] General [J. Lawton] Collins called me in and asked me if I wanted to leave all of my trucks and get new ones. He said he had a piece of paper saying the convoy was nine good-sized ships. They were going to pick them and us up and would have a 120-day supply of all classes and, if you wanted, a full suit of new vehicles that you can assemble when you get there, all boxed vehicles. He said, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I don't want any part of box vehicles. I don't have mechanical competence or the tool competence to put them together in a hurry and we may need them immediately. My trucks work. I want to take them." And so he said, "No new trucks!" There was room in the ships to put the trucks on top of the groceries, ammunition, and other stuff. When we got it unloaded (we sweated blood doing that), I was horrified to find what we had. We didn't know until we got it out and looked at it. Their 120-day supply of all classes included a full set of heavy tentage for the division with a tent stove for every tent. There were tons of scrap iron there rusting out. We never erected a one of them. We had a couple of thousand tons of flour in bags. We were supposed to make bread on field ranges at night when they weren't cooking meals. The Japs had air superiority at night and were bombing every night and we couldn't have any fires so we didn't make any bread. We piled all the flour up in a big pile and covered it with tarp. Eventually, it got

damp and moldy and caught fire by spontaneous combustion and burned up. This happened in the night. I got a call from the general: "Get up there and put out that fire!"

"General," I said, "Have you seen it? Why don't you kindly put it out?"

CPT WILHELM: Was that General Collins?

BG VOORHEES: Yes.

CPT WILHELM: Since you mentioned that most of your vessel discharging was done 'in the stream', so to speak, a half mile out in an anchorage, what were the 'in the stream' conditions and did they hamper operations at all?

BG VOORHEES: No, not really. The thing that hampered us was the ship not being there as many hours a day as we would prefer. The winds were enough sometimes so that barges and small craft couldn't maneuver as well as they might. But mostly we could do it. There were very few storms and the trade winds were pretty mild. In fact, we could have stood a little more breeze.

CPT WILHELM: So, as far as the importance of lighterage, it did play a very major role?

BG VOORHEES: Well, we were short of lighterage. We didn't have enough power on it and it was mostly too unstable. It was really ticklish considering the nature of the freight we were unloading and we got most of the vehicle ashore in the tank lighterage. Most of the other stuff came on the pontoon barges. There was no big problem on the weather.

CPT WILHELM: What was your opinion of the qualification of those crews that operated the pontoon barges?

BG VOORHEES: Well, they were all just sailors, mostly seaman seconds. The ships that sent them ashore to work there volunteered them, and you know, they didn't send their best people.

CPT WILHELM: How about the pontoon barges themselves? Were they well maintained?

BG VOORHEES: Well, they sent in a few shiploads of pontoons and the Navy Seabees welded them together and put the bars on them and one thing and another and the power units and painted them. That's the only maintenance. They rusted out in due course.

CPT WILHELM: Then lighterage control was actually affected by naval personnel?

BG VOORHEES: Yes, it was with consultations with the beach master. They tried to be accommodating, did the best they could considering what they had to work with. The hauling and beach clearance was my problem. I did the best I could with what trucks I

could get running. As far as the paperwork on the supplies, there wasn't any. We had all of this stuff that was supposed to last 120 days until our supply system could be established. Then we were supposed to requisition further supplies. Well, we didn't have anybody to do that either and it was difficult to figure what we might need with the changing war situation. It was just "by guess and by gosh" really. It was amazing that we did as well as we did.

CPT WILHELM: Are you saying that your actual port area almost became a depot holding area for supplies?

BG VOORHEES: Well, no. We didn't have any acreage. We had to haul it back in the jungle and put it in a clear spot some place and pile it up and hope that somebody would get to it sooner or later. But that was always a problem. We never knew what was in the dumps. We'd have to go and hunt to see if there was something we could use in there.

CPT WILHELM: What were some of the problems, sir, that you encountered with the delivery of the break-bulk cargo either upon the discharge from the major transport vessel, onto the lighterage, material handling equipment or even upon delivery to the requesting unit? I know you alluded to the fact you had basically no delivery system.

BG VOORHEES: Well, there was practically no delivery to our requesting units. It was virtually impossible. They'd get the stuff out of the ship onto the barge, into the lighter, into the LCU, or whatever, and haul it ashore. We'd hit the beach and we would drag it off of there. Eventually we got a couple of small cranes and they would throw this stuff into a pile on a net sling, hoist it up, swing the crane and trip the corners and dump it up on top of the pile. We had pyramids of supplies of all shapes and sizes. Nobody knew what the labels were on any of it and nobody knew what was in the boxes. Then trucks would come in and they'd load them and haul them over and dump them willy-nilly in the dump someplace.

CPT WILHELM: So, you had no Class I, Class II type yard?

BG VOORHEES: Well, the groceries we tried to send to a ration dump. The other stuff we sent to some other dump. The bombs we'd just dump them out in the field. Gasoline drums, when they started coming in, eventually we'd get whole shiploads of nothing but gasoline drums and we'd pile those up all over the place. Eventually the island was buried in empty drums.

CPT WILHELM: Prior to a ship's arrival, did you receive the equivalent of a cargo manifest or a stow plan?

BG VOORHEES: We usually had only the sketchiest notion of what might be in a convoy. We'd get a notice that there would be a convoy in three or four days and they'd come up with escorts, and destroyers or something and anchor. We would go out to the ship and talk to the captain and try to find out what he had. Some ships were

straight loads of rations; others were straight load of other kinds of supplies. Some were straight loads of oil drums, gasoline and some practically straight loads of ammunition. Usually, we'd get the manifest all right, but the ships were desperate to get away from there. They were afraid of getting either bombed or- torpedoed and some did. They were so anxious to get away that we didn't have time to check anything and we didn't have anybody qualified to do it either. We just piled it up and tried to use it. The ships left as fast as we could do it. A Liberty ship would usually take about 25 days to unload, going away at night and coming back in the morning. We used to have a yardstick - from the time you see the top of the rudder, you could finish unloading it in a week.

CPT WILHELM: So then your basic problem with most of the ships' captains was the fact that they didn't want to remain in the vicinity?

BG VOORHEES: They were scared to death. They used to come back in the morning. They had a contract, apparently, that the crews got \$125.00 every time they went to a different port in the South Pacific and another \$125.00 every time they were bombed. I'd come out and see the captain in the morning and he'd say, "Will you sign the log?" I'd say, "What for?" He'd say, "Well, we were bombed last night." I'd say "We were, you weren't. You were over in Pervis Bay, 25 miles away over on Florida Island. We were bombed, you weren't." I wouldn't sign it. They'd get very disgruntled about that.

CPT WILHELM: According to the way doctrine is today, you would normally go to a ship's captain with a discharge plan on how you planned to unload his ship. Did that exist back then?

