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U.S. MARINE CORPS ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interviewee: Brigadier General James D. Hittle, USMC (Ret)

Interviewer: Mr. Benis M. Frank, Head, Oral History Unit

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Side 1, Tape 1

Frank: This interview is being conducted in Mr. Hittle's office in the Pentagon. Mr. Hittle is presently Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

On our outline, Mr. Secretary, we indicate early years, 1937-1942, August of '37 being the date that you first entered commissioned service in the Marine Corps. But what I'd like to do is go back just a little bit earlier to your college days and school days. I believe you're a Michigan native. Is that right, sir?

Hittle: That's right. I was born in Bear Lake, Michigan, the northern part of the lower peninsula, and as a child moved to Manistee, Michigan; and then from there when I was in about third grade my parents moved to Lansing, Michigan. And I lived in East Lansing 'til I graduated from Michigan State College.

Q: Was your father a professional man, sir?

Hittle: He was an attorney, yes.

Q: As I recall, very active in politics.

Hittle: As I know he always looked upon public service as a public obligation and he served as a District Attorney in northern Michigan as a young man. Then back in East Lansing he was elected District Attorney in Lansing, Michigan and then shortly thereafter he was elected to the Michigan Senate from the capitol district--central Michigan district--and he served there until his death about 12 years ago.

Q: You went to Michigan State . . .

Hittle: Michigan State College, yes.

Q: . . . College.

Hittle: Now, the thing is Michigan State University.

When I graduated from Michigan State in 1937, the student body was still small enough in most American state universities that you had a direct teacher/student relationship. And the classes were of manageable size and at that time, (airplane overhead) at when I graduated, Michigan State only had about 5800 students, we thought that was a great big school. I was back there to speak on the campus a few weeks ago and there's 40,000 students at Michigan State now.

Q: I was talking to someone. . . .

Hittle: And the football averages from one season to another are much different than they were when we had 5600, which proves everything is relative in this world.

Q: I might also say, by the way, that you are the author of a classic which is a history of the general staff.

Hittle: The actual title of it is: History of the Military Staff, because it goes far beyond the general staff per se.

I don't know if it's a classic or not, but the fact is that it's just about the only attempted comprehensive coverage of the various countries historically, and the fast development is probably one of the reasons it's still alive.

Q: Well, I took the course in the Institute, and I want to say that a lot of the things that come more in perspective since my tour of duty as an historian at Headquarters than at the time I took the course. I remember the relationship of the historian especially in the German general staff, which was quite unique.

Hittle: Yes. The interest of the German general staff in history was the very commendable one but, unfortunately, in the German general staff--at least unfortunately for the Germans, probably fortunate for the Allies--Germany placed a great emphasis upon history, and then the professional general staffers didn't even make use out of it.

Q: Yes, it's very much like intelligence.

Hittle: That's the great mystique of intelligence, I think. If you read military history, I doubt if there's one single great event that ever took place as a surprise and really

changed at least the contemporary course of the main current of history, that somebody didn't have advance knowledge of it and tried to convince some superior that they ought to do something about it, and then got turned out into the cold. I think that that's the sense of futility so often that those who labor in the vineyard of military intelligence historically have run into. It reminds me of that famous statement of Gneisenau--Count Gneisenau--and General Gneisenau before then, the disaster at Jena in 1806 under Napoleon when the German occupation forces were hitting Napoleon or he was hitting them; and he was in his prime in the great battle of Jena, and Gneisenau, of course, was probably one of the most able officers along with Scharnhorst of his time. Of course, he was always--at that time he was a relatively young officer fighting against the titled strength of inbred confidence or misconfidence, whichever you want to call it, of the higher hierarchy within the Imperial General Staff of the time. Someone said to him in the small hours of the evening when they knew the battle was going to take place in the morning, someone came up and said, "What's going to happen tomorrow?"

And the story was to the effect that Gneisenau looked at the ground, twisted his heels in deep thought, with a look of frustration on his face, and is reported to have said, "I know what should happen tomorrow, but what's going to happen only God knows."

Q: That could be any commensurate situation.

Hittle: Particularly when you knew what should be done and you knew it wasn't going to be done.

Q: I take it you were a member of the ROTC at college.

Hittle: I took Army ROTC; and my branch was the U.S. Army Cavalry Force, ROTC. It was one of the last of the units that had a full horse cavalry complement. Of course, by the end of World War II the horse had gone the way of the carriage ahead of it, and the actual horse cavalry was phased out--it was mechanized.

