

**David George Fitz-Enz
Veteran**

**Michael Russert
Wayne Clarke
Interviewer**

**Best Western Motel
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DGF: So you've got my bio there, I guess.

MR: Yes.

DGF: I've forgotten what I sent you guys. I had no idea.

MR: We filled out the form.

WC: Okay, we are rolling.

MR: This is an interview at the Best Western Motel, Plattsburgh, New York. It is the 25th of July, 2007, approximately 2:30pm. Interviewers are Mike Russert and Wayne Clarke. Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth, please?

DGF: I'm Colonel David G. Fitz-Enz. I was born in Aurora, Illinois on the 18th of October 1940.

MR: What was your educational background prior to entering service?

DGF: In Aurora, Illinois, we had a unique situation. Instead of a high school, we had a military academy, Marmion Military Academy, run by the Benedictine Fathers, Marist Brothers and ROTC. All the young Catholic boys went to military academy, as did my brother and all of our friends, every class of every Catholic school in the area. A unique beginning. Four years of high school and then I went on to Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin and took ROTC there as well and majored in Business Administration.

MR: Was there any choice on your part that you may have not had to go through this or did you always want to go through this high school and ROTC?

DGF: I think it was 1952 when we got our first television set and *Victory at Sea* came on. *Victory at Sea*, probably the most influential thing that happened in my life. I watched all those soldiers and sailors. I was fascinated with the officers that had what I thought was a one or two on their helmet. I learned later that it was a lieutenant or captain. Very shortly thereafter in 1954, I started high school at a military academy and was thrown right into the United States Army because it was a full time military situation. We wore World War II uniforms in those days. That started me off. I found that I liked the military. I liked the structure. It was tough, but it was interesting and it was fair and it was honest and I liked that very much. My wife to be, Carol and I went to grade school together. From the first grade on and then she went to the Girls Academy that was associated with Madonna's Girls Academy that my mother went to. We dated throughout high school. We were married my junior year in college at Marquette University. Our first son was born there.

MR: So you went into the service directly from Marquette?

DGF: Right. I graduated in 1963. It took me five years to get through college. [being I was] married and [had] one child. I joined the Signal Corps, and became a regular Army officer. It was the branch that they were filling at the time. It was one of three choices that I had. So I was sent to Fort Gordon, Georgia for my basic officer course in the summer of 1963. What surprised me is I'd never been further south than Kentucky. When I arrived in Atlanta, I got on the Georgia Railway and got off in Augusta. The railway station was segregated, and that really came as a shock to me. The first thing I noticed was the water bubbler, water fountain. There was one for blacks and one for whites. The station was divided down the middle with an iron railing, and there were latrines on one side for whites and one side for blacks. As we got into Augusta, I found that restaurants were segregated. That really came as quite a shock to me. Eight weeks later I left Signal School, graduated and went to Jump School at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was a regular Army officer and I wanted to go the regular route. And I knew from my training that the very best were the airborne troops. If that's where you were going to be a regular, that's where you should be. I wanted to be an airborne soldier. Went to Fort Benning, Georgia, just down the road a little ways and took a three week course in Jump School. A real harrowing experience. Not because of the jumping out of a perfectly good airplane, but because physically it was extremely demanding. In those days, people didn't run like they do today. You think nothing of jogging, but in 1963, nobody ever ran unless they were on a track team. They certainly didn't run after college. And we were running in airborne heavy boots and we had to complete a twenty-seven minute constant run, which was an unbelievably long distance to go. I found the PT in the morning and the PT all day long and the physical training at night and the running was really hard. I couldn't believe it.

You quit every hour on the hour during the break, and then you started the next hour, cooled off and did another hour. You could live through it hour by hour.

MR: Must have been especially demanding with the temperatures.

DGF: Oh, you know, it was August, of course. The worst possible time of year to go. It was so hot that we took showers every hour in our uniforms. They had outdoor sprinklers which you ran or walked through several times and got soaking wet. It felt wonderful. By the end of the next hour you were bone dry and did it again. That was the only way you survived this stuff. But my fourth jump, and you have to make five, was a heavy equipment jump with about eighty five pounds of equipment. I had a heat injury coming off the drop zone. You had to run off the drop zone for about a mile and a half. Ended up in the hospital and couldn't complete Jump School because I had orders for Japan. So off I went to Japan without my wings, really disappointed, and served my first tour in Signal Command Japan at Camp Zama, which was the headquarters for the United States Army Japan. There I was a radio frequency officer, radio engineer. I knew nothing about engineering and managed a project for troposcatter stations in three countries. Japan, Okinawa and Korea. It was a fascinating tour in Japan because we lived in a Japanese house.

MR: Your wife was with you?

DGF: My wife now came with me. We had another son. The first one was David, the second was Tim. Tim was born while I was at Jump School. In fact, when Carol was at the commissary, pregnant nine months, she looked up the week that I was in tower week. She saw a guy wrapped around the top of the tower. His parachute had failed. The next day she had Tim. Fortunately, it was not me. They joined us in Japan. Going to Japan was an experience in those days because you took a C46 Navy airplane out of California. It was a thirty four hour flight to Japan over two days. We flew to Hawaii, got off, stayed overnight, flew to Wake island, refueled, flew on to Okinawa, then flew on and got in very late at night in Japan, absolutely exhausted. It was just before the jetliners came in. Carol followed four months later with the two boys on a 707, a much nicer flight than we had. Still difficult for her with the two small children. We lived in the village and that was a great experience. You couldn't speak Japanese and more importantly, you couldn't read the signs. So here we were in a Japanese village in a little tiny house made of paper, where the American bed that the government gave us touched three walls in the bedroom. It was heated with a space heater in the middle of the living room because it was winter and it was cold in Japan. And the hot water outside had a heater that she had to start by throwing a match into a cauldron of gasoline in order to get hot water. It was an interesting experience, but we survived it.

MR: Now, did you eat a lot of local foods or military foods?

DGF: Yeah. Second lieutenants didn't get paid an awful lot of money, so you lived very frugally. We ate in the silver wagons on the street and things like that. It was really a great way to start an Army career. In those days. Our 222-30 [pay chart], which is what I was paid as an officer, went a long way in Japan because things were very, very inexpensive over there.

WC: That was two hundred twenty two dollars and thirty cents per month?

DGF: That's what it was. Just think about what a soldier made. Of course, in those days, most of the soldiers were not married. They lived in the barracks. Later on in that tour, and I was only there eighteen months, I was the executive officer of the Signal Company and took care of soldiers. Probably eighty percent of the company was unmarried, so they lived differently. They lived in the barracks. It was much cheaper for them.

MR: What were the duties of the Signal Command?

DGF: We provided communications to the US Commander in Japan, who was there at Camp Zama and was a two star. Okinawa and from the States all the way into Korea. We were relayed into Korea as well. I had, I think it was sixteen troposcatter stations that were dotted all over Japan from the north to the south. Very interesting. Mostly to ASA, Army Security Agency, sites that were listening to Russian and North Korean broadcasts. That was primarily what we did. Link all those communication sites for intelligence purposes. As well as the usual command and control and ran what was known as Star Comm stations in those days, the big overseas heavy radio stations. The most memorable thing though, of course, was Kennedy's funeral. That was in Japan. I woke up on a Sunday morning in my BOQ [Bachelor Officer Quarters]. It was before Carroll got there. I was a commanding officer of the Honor Guard as a second lieutenant. There were four platoons. I had the signal platoon and we had special uniforms. It was for VIPs visiting the headquarters. I went to the Officers Club, had breakfast and heard over Armed Forces Radio that Kennedy had been assassinated. Immediately the Honor Guard platoon was called out. And for the next four days we stayed in uniform in front of the headquarters building because we raised the post flags. Post flags were like forty five feet long on a ninety foot pole. You put them up and you had the United Nations flag, the Japanese flag and the American flag. If the wind got above eight knots, you had to take them down because it pulled the poles out of the ground. The platoons stayed up for four straight days tending to those flags and Kennedy's death, which was very, very difficult for people like us overseas because we had fragmentary news. We only had a little bit on the FM radio. The Japanese were getting more than we were. I was amazed at the sorrow

expressed by the Japanese people over the death of Kennedy. It was profound. You were stopped everywhere you went, especially me. I'm five foot ten and blonde with blue eyes. You can imagine the Japanese came up to about here on me. [gestures breast height] When I rode a train in Japan, one half of the car looked this way and the other half of the car was faced the other way because they were all looking at me or looking at our boys who were blonde, blue eyes. We really stood out and it was really sincere. The Japanese felt it very deeply. I really liked the Japanese. They were extremely kind to us. They were very nice people. Carol taught English to college girls. We had four of them visit our quarters at night and she taught them English and they taught us Japanese. It was a wonderful tour. Eighteen months.

MR: How'd your sons like it there?

DGF: Well, the boys were very small. They loved it because the girls babysat them and played with them. Our third son, Jonathan was born in Japan. They took us shopping to big department stores in Okinawa and Yokosuka and in downtown Tokyo with these four college girls. They carried the boys. When you went into a store, all the Japanese clerks ran and took the boys away and carried them all over the stores while we shopped. Then they brought them back as you left the shop. They thought they were wonderful. We went to Kamakura to see the Buddha and we have pictures of the boys in their stroller and one being carried. And no one was looking at the Buddha. We have a crowd of Japanese men and women around the boys looking at them, having their pictures taken, taken with blond haired, blue eyed children. Yeah, it was a great experience, a great way to start a career.

MR: Where did you go from Japan?

DGF: [reviews a piece of paper] Well, let's see. Just before I left Japan, I had detailed as an aide-de-camp to the chief signal officer who was visiting the Orient on his farewell tour, General David Gibbs. He was accompanied by colonel Thomas [Matthew "Big Tom"] Rienzi, who became very well known later on. They were happy with what I did for them. When they left, Colonel Rienzi asked if he could do anything for me and I said yes, I want to go to Jump School again and I want to go to special forces. Because the Vietnam war had just begun as they evacuated families to Japan in 1964 while we were there. I wanted to get to Vietnam before the war was over. I didn't want to miss the war, being a regular. That's where you should be. I was anxious to get to Vietnam. He said he'd give me orders for Special Forces. That was the big going unit at the time, Kennedy's Green Berets. And they were all airborne of course. So I went to Jump School. On the way back, we came by a commercial carrier ship. Wonderful. USS Cleveland. The government paid for it; it was the way that they supplemented the ship lines in those days

was by carrying military families on board if they didn't have the passengers. We had a great twenty one day voyage coming back and went to Fort Benning, Georgia where I completed Jump School. Then I sat there waiting for orders to go to Special Forces to go to Kennedy Center at Fort Bragg for a couple of weeks. My job as a new airborne lieutenant was to interview quitters. People who quit the course, because it is all volunteer, were always interviewed so that they had an idea of why they were leaving the school. I did that for three weeks and wrote a big paper about why they quit. And it came down to one thing. If an officer quit, he took ten enlisted men with him. When he walked off the field there were at least ten other guys that were right on the brink of leaving. And when they saw that lieutenant or captain walk off, they walked off right behind him. It really came home to me how important an officer is. You didn't think you had an impact, but you were always being watched. Everyone was interested in what you were doing, what you were thinking, what you were saying. People looked up to officers. That was all there was to it. That was very interesting to me.