BG VOORHEES: I couldn't even make a plan on how to unload it until I found what he had and what kind of boats that I had to have and how many people. I made the plan on the spot usually. But I had unloaded hundreds of ships at one time or another and I could do that without any delay usually.

CPT WILHELM: How many ships, sir, could you discharge simultaneously under ideal conditions?

BG VOORHEES: When we first went in there at Lunga, we would usually get five or six. Later, three months later and after the Japs were pretty well taken care of, then we had gotten several other divisions. One time we had five divisions on the island, each one in a different area. They each had an unloading beach so I had to have a different operation and borrow people from their units to work those beaches. At that time, well, we eventually got up to 15 or maybe 17 or 18 ships at a time, one place or another, over a 35 mile stretch of the north shore at Guadalcanal.

CPT WILHELM: Now were you actually discharging everyone of those ships or were some of those ships waiting?

BG VOORHEES: Well, they'd all be working until they got down to where some of them - you know #2 in a Liberty ship is a terrific warehouse, and usually it runs a few days

longer than the other holds. Eventually we'd get down to dribbles and drabs on the long hatches. We had our trouble with it. It was most frustrating at times.

CPT WILHELM: How about as far as backlogs were concerned, sir? What was the maximum number of ships awaiting to discharge due to unavailability of lighterage?

BG VOORHEES: We didn't send them up there until we could work because they didn't want to risk the ship. They kept them down at Espiritu Sancto or Noumea or some place else and they sent them up only as we could handle it. Sometimes we had 50 some ships backed up and we gradually worked it out.

CPT WILHELM: What type of cargo security measures did you employ to protect the cargo once it arrived?

BG VOORHEES: We just dumped it out in the field. We didn't have any security measures. There were troop units all around there and we mostly didn't bother to put a guard on it.

CPT WILHELM: As we know it today, doctrine-wise, with the throughput (and that's from the time it reaches the beach) and trying to deliver supplies, to the user level as best as possible, did this type of distribution even exist? I know you have somewhat alluded that it did not exist.

BG VOORHEES: The kind we have now, no. They did start putting emergency requisitions in for things, but then when you couldn't find it, why they'd put in another one and that was part of the problem too. We had quite a lot of duplication of shipments eventually and some of the things they sent were absolutely stupid. I know in my 120-day supply of stuff, besides the heavy tentage, which we didn't really need, and the tent stoves, which we had no use for, among other things, I got a carload of vinegar one time in gallon jugs. We didn't have any use for that either. We could trade the bottles though, if we have a screw cap on it, with the natives for some bananas or something once in a while. We got 7500 pairs of wool ski pants one time that we didn't have any use for. They got several thousand pairs of left shoes one time. I don't know where the right ones went.

CPT WILHELM: When a unit needed supplies, how did they go about getting those supplies?

BG VOORHEES: Try to find it in the dump.

CPT WILHELM: They had to come basically to the area where the dumps were located?

BG VOORHEES: We never had the means to deliver anything. You'd send a truck over to a dump and look around and see what you could find. We'd get the manifest off the ship and we had some clerks that would try to make a guess if we had something like

that in the dump or not. There was not a supermarket. You couldn't go and pick things off the shelf because we didn't know where anything was.

CPT WILHELM: Did you control that at all? Were units free to go to those dump areas if they needed something and just pick it up?

BG VOORHEES: No, they were supposed to go through the proper channels to get it. But then you'd have to go over there and see if you could find it. The materiel situation improved when we went up the line. Eventually, the troops started going forward and I went first to Fussell Island that didn't turn out to be much of a big deal. The Japs had got scared and left before the Marine outfit got there. Then we went to New Georgia. We had a pretty big operation there, but it was far more complicated because the ships couldn't get anywhere near the place. We had to have our main unloading on smaller outside islands and then taken by boat, mostly LCUs, over to New Georgia proper - over in Munda where the big operation was. We had a lot of boat trouble there because there was so much outcropping coral all over the place. Boat maintenance was the biggest problem.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, how would you comment on communications systems available to you for ship-to-shore type operations? Did you have communications systems or did you actually have to go out and visit the ship?

BG VOORHEES: Both. We had flags, signal flags - the Navy signalmen. We didn't do radio communication much with them. We didn't have walkie-talkies and stuff like that.

CPT WILHELM: How did word get down to say the division there at Guadalcanal, from you, that those high priority requisitions had arrived and were ready for pickup?

BG VOORHEES: Well, there wasn't much of that. We didn't actually know what the unit considered their high priority stuff. They'd come and start heckling when they thought it ought to be about due. I saw the chaplain one time. He came down pretty near every day to see if some sacramental wine was on the convoy. The Chief of Chaplains had written him a letter and said that he had sent him a case. And he'd come down and ask, "Where is it, where is it?" I'd say, "Well, I'll look out for it very carefully and when I get it, you'll get your cut."

CPT WILHELM: I guess everybody had to take care of each other. Sir, the lessons learned due to the problems you encountered at Guadalcanal, were those resolved in future operations, say in New Georgia and Bougainville?

BG VOORHEES: To some extent, in New Georgia. We had a really good port operation in New Georgia, but I had nine separate unloading places, mostly on different islands. I had to spend a lot of time commuting in a fast boat and there we could work at night because by then the Japanese air superiority had disappeared. We could work whenever we could. I used to order the ships up (I had a little more control in New Georgia) only when I knew I was going to go to work the minute they dropped the

anchor. At that time, the Chiefs of Transportation used to put out a paper every month on worldwide port efficiency and among the things they considered were: net unloading time and gross unloading time, as well as tons per day. I would order the ship up when I knew I could work and if it was something that could be unloaded very fast, like gasoline drums or ammunition, I would be set to jump on it the minute the anchor went down. We unloaded a C3 full of oil drums, for instance, in 2-1/2 days. We improvised some gang cluster hooks on spreader bars so we could handle 16 drums at a time both in the ship and the shore. We had a few more cranes than on shore too.

CPT WILHELM: So, then during discharge operations at New Georgia, did the major ships or vessels have to depart in the evening like they did in Guadalcanal?

BG VOORHEES: No, they didn't have to. The Japs didn't have enough airplanes left to come down and bother us much.

CPT WILHELM: Then basically by the time that you had arrived at New Georgia, the "slot" and the Tokyo Express were basically nonexistent.

BG VOORHEES: Well, there was no more Tokyo Express either. But I made the landing in New Georgia and started the thing right from scratch. We had the much better system and no Japanese ships could come in and shoot at us and very seldom planes would come at night. We were launching hundreds of bombing strikes out of Munda airstrip further up to get them choked off and they couldn't do a thing at Bougainville except they had a big group over on the north side of Bougainville. They came down over a high mountain and got up on a hill right behind us with some 120mm guns, but they had to carry the ammunition piggyback practically for forty miles to get to it. They used to shoot in the beach and in the water where the ships were a few times a week, a few shots a day, but they never could shoot more than 10 to 15 shots in any one day. We didn't worry about it too much.