But I always tend to look back upon my 4 years in the U.S. Army Horse Cavalry, and the equitation, five to six 8-hours a week plus summer camp; and I look upon it as a very useful period because I think that equitation on a real intense prolonged basis teaches something very important. And I may not have learned at the time, but I look back on it, why I feel I probably learned something out of it and that is that it is really a lesson in humility because here you are in college, almost got a baccalaureate degree and you're ready to go out into the world you think to earn a living in the market place of competition, and all this time you have to work like hell and concentrate in order to be smarter than that dumb horse who's going to throw you off the first time you relax. And I think one of the things that's missing today in our whole social, educational and economic system is the horse because, if it didn't teach you anything

else, it taught you that, as a human being, you had to work awful hard to be smarter than that dumb 4-footed animal.

Q: Why did you opt for a commission in the Marine Corps?

Hittle: Well, my first commission--actually, while I was waiting for the Marine Corps commission to come through--I was very briefly in the Army Reserve in the Horse Cavalry. I never went to active duty in it, but that was my initial commission in the reserves.

About a month before I--or two months before I was scheduled to graduate from Michigan State, the professor of Military Science and Tactics called me in. He said, "This year we're going to have another one or two appointments," he said, "to the U.S. Marine Corps," he said, "from those who stood high in the ROTC." And he said, "Would you be interested?"

I said, "What's the Marine Corps?"

And he said, "Well," he said, "it's a mighty elite outfit." He said, "I served with someone in France," he said, "the later part of World War I," he said, "in General Lejeune's division and he was on the staff. A great outfit." He said, "You see a lot of duty and high standards. They're relatively small, but I've had a lot of admiration for them."

And so I said, "Well, I'm all set to go to law school starting soon after I graduate." I said, "I'd always figured, from the day of my earliest perception of it was that I wanted to be a lawyer, and there never was any doubt about it."

So he said, "Well," he said, "think it over."

So I went home and talked to my father. My father had his law practice there and I was his only son. And I knew he had expected me to--he looked forward to when I'd be able to practice with him. But I was one of those types that believed that a person had to do what they really wanted in life: they should never be held down by somebody else's hopes or requirements. So he actually leaned over backwards and encouraged me to take a crack at the Marine Corps on the basis that military service never did anybody any harm, and that after a good try at it if I decided I still wanted to take law and get out why, I'd at least done my chore.

So I entered the Marine Corps in 1937 and came out about a quarter of a century later.

Q: You got your law degree. . . .

Hittle: No; I never got a law degree. I got a lot of rub-off while I was growing up at home and when I was in the military service, but I never got a law degree.

Q: Your first assignment was to the Basic School in Philadelphia.

Hittle: That's right. I was in Philadelphia in the Navy Yard, it had the Marine Corps Basic School in it. The parade ground was to drill down at Liberty Park, and down on South Broad Street was the maneuver area.

Q: Who were some of your classmates?

Hittle: Oh, it was a class of very, very able people in it. Colonel Heinl probably one of the most distinguished military historians and writers in the rank of the day; General McCutcheon who is in Marine aviation today. I could go down a long list of very distinguished officers in that group.

Q: Had the curriculum at the Basic School been affected much by the publication of FTP 167, and the development of amphibious warfare doctrine as it had begun in '34, '33?

Hittle: I wouldn't say it had been effected very much. Really, that term "Basic School," back then was a very proper term. The instruction was very basic and the result was that there wasn't very much advanced as far as doctrine was concerned. It was basically the essential, the professional tools of the trade.

Q: They didn't try to teach you anything more advanced than squads right, squads left, did they?

Hittle: Oh, it was platoon and company tactics and a lot of emphasis on the essentials.

Q: Who were some of the instructors at this time.

Hittle: You look back and we had some outstanding instructors. Major Graham? And our company commander in the Basic School in the company I was in was Lewie Puller; and anybody

that couldn't be effected beneficially in some respect in the military profession by serving under Lewie Puller, there'd be no hope for him anyway.

Q: Did you have an opportunity to choose what your assignment was to be after Basic School, or was it a

Hittle: In the most theoretical sense you did. But in those days the larger portion went to sea: almost every second lieutenant or first lieutenant got assigned to sea. And it was a very beneficial thing, I think.

I went from Basic School to the west coast to the USS Portland and served on her in the Pacific Fleet mostly out at the west coast and did some maneuvering in the Carribean; and then I was transferred from her at the end of the year to Marine Corps Schools, Quantico -- actually to the FMF Brigade in Quantico, 5th Marines, 2d Battalion. And there was some choice there because I was on the west coast and I wanted to get to the FMF; and so I asked my detachment commander, Colonel--later colonel and brigadier general--was then Captain Ray Crist, who was a really distinguished naval officer through the war and one of the outstanding artillery commanders we had through World War II. And Ray said, "Just remember something," he said. "As long as you got a good reason in this Corps, nobody blames you for asking."