I went from there. I got orders. Instead of the Special Forces, I was sent to the Alternate National Military Command Center, Fort Ritchie, Maryland, ANMCC. It's the alternate command center for the President of the United States and Joint Chiefs of Staff. Underground near Thurmont, Maryland, near Eisenhower's farm. It was built during the Eisenhower administration. It's a mountain that's been hollowed out. Far larger than the famous one in Colorado. Hardly anyone knows of this place. When I got there it had just been declassified in 1965. Until that time it was absolutely secret. The entrances were just tunnel faces. The Czechoslovakians had just bought a house down the road and across the highway. And from there they could see the entrance to the tunnel. So they figured that the cat was out of the bag. [laughs] They finally declassified the fact that it actually existed. I was sent there to be the operations officer. I was a first lieutenant and my job essentially was to give tours to VIPs from Washington, DC. They came up and looked at their office or where they were going to live in this case or that case. Secretary of State Dulles and other people like that. I didn't like the job. It was a terrible job for a lieutenant that wanted to go to Vietnam.

I volunteered for Vietnam, went to Washington, and my detailer said, there was only one job open. There was one guy they needed down at the 69th Signal Battalion, Fort Eustis, Virginia. They're going to ship out in about a week. Can you make it? I said, I certainly could. I never heard of the 69th Signal Battalion before. It was an Army level signal battalion. Carol drove me down and we had a tearful goodbye. I turned around and was standing in front of the headquarters of this little unit. Went in and reported to Charlie Meyer [?], the battalion, who by the way, died last week. Lieutenant General, fine man,

great commander. He said, there was one job left in my battalion. He had been battalion commander for over two years. He said, it's the platoon leader of combat photographers. There was only one platoon in the Army. There were forty men and four officers. I got three officers who were school trained photographers. I said, I don't even own a camera. [laughs] He said, it didn't matter. You're an airborne lieutenant. You're just what I was looking for. We need a leader to put this mess together. He said, every one of these kids wants to take a picture of the flag going up on Iwo Jima again. And that's not what we're here for. We're here to document the war. And this was only one platoon out of his eight hundred man battalion. He was not particularly interested in it. He just wanted it out of the way. That was not the bread and butter of the Signal Corps. He dumped it in my lap and I said, I'd love to have it. I got the platoon. I walked across the street to Headquarters Company and the commander said, I'm leaving tonight. I'm part of the advance party. You're the new company commander, Headquarters Company. So I had one hundred six soldiers that I was going to take to Vietnam with this battalion of eight hundred.

We were to leave clandestinely because it was 1965. We were in the very first buildup of troops. The 1st Infantry Division had just left. I think part of the 101st was on the way. It was the very beginning. Our move was a classified secret. One company went out of Dulles Airport, and one went out of some other town, another one out of another town. I had the Headquarters Company up at Dulles. We got on five buses at four o'clock in the morning. We had all of our equipment fully combat loaded, rifles, helmets, the whole bit, and arrived at about eight o'clock in the morning at Dulles International Airport on a Monday, and pulled up in front of the departure. I went in while everybody sat on the buses. While I was trying to find out what's going on, I saw that all the buses were being emptied, and the buses drove away. I finally found the guy from American Airlines who said, who are you? They had no idea. I said, here are one hundred six tickets to San Francisco. He said, we can't do this. And by now, the soldiers, their equipment, their duffel bags, their footlockers, their rifles over their shoulders, their helmets and everything, were walking into the airport. The movie *Failsafe* or *Twelve days in October*, [*Thirteen Days*] whatever that movie was at the time, where the military took over the airport. We were walking into Dulles like that. He was very excited. [laughs] I finally said, we're going on your airplane, where do you want us? He put us all on these transporters that took people out to the airplanes just to get us out of the way. We went out to the airplane finally, and our seats were all over the airplane. We were interspersed everywhere. So we had little old ladies and soldiers with M14 rifles and helmets. Where do you put a rifle in an airliner, you know? The stewardesses were trying to help us. All of a sudden, this woman started screaming and yelling. "These men have guns", she yelled. [laughs] The soldiers were just a bunch of kids. They didn't know what to do.

Finally, the captain came back and calmed things down. Everybody was armed, it was an absolute disaster.

Of course, this was a secret move. My first sergeant told everyone not to tell anyone where they were going. If they asked, we were the 10th Underground Balloon Corps Company and we were going to San Francisco. They all liked that. We had been on board for about ten minutes and things finally began to quiet down. The stewardess came back and said, is it true you're going to Vietnam? A pretty girl was able to get that information out of a soldier in a heartbeat. So that was all over with. When we got to San Francisco, nobody knew we were coming. We had no transportation. We sat on the tarmac. All these soldiers were out on the tarmac outside the terminal. They wouldn't have us inside the terminal. Finally cattle trucks came, picked us up about four hours later and took us to the terminal, where we got on an MSTS vessel. It took twenty one days on board the ship to get to Vietnam. It was a very interesting company command tour, believe me. When we got to Vietnam____

WC: Where did you land in Vietnam?

DGF: We went to Vung Thao. Thao was a seaside area off the Mekong River. We laid off at night. All night long, the guys came on board and threw percussion grenades over the side to keep skin divers from blowing the bottom out of the ship. Because the USS Card, a small carrier, had been attacked months before and damaged. The next morning, I thought that somehow we were just going to drive up and go ashore and pier up somewhere in Saigon. Now, the next morning, LCUs appeared, ten of them, right out of World War II. They pulled a lighter up next to the ship, and they put scrambled nets over the side. My Signal Corps soldiers had never seen a scramble net in their entire lives. And now they're going to cross down these nets, ninety feet, get on the lighter and then get on these LCUs. They were out there in a big circle. I mean, it looked like Normandy to a poor guy like me. And I had a whole company of these guys. I went over the rail first with my other lieutenants and crawled down this ladder. My helmet fell off and crashed down below to the deck. Stuff began to fall off. The first sergeant stood up on the top of the rail, and he just put the next line over. Over they came, and all the equipment started raining down on the steel deck, bouncing all over the place. We had duffel bags, footlockers. The whole bit came down those nets. We finally got everybody down without killing anybody. Then threw everything into an LCU. I found out that the bottom of it is about ten feet below when you step in. [laughs] Everybody fell into that. I ended up standing next to the coxswain on the back of this thing. I'd never seen one before in my life. He pulled away and the next one came up. We unloaded eight hundred Signal Corps troops into these things and made a big circle out there in the water.

Then the boats turned and we started going down the coast away from the ship. We didn't go to the shore. After about twenty minutes, I asked the coxswain, where are we going? We were in the lead boat. He said, you're going to assault this beach up here. I said, what do you mean assault? We don't have any ammunition. Our ammunition is in boxes. He said it's a hot beach. I got the first sergeant and we started passing out ammunition and loading magazines and M14s. Pretty soon we got to this God awful strip of sand with the jungle behind it. Up behind us came the other boats. We turned, all ten of us, ran to hit the beach, dropped the gate in front, and we charged ashore. We hit the sand and started digging. There was a road right in front of us, nobody there, and nothing happened. We were there for a good hour or more. The Colonel came ashore with the colors uncased, you know, the whole bit. Then we heard some motorcycles coming. It was pimps with prostitutes because we were at Vung Tao, which was an R and R center for both the NVA, the Vietnamese Army, the Viet Cong and the Americans. It was an old French site. They tried to sell these guys Cokes. The troops wanted to go over the road into the jungle. Finally a jeep pulled up and it was a battalion commander of the 39th Signal Battalion. He wanted to know from our battalion commander who the hell he was and what he was doing on his beach. No one in Vietnam knew we were coming. It was so secret, nobody in MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam] headquarters knew we existed. By the end of the day, we had Engineer Corps dump trucks that we loaded, and they took us to an air base. We jumped on C-130 airplanes. I think we had three of them, maybe four. They flew us to Bien Hoa Air Base and put us in more dump trucks and took us to a hill that the engineers scraped off that afternoon. Plunked down eight hundred guys in the middle of the jungle all by themselves. It was a harrowing beginning to our Vietnam tour.

MR: So basically it was a cleared area and you had to just construct from scratch?

DGF: Unfortunately, when the engineers created this scraped off hill, they created a berm for the enemy, you know, fallen timbers. That night we were attacked. In the rainstorm, we shot up everything we had. I think we cut the jungle back by about thirty feet with all the ammunition that was expended that night. [laughs] Yeah, it was a hard beginning.

WC: So you were just dug in, in foxholes, basically?

DGF: Yeah, we dug in where we were laying. That was where we dug in. All we had was some dredging tools, and we were silhouetted against the sky. Yeah, that was at Long Binh. We were the first troops in Long Binh.

WC: Any casualties?

DGF: No. On the enemy side, too, I'm sure. We never hit anything. Since I became a platoon leader of photographers, the next day, the head photographer in Vietnam showed up, who was a major named Beresford. Wonderful man, Charlie [Charles "Chuck"] Beresford. He had been a combat photographer in Korea. He said, you're being detached from the 69th and I was overjoyed. [He] took us into Saigon, myself and my driver. We had a jeep and went to MACV headquarters [where I] was given my orders, which were to document the war. Those were my words. And so with that, we took a platoon, cut it up into four pieces. I took those guys who were airborne qualified, and I had two or three, plus some others. We went to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the only unit on jump status at that time in Vietnam. They were at Bien Hoa, which was right where we had gotten off the airplane in the first place. Reported in. And they didn't know we were coming either. At that location, I think I had twelve or fourteen guys, motion picture as well as still photography. They taught me how to shoot pictures on the ship on the way over. We had a little, tiny portable lab so we could develop contact prints. I was amazed. When I went to the officer's mess to eat at night, I had these little contact prints that I was taking all over the ship. People would give me anything I wanted for those pictures to send home. I began to realize how important photographs were to people in combat. And that really turned out to be true. We could have virtually anything we wanted in that combat photography platoon if we took your picture. Generals or privates, it didn't matter. Everyone wanted to be documented in war. I was here, and here I am. That really came home to us.

We had a set of letters that were given to us by the commanding general that said who we were, that we were not press, that we were regular army photographers, and that we were to be given all considerations and allowed freedom of action to document the war on behalf of the troops that we were in contact with. We never had a problem with that. In fact, I don't think I ever showed that letter to anybody. I turned up, told them who I was and what I wanted to do and they told me what they were doing. I selected where we wanted to go, went out and documented it. We were taking twenty thousand pictures a month and twenty five thousand feet of motion picture film. Ektachrome negative, studio quality film, which needed lighting, which we didn't have, was the worst possible film we could have had. We had cameras that were issued in World War II. They were Eyemos, wind up thirty five millimeter, one hundred foot long rolls. The film came in a thousand foot rolls. You had a changing bag and you had to put the film in the changing bag with an empty reel, a one hundred foot reel and scissors. Then you stuck your hand in the bag, measured with your hands one hundred feet of raw film, cut it and rolled it onto [an empty] spool, all unseen. And for that, as I remember, you got about two minutes of

shooting out of that film before you had to change reels again. We always ran out of film at just the wrong moment when the action was going.

These eighteen year old kids were wonderful. I mean, I had the best troops. Never had any trouble. They did some amazing things. They were very heroic soldiers. They went everywhere, did everything. The best job in all of Vietnam was to be a combat photographer lieutenant because I saw everything in the war. Most people saw the artillery or they looked through a gun sight or they were in a transportation company and they saw their war. Everyone has their little war which is one very minute picture and they very rarely have any appreciation for much other than that. But yet I saw everything and went everywhere and took artillery, infantry. I especially concentrated in the beginning on the infantry platoons. And so happened that later on in that year, my fellow ROTC cadet at Marquette University, Larry [unclear], 34.56 became company commander at one of the companies in the 173rd Airborne. I went out with his company, documented their missions. I was with Wayne [A.] Downing, General Downing, who just died the other day. Wayne was company commander in the 1st 503rd. I was with them. I was with the 2nd 503rd, A Company, Carmen Cavezza, a three star general who retired a few years ago. So I was with some really amazing people and was able to go down to the squad level. I shot still [photographs]. I used an underwater Nikonos camera because it had a steel body and it didn't rust, a big, wide angle lens on it. I had a motion picture guy beside me and sometimes another still photographer and we went with an average platoon. We stayed with them until our film ran out, four or five days on operations.