CPT WILHELM: And you're saying that's the hill that overlooked Empress Augusta Bay and Mount Bagana?

BG VOORHEES: Yes, Mount Bagana which was smoking sulphurous smoke and the ground was shaking quite a bit and later the whole top blew off right after we left, a year or so after.

CPT WILHELM: You had mentioned the coral reefs there right at Munda Point and in the New Georgia area. What would you say the distance was from shore that the ships had to anchor?

BG VOORHEES: Well, they had to anchor over on outside islands, like over by the island of Sasavielle or Rendova or some place and then we would have to get it ashore and then haul it from there through a torturous channel through the coral reefs over to Munda. Eventually, we got enough channels so the LSTs could come directly into Munda from the ship.

CPT WILHELM: Was the Navy again providing the LCM [Landing Craft, Mechanized] or the LCU [Landing Craft, Utility] pilotage?

BG VOORHEES: Well, we got a few Army LCUs. Before I left Guadalcanal, I got the first battalion of DUKWs - amphibious vehicles - that were shipped overseas, the First Amphibious Truck Battalion. They went with us to Bougainville. I didn't have them in New Georgia. I wore them out - they weren't worth a darn after I got through with them. We did have that, but the Navy had the LCUs and the LCMS, mostly 6's and some LCVPs [Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel] and we still had pontoon barges too.

CPT WILHELM: Now, did you control the operations more so at New Georgia than at Guadalcanal?

BG VOORHEES: Oh, yes, I definitely had a little bit better rapport with the high level tactical management there. I ran all the ports in the New Georgia group. Also, since I had quite a few years in the infantry, I had been an infantry battalion commander. I was the Provisional Commander of all the technical service troops in New Georgia in case we had to repel an attack on the ports.

CPT WILHELM: That's a lot of responsibility, sir.

BG VOORHEES: Oh, yes. Before I left Guadalcanal, we got some graduates of the first OCS [Officer Candidate School] class the Transportation Corps had at Camp Plauche, Louisiana. Most of them were people from all walks of life, little if any transportation experience, no port experience, no stevedoring experience. They'd recognize a ship if they saw it, but that was about all.

CPT WILHELM: So, at New Georgia, did you have a unified command? Did the Navy have to answer to you as far as lighterage control, the way you wanted to off-load vessels, etc?

BG VOORHEES: No, I decided how I wanted to off-load the vessels and the fellow who had control of the boats was on another island named Koli Koli just off Munda where they had a boat repair shop. He would support the offload operation. They were always very cooperative. I got along fine with the Navy always.

CPT WILHELM: Did you have any improvements, sir, at all, with your material handling equipment or trucks at New Georgia?

BG VOORHEES: Well, we got a few forklifts up there in New Georgia. We didn't have any at Guadalcanal. We got some forklifts. We had more cranes and we had more trucks, too.

CPT WILHELM: How were the road networks at New Georgia?

BG VOORHEES: Initially, none. We built the roads as we went along and had to expand our camping areas and dump areas.

CPT WILHELM: Were the ports developed to any degree prior to your arrival there at New Georgia?

BG VOORHEES: We went in on the original landing. There was nothing before we got there. A lot of jobs.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, what effects did malaria have on operations there?

BG VOORHEES: It was a disaster. Everybody got malaria. We had to build the port unloading area at New Georgia and Munda. We built quite a large size thing. The Engineers hauled in a lot of live coral and busted it up and we rolled it out and had a big paved hardstand, big enough so we could work quite a lot of landing craft at the same time. The temperature was much worse. It was real hot. It used to get up to 137 degrees maybe in the afternoon in the working area and I had to devise a whole new concept of how to get work out of these people. I had some troops by then, too. I had one black regiment, an infantry regiment; I had three or four port battalions that the Army sent out, mostly black; and I had one Navy Seabee Special Battalion - Stevedore - which was the best outfit I had. They were all professional stevedores before the war, apparently, and the commander had been an owner of a good size stevedoring business in San Pedro. He understood the business thoroughly, so I had more professional competence. The temperature was a killer. It was so hot that anybody that worked all day in the sun, he'd go to bed and he probably couldn't sleep as it was still hot at night and very humid. So in order to give everyone an even shake on night work and night sleep, I changed from the traditional 12 hour shift, morning and evening with some time off to eat. I changed to 6 hours and 12 hours off. But the 6 hours was net work. They had to eat before they came to work and they didn't eat again until after they left. They worked like heck for 6 hours, then the new shift would come on for 6 hours. So every two days then they all got the same amount of night sleep. My tonnage went up quite substantially.

CPT WILHELM: What type of medical supplies were available to combat the malaria?

BG VOORHEES: Well, we had field hospitals. If you got malaria, the Navy would give you quinine pills. The Army would make you go to the hospital and take the cure. But they were in tents, hotter than heck, and the chow was terrible. So after I came down pretty bad with malaria at New Georgia - I had taken a lot of atabrine at Guadalcanal and I didn't have it - but then I went to New Zealand on R&R [Rest and Relaxation] and there it was winter, cold, and I didn't take any atabrine and I came down bad with malaria on the way back. The Army wouldn't do anything but turn you into the hospital and I couldn't spare myself from work. The Navy Seabee battalion had a doctor and he gave quart bottles of quinine capsules. So I took 40 grains of quinine a day most of the time at New Georgia and all of the time at Bougainville. I was walking a little high and my ears were ringing but I was able to do it.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, how much time at New Georgia and even at Bougainville, did you allocate on a daily basis for equipment maintenance - for your bigger trucks and forklifts?

BG VOORHEES: We tried to maintain. Every shift we tried to oil and grease the cranes, bulldozers, forklifts, and such stuff. We tried to do regular maintenance on the trucks, but that was very hard to do because we had to work long hours. If they failed, we tried to fix it, but we were always in a big shortage of spare parts.

CPT WILHELM: Can you describe your offload or dump area at New Georgia compared to Guadalcanal? Was it more organized?

BG VOORHEES: Oh, yes, very much more. First, at Guadalcanal, there was either sand or mud usually and we didn't have any good working area. In New Georgia, there's a big, flat piece of land up there with a coral base and the Engineers bulldozed that off into a big flat area about the size of a football field and spread live coral all over the top, then soaked it and rolled it. We had some road rollers up there and we had a good working area at New Georgia except for the heat and humidity. Usually in the afternoon we'd have a terrific thundershower and it would rain 5 or 6 inches in 30 minutes and then it would go.

CPT WILHELM: So then, at New Georgia, in your dump area, you were able to better separate the supplies by class?

BG VOORHEES: Oh, yes, much better. The Service Command had acquired some technical supply people in Ordnance and Signal, Quartermaster and one thing and another. It was much better.

CPT WILHELM: So, would you attribute that then, sir, to having better trained personnel plus initiating the operation from the beginning as an Army operation versus going in after the Navy and Marines like you did at Guadalcanal?

BG VOORHEES: I think that had a good deal to do with it, yes. But they still didn't learn anything as far as our basic lesson that we got about the difficulty of keeping track of the stuff initially. The same thing happened in Thule years later, (and they should have all known better) when I inherited that port business in NEAC [Northeast Air Command]. We had an area down below the airfield about the size of a football field with row after row of boxes stacked up that had come in on automatic resupply, initial supply, and in response to emergency requisitions all thrown in the pile. It had been under the snow for a winter or two and the labels were gone from the boxes and people were still making emergency requisitions and they didn't have any idea what they had down there on the field. I was supposed to straighten the thing out. So I pleaded with the management in the Army for a hundred non-coms who were experts in some kind of supply, on loan for a year, and they went up there and opened up all these boxes and identified what was inside and wrote up excess property slips on it and asked for

disposition. We eventually got rid of it but it took this hundred experts about a year to do so.

CPT WILHELM: So then you're saying that the audit trail on documentation, knowing what had actually been discharged, was still a problem?

BG VOORHEES: Well, there was no trail, knowing what was actually discharged. If it was in the ship, we discharged it and we didn't know that it was that was in it and cared less.

CPT WILHELM: How about backload operations? Did you perform any of those?

BG VOORHEES: Yes, we had, initially, to send all the artillery brass back, the shell casings. That was valuable. And we sent shiploads of artillery brass. As the Japs said, we were not good jungle fighters. We shot the jungle down. We used a tremendous amount of artillery ammunition and we sent the brass back and then every now and then, they'd say they needed old tires for refurbishing or something. I sent shiploads of old tires back and once in a while a shipload of old oil drums, but not often enough.

CPT WILHELM: So were these vessels actually fully loaded or just partially loaded when you would backhaul on them?

BG VOORHEES: Sometimes a freighter would be unloading and we'd clear a short hatch. We might fill that one up with artillery brass or tires. Once the ship was unloaded, it left and we did what we could before that time.

CPT WILHELM: So at Guadalcanal or even Bougainville, did you use the same 6 hours-on, 12-hours-off type shift for your personnel?

BG VOORHEES: No, I hadn't invented that system at Guadalcanal and we could only work in the daytime on account of the Japs in the air at night. But in New Georgia, we could work at night, so I had to invent the system. I used the same thing at Bougainville.

CPT WILHELM: Going back to Guadalcanal, sir, you said you would get your next day's work force from the front lines. When did they actually come to your port?

BG VOORHEES: We had to send trucks after them. They didn't have any transportation. We'd send trucks up in the morning. Daylight usually came at 5:30 or 6:00 and we'd send the trucks up. If the Japs were going to attack in daylight, they did usually just before daylight and they frequently did it. Right after daylight, (say half an hour or an hour) they weren't going to attack if they hadn't already. So we'd send the trucks up and get the men down and give them breakfast. They'd finish breakfast by the time the ships came over from Florida Island where they hid for the night. There was a bay over there with a bank so high and steep that if a bomber looking for ships flew over, if he got far enough where he could see the ships, it was too late to drop the bombs - it would overshoot and go in the muntains on the other side of the water. We

had the system refined much better at New Georgia and in Bougainville even more so. There I had a much bigger crew and most everybody had quite a bit of experience and I was then beginning to get some transportation people. Initially, practically all the officers I had for supervisory jobs on the beach at Guadalcanal were Infantry or Artillery officers who had been wounded and gotten out of the hospital and put on limited duty for three or four weeks before they could go back to work in their own capacity. These people invariably had no idea whatever about port business or ships or unloading or anything else. They may have been expert machine gunners or something or other but they didn't know what they were doing down there and many of them didn't feel very good either. So I had to half kill myself. I usually worked whenever it was necessary and long hours. I went for months without ever getting more than two hours of sleep at one time, I guess.

CPT WILHELM: So then would you say that the advent of having transportation trained personnel, when you alluded to the two black battalions, helped you in port operations?

BG VOORHEES: Well, yes and no. I had one black battalion that was fairly good. I had another that were Harlem commandos. They were mostly off the streets in the New York area, a mostly class 4 mentality, most of them syphilitic, and they weren't worth a cent frankly. They had no motivation. I had to try to shame them into doing a little more work. At Bougainville, I had a Fiji Dock Battalion. Most of them were the fathers of members of the First Fiji Rifles which were the best scouting troops I had ever seen in my life. They were really good. They could track like dogs in the jungle and sneak around at night and cut the throats of the Japs that they encountered and you never knew they were there. So the fathers in Fiji decided they ought to do something for the war effort and they formed this dock battalion. Their commander was a retired colonel from the British Indian Army and they came up there and they were all big, husky people. I used to try to shame a full sized port terminal service company with 220 odd men by relieving them when their shift was up with 60 of these Fiji dock people who would turn out far more tonnage.

CPT WILHELM: You say you had them at Bougainville?

BG VOORHEES: Yes.

CPT WILHELM: What, if any type of native or host nation support did you have at New Georgia or even Guadalcanal? Were you able to get any labor force?

BG VOORHEES: There was no host nation. This was the British Solomon Islands and the only people up there were a few coconut planters who had been run out by the Japs.

CPT WILHELM: But I mean were they there or utilized at all to supplement or help support your operation?

BG VOORHEES: They were gone. There weren't any of them left. At Guadalcanal when our troops got so far back in the mountains, there were no roads (it was a problem of portage for ammunition, drinking water and rations way back in the hills of Guadalcanal). We recruited three or four hundred Solomon Islanders from the island of Malaita. That was a headhunting outfit up there and they were well-built, tough-looking little people and the rest of the Solomon Islanders were scared of them. We hired them for a shilling a day plus a ration of tea and a ration of chewing tobacco - "Picnic Twist" - and we gave them other rations too - rice, whatever. They worked pretty good. The other Solomon Islanders were worthless because they were scared to death of the Japs and scared of shooting and they wouldn't go near where the fighting was. These Malaita boys came over and their head man was a teenager, a young boy. He had a big build on him because he not only was the heir apparent to the Chief of all the natives up there but he was also a high priest of some sort in their religion. He had them just like that. He said, "I like Marines and I don't care for British and I hate Japs. You give us what we've agreed and we'll carry the stuff anywhere you say, as long as if one of our boys is wounded you will give him the same medical treatment you would give your own people up there." And they did it. With the local Guadalcanal natives, a bombing raid would come up at night and they'd take to the bushes and you wouldn't find them for two or three days.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, how would you describe your arrival at Bougainville? Were you in the initial landing there as you were in New Georgia?

BG VOORHEES: Yes.

CPT WILHELM: How about the port facilities that you eventually utilized? Could you describe them as far as reefs?