My fondest memory of my service, I think, is with an infantry platoon we attacked. We got fire from a village and hit a village. I finally realized why I did all that running at jump school. Running across a rice patty while someone was trying to kill you really takes your breath away. So I had to run a little bit. The other choice was that if you stopped, you were alone, so you didn't stop, no matter how fatigued you might have been. You ran all the way into that fire because you didn't want to be separated from anybody.

WC: What kind of weapon did you carry?

DGF: I carried a .45 for a little while. I was with a chemical platoon one day. We were gassing tunnels with tear gas to get people to pop up out of the ground, and we got shot at. We were out past the lines in the jungle, and it was getting pretty dodgy. I took my .45 out and put a round in the chamber. I had a lot of experience with .45s. I'd run rifle ranges before. With two hands, I pressed the trigger and I let the hammer down to half cock, which is the strongest of the four safeties on the .45. I put it back in my holster and it went off. I don't know what happened. I must have caught the hammer on that stiff

leather flap over the top and pulled it back just enough. And when it dropped into the holster, it went off with a resounding noise. The platoon leader standing next to me looked at me and said, was that you? I said, yes. I looked down and there was a hole in my baggy pants right over my knee. My knee burned something terrible. I thought, my God, I shot myself. Ultimate disgrace. He knelt down and he ripped the pants open. The round had just creased my leg, and I had a red mark there. The bullet went into the ground between my feet. Yeah, believe me, that's excitement. After that operation____

MR: Can I stop you for a second? Did the conditions affect the cameras at all in Vietnam?

DGF: Not as long as we used the Skindiver cameras. We had Leicas. We had the World War II kit issued to us. German cameras. Would you believe that German cameras were used by American photographers during World War II? They were bought in the 1930s and they stood up through World War II. They did not stand up in the jungle. They rusted as you looked at them. Everything rusted. We all went to the PX and bought our own cameras. I bought a sixty dollar Nikonos underwater Skindiver camera. And that was flawless. Some of the guys had Hasselblad, which they bought themselves. They had a lot of trouble with those. Anything like that couldn't take the temperatures and the water, the wet season. The motion picture cameras worked fine. They were okay. Later on, they conned me into shooting motion pictures, which I didn't want to do. The troops said that I could do it if somebody taught me. They taught me how to shoot motion pictures. I laid on the floor of a B model gunship, and shot out the side with a motion picture camera. That was the only way you could get the film to work.

MR: After you took all these photographs and motion pictures, where did they go?

DGF: We had archive numbers. When you took a photograph in combat, there was a format that you filled out, a caption sheet. It had place, time of day, weather conditions, names of people that were in the photograph, which was the hardest thing to do, and all kinds of basic information behind that, camera settings and so forth. When you got back into base camp, you had to fill out one of those for every photograph. You took a lot of photographs; a lot of paperwork went into it. Then it was typed up on a mimeograph machine. That's why we had a lab. Some of the guys were lab guys. We actually built a lab in 173rd with old bomb tanks from the Air Force so we could wash our prints. We made a print cleaning apparatus out of petrol barrels cut in half and put a crank on them so they could be hand turned.

MR: So everything was basically improvisation?

DGF: Oh, everything was, yeah. To get the tanks up, we had to build a tower. We built a tower with three of those bomb things on top of it. Made out of teak logs that were eight inches thick. The tower's probably still there. It was so substantial. The engineers built it for us, knocked it all together. We used an army tractor trailer van. We burned the holes in the side with a torch. Didn't realize there was wood filler in between the metal. Set the truck on fire. [laughs] We put that out. Ran piping that we got and somebody plumbed it for us and we made sinks. And we actually did the photographic work there in the 173rd base camp. I had four or five guys that did nothing but that; processed all this film. We actually produced prints. I needed prints because I found that that was our ticket back. After I'd been out with these guys, I went back a week or two later when they were in base camp and I handed out eight by ten black and white photographs. Oh, boy, they were gold. People really liked it. They [photographs], of course, were sent home. That was our ticket back all the time.

MR: Do you ever watch a program on History Channel or something or look through books on Vietnam and see things that you thought were yours?

DGF: I know they were mine. Yeah, I can tell because when I was in 173rd Airborne, we still wore color patches. We were the only unit in Vietnam that wore color. We refused to go subdued because we wanted the enemy to know who we were. I can always spot us because the patch is always colored. And that was only done the year I was there. Then it changed later on. I see it every once in a while. And recently on tv, I was shocked. I had a buddy who was the mortar, a platoon leader of A Company 2nd 503rd, who had been my jump instructor at jump school. Phil Tab [?], and I was with him on operations. Carmen Cavezza was the company commander. We got hit and he put his three mortars into operation and I was there to film it. When he was done shooting, I went forward to get with the infantry. When I say forward, I meant fifty yards forward to pick up an infantry platoon under fire. All of a sudden I had a tremendous explosion behind me. I turned around and it was Tab. When I got to him, the platoon sergeant grabbed me and said, I saw the enemy mortar round hit his helmet. So it hit his helmet and exploded and it just disintegrated. Bad day. Bad day. So you saw an awful lot. I was glad I didn't have a picture of it. You saw a lot of that stuff.

I got tired of walking in the jungle. You know, eight, ten thousand meter walks through the jungle. I had been with infantry platoons for a couple of months and taken a lot. I was getting tired. I saw a forward air controller fly over one day in an O1V, which is basically a Piper Cub FAC, Forward Air Controllers, aircraft armed with four white phosphorus rockets. He was spotting for the fighters up above. He marked a target, pulled out and they came in and bombed it for us. And they had done that that day when I was with

Cabezza. That company came right over me and bombed. So I got some pictures of them. I got a hold of the Forward Air Controller. His name was Hank Snow, the friendly ALO Air Force Liaison Officer who later turned out to be my neighbor here forty some years later, believe it or not. I asked if I could fly with the FAC and he said yeah. So I got in the back seat of this Piper Cub. When I got there, I had gone to a flight school for one week long for forward observers, guys like me, so that I could fly. I got a rating as an observer and I could get an aircraft off the ground, fly it straight level and put it back down. That was it. Because, if the pilot got shot, you couldn't do anything. So I could fly if I had to. So he said, yeah, you can fly with me. So that was great because that was one thousand feet. You saw a lot from one thousand feet. I could see our troops on the ground and so forth.

In support of a Skyraiders [Douglass A-1], which is a fighter bomber, we had the last reciprocal engine fighter bomber. It was a navy airplane the Air Force was flying. It had one huge twelve cylinder engine in it, four bladed prop. It was the biggest fighter you ever saw in your life. I have a picture of it here; I'll show later. Four of them flew behind the FAC several miles out. We went down and tried to get into trouble, wagging his wings and so forth, buzzing anything. We had our troops on the ground and we tried to get someone to shoot at us. Then he marked the target with one of these white phosphorus rockets, pulled away and the Skyraiders came in behind. Well, I took two or three flights with him and I said, this guy's going to get me killed.

So I went to see the squadron commander of the 1st Air Commando Squadron, SkyRaiders. And he said, yeah, you can fly with me. I don't have anybody to take pictures. I said, I'll give you bomb damage assessment photographs, which he never had. So I got to fly some twenty missions with Skyraiders. In the right seat. Great airplane. World War II all over. It was a *Victory At Sea*, you know. We came in from five thousand feet and hammerhead dived on a bridge or something and took it out. We had fourteen bombs on that sucker. It could really fly. It could loiter. While a jet could only spend an hour on station. A Sky rider could spend four hours on station. So we just went up in the afternoon and flew in a great big circle over the 173rd Airborne. We just waited for someone to call us. A pilot was bored to death. And they always put me with an IP, an instructor pilot. He taught me how to fly Skyraiders because he was tired of doing it himself. He said, don't worry about it. If you get into trouble, I'll just grab the controls away from you. So I got to fly the Skyraider in great big circles and do all kinds of things with it. You know, it was a dream come true. Terrific, terrific job. Being a combat photographer really was.

That tour ended for me nine months later when I got promoted to captain. My battalion commander said, no more fun for you. Now you have to go to work. They said there's no place in the Army for a career officer who is a combat photographer. We got to get you back into communication. So I spent the last three months as the Assistant Operations Officer, the 69th Signal Battalion before I returned to the States. When I got back to the States, I went to the Signal Advance Course in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. I wanted a company command. I had a company command, but it was only thirty, forty days. So when I got to the Signal School, there were six months to go. So they gave me command of a training company for six months. That was an experience because we only had two hundred beds and we had four hundred troops. These kids went to Signal School in shifts. You hot bedded them. Two hundred went to school during the day while two hundred slept in barracks. Then they switched. It was an interesting time. I wanted a real company to command, so I asked for it. They said all of you guys in this class that just came back from Vietnam, are going to college ROTC units, because we were having a lot of campus unrest. This was 1968. I was Signal School 1967, 1968, 1969. Then I was sent to ROTC and I was offered about five different schools that I could have gone to. Texas A and M, Notre Dame and so forth. My brother had gone to Notre Dame. I picked the University of Nevada, Reno, because I like to ski. So I wanted to go up there. I spent two years teaching ROTC, Assistant Professor of military science, which I enjoyed very much. The experience there was a unique one. Because during the Vietnam War, when someone's son was killed, you had to notify the family. In a place like Reno, Nevada, there were no military units around. In fact, the state National Guard commander was also the bowling coach at the University of Nevada. That's how small the National Guard was. They had one company of armor, five tanks, spread over the entire state. That was the Nevada National Guard. So the ROTC instructors had to do all of the notifications. I was a notifications officer for two years. You got the paperwork and an address and you went to the house. In the middle of the day. In those days, women were at home. You knocked on the door, you wore your uniform, you came in an Army car, you were all alone. You went to the door, a lady came to the door and you told her that her son had been killed. That was very hard. So after two years of that, I was more than ready to go back to Vietnam. It was very, very difficult.

MR: Now, was there much unrest at University of Nevada?

DGF: Not at all. In fact, there was great support there. Very conservative state, very wonderful people. I really enjoyed Nevada. Ranchers and gamblers are extremely conservative people, so we never had any problems like they had in California at Berkeley. Nothing like that.

[When doing a notification], The first thing you did was ask if there was a neighbor or someone who could come over to get you out of that. You didn't want to be there alone with her. We had gotten information about how to do this because there had been problems in other places where the woman claimed that the officer notified her and then raped her or something like that, just to get back at the Army. So you were very careful. You didn't touch anybody. You didn't go in the house. There were rules, and they were all experience rules. So you got a neighbor to come in and as many as you could get to come in. I never had any problem. The husband was called at work to come home. In those days, most men had served because of the draft. So, they knew who you were, first of all. They recognized your uniform and they knew you were an officer. I was a captain at the time. You got a certain amount of respect right out of the box. The other important thing was that you had been to Vietnam so you could tell them what it was like. You were kind of tarred with the same brush. You had been through it, so you weren't just some total outsider. You lived through it. I don't know how many of those I did, but I did a lot of them.

WC: How much time on average did you spend with each family?