BG VOORHEES: Well, it was in Empress Augusta Bay which was a fairly shallow bay right off of the ocean there about halfway up Bougainville from the southern most tip. The Marines went in and made an assault landing and, whatever Japs were there, retreated. By the time we were able to start port operations, we had a kind of a horseshoe shaped perimeter with perhaps a good three hundred yards of fairly good beach, shoal water. Then the troops were all around the perimeter. We had some camps in the middle. We had plenty of room in the middle for dumps. We had a good size flat beach area; shoal water and landing craft could get in all right. But that's when I screamed for the DUKW Battalion from Guadalcanal and they sent it up there. They could come and go at all stages of the tide. The ships would anchor out about half a mile or less and we would unload by lighterage.

CPT WILHELM: Now, were the ships where they were anchored? Were they actually out in the ocean or were they staying in a protected area?

BG VOORHEES: No, they were in Empress Augusta Bay which was a sort of a tit belt off the ocean there. It was calm water.

CPT WILHELM: Did you encounter any adverse conditions there as far as winds or effects of the tides?

BG VOORHEES: Every afternoon the southern trades blew up and sometimes the weather would get too rough for the DUKWS [Amphibious Truck, 2 1/2-ton Cargo], but a lot of times not and the other LCUs and LCMs would work anytime. We never had any big problem on that. Sometimes we had a very hard rain and sometimes the Japs' twenty-centimeter cannon on the mountain would pop in a few shots. Once in a while, they would make a terrible attack to crack the perimeter and try to get in to our dumps because they were literally starving. They had nothing. Also, the Japanese resupply had practically petered out. They couldn't move their ships down there, up on the north shore. I remember one time we figured it was coming because of the work that these Fiji scouts who went over the mountain and observed over there. They seemed to be collecting to do something and we had quite a few antiaircraft guns, 90mm, rapid fire. But we didn't have any airplanes to shoot at by then. They put them all behind the line and trained them to shoot just over the wire. One morning 6 or 7 Japanese battalions attacked on a one battalion front to try to break through the wire and get to our dumps and these people were just shooting cannister over the wire. There were Japs scattered all over the country around there. It was very obnoxious to go near the front for a long time after that. But they made a lot of noise and frequently they did the shooting at night when we were trying to sleep.

CPT WILHELM: Just more of a harassment type thing?

BG VOORHEES: No, our people were doing the shooting at night and then we had a bunch of big guns too. They used to pull the chain every few minutes along during the night.

CPT WILHELM: Did you have a lot better organization in your supply dumps in Bougainville than in New Georgia?

BG VOORHEES: Yes, the Quartermaster was pretty well organized up there and so were the rest of the services. I didn't have much to do with the dumps up there.

CPT WILHELM: Was the Navy still operating the lighterage utilized to offload vessels at Bougainville?

BG VOORHEES: Yes, except for the IXJM Battalion; they were Army. I'm not sure. We may have had a few Army LCUs up there.

CPT WILHELM: Did you develop the port at Bougainville, at all, to the extent of finger piers?

BG VOORHEES: No, we never did.

CPT WILHELM: You just went solely utilizing anchorage for offloading?

BG VOORHEES: The bright spot of the occasion was when a Navy commander, skipper of Navy resupply ship, brought us a load of rations at New Georgia. I went out to breakfast. I wanted to break an egg instead of powdered eggs and it turned out he was a gun crank and he was very anxious to acquire a good Japanese sniper rifle. I told him I'd get him one. I knew where I had liberated several. I found a cache where they threw them in the water before they abandoned the island and we had received a truckload and cleaned them up. So I took him a nice one and he said, "How much do you want for it?"

" I can't use the money, there's not even a PX [Post Exchange] here."

He said, "Well, I've got to give you something."

I said, "Well, on your next trip bring me some beer. We have nothing to drink up here either." He said, "How much do you want?" I said, "Bring as much as you've got room for, I don't care how much it is. If you've got the whole shipload, I can collect the money around here and I'll pay you off on delivery." He said he'd see what he could do. So then I got a phone call, a message in the middle of the night, a few days later saying that the guy that was supposed to run the ports at Bougainville had fallen down the ladder on the ship and had broken his leg and gotten a medical evacuation. A plane would be in to pick me up in the morning about daylight, and to be down at the field with all my junk.

CPT WILHELM: This is at Munda for pickup.

BG VOORHEES: Yes, to go to Bougainfield and so I did. I forgot about this deal with the captain. Then two or three months later I saw his ship coming up to Empress Augusta with a load of rations. Well, I get in my boat and I tore down Empress Augusta Bay and met him way off port. He said, "I've been looking all over for you. I spent all my money buying beer for you and I want to deliver it and get the money back."

I said, "How much do you have?"

He said, "Well, I started with 500 cases." New Zealand beer at the time came in wood boxes, 24 quarts to the case. He said, "We hadn't been ashore for months and the crew and me had a picnic and we drank some of it but I've got about 480 cases left and I need the money."

I said, "Okay, I'll come aboard and have breakfast, then we'll arrange how we're going to deliver it and I'll pay you this afternoon." I told him to have it all out on the deck in net slings suitable for one DUKW. I said, "I will send a convoy of DUKWs out here each with a reliable non-com with a tommy gun. When he comes alongside you, drop the net in the duck and he'll know where to go with it. I'll be back after lunch and I'll pay you." I got the money, collecting some from other people, and paid him off. I became the wealthiest man on the island of Bougainville with 480 cases of New Zealand beer. I had at that time a pyramidal tent with a wooden floor and screens. I had a dowel pipe on top of the

pole and another tent on top so I had boomed out the skirts on the top tent and then they'd collect the air and circulate it through and it was very pleasant. Then I lined the walls of my tent with these boxes of beer. I sent a few cases up to the Corp Commander for the headquarters people and the rest I kept and just invited people over for a beer once in a while. I had to have it because I was having malaria attacks three time a week at least and several cycles going at the same time. The only way I could eat the Vienna sausage and string beans that we had in the mess was to have some beer first. We had a Seabee that had gone ashore and they had captured a Japanese ice machine. The Corps Commander had allocated all of the product of this machine to the hospital. I don't think he even kept one chunk a day for his own mess. So I went over and talked to this chief and I asked, "How about getting a little ice. There's some beer in it for you if I can get a little ice." He replied, "Well, I'm strictly monitored. I've got to deliver so many a day to the hospital." I retorted, "Well, can you force the machine to make one extra chunk and I'll give you five cases of beer." He thought maybe he could, at least most days he could. So I had a Marmite can and I'd take my chunk of ice and put some beer with it and seal it up then in the evening I could have a quart of beer and then go and eat the garbage that we had in the mess.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, when you were talking about the DUKWs that you had brought up from Guadalcanal, how many total were there in that particular unit?

BG VOORHEES: I don't remember.

CPT WILHELM: You're talking 10, 15, 20?

BG VOORHEES: I think it must have been at least 50.

CPT WILHELM: 50?

BG VOORHEES: Yes, it was a whole battalion - four companies. It was quite a lot of DUKWs and they were hard to maintain too.

CPT WILHELM: Were spare parts available for all your equipment?

BG VOORHEES: Normally not.

CPT WILHELM: That was no problem?

BG VOORHEES: That was always a problem.

CPT WILHELM: I mean through Guadalcanal, New Georgia, and Bougainville?

BG VOORHEES: All the way spare parts were continually a problem. I don't recall ever having any luxury in spare parts anywhere.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, providing all the technology existed, would containerization, that is if you had the containerization handling equipment or large enough cranes to handle it, would containerization of cargo have enhanced port operations in the Solomon Islands?

BG VOORHEES: Well, it certainly would have expedited the unloading of the ships and I guess if each container was somewhat documented on what's in it, it would have greatly facilitated the distribution.

CPT WILHELM: If you could have had at either Guadalcanal, New Georgia, or Bougainville, one piece of equipment that exists today and did not exist in the 1940's, what piece of equipment would you, as the Port Commander, choose that would have enhanced your operations greatly?

BG VOORHEES: I don't know. They've got a lot of fancy equipment right now some of which I've only seen in demonstrations. I don't know. We were always critically short of cranes and forklifts and once you get into containerization you don't need cherry pickers either. They won't handle it. But we used them quite a bit when we could get them. Some were captured Japanese cherry pickers and they worked them hard, too. I'm trying to think, what in the way of new equipment?... We never got to a point where we could have aspired any even if it was known about a container unloading facility. We never got up to that kind of thing and always we were not supposed to be permanent either, only temporary. Rough terrain forklifts would have been a tremendous help at Guadalcanal and fairly high speed cranes would have been a help. We didn't have any of them either.

CPT WILHELM: What about, say, the B Delong pier, or the A Delong pier?

BG VOORHEES: Well, yes, if we could have put it to where ships could come alongside it. On New Georgia and Guadalcanal both, it wouldn't be practical because it was at least half a mile before you got enough water to put the ship in. We didn't hope to stay there long enough to build a causeway out to that. But they hadn't invented that then either. We eventually did get a pier made out of rock with the T-head on it and cribbing down to deep water where we could get medium-sized ships alongside at Guadalcanal.

CPT WILHELM: To include LSTs [Landing Ship, Tank]?

BG VOORHEES: They would come along and we had a ramp for that where they could come bow on to it and two at a time. Then the Navy started chartering a bunch of tuna boats from the West Coast to haul reefer stuff from New Zealand. The first six months we were there, we had no meat except canned. I remember one time I went out when a big convoy came in and we were very low on rations. The manifest showed all kind of things: beef, chicken, mutton, and all manner of stuff and it was all redlines - substitute Spam. There was about a million pounds of Spam in cans and I didn't dare let the word out because I'd have been lynched. Nobody knew they were going to eat Spam for days and days. I still won't eat it at home.

CPT WILHELM: Do you feel that had better road networks existed, those would have enhanced your actual beach clearance operations?

BG VOORHEES: It would have at Guadalcanal certainly. It didn't matter much at New Georgia because we had far less troops and we had far more available land close to the port. We weren't far enough in to need any roads much. Bougainville even less so. We never did get out of that little perimeter. We didn't try because we knew the Navy was taking care of them up on the north side and they couldn't resupply and sooner or later the 30 or 40,000 Japs they had up there would starve. We weren't worried about that. All we were worried about was shooting them when they came to try to steal our rations, .

CPT WILHELM: Sir, based upon your knowledge of today's equipment, its availability and reliability, the Ready Reserve Fleet, Sealift Readiness Program, U.S. Flagship Callup Program and today's threat, do you feel we're adequately prepared to conduct a successful LOTS [Logistics Over the Shore] or port operation in any ensuing conflict?

BG VOORHEES: No, I don't think so. We are grossly inadequate on not only the initial transport for the people that we could probably readily send in an emergency, but we're in horrible shape on the resupply. Nobody believes how fast you shoot. Ammunition just goes down the train in a hurry - thousands of tons of it - and there aren't enough airplanes to do the resupply. I don't think if we really got into a two front situation like we had before, I don't see how we can do it.

CPT WILHELM: How about POL [Petroleum, Oils, and Lubricants] discharge and say direct transfer from ships via pipelines?

BG VOORHEES: Well, usually they hook up pipelines pretty fast now. We might be able to do that. I don't know. I'm not a POL expert. I'm under the impression that we could do that better than we could the other cargo. There's lots of tankers running around now wishing they had some cargo or place to go.

CPT WILHELM: Field artillery pieces because of the threat are vulnerable if they stay in one area. Do you still feel that ships could, say, spend a half a day today, in a port or in the stream, in any type of a discharge made? Do you feel that that would be vulnerable?

BG VOORHEES: That would depend entirely on whether we had control of the air I think. If we didn't, no.

CPT WILHELM: Sir, that's all the direct comments or questions that I had for you in reference to the Solomon Island operations. Would you like to make any comments about your follow-on assignments?

BG VOORHEES: After Bougainville, I was selected to go and operate the port of Kavieng on New Ireland which the general in the Service Command down in Noumea flew up to tell me. I had been in these islands two years and had the malaria and was feeling not only bad but disgruntled because I didn't think I really was getting all I had

coming to me. Then he came up to tell me that I was going to run the port at Kavieng and would at last get the promotion that I had been in the slot for over a year and never got. I was the senior lieutenant colonel in the South Pacific and not too proud of it. He told me, "You're going to Kavieng." I replied, "General I don't know if I can do it. I feel terrible. I think I would like to go back to the States and get on a cadre and go to France and liberate some champagne and French girls or something. I'm sick of this whole business." He joked, "No, you've got to do that. You're the best qualified and you have to do it." Well, fortunately MacArthur went into Manus Island right then and bypassed New Ireland. So they cancelled the operation and that was going to be the last Navy operation in the South Pacific. But he made it unnecessary. So then I got orders back to Noumea to be the Transportation Officer for the Army in the South Pacific and supervise the rest of the ports. We had several. We had one at New Caledonia, two in the New Hebrides, several other ports scattered around. So I went down to do that and I didn't like the setup at all. I was wondering how I could get out of there when Admiral William F. Halsey, who was COMSOPAC [Commander, South Pacific], was going to sea in the Third Fleet and conduct big operations in the Central Pacific. He had a joint staff that included two Army colonels, both of whom I knew. He was going to sea and his deputy, Admiral John Henry Newton, a battleship admiral, was going to succeed him and he had to have a joint staff too. Halsey was going to take his two colonels with him though so Newton didn't have any. So he invited me to come over to the Navy Joint Staff as the J-4 of the South Pacific Theater and be concerned about what's left of the war and priorities for stuff we needed. Also how we were going to get rid of what junk we had, which was considerable, because everybody tends to be a pack rat and also an empire builder. So I thought, this is great. I'll get out from under the Army. So I went over there and was promoted right away. The Army had been dragging for far too long, I thought. There I was, Chairman of the Theater Priority Board which met every month and decided what the theater needed, allocated some shipping sometimes, or asked for some if we didn't have it. So I did that for a while. Then it became obvious the war had passed us by and we were going to have to roll up. My shop worked up a plan to roll up the whole South Pacific Theater, and what was excess, and to try to sell it; what to negotiate with MacArthur's people, what they could use if we sent it forward and what was left over and would have to be scrapped or returned to the States. It was quite a big book. I finished that and among other things I was chairman of the board to adjudicate the claim that all the coconut planters in the Solomon Islands made for the trees we cut down to make airfields and camps. They all sent representatives and I met with them a few times and arrived at what I thought was a very fair solution after they had presented millions of dollars worth of claims - so much for every coconut tree.