DGF: Probably four or five hours. All afternoon into the evening, until you felt everything was settled down and everyone had been notified. Then the next guy came. Another officer from the ROTC unit came the next day and he was the advisor. You didn't want to combine the guy who notified [the family] with the guy who was going to help the family. It was hard to make that transition. In my case, Bob Garrett [?], a captain who served with me. He went and handled the family affairs, got the body, the honor guard, the bugler, the funeral home and the insurance, which was ten thousand dollars in those days, believe it or not. You had every kind of experience you can imagine. I mean, you had people who were absolutely distraught and you didn't know how you were going to get through the next five minutes. Then you had other people who said, oh, I divorced him, really in my mind, and just the papers haven't come through. I hadn't seen him in a couple years. How much money do I get? Those were the two extremes. I ran across a lieutenant colonel who had lost his only son, who was divorced, living in a trailer in Reno. That was hard. We drank all afternoon on that one. Yeah, he saw the whole [unclear]. 54.21 You were twenty six years old. You got a lot of experience in those twenty six years.

I volunteered again to go back to Vietnam a second time. The rules were that when you went back a second time, you picked the unit that you wanted to go with. So I naturally wanted to go back to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. I flew into Cameron Bay, reported in, and they said, here's your orders, the 4th Infantry Division. It was like I'd been shot. It

was a straight leg, non airborne division, mostly draftees. They didn't have a terrific reputation like the 173rd had, the kind of stuff that gets you killed. I really fought it, but it didn't do any good. They didn't pay any attention to me. And within two, three days I had orders and was flown off to Pleiku to the 4th Infantry Division. I reported into the 124th Signal Battalion Commander who was also the division signal officer. And lo and behold, it was the SOB who was my assignments officer that I volunteered with in Washington D.C. This guy knew he was coming over to be battalion commander and he was picking people. And no matter what you said, what you volunteered for, he didn't pay attention to that. His name was [unclear] 55.37 A nice guy, but Jeez. [laughs] I could have strangled him when I saw him. There I was in his battalion. I began to look around and I knew a whole bunch of guys over there that had been in Vietnam before. He had all veterans, all the guys and all the things that he wanted to make his battalion successful. He said, I know you wanted a company because he knew my background and I wanted a company really badly. But I haven't got a company right now. I'm going to send you the 1st Squadron 10th Cavalry, the Division Cavalry Squad. Well, I knew nothing about cavalry, at all. And I didn't know there was a cavalry squad. It was right across the street. And come to find out, the 1st of the 10th Cavalry were the Buffalo Soldiers, way back from the Indian Wars. Tremendous history. This one aviation troop and three ground troops of tanks. I was quasi aviation qualified in that. I had been on aviation stats for a year in Vietnam before. It was probably another reason why this guy sent me there. I knew a little bit about avionics. Suddenly I was in the cavalry. Well, then I found out I'm the only non cavalry officer in the entire squadron. Only one non cavalry slot. That was a signal officer position. A "comm officer", as they called it. So I got a pennant on my tank that said comm on it, 10th Cavalry. And that was the benefit to the whole thing. But I really liked those guys. I found out that they were crazier than the airborne. They were wonderful. I really enjoyed being a comm officer in that squadron. I volunteered to be the talk officer at night to stay up all night long.

ME: Now what does that mean?

DGF: The Tactical Operations Center. We had spent our first few months on a road between Pleiku and An Khe while we refitted the squadron because they had been very heavily damaged in combat over a period of two years. So we refitted the entire squadron. Fortunately, the squadron commander got fired. I was very happy to see that. He didn't like me very much because I had moved his talk. We moved into An Khe. He located the squadron headquarters next to the stream that ran through the golf courses where all the aviation stuff was. That was the worst place in the world to put an operations center because you were down in a hole and the radios wouldn't work. I found a spot up the hill a little ways, only one hundred yards, and moved his talk. It had to be

here or you couldn't talk to anybody up the road. And boy, he was mad. But I proved that it wouldn't work any other way. And in a torrential rainstorm, lightning storm, we put up a brand new blackjack telephone pole, wet creosote pole, that was forty feet high and sunk that thing in the ground. One of my guys who was a telephone installer in civilian life, really good on poles. Believe me, there is nothing more fatiguing or difficult or scary than climbing a telephone pole. If you've never done it, you have no idea. You put these gaffs on that dig into the pole. You strapped them onto your boot. I had done it at Signals Advanced Course and I didn't like it there. We played volleyball on these poles in a pole orchard and people fell and got hurt. You gaff out by accident and you slid down the pole and the first thing you did was grab the pole and then you ended up with splinters down your entire body by the time you hit the ground and broke your leg. It was much more difficult than airborne. Terribly fatiguing. So we took a ten foot metal mast with an antenna on top of it and climbed that pole. In the lightning storm and in the rain, we put that sucker up on top. I couldn't believe it. I was so damn mad after the squadron commander had given me such a tough time over it. It worked.

MR: Can we stop there?

DGF: Oh, put up the pole. Yeah. Okay. So at any rate, we got the pole up and we got the squadron commander relieved and everybody was happy. We got a new mission and went up to the Cambodian border. Our mission in the 10th Cavalry Squadron was to sit on the highway from Cambodia to Pleiku and intercept the fifty Russian tanks that were reported on the far side that had been waiting to run down the road into Pleiku and cut the country in half. Being a cavalry squadron, we were capable of taking on that sort of thing. With three ground troops and one aviation. And we lived on LZ Meredith [landing zone], which was about twice the size of this hotel room. I sat there for about four months watching the border. We sat on LZs, one of which was called LZ Precarious, which I always thought was a great name for an LZ. Scraped off pieces of dirt in the middle of the jungle. Watched the tigers at night; we were overrun. That was where Teddy Roosevelt did hunting after he was president of the United States. It was on the Kati Kaia [?] rubber plantation. That's where we were. The old man went out and shot an elk one day and had to drag him back on an artillery carrier. The helicopter wouldn't pick it up. We hunted in the afternoon from the LOH [Light Observation Helicopter] helicopters with shotguns and shot peacocks. The next morning we went out and got shot at by the enemy in the same helicopter flying over the same land. It was a very, very strange existence. We saw the enemy on the other side of the border, but we couldn't cross over. This idea of giving a haven to the enemy we see going on today in Iraq. They did it then, too. It was devastating to the troops. They chose the time they wanted to attack us and so forth. We had quite a bit of combat.

Like I said, I volunteered to run the talk at night because only the S3 and the S3 air [?] were alternating night after night. Sat up all night long in the tactical operations center, which was four tracks backed together down in a great big hole in the ground, covered over with teak logs and sandbanks. I lived in a tent right next to it above ground. You could literally throw a rock across the fire base from one side to the other. We had Headquarters Troop there with four or five scouts. My track, which had a machine gun on top of it, and a couple other flame tracks were in there. About eighty guys from the Headquarters Troop, as well as a squadron commander. I thought if I volunteered to run the talk every third night, then these guys could get some sleep because they were just absolutely worn out. Unfortunately, every time I took over the talk at night, we got attacked. So I got a bad reputation. [laughs] The idea was that if I was running the talk, then the S3 could take off at night and go into Camp Enari, the main base for the infantry division and get some other work done with the division staff and get a night in a bed. Unfortunately, he always ended up scrambling aircraft to come out and get me out of trouble. For some reason, the Viet Cong seemed to know when I was on duty and he shot tanks all night long.

One night when I was there and he was there, we had an enemy in the wire around about two o' clock in the morning. I detected them crawling up on us. I had lit the outside of the fire base for the squadron commander named Moran [?], who was the finest leader I've ever known in my life, Colonel Moran. He had me go to Cameron Bay and get generators and outdoor light sets, spotlights. I electrified the camp. He said, this is your job. I said, I'm not an engineer; I don't know anything about electricity. He said, your Signal Corp, aren't you. That's electricity. I had to put these spotlights up around the wire facing out. The division thought he was crazy because at night they had this huge ring of spotlights in the middle of nowhere, you know, shining out. But of course, it was a very good idea because he said, hey, folks, the enemy knows we're here, but we can't see them. So he lit it up going out the other way. Well, one night we had people crawling up the wire. The squadron commander said to the S3, Bill West, go out and check this out. See what the hell's going on out there. West came and got me. I always carried an M16 rifle with tracers in it. Every other round was a tracer because I did a lot of flying with scouts. And if I saw something and shot a tracer, the gunships behind, the Cobras, knew what I saw, and they fired on it. So he said, you got those tracers? Nobody else was dumb enough to do that. He said, come with me. I followed him out. All of a sudden we were out walking in the wire. He said, if you see anybody, shoot them. He had a flashlight and I had a rifle, and I followed the beam of the flashlight with my rifle. If I saw a body, I pulled the trigger. That was his idea of clearing a wire. He thought that was a really good idea. It

was not a really good idea. He had me shoot at night if we had movement on the side of the hill away from us; shoot those tracers out there. Another guy on a night scope told me. When I fired he said, move to the right about two clicks. So I moved it over and fired again. When he saw somebody run because I was getting close to him, he had the whole side of the tanks open up on the side at that point. That was the kind of improvised crazy things that people did in the cavalry. That was about standard operation up there.

The only problem I really had was Christmas of 1965. I woke up Christmas morning and there was a huge explosion behind me, behind the tent. The squadron commander asked me if I could go save Christmas dinner because they were cooking Christmas dinner and had this huge explosion of fire and smoke. He said that was my job. It was a typical Signal Corps job, save Christmas dinner while everybody else was running around doing things. So I went to the mess tent a hundred feet away and pulled a truck up. A tank was on fire. I pulled the truck up between them so the tent was protected and the cooks could go back to cooking Christmas dinner. Came to find out there were two guys in the tank.

WC: How was the tank hit? With an RPG?

DFG: No. They were maintenance men. It was a warrant officer and a sergeant. They were down inside fooling with an electrical problem, we think. It was a fully loaded combat tank, and had sixty rounds in it. which were all electrically fired. The outside of the tank was covered with ammunition and boxes of fifty caliber and so forth. It was its own maintenance, carried its own load with it and probably more. The guys were inside. I got them out. [gets emotional] After Christmas morning...both guys lived, by the way.

MR: Now you were burned over there. That's when you were burned?

DGF: Kind of a flash burn. I got promoted to major. I flew back into the fire base one day and the old man said you've been promoted. I had no idea I was even eligible. I mean, you get so detached from things. It was 1969. I'd only been in since 1963, and I was a field grade officer, a terrific promotion. I just finished the six-month second tour. And with that, there was a rule that said that if you had been in line combat units, and I had always been in line units, and you were on your second tour and you completed six months, you could spend the next six months anywhere you wanted to. So I said, okay, send me to the 173rd Airborne Brigade. Like a broken record. The division signal officer, that guy that had sent me there in the first place, [unclear], 1.09.40 came out to see me in the fire base. Highly unusual. Nobody ever came out to those fire bases. He said, what will it take for you to stay in the division? I said, I want to be the S3 of your battalion, which is a very important position in a career to be the operations officer of a line battalion in combat. It was only given to very senior people because everybody wanted a

troop. And he said, okay. I left the squadron after six months and I was a captain promotable. Captain P, as they said, you write it next to Captain. I was always writing P. So I took over as the S3, the 124th Signal Battalion. Terrific job, wonderful guys.