I said, "Gentlemen, as I understand it, the Japs came in and you all scammed, left the field to the Japs to fix. We got most of it back to you. Only a few trees were cut down. Actually there were hundreds, I guess thousands. I don't know but they still had a lot left. You had nothing. So what you got back is net profit. My decision is subject to the admiral's concurrence and it is that we won't pay you a cent. You're ahead right now over what you had." The admiral agreed to that and it stuck. We never did pay them for the trees. So then, VJ [Victory in Japan] Day finally ensued. Well, first our roll-up plan included rolling up the whole big empire the Navy had built in Noumea and getting rid of

that stuff. We had a lot of sales pitches. We sold some to Australia, some to New Zealand, some to the Dutch, various people, some to the French. Then we rolled up our headquarters and went to sea in the cruiser St. Louis, a 6-inch flagship, and cut back our staff to what would fit into that. So I went to sea along with the rest of them and we played poker every night, as the movies were terrible. Admiral Newton would ask, "Well, what do we want to do tomorrow? Is there any place we can go and see how things are going?" I replied, "Well, maybe we ought to take a run up to some island and see how they're going up there." So he'd send for the ship's captain and say, "Stand by to heave anchor tomorrow morning at 8:00. I'll tell you where we're going later." So we did that for a while. Then, when the war pursued further and we had a big operation going like at Peleliu, Okinawa or Leyte, the Navy wanted all of the big guns to get up to shoot for a while at the landing. So sometimes we'd take off and go up and shoot for a couple of days.

CPT WILHELM: Did you join in with Admiral Halsey's group when you say you'd go up and shoot?

BG VOORHEES: Well, he was in charge of some of the operations, yes. We were still COMSOPAC but our ship was participating in the fire support. I only worked for Halsey a couple of weeks before he took off with his crew. Then I worked for John Henry Newton for quite a while until he took off to be Inspector General of the Navy. Then I worked for Admiral [I Calhoun for a while until he retired and then finally for another admiral, Paul Hendron. All good people and I got along fine with them. They all gave me good efficiency reports and some medals.

CPT WILHELM: So if you could recap your experiences as a port commander, what would be the biggest thing that stands out in your mind, sir, about the operations either in Guadalcanal or Bougainville or New Georgia? What is one of the things that maybe you've learned the most about from an operational aspect?

BG VOORHEES: Well, unified control would have been a big help in Guadalcanal; the Army and the Navy weren't always quite parallel on their thinking. Well, in fact, one time it got very bad. A big convoy was coming in of stuff we desperately needed and I couldn't even find out when they were coming because the Navy officer who got the message said it was top secret.. He was carrying it around under his elephant hat. He wouldn't show it to anybody because he didn't feel they were authorized for that kind of classified message. And I was the guy that was supposed to be ready to unload when they got there. They got rid of him pretty soon. We could've used a unified command. The initial planning did not visualize a requirement for so much service support as it turned out we had to have. That's the reason the Marines were finished in two months and were all through - they didn't have any support. The Japs came down a few times and shot up the ships and they couldn't get their resupply in the way it was supposed to come. They didn't have a thing. They shot their ammunition, used up the clothes, and they all got malaria, jungle rot, dysentery and goodness knows what. They were all through when we got there. In fact, I had to break out a lot of reserve khakis to give some of these people so that they'd have clothes on their back when they walked

ashore in New Zealand for their retraining and refitting. They were in tatters as well as being sick.

CPT WILHELM: I know initially when the Marines landed at Guadalcanal that Admiral Halsey felt that the carriers were too vulnerable an asset and actually took them away. They were without fire support and they offloaded with about 15 days worth of basic load.

BG VOORHEES: That's right, it was pitiful. They're not built for staying power anyway. They didn't have a lot of things that you need if you're going to fight for an extended period. They were grossly outnumbered.

CPT WILHELM: Do you feel that maybe there ought to be some kind of joint type training as far as port operations between, say, Army, Navy, and Marines?

BG VOORHEES: Well, we have quite a bit of that now, I believe. We didn't have it in the Solomons. I know the Navy. When they were bringing in troops, they'd have a lot of APA's [Auxiliary Personnel, Attack, Combat Landing Craft] come in with some commodore in charge and they'd throw the troops ashore and their equipment that they could carry and unload a few loads of other stuff then take off. They didn't want to stick around. Then the Army resupply for the ports; they hadn't given it hardly a thought, I don't think, especially for the conditions that we had. I was always in every place in the position of having to steal net slings off the ships. They'd send net slings full of stuff ashore and some of those slings never found their way back to the ship the way they had visualized it would. Bougainville was even worse because we went up there on a shoestring with the 3rd Marine Amphibious Corp and some Army. We didn't have any port equipment. So whenever one of these task forces came in with augmentation troops, I always managed to steal most of their slings. Sometimes they didn't get all their boats back.

CPT WILHELM: Well, sir, any comments on other operations?

BG VOORHEES: Well, I've tried to keep current on what was going on in the world and the various operations. I had an opportunity to personally look at a great deal of the operations in Vietnam. By then I'd retired from the Army and was Vice President of Seatrain Lines and we had 23 ships on contract hauling stuff to Vietnam. We hauled more than anybody else: more boats than anyone else, more airplanes than anyone else, and I guess more ammunition in our ships and that was the department that I was running. I spent one month out of three for 7 or 8 years in the Far East - a good part of it in Vietnam in ports from Saigon clear up to Da Nang. I had a good chance to see what was going on there and at the same time I was doing a lot of conferring in Washington with the management of the war. Sometimes MacNamara's whiz kids would call me in and say, "Maybe you can answer a question for us. You've been out there. We have X type of a work battalion working at Saigon and they're able to do so many tons a day. We have another one just like it up at Da Nang and they're not doing but half that. Can

you explain why? They've got the same equipment and the same number of people and presumably the same expertise."