A few months later went on the Cambodian incursion. I think it was the 2nd of May. We heard on the radio that the guys down south had come into Cambodia at the Parrot's Beak, which is where I was before. Everybody in the division was really disappointed that we couldn't go into Cambodia but had been restricted to only two divisions down south. We were in the Midlands. They said, too bad. The next day we got orders and were going to Cambodia. The 4th Division was cut loose and we took off. And that was an amazing time. I never saw happier soldiers in my life. They wanted to go into Cambodia really badly. That whole division went into Cambodia and I had the signal battalion. So we went up to Pleiku and spent the night. The next day we went into Cambodia near [unclear] 1.11.18 And it was a real experience to get on the other side of the border. They had everything. They had an underground hospital, they had food, they had ammunition, they had troops. I mean, it was a target rich environment. I think I probably made the only call to the President of the United States from Cambodia. The division commander, Walker, a great man, had to call the President of the United States. We made a phone call. He tried to do it from his, quote, office, which was a trailer, tank or something. That was not going to work. I dragged him across this little fire base at [unclear] 1.12.10 and put him in the radio van where the soldier was operating all this equipment, two of us standing side by side. I operated the thing and I didn't know very much about it. I was hooked up all the way back to Pleiku and Pleiku to somewhere, to somewhere, to somewhere all through Hawaii. We went all the way through the White House. I had the handset, and they said, put General Walker on the line, the President is coming. I gave General Walker the handset. It looked just like a telephone, but it wasn't. It was one way reversible. There was a butterfly switch on it. I forgot to tell him about the butterfly switch in between the receiver. The President came on and said, hello, John, or whatever. He said, hello, Mr. President, but it didn't go anywhere. He looked at me, his eyes got about that big. [gestures about six inch circles] [laughs] I grabbed the receiver and I spoke to the President. Then I remembered the switch. I said, rotate the switch when you speak and let go when you don't. And he talked to the President of the United States. He told him what the situation was in Cambodia. Mr. President, I can do one of two things. I can kill enemy soldiers or I can destroy the supplies. Which one do you want me to do? The President said, destroy the supplies. And so that was what we did. We burned rice. We broke things up. We tried to cart it back across the border but there was so much we couldn't do it. The division spent thirty days in Cambodia destroying supplies. That was quite a time. So that was Vietnam.

MR: Could I ask you.

DGF: Yes, please.

MR: How was it different from the first time you were there?

DGF: Not at all.

MR: Not at all. You didn't see any changes? How about the M16s? What did you think of them compared to the 14s? I know they had that changed by then.

DGF: I'm glad you asked, as they say. We were the first unit to ever get M14s in the 173rd. We actually captured a document that said to the Viet Cong, "do not attack the men that carry the little black rifle." And that was only the 173rd, we were the first unit. I actually was with General [William] Westmoreland on Thanksgiving Day, 1965. He came out to have Thanksgiving dinner with us. I photographed him. Very nice man. Terrific. I met him many times afterwards, and I was with him when he talked to soldiers. And the question he asked was, we were having a lot of trouble; we heard from the marines with the M16 rifle. What do you guys think of it? This soldier said to him, clean them. What do you mean? [laughs] If you keep it clean, it works beautifully. You have to use "Shakewell" on it. Westmoreland looked at me, and he looked at the general. Commanding General [unclear] 1.15.17 and said, what's Shakewell? The soldier reached up in his helmet where there was a strap. He pulled this plastic bottle of silicon off his helmet and on it, in big letters, it said, shake well. [laughs] That was what the soldiers called it. Soldiers showed him how to clean an M16 rifle. I was very impressed with Westmoreland. That was the first time I'd ever seen him. He was good with soldiers. [emphasizes statement] He was a soldier's general. He was a soldier himself. And he was very nice to me. In fact, in his office, he had one of the pictures I took that was his favorite a year later. I had dinner with him when I was at the War College. But we never had trouble with the M16 rifle.

In my second tour in the CAV squadron, we all had M16 rifles. Before that, the guys that had the M14s that I knew in the 1st Infantry Division didn't like the M14. Because it was too damn big, too damn long, too damn heavy, the ammunition was heavy, and it just didn't fit. It was a European weapon for long range, and we could [only] see about four feet in the jungle. You wanted something to really tear that jungle up. The M16 was a great weapon. It's still around today with very little modification, but you had to clean it. It's a very precise weapon.

MR: How about morale or problems with draftees or race problems at all? Did you encounter any of these in your second term?

DGF: All my soldiers in the CAV squadron were draftees. I had college graduates. I had one guy who couldn't read or write and he was a high school graduate, by the way. His name was Griffin. He was my driver because I couldn't trust him anywhere else. He was a great soldier, but he just couldn't read or write. Once I gave him three packages to take down to the troops along this road. A Troop, B Troop, C Troop. I wrote on the outside of the envelope A, B, C and gave them to him. Those were the signal operating instructions. Very important. Everyone had to have them. Every month they changed. It had all the code words, all the frequencies and everything. Extremely important documents and classified. But I trusted him and he was a good guy. I got a call a little while later, and A Troop had C Troop, B Troop had, etc. He mixed the envelopes up. That was how bad it was. One of the guys used to read his mother's letters to him. And he wasn't alone. There were some category fours that you just could not believe. But I never had a problem with any of them. Frankly, I never saw a problem with drafted soldiers. They were good. I mean, they weren't happy. They all wanted to go home. Everybody wanted to go home, you know. But my soldiers and the soldiers that I met, and I met thousands of them by the time two tours were done. All these morale problems and all these other problems, all these drug problems they talked about, they were in the States, in the news media.

Don't get me started on the news media. Oh, geez. As the combat platoon leader of photographers in 173rd, I was the guy that had to handle all the news media people. Boy, they were the dregs of the earth, I'm telling you. They were there to make themselves famous. That was what they were there for. And they were there for no other reason. Most of them didn't have any credentials anyway. They tried to buy film from my photographers and claim it as theirs. They tried to get my photographers to carry their camera into combat with them and come back and give them their camera back with the film shot up on it. When we flew back in off of two or three days of operations and hit the home base, these clowns were sitting there. Because they wouldn't go out with us. They interviewed the soldiers about the operation as they came off. Soldiers, you know, soldiers? [gestures to Wayne] When soldiers realized what scum these people were and how they didn't have the courage to go do what these poor soldiers were doing, they told them the wildest stories they ever wanted to hear. Because soldiers thought that was funny. They told them all kinds of things. And of course, they only printed those things that were negative. Yet we had all kinds of positive things that these units were doing with civic action programs throughout Vietnam. My battalion, the 124th, had a whole village of a thousand people that we took care of. We fed them, educated them, trained them to defend themselves. Montagnards. The press were not interested in that. They

weren't interested in anything our medics did. Our medics spent all their spare time treating the local people, taking care of them, doing really good work. Everyone, when they weren't in combat, were out doing something in civic action, throughout any of the units I was in, in large scale operations. And you never had newsmen there. It was really a bad scene. I have nothing good to say about newsmen except for Tom Tiede, who was one good guy, and Horst Faas, who's quite famous now and head of AP [Associated Press]. Horst Faas and I spent several nights together on operations and he stayed in my tent with me. The only thing I didn't like about Horst Faas is he wouldn't take his boots off at night when he slept and got mud all over the cots and sleeping bags that we had. But he was interesting. Those were the only two. I knew a lot of them. I had one woman show up to the 173rd Airborne Brigade one day in Abercrombie and Fitch safari gear with a hat and speckled band and high heeled boots and wanted to go out on operations with us. I said, you know, my dear, how would you like to fly? Oh, she said, that'd be great. I said, I'll take care of it. A very pretty girl, I put her in a jeep and took her outside the 173rd, over to the Air Force side of the base, to the 1st Air Commando Squadron where I was flying with Skyraiders. [gestures offering and pushing away] I gave her to the squadron commander and said, how would you like her to fly with your Skyraiders and write a story about it? He said, sure. That was the last I saw her. They took her to the Officers Club and she never came back to the Airborne Brigade. That was the quality of the press. The press was terrible.

MR: Where did you go from Vietnam?

DGF: When I left Vietnam. I told my detailer, I am tired, I am really totally worn out as through this battalion now.

WC: When did you leave Vietnam?

DGF: I left June of 1970, for the second time. I said, I want to go on high staff in Europe, leave me alone for a while. So he sent me to headquarters European Command, which was the joint headquarters in Europe. He sent me to operations S3 or J3, joint, into the command center on a command council. A four man team, full colonel Army, a lieutenant colonel Air Force, me as a comm officer and a Navy yeoman. That was a four man team. And there were five of those. We sat inside a building, inside a building with no windows, in a very large glass cage with huge consoles of communications and ran Europe on a minute to minute basis. When anything happened, it came to us first. We handed it off to somebody else to do something about it. We were the command center for all US troops in Europe in Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany. Lived in quarters there with the three boys and Carol, nice old German quarters. An apartment house about four minutes from where I worked in Patch Barracks. The first day there, this Air Force

lieutenant colonel who was a training officer, said to me, what do you know about Psyops [psychological operations]? I said, I know quite a bit about them. We did a lot of psyop, psychological operations in Vietnam. I talked the enemy into giving up and that kind of stuff. He said, well, that's good. You take a test in two weeks. Go into the study room and all the volumes for this are in a bookcase on the desk. Learn all you can about Psyop and then I'll give you this examination. I went in, I sat down. It was not psychological operations. It was the Single Integrated Operations Plan for nuclear war, SIOP. It was the Air Force. This was the go to war plan for World War III. It was extremely highly classified and it was how we put nuclear weapons on targets. All that went into that is very complicated. I had no idea what I was getting into. I had two weeks to learn. There were eleven volumes. They filled the entire desk from one side to the other. I started reading. I didn't even understand the terms I was reading. I'd never even heard of these things. All these nuclear weapons. It was SAC. It was all SAC. What's that name for? I've already forgotten.

MR: Strategic Air Command.

DGF: It was their documents, but it was JCF, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stamp on the front of it. It was for submarines. They were in it with all their nuclear missiles, all their warheads, how to target them, all of the SAC bomber fleet, all the SAC missile fleet, all the bases, all the command and control on how you operated this stuff. All the signals, all the messages you had to send, all the training exercises, all the real events. I mean, it was just voluminous. It was a lifetime of work that these SAC guys put into the SIOP. It was not psychological operations. That was the worst two weeks of my life. I had to learn this stuff. I had no idea what I was doing. I had nightmares; I couldn't even sleep at night. I mean, I had to ask people what these things meant. I mean, there were airplanes and things that I never even heard of. All kinds of spooky stuff going on. You know, we were SR71s, satellites. Terrible. I just came out of an infantry division in Vietnam. I took the exam two weeks later. The guy who gave me the exam, his name was Stretch, a lieutenant colonel. Had been in this business all his life. I took the exam. He said, well, now if you don't pass this exam, we have five teams. You are a comm officer in one of them. If you don't pass the exam, these other comm officers are going to have to take your place, work double shifts until you do. So it is really important that you pass this examination. He said, let's go over your answers here just to see how well you did. Well, I knew I failed it. He went to question one. Now let's see. Here are your choices. He read me the choices. [He said] Which one of these do you think it should be? He led me to the one I was supposed to answer. I said, I really thought I should have picked A instead of B. He said that's right and he changed it. [laughs] We went through the whole exam and I passed. Oh geez, what a bad day. Terrible. Because he thought I was an idiot. I did that

for three years in the command center. It was a wonderful job. I really liked it a great deal. You worked eight hours for four days then took a break for a day and then you worked in the evening for four days and then you got four days off. Then you worked four midnight shifts and then you got four days off. So with the family, we got to see each other again. Carol and the boys and I went to Austria and learned to ski. So we skied all winter long each year for those three years. It was great. I really liked it.