"Yes, I can explain it. They're working piers at Saigon and they can work around the clock. There's no enemy shooting down there. Up at Da Nang, they're working in more or less an open roadstead. There's a little bay up there, but every afternoon the winds come up and all lighterage has to knock off. They're doing the best they can with the weather they have to contend with. You've got to figure on those things. You can't assume that just because you feed the cow the same amount of feed, it's going to give the same amount of milk."

We haven't paid enough attention to the actual conditions where we intend to work I don't think. We could do, or maybe they're doing it and I don't know, but we should do a lot of detailed work on the actual target area before we start tailoring the troops and equipment. It's sort of similar to the problem that I had on the DEWLINE [Distant Early Warning Line]. I happened to be commanding all of the Army in Northeast Air Command before the DEWLINE started and running all the ports up there in Newfoundland, Labrador, Greenland, and I had seven ports. Then the DEWLINE suddenly came up. The National Security Council decided they would have it and we should get cracking. As the senior Army officer up there, in addition to my port people, I also had a couple SCARWAF Engineers assigned to the Air Force that I had court martial jurisdiction over. So I got assigned by the Chief of Transportation to do a little investigating and figure out what to do about the DEWLINE. I had a unique job. I was Army.

I was assigned to the Chief of Transportation, loaned to CGNEAC [Commanding General, Northeast Air Command] - an Air Force three star - with whom I got along greatly. I had been to all the schools and been in the planning business in the Department of the Army, so I started to make a plan on how to attack the DEWLINE problem. Then I got nominated to go on a team to pick out the sites and we flew three lines in the middle of the winter, pitch black night, in a B-36 - ping-pong on high sharp rock through the bomb sites and picking out a tentative site every so many miles. We turned in a plot on three site lines. One was roughly along the lines of the old pine tree line in middle Canada; another the line selected; and the third one was further north up on McClure Straits. The Navy decided the McClure Strait line was not feasible to haul anything up there because shore fast ice sticks out for twenty miles sometimes and you'd have to blast through an awful lot of ice to get anything ashore. The other line was too close. It wouldn't have any warning. So we picked this site. After daylight, I went - it was a team of electronics experts and Canadian engineers in a bush plane with skis - and visited the sites that we had tentatively selected for the DEWLINE. There were 42 of them. We loaded the plane full of gasoline and a big carton about twice the size of this table full of frozen sandwiches, a coffee pot, and a Coleman stove and took off. We would land as close as we could to one of the sites we had selected and march up there and look at it. The Engineer would decide if he could build it there. The Navy man would decide how close he could get ships there to unload his stuff. I would decide if we could get it off the ships and over the rocks and up to this place. A Bell longlinesman would decide if the electronics and water return was a big enough arc to make it a good site

for that viewpoint. If we all agreed, we'd put the chalk on that site and got to the next. When we got tired and hungry, we would eat some sandwiches and make some coffee. It was cold even though we were in Arctic clothes. We'd sleep on airbags on the floor. We did that, visited two or three sites a day, for about a week and got over most of it and came back. Then we started to plan.

I put in a requisition for several specialized teams to be trained at Fort Eustis with specialized equipment because the sites were not all the same. They did not all require the same equipment or manpower or inland transport. We had to make a progressive plan attacking the first place that got ice clear in the summer and then move on as the ice receded here and there and eventually cover it. I had quite a few teams and it took a lot of ships to load them and their equipment. They borrowed people from all over and trained the teams here at Eustis and collected the equipment. I had asked for special skills in engineering equipment maintenance. They sent me that. We eventually got it all ready to go and I had a book about this thick. It may be over in the library, possibly you've seen it, the project's 572 plan of attack.

Finally, I had this book all complete except for one chapter -- counterelectronics. It was something I knew nothing about and I didn't have any signal officer who knew anything about it either. Then I was summoned to New York to a large conference. The Air Force had the basic responsibility to build the DEWLINE with assistance as required from the other services. So the Secretary of the Air Force sent a letter to the CNO [Chief of Naval Operations] and the Chief of Staff of the Army, and to the Secretaries of the two services, saying they were going to need some help. Then they forgot it. They didn't do a thing about it. They busied themselves on their own plan for airplane flights and things. Then suddenly it dawned on them. We've got no plan. They summoned this meeting; there were 40 odd people there. CINCLANT [Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic], Hydrographic Office, TAC [Tactical Air Command] Air, SAC [Supreme Allied Command], Army-both War Plans-and Chief of Transportation. I was there and also some Deputy NEAC. There was a whole room full of people and some Air Force colonel got up and he said, "Now the purpose of this gathering is to write an operation plan for this thing." Well, I'd already figured out it was going to take a hundred and four ships. I was going to handle about 6,000 and some men and \$50 million dollars of equipment. He said, "We're going to make this plan and we've got to do it fast because we've only got a month or so to go. The stuff has been ordered and collected into the port, one thing and another." I got up and said, "Colonel, have you any idea of the problems of making such a complex joint operations plan with a group this size, who haven't got the faintest idea of what the plan ought to look like?" He said, "Well, these are all the smartest people we could get and we'll have to do it." "Well," I said, "I just happened to have spent the winter up in NEAC with a fairly competent staff making a detailed plan; I knew you all weren't going to do it and somebody had to have one and I've had a good deal of experience in doing plans for the Navy and also for the Army. I have a big book here with everything in it except counterelectronics which I must ask the Navy to supply an expert to do that part. The rest is here. I would suggest you take a look at what I've got before you flap your wings too much on a deal like this which is not going to be productive." "Well, General," said the Colonel, "that's all very kind of you to have

thought of all this and want to help us out, but this is pretty complicated and we're going to have to do it our way." So then, God bless him, Admiral Duncan, the Deputy CINCLANT Fleet, (I had known him in the South Pacific and he was at one time the Deputy for Nimitz) said, "Colonel, if General Voorhees says that he has a plan that is suitable for a joint operations plan, the Navy will buy it. I'm familiar with his planning procedures when was in the Joint Staffs and it's probably a pretty good plan. We will buy it and cut out all of this stuff around here."

CPT WILHELM: Did he buy it, sir?

BG VOORHEES: Then the Colonel said, "Well, we'll take a look at it and see what we can do." So, anyway, that's the plan that was used.

CPT WILHELM: So all that time was not wasted.

BG VOORHEES: It was very satisfying to me to have an opportunity to be present and see a plan that you wrote yourself executed. It worked all right; everything went on schedule. We couldn't be sure of the schedule so we had to have a lot of options. We weren't positive in what order the ice would go out so I had all these different specialized teams, each one capable of getting to two or three different places and there was some similarity in the places though not identical. So we had it figured that the ships with all the stuff on it would go on up ahead and wait and when the first one came open, we would attack that one and go on in sequence. The only thing is we didn't know what sequence, so we were prepared for that. If we couldn't go here, we'd go there. We had about three options for every team. When the smoke cleared away, every team got his shot and did the job. You ought to look at that plan sometime if you can see it in the library.

CPT WILHELM: I definitely will do that sir.