I can't talk very much about it because it's extremely classified information, but I did have one incident in 1973. Could have been a little earlier, might have been 1972. I got a call one night from brigadier general Alexander Haig. He was in the White House and he said, I want you to hook me up with Vernon Walters. Vernon Walters was the military attache in Paris. When you did these things, you stayed on the line and they knew you were there. These things dropped off all the time and you had to re-established them. So you were dialing phones and trying to hook them together and everything. So I hooked him up with Vernon Walters who later became an ambassador to the UN and Head of the CIA and all kinds of things. He was quite a guy, spoke eight languages and he was an Army intelligence brigadier general. Haig was arranging to have Henry Kissinger come to Paris and do alternate peace talks away from the press. We had a three star, his name slips my mind at the moment, who was in the press running these peace talks with this delegation from North Vietnam in the Elysee Palace. Jonah [Julian] Ewell was his name. He was a real crotchety guy, he was real fun. He was running these peace talks and was very much in the press every minute of every day. People were being interviewed and they were trying to work out an agreement at the end of the Vietnam War. That was how phony it was.[?] 1.29.49 It had nothing to do with anything. Instead the North Vietnamese sent someone to Paris and I don't know where he was, but he was in Paris and Kissinger was going to work with him individually and work out the arrangements for the peace agreements. As time went on, I learned this from the conversations I had monitored and been involved in. Kissinger, in the evening in Washington D.C. would go to some big gala party and was there with some movie star that was current. Some names you would have known at the time. A famous movie starlet who was forty years younger than he was and he would be there in his black tie and so forth cajoling everybody. When this was over with, he went to Andrews [Air Force Base], got on a jet airplane and flew to Spain. In Spain, we picked him up with one of our executive jets. We had four of them from Stuttgart. General [Andrew] Goodpaster was commanding general of Europe and he had a deputy four star Air Force with us, [unclear], 1.31.03 because Goodpaster was in Belgium. We flew down one of our executive jets and picked up Kissinger and then that executive jet flew him to a French military Air Base in Paris. He got off the plane, Vernon Walters picked him up and drove him home to his apartment. He was a bachelor.

And there the two of them worked out the Paris Peace Accord as it came to be. Then we reversed the process. He flew back. I don't know if they ever slept. But somehow Kissinger did all this and Haig was the guy that arranged it all. So I used to talk to General Haig at the time. We knew what was going on but you couldn't tell anybody. And it worked out very well. So it was nice to be a part of history like that to know what really took place. Julian Ewell was the general's name, nastiest SOB in the United States Army. That's why they put him in there. He was really crotchety. But anyway, a very, very fine man.

After three years at headquarters European command, I got a call from Tony Bauer [?]. Tony was my executive officer, the executive officer of the 124th Sigma Battalion. He was older than I was. In fact, I replaced him as the S3 of the 124th. He moved up to executive officer. He was now the captain's assignments officer for the Signal Corps. He called me when I was getting ready to leave, and he said, you're really high on the OML, Order of Merit Listing for command general staff college. I had a bronze star for valor, five of them, and the Soldier's Medal for Heroism for life saving and there was no one else like that. He said, in the Signal Corps, you've got some unusual credentials, and we'd like to send you to command general staff college. But you need command. You need a big command. As a major, you didn't get command because lieutenants and captains got command, and lieutenant colonels commanded battalions. Majors were staff officers in between. He said, I want to get you a command. You can have Camp Roberts, California, which is on the Hearst estate in California, satellite station. You can have the Alternate Army Command Center at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, the Army War College, or you can have the satellite station, Lakehurst, New Jersey. I said, I've never heard of any of these three. Pick one. Pick the best one. He said, ok, Lakehurst, you're going to Lakehurst.

So I got command of Lakehurst Satellite Station. That was the first satellite station ever built. It was the one that bounced the signal off the moon. It was the one that President Kennedy spoke over for the first voice conversation. Satellite, ground satellite built by a shipping company. Monstrous antenna, one hundred ten feet high. Parabolic. Built on a pedestal ninety feet high. The parabolic [antenna] was so big it almost touched the ground. It was as highly technical as you could get. I had no technology background whatsoever. I had business administration. So I took command of Lakehurst Satellite Station. As an officer, the thing I think I learned was that you took care of the troops, you took care of the soldiers as an officer and as a commander. You learned as much expertise as you could so that you understood what was going on. You trained your soldiers, you took care of them, you took care of their families. You made sure they were paid, they were fed, they were clothed and they were trained and everything that you

could do for them. And they took care of the mission. It was that simple. That was what you were there for; to see to it that they were able to do the job that you gave them. That was how I approached command at Lakehurst and it worked out beautifully. I came out of Lakehurst absolutely on top. Terrific efficiency.

MR: How long were you there?

DGF: I was there for one year. It's a two year tour. But I got recommended for Command General Staff College and I had to leave within a year. Bauer knew that, but he never told me that. The other thing I learned was the guy you should please is your rater. And don't worry about anybody else. Don't worry about generals and colonels and all the rest of these people, you know, flying around in circles. The guy that wrote your efficiency report, signed it, that was the guy you got to please. So you took care of the troops here and you found out what he wanted and you made sure he got it. You depended on him to be a good officer and to not make you do something that you shouldn't be doing. And I've never had a problem with that. I served some of the finest people in the world and my soldiers have always been terrific. Soldiers are wonderful people. They really are. They're head and shoulders above the total population. So I spent my time making sure my commanding officer gets what he wants done and done a little bit better than he requested.

My other philosophy was I volunteered for everything I can get my hands on. I am the world's biggest volunteer. Because as a rule, every commanding officer has got some real dirty jobs that nobody wants, but he's got them anyway and he needs them done. And he looked for somebody who said, hey, I'll do that, and didn't bitch and complain about it. And that'll take you a long, long way. And some of those dirty jobs turned out to be very, very interesting. That was how I ran things, that command and all the commands that I had afterwards.

I left there and went to Command General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas with the family. Wonderful. About eight hundred officers. They were all majors basically. All with a couple of tours of Vietnam behind them. Creighton Abrams Jr. was a classmate of mine. Wes Clark was a classmate of mine. So many others became well known afterwards. Very important, the connections you made in a school like that. You were in the top one third or one quarter of the Army if you went to Command General Staff College. You knew it and everybody else knew it in the class.

My number two son Timothy, played kids football. My oldest son David played in another league. Tim was a little bit small, but he was a terrific football player. The coaching staff of this little league football team had six All Americans on it. And the head coach was [George] Blanda, whose brother was the most famous football player of the day. He himself was quarterback at West Point. This was the coaching staff for an eleven year old football team. They beat everybody in Kansas. The coaching was fantastic for these little kids. Great big men coaching. Tim got his hands stepped on in one of the games and broke a couple of fingers so he couldn't play. So he was just going to be on the bench for that game. He went to the game and we showed up at the game when they were ready to play. Two hours later there was Tim, he was out in the field and he had his hand wrapped in foam like this, a cast over it and this foam thing on the end of it. It looked like a club. He was playing. The coaching staff said, well, there's nothing wrong with him, he just hurt his hand a little bit. It was the kind of reasoning they had on that football team. That's why they wanted him on the coaching staff. He was terrific. He played and he played well. At the end of the game he took all that stuff off. He was all right.

Because I had an aviation background and I had learned a lot in Headquarters European Command, I requested duty on the Airborne Command Post for the Supreme Allied Command of Europe. This was a joint assignment again. I was going to be flying on board General Haig's, who's now Supreme Alliance Commander of Europe. Four star, youngest SACEUR at that point. And he was of course in SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe], Belgium, near Mons. But the aircraft was kept in England at RAF Mildenhall. And the reason for that was it was outside the range of Russian bombers, but Haig wasn't. So we could protect the airplane just by distance by keeping it milled at home. It was a Boeing 707, which is an EC135, electronic version of a tanker. We had three of them. One of them was Kennedy's old Airplane, 291, that we could fly over in a matter of minutes to pick him up at Chievre's Air Force Base right next to SHAPE headquarters and then go off. He could command all of Europe from the air with all the communications we had on board. I was a comm officer and I had an Air Force crew of communications people on board. We had all kinds of radios and special things. We could talk to submarines, we could talk to anybody in the world anytime, including the President of the United States, the National Military Airborne Command Post, NEACP [National Emergency Airborne Command Post], which today flies behind the President. You see it every once in a while. I flew aboard NEACP. We did a crew exchange and I actually flew the President's Airborne Command Post as a result.

I got the assignment and the first thing they did while I was still at Leavenworth was, they sent me to SAC. I got to go to Offutt Air Force Base and got high altitude training. So to my knowledge, I'm the only Signal Corps Army officer that ever took high altitude training training for no reason at all. I got to fly at forty eight thousand feet without oxygen and things like that. See how long it took me to get hypoxic and pass out. I learned how to get vertigo and how to get out of vertigo in the spinning chair and centrifuge and all that kind of stuff, which the Air Force found very funny. I really enjoyed that I was always the first one in the class. Did everything, shot off injection seat training, shot up to the top of the hangar on an injection seat rack and all that. That was great fun. The Airborne command post was a four year assignment and on board was a joint staff. The boss was a full colonel of any service. Mine was the Navy. And then there was an operations officer, lieutenant colonel. Then there were three majors, Comm, Intelligence and Logistics. And then there was an Army sergeant, operations sergeant, Air Force operations sergeant and a Navy yeoman. That was an emergency action team. It was extremely classified what we did, but it was again the SIOP. We had what was known as the red ball. We could start a nuclear war. The com officer carried the presidential codes to set World War III in action. Great responsibility. And we had five crews like that. I was on the standard evaluation crew, the head crew.

It was for four years of very, very interesting flying. We flew North Sea and down over the Azores and picked up General Haig. I had Haig's first ride on board. Before he rode, an assistant Secretary of Defense came on board and did a dry run to make sure we did everything right. Since the com officer was the only one who could move on the airplane. I could go to the front end. And I actually did fly the aircraft. I did the com crew section, which was my primary mission. I was a member of the battle staff and I wrote and broadcast all of the emergency action messages. And then I took care of the VIP who was in the rear, who was the officer flying for the day. A senior general officer. When Haig was coming, this Secretary of Defense showed up and I had to go through the routine with him. I gave him all the stuff, all the briefings, all the dog and pony stuff. He said, yeah, but where's the bowl of candy? I said, what candy? He said General Haig was giving up smoking and instead he eats hard candy. You had to have a bowl of hard candy on the desk right there while you were talking to him because instead of smoking, he took the hard candy. That was the most important thing I did, was to make sure that the hard candy was there for him. The Airborne Command Post was a wonderful assignment. The kids all loved going to school in England. John and Tim and David. Carol enjoyed it there very much as well. We lived on a farm, in a six bedroom house. My hobby is Napoleonic warfare and that was primarily why I wanted to go to England, so I could continue the hobby.

Left there. I came out on the battalion commander's list, lieutenant colonel's list, and I was selected to be an Inspector General. General [unclear] 1.45.44 was a new Inspector General in the Army. He was changing the whole system and he wanted certain people in these inspector General jobs and I got one of them. So I was made the Inspector General for the 7th Signal Command, which is where I was going to go command a battalion a year later. That was a mixed blessing. I showed up at Fort Ritchie, Maryland. Here I was back at Fort Ritchie again, ANMCC, where I started out as a lieutenant out of Japan. I was back in Raven Rock, the underground command center. And that was the headquarters of 7th Signal Command. Amazing.

Anyway, I met General Riley, who was the Commander General, Brigadier, who used to be the White House communications officer. Wonderful officer. And first thing, I said hello to him and said, general, you're under investigation. [laughs] General [unclear] 1.46.35 saw me before I left the school and there's been a complaint against you. And as you know, all general officers are investigated by other general officers in the IG Corps. I didn't do the investigation. I'm your IG. But he asked me to do all the preliminary work. So I had to interview him about this incident that occurred and so forth and so on. It was the worst possible beginning you could have. I was interviewing my own commanding officer who was going to be my commander when I was battalion commander. And I was going to interview him about this incident that occurred when he was involved in. Stopping some kid for speeding on post in his car. The general ran out in the street and stopped him because he was going over thirty five miles an hour. It turned into a general officer IG complaint. It was ridiculous. He was not too happy about this. It was a bad beginning. So I spent a year as the Inspector General for the 7th Signal Command and inspected all their locations all over the country. They ran all communications in the Continental United States. Big operation, about eight thousand troops. We never spoke after that on the job. I did my reports. I wrote him my personal evaluation of the operation. He accepted it. That was all the connection we had. He was just down the hall from me. Socially, I saw him all the time. It turned out that the man was in the 4th Infantry Division the year before I was as a com officer in an infantry battalion about two miles from where I was doing exactly the same thing in the infantry battalion. I think that was the bond that kept us together. Because he knew what was going on. He was terrific.

I left IG and I became battalion commander of the East Coast Telecommunications Center at 1110 Sigma Battalion at Fort Detrick, Maryland, which was where the Chemical Warfare School and Bacteriological Warfare and all that stuff was. It also happened to be the location of a huge communications strategic station, probably the

biggest in the world. It had five huge satellite antennas as well as many other kinds of communications. Included all of Central and South America for the Diplomatic Corps, for the State Department. Our job was to provide command and control communications to the President of the United States and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all their links. More importantly, we downlinked all intelligence platforms. SR71s [Lockheed Blackbird], U2s, satellites, all downlinked through us. I had two companies, two at Fort Detrick and one at Fort Meade, where NSA is located. And I really worked for NSA. We brought all that intelligence into the analysts and they did all of the analytical stuff on worldwide intelligence. I did that for three years. But also clustered amongst my antennas was the Moscow Hotline. I ran the Moscow Hotline for three years. My mission was, don't ever let it go off the air. It was that simple. It was a contract operation, no soldiers. It was done by contract used for Harris Corporation. It had two antennas of its own. Contrary to popular belief, the Moscow Hotline was never a telephone. It has always been teletype. It has always been written. Because first of all, the premier of Russia didn't speak English and the President of the United States didn't speak Russian. So that's stupid, you know. I mean, that's movie stuff, right? It was all done encrypted. The problem with the encryption was the Americans didn't want to use American encryption and the Russians didn't want to use Russian encryption because you had to have the same machines on either end and therefore you gave away your whole encryption system. So they used Swedish. We had Swedish encryption equipment on both ends. The satellites were Russian, not American because of the highly elliptical orbit that the satellite used. Because they're [Russia] in the northern area, they can't use satellites in synchronous orbits around the equator. They're too far north. Their satellites go deep into space and come back very close to the Earth. So we used, I think, eleven Russian satellites that kept going around and around, which meant we had to hand off every two hours or so to another satellite. We had two antennas. Therefore, you picked up the satellite coming over the horizon with this one and then handed it off to this satellite antenna, this one went back to pick up the next one and it handed it off and then they switched over again. You could not lose contact for one second. That was the mission. We did it for three years. We never lost contact. It was a real hair raising experience. Besides that, all the coordination was done in Russian. All my operators were Russian speaking. All the typewriters were Cyrillic Alphabet. And besides that, we had a station in a small building and a briefing room. A curtain was up and the VIPs came from Washington and I briefed them. At the end of my briefing, curtains opened automatically. There were the guys working the Moscow Hotline and they watched it all. It was a very, very dramatic scene that we had set up. Always, always a crowd pleaser when it was over with. That was kind of a different twist in addition to running the regular battalion of about eight hundred people.

I left Battalion Command after three years and I was supposed to go to Germany to be the brigade operations and brigade executive officer of a single brigade, which I really wanted to do very much. I got a call from a friend in Washington at the Department of the Army who said get down here right away. The boss has got to talk to you. It was a three star who ran a Signal Corps. He wants to talk to you about your job. I had no idea what he meant. I couldn't believe this guy was interested in something that low. So I went down and met this general. He started this briefing off with me about all the things I was going to do and take care of, how he was going to back me and the whole Signal Corps was going to back me and on and on about how difficult it was going to be. I said, to be a brigade executive officer? He said, oh no. He said, you're going to be a special assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe for General Bernie [Bernard W.] Rogers, who was the most feared man in the United States Army. He had been Chief of Staff of the Army. He was a no nonsense guy, first in his class at West Point, Rhodes Scholar. I had known about him before because Wes Clark used to be his speechwriter. We saw it in the news. He went to be his speechwriter when I left to go to the airborne command post. And there were a million stories about General Rogers. I was briefed, the problem was that General Rogers had stated to the Chief of Staff of the Army, remember Rogers was the most senior general officer in the United States Army. That's a lot of power. He said, I cannot command Europe because the Signal Corps has failed to give me communications. Bang. That meant a lot of people were going to get relieved all over the world to include the head of the Signal Corps. So happened this guy I was talking to, this three star, was Bernie Rogers' communications officer in the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam when Rogers was a Brigadier General. They played cards at night together. He was the only signal officer Rogers trusted. He hated all of them that were in Europe and the bad communications that he had [when he was] isolated in Mons, Belgium. Rogers was an international commander. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe of all NATO. But he was also the commanding general of the United States forces in Europe. Wore two hats. He couldn't control the U.S. forces from Mons, Belgium because all U.S. forces were in Germany. The communications between the two locations were very, very poor. No one upgraded them or did anything about it. It was now my problem. They were packing my house goods to stay. So we changed that and the household goods went to Belgium. And we went to Belgium and I reported in. Rogers was so angry he wouldn't see me. He didn't even know who I was. I was a lieutenant colonel who just gave up battalion command. The deputy who was a four star Air Force. He saw me, he was a terrific guy, a really nice man and he explained the whole thing to me. My job was going to be liaison between Rogers and the Navy Commodore, the Army Brigadier and the Air Force Brigadier that ran the three services communications in Europe. And I was going to

go counsel them. Because if Rogers saw them, he would have relieved them and retired. He really didn't want to do that, but he was so angry with their poor performances. So he decided the thing to do was get some lowly lieutenant colonel and embarrass these guys, which was not good for the lieutenant colonel. I got the instructions from a brigadier general who was Rogers' executive officer. I didn't see Rogers and I was told what to do. I got in my car, went to Germany and I counseled those three generals. The Navy Commodore, [Robert K. U.] Kihune, he ended up with four stars, a very nice man. He said to me, are you trying to tell me, Colonel, that if I don't do this I'm going to be relieved? I said yes sir, that's it. And frankly, all three of them were very nice to me the rest of the years that I knew them, they all never resented it. They were very tactful, you understand, but that was the job.

I began to see Rogers. He and I never had a good day. He swore at me, he cussed at me, it was bad every day. One day he said, I was just talking to Weinberger. Weinberger was in Spain, or Portugal and he was with the Prime Minister of England. And she was talking on a secure telephone from her hotel room. He said, get me the equipment that the Prime Minister of England uses. I went right away to NSA and they said we don't know what you're talking about. So I went to Weinberger's office and they said oh, she lent him something in a suitcase. I went to the Prime Minister's office in London and asked to speak to her communications officer who was a civilian. I told him who I was and what the problem was. He said, oh, that's a Brahms. We developed that at Cheltenham, which is their National Security Agency. He said, you want that? How many? I said, well, three. [He said] Okay. I got introduced to the Prime Minister, we talked about this. She said fine. I got on a train and went to Cheltenham, England, to this place behind all this barbed wire. I spent two days learning how to operate it. It was a briefcase. You opened it up and it had a flat piece of metal inside. It had a handset on it with three positions, off, on and secure. Remember these were the days when there were not secure telephones anywhere, even in fixed station operations. This was 1983. What you did was you went to a hotel room, took the phone apart, took these two little things, screwed these onto the wires, and then you just operated the switch. Dialed a phone, you got the guy on the other end, he had a Brahms too. And you said go to position three. You turned it to position three and talked. It was now encrypted. They gave it to me. I left. It arrived a couple days later, by a special courier. I taught General Rogers and his aide and everybody how to use it. We took one to [unclear] 200.09 headquarters, to a four star. He got one so he could talk to his own headquarters and then put one on his airplane. He had a DC9 that we flew all over the place and put one on there, and he had secure communications. It was amazing. When the Lebanon thing occurred, when those marines were killed in a hotel in Lebanon,

General Rogers was sitting in Crete in a hotel, and he talked securely from his hotel room. It really, really was something. And he talked all the way back.

WC: All right, I'm going to stop you here. We're going to have to change tapes again. Just give it a second and cycle through. Okay, it should be good.

DGF: When the tour was over with General Rogers in SHAPE, Belgium, I came out on the Army War College list. I'd been on the War College list the year before, but he had deferred me for a year because he said, you're not going anywhere until this problem gets solved. So that was the end of that. I got to go to the War College the following year. I made full colonel the day the war college started. The very first day, I sat down in my work group. Remember, it was only one hundred Army colonels, and there were some Air Force and other government officials that came in. It was a great, great joy to be in a group that small and dedicated. During the first seminar, the instructor said to me that we got a guy in the group, about fifteen guys, who just had a very interesting assignment. He was with the Supreme Allied Commander the last two years. And I'd just like him to tell me what it was like dealing with General Rogers on a daily basis in a job like that? I started telling him about the job. In the meantime, he walked over and he put this dot on my hand, stuck it to my hand while I was talking. I'd never seen it before. I told him about a couple incidents where things got heated. I had been fired and rehired and on and on. Everyone was listening, and it was kind of funny. Finally I realized, everyone was looking at my hand and the dot was changing color. It was a stress dot. I was reliving in my own mind these horrible conversations with this man. When I was trying to get on his good side once, I said to him, after all, General, you're the most senior general in the United States military. He said, the hell I am. He said, I'm the most senior general in the free world. [laughs] I said, wrong again, huh, General? He said, that's right. That was a good day. So I was the demonstration on what stress can do to you. The dot went solid black from a pale color. That was War College. College is the most wonderful experience you'll ever have. One year. It was just magnificent. The people you got to know were terrific.

I went from there to the Department of the Army for one year. I had never been to Washington. They finally caught up with me, and I was sent to the Chief Signal Officer's office. I was on the brigade command list for one year. I was to put the first PCs on work desks. No one had ever had a PC. This was 1986. Zenith 246S. I'd never seen one myself. I had one thousand PCs. I had them in rooms all over the Pentagon in boxes. The first one went on my desk. I had a staff of about eight guys who were computer experts, their majors, and they taught me how to run a PC for the first time. About four days into that, we put one in the Chief Signal Officer's office. I got a call, and he said, come up here

right away. I got to send an email note to the vice Chief of Staff of the Army, General Thurmond, who was known to be difficult. He sent me an email note, and I couldn't answer it, because I didn't know how to run the machine. I had just learned it myself. In those days you had F1, F2, F3, F4, you know, and you didn't know what the hell they were. Oh, it was terrible. I had just learned it. I went up there and he [Chief Signal Officer] said, send this message to him. He wasn't even going to touch it. I had to type up this message. I hit F4 and it went. He said, you computer guys are all alike. [laughs] A bunch of geeks. And he went on and on and about it. I knew about this much more than he did about that computer. [gestures a tiny amount] The next year I learned what a PC was. We trained all the secretaries and all the officers, and boy, it was terrible. It was absolutely terrible. You spent the day running between offices in the Pentagon. Computers wouldn't work, printers wouldn't work. It was a nightmare, an absolute nightmare.

After a year I left, thank God, the Department of the Army. Working in the Pentagon was a unique experience. I went to command my brigade, which was about thirty eight hundred troops. It was called the 1101st Signal Brigade. The headquarters were Fort McNair, Virginia, which is across the Potomac in D.C., right on the water. In addition to commanding my brigade, which was split up in four battalions and nine separate companies, we were responsible for all of the downlink satellite communications for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. One of the battalions was my old battalion at Fort Detrick. So the guy got the Moscow Hotline back again and all the CIA ground stations. The Army actually operated them, but they were bought by the CIA and they were for use by the CIA. But the CIA didn't have people, so the services ran the stations for them. I had soldiers at these various hidden locations all over the country downlinking all this kind of stuff.

I had had experience with that before, because at Detrick, when I was a battalion commander, I performed the first shuttle communications. I did the first shuttle mission when the shuttle went around the world. When it got to the far side, it lost all your communications. It couldn't even get into Australia, where we had stations. We had a satellite station on a communist island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, believe it or not, in a communist state. They didn't mind it as long as we paid them. We actually had a station there. When it was on the far side of the Earth, the space shuttle downlinked to that station and then back up to a satellite and back down to us. I got to go to a very strange place. So we did the very first space shuttle communications. I got a lot of time on NBC television as a result of that. So that was interesting. We were doing that stuff again and a lot more. The brigade was very, very interesting. The problem was that a lot

of the stuff, people in the brigade didn't know what it was because they weren't cleared for it. I was cleared, but nobody else in my brigade was cleared except the guys working a particular black program. A book called *Deep Black* came out in those days, and it had a whole bunch of classified programs in it. One of which was the space telescope, which in those days wasn't the space telescope. It was looking at the earth instead. We downlinked that and several others similar. That was one of our programs. I told my people, go buy *Deep Black* so you can find out what we're doing. I couldn't believe the information that was in that book was out there. It astounded me. But I couldn't brief my own troops on what we did, but this book could. So we used that and a book called *Puzzle Palace*, which was written by the same guy that pretty much laid out the things that we did in excruciating detail. There it was.

MR: How did he get this information?

DGF: I had very high clearances that are eons of top secret, special black programs. In some cases, I was the only guy in the Signal Corps that got briefed. They were right out of the office of the White House, places like that. So it was a fascinating brigade to command. But in addition to that, I was dual hatted as the deputy chief of staff for the military district of Washington, which was the ceremonial unit. The Old Guard [3rd Infantry Regiment] was one of the units that I took care of and provided them with all their communications. In addition to that, I also picked up the job of being the signal officer on all of the posts in the Washington area. So Fort Myer, Fort Belvoir, Fort Cameron station, so forth, and so on. All of those were all my responsibility. And they had companies on each one of those and were under a different hat. So it was a very split command. I had two raters. I had a major general from the Military District of Washington who was a commanding general and I had another general in the Signal Corps. The two of them never had anything to do with each other because the missions were totally separate. That made it very difficult sometimes because one didn't appreciate the demands that the other one had. Of course, the Military District of Washington was responsible for all ceremonies in the United States, regardless of what service it was. So we did all the planning of all the funerals of everything, even if it was the Navy. The Military District of Washington did ceremonies for the President and for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I was made an honorary member of The Old Guard. Which was very interesting. Stood in ceremonies in a dressblue uniform. One of the nice things that happened was that I got to go meet Gorbachev at the White House. Carol and I got to go to the White House at a historic meeting, which was fascinating. In the Military District of Washington, the senior officers, full colonels and one general, we were what we called wallpaper. We were trusted, you know. We could be a crowd without shooting anybody. You didn't have to vet us every time. We went to these things with VIPs in various

places. We were told to stand against the wall, not talk to anybody. [laughs] We stood there with our wives, free drinks and ate canapes until they were coming out of our ears. We weren't allowed to go talk to the real important people that were in the middle of the room talking state business. We were wallpaper. I'm sure that they're still there today.

I got to be the communications officer for the presidential inaugural when the first President Bush was inaugurated. I spent six months running all the communications and computers that went into the inaugural events and the inaugural parade. The parade was really exciting. The planning that went into that is enormous. Thousands of people worked on those events. That was very interesting to be in both jobs. It was very busy. Two years in command. I left there and went to be chief of staff, Defense Communications Agency. We were in charge of all Defense Department communications in the world. I was their chief and worked for a three star. The best thing about that was I used to go to the Monday morning meeting with Colin Powell, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He had all of his heads of defense establishment and Joint Chiefs of Staff sitting around the table. On a Monday morning, he went around, asked questions and got briefed on what was going on. My job was to sit in a chair against the wall and if he had any questions regarding communications, I was supposed to answer them. We had a good rapport. He walked in, I was sitting in a chair. He walked past me and said, good morning, colonel, and I said, good morning, general. The last time we spoke. [laughs]

But my wife got to know his wife very well because she was a hostess for the Pentagon and Colin Powell's wife was also a hostess, and the two of them worked together all week long. So Alma, a lovely lady, and Carol got to know her very well. Then Carol became an Arlington Lady. I don't know if you're familiar with Arlington Ladies or not. In the Arlington Cemetery, which is part of the Military District of Washington, every day soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines are buried. Sometimes ten, fourteen funerals a day, even in peacetime. There is a point in the ceremony after the chaplain finishes and the flag has been given to the survivor that a lady volunteer, an officer's wife, goes to the survivor and presents a letter from the Chief of Staff of the Army. Also a letter she has written on behalf of herself, the Army and the Chief of Staff to express condolences at the loss of the person who was just buried. That's a very hard thing to do. There were about ten ladies that did that every day, all day long from the various services. They were known as the Arlington Ladies. They're still doing it today. We see them in ceremonies. You'll see this woman walk up and she has an Old Guard soldier on her arm to take her up, and she does this presentation. So it was a very hard duty. You know, like all army wives, they do these things during their whole husband's career. They're never paid for. They take care of soldiers, they take care of soldiers' children, they take care of soldiers' wives in various

commands all over the world. And then in the end, she went to Arlington and did that final duty. So we finished command there after two years, and then I left. I was only there eight months in that duty because I got command again and went to training TRADOC [former US Army Training and Doctrine Command] command, in Fort Monroe, Virginia, in 1990 and commanded all the signal troops in TRADOC. And was again the deputy chief of staff at TRADOC for communications electronics with one of the five deputy commanders. All the others were generals and the Signal Corps was a full colonel and performed that duty for the next three years with General [John W.] Foss, commander general. Sitting at the table, the other deputy chiefs of staff, Freddie [Frederick M.] Franks, who ran the war in the Gulf. Tommy Franks, the brigadier at the time, ran the next war. Wes Clark sat across from me. Those were the other guys at the table. I got to know all of them very, very well. Training and Doctrine Command was one hundred ten thousand man command spread over sixteen posts. I had command of all the signal troops on each of those sixteen posts, as well as my own headquarters at Fort Monroe. And we finished up thirty years in ten days like that.

MR: How do you think of your time in the service now? You basically, even if you count high school, have been in the service since you were young, not even a teenager, maybe twelve.

DGF: Twelve, thirteen.

MR: How do you think that's affected your life?

DGF: Oh, It was wonderful. Because of the people you are associated with, the military has a code of conduct that they live by, and they do live by it. If you met someone who did not live up to that code of honesty and integrity, that guy was gone. It wouldn't take long before it was identified and eliminated from the service. You had the great privilege of being able to work with honest people all the time who are doing their very best. And everyone was focused on a single mission, defending the country. That was a very nice place to work. You get to travel all over the world. The pay was terrible, there's no question about it. But as they taught us at the Army War College, someday you'll walk with kings. And that was true. I met and talked to Prince Phillip in England. I met several prime ministers. I knew the Archduke of Luxembourg and the King of Belgium. So you, you had some marvelous experiences that you never had anywhere else. But the joy was, you knew every morning when you got up and went to work that you were going to be with the best people in the world.

MR: Why don't we focus on your things that you brought?

WC: Okay, I'll hand everything to you.

DGF: Tip it so the light doesn't reflect? [Holds a collage of photos] [first photo] A unique picture. I think that's me, unfortunately, when I was twenty four years old. I'm wearing an Army Airborne hat and an Air Force flight suit because I was flying with this unit, first Air Commando Squadron in Vietnam. They lent me a flight suit because I couldn't fly in Army fatigues because they weren't fireproof. That was shot after a flight one day in a Skyraider in Vietnam. [second photo] That was taken the day I won the Soldier's Medal in the spring of 1970 after the Christmas event. [third photo] My family at Command General Staff College at Leavenworth, Kansas, including our West Highland White Terrier [named] Teddy.

MR: It isn't the same one [dog] your wife had out there?

DGF: No. In fact, that's Toddy. We've had four and we still have a pair.

WC: Do you want to name your children there?

DGF: [points to children in the third photo] That's Jonathan. He's the youngest. Timothy in the middle. David, our oldest. David is now retired from the Army. Isn't that something? He played football at the University of New Mexico and then went in for a career. My wife Carol, and me as a major. [fourth photo, a different family photo] This was taken at the War College, I believe, a few years later with David, Tim, John and Carol. [fifth photo, military portrait] That's my command photograph as brigade commander of the 1101st Signal Brigade. [sixth photo, airplane] I included this because that's a picture of a Skyraider. So you can see what a Skyraider looked like. One hell of an airplane. That's the first picture of a CBU [bluster bomb] bomb being dropped in Vietnam. That was the first shot ever taken. One of the combat photographers' missions was to take pictures of new things not seen before. [seventh photo, him and his wife] And that's a picture of Carol and I. The graduation picture at the War College.

WC: We'll take that now. I'll pass you the rest of the memorabilia.

DGF: [shows helmet] This is my Fast Movers helmet, as we called it, that I wore flying first of all in the Skyraider and then upgraded to fly high altitude with EC135 electronic aircraft, RAF Mildenhall. We lived on oxygen for eight hours on some missions, which was very, very, very tiring. Reverse breathing.

WC: Okay, here's your helmet bag. [hands bag to Fitz-Enz]

DGF: And this is kind of a tableau of the career. My helmet bag. [points to different patches on the bag] 4th Infantry Division, Vietnam. 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vietnam. And one of the rarest things, combat photographers tab. Only my platoon was authorized to wear that. This is my brigade, the 1101st-signal brigade. My aviator wings, parachute

wings. I jumped in Vietnam with the Vietnamese Army. Made five jumps there. And of course, all the jumps with them were combat jumps. And then full colonel insignia.

WC: [hands memorabilia to Fitz-Enz]

DGF: Books. Yeah. After I retired, with the local studio here, I did the [documentary] *Battle of Plattsburgh and Lake Champlain*, which occurred on the 11th of September, 1814. It was shown on PBS. [Shows the movie box] I produced it, wrote it. That was followed up with a book. [shows first book] *The Final Invasion* book. It won two national awards, the book of the Year from the Army Historical Foundation and the Military Order of St. Louis from the Knights Templar for contributions to military literature. The latest one is *Old Ironsides*. [shows second book] Again, we're back in the War of 1812, and it's the story of Old Ironsides. But more importantly, all the research for this one and the previous one was done in England because I like to write history from the standpoint of the loser instead of the winner, and you get a little different idea. So all the documentation, the vast majority of it came from England. And what I hadn't mentioned and saved for last. I was asked by Random House to write my memoir of being an Army combat photographer in Vietnam. [shows third book] So I wrote *Why A Soldier* for them. It sold twenty thousand copies and this is the new edition. A full size edition that just came out again this year as a reprint. I am publishing a new book that will come out in March of 2008, and it is alternative history. And at this time, the British are going to win the War of 1812. And it's called *Redcoats Revenge, Wellington versus Jackson*. That's Andrew Jackson, naturally. But I hope that will go well. I have a new contract for another new book just this last week, which is called *Madison's Commanders [Hacks, Sycophants, Adventurers, and Heroes: Madison's Commanders in the War of 1812]* The Generals and Navy Captains that commanded during the War of 1812, or we call it Second War of Independence. So [unclear], 2.24.55 I guess I'll be putting that out. So that's the future.

MR: All right, thank you very much.