So I followed that the rest of my career; and I, as a second lieutenant on the USS Portland out at Long Beach, I put in for Fleet Marine Force, Quantico; and just prior to

when I was due for transfer went to . . . that the ship was sent around through canal to the Carribean for maneuvers then back through the canal again to Long Beach; and two of us got orders to Quantico. On the way through I stopped at Headquarters and said, "Why was it that just two of us got orders there," and (interruption) they said that we were the only two that asked for it.

So, they tried to do what they could, because there always was a real, distinct policy of compassion and sympathy in the Corps on assignments. (Excuse me. I've got to take this phone call privately.)

Q: I can't help but think, as I interview you here and as I talked to you the first time, the very incongruous and interesting juxtaposition of your positions as first a Marine officer and of course now as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and particularly as it applies to your comment about sea duty, and especially since you are Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower, in view of so few seagoing billets of the Marine officers today. There is such a paucity opportunity.

Hittle: Well, I think that's unfortunate because sea duty, I think, did something very valuable for every Marine officer. It brings him in closer contact with the Navy on a day-to-day professional basis. The result is that the Navy understands Marine Corps problems better simply through the personal and professional relationship. And the Marine Corps gets a better insight into what goes on in running a ship because the

officer at sea is part of that ship's company. And this is very important as the years go on, the relationship between the Navy and Marine Corps, because the Marine Corps I firmly feel and Navy always felt, has its basic justification not only in law but also in doctrine and logic. It has its basic justification as a major service, although small, though nevertheless a major combat service; it has it as a part of the overall organization of American sea power. Not part of the Navy: a separate service, but, nevertheless, a part of the Department of the Navy, as a primary instrument of American sea power.

Q: I don't think there's any easy solution to the situation either. There aren't that many ships available for a Marine to go seagoing.

Hittle: Well, it's not just going in a capital ship in a Marine detachment. There's a lot more opportunity and the more opportunity in this sense that balances favorably than there was when I first went to sea, and that is: our amphibious forces, our amphibious groups, our amphibious organization in which the Navy and Marine Corps work so closely together, so that there is an across the board working relationship. And, of course, if we can keep working together, the Navy and Marine Corps, the better off the Department of the Navy's policies are going to be when it comes to a matter of implementation of overall national security policy. And only through the close association of the Navy and the

Marine Corps, both cooperative and from the standpoint of doctrine, only through this close cooperation is the necessary advance going to be made in American seapower.

As you know, American seapower is something unique, really, in the history of warfare. No other nation in history has really ever achieved as deliberately and as in full bloom and with the essentials in the right place that the United States has in achieving the balanced fleet. And the balanced fleet is really the product of two very basic things: Naval power in its essential form, which is the Navy per se--ships, guns; and the other major attribute of it being the Marine Corps landing forces which have been incorporated into the fleet structure. And this is really the genesis of the American concept of seapower, and it marks the departure of U.S. seapower doctrine and thinking from the European concept; and this departure took place at the time of the Spanish-American War with the Marine landing force in Guantanamo Bay, because for the first time in the history of the United States, a specific landing force embarked on a ship incorporated into the fleet structure was brought into combat. And from that point on, the farsighted and intelligent naval leadership, both civilian and in uniform that we had at the time, saw that there was something new and great in this. As a result, based upon the very simple fact that we incorporated landing forces along with the traditional aspects of naval power which was guns and ships. Out of that

grew the philosophic willingness as well as the professional enthusiasm of incorporating into the fleet every kind of weapon that would contribute to the overall effectiveness of seapower, not only within the limitations of the sea itself but also from the standpoint of the really, the greatest chore of seapower, which is being the instrument by which national power is projected from the sea against land targets.

Q: Of course, this is the transition to the Fleet Marine Force.

Hittle: Well, this is the genesis of the Fleet Marine Force. No other nation in history ever had this. The British were on the threshold of it twice during their naval history. One time they--Admiral Vernon beautifully conceived and poorly executed a campaign in the Carribean. What, 1740?

Q: That era, yes.

Hittle: About 1740. And then unfortunately, it foundered really on interservice lack of cooperation. The only way that Vernon, who was a brilliant naval officer, knew what had to be done; the only way that he could get the embarked British Army troops to do a job was to go over and try to cajole or threaten or convince the embarked military landing force commander, and most of the time he couldn't do that; the result is that it foundered on the rocks of interservice difficulties. Another time that they had the . . . they were on the threshold of the basic concept of integrated landing force

into the fleet, was the British campaign in the Mediterranean shortly thereafter. Admiral Bing. And of course, there's probably more in this thing somewhere; I don't know where it would be--he had embarked Marines aboard for a landing forces in operations against France; probably in the Minorca area, as I recall. And before sailing from Gib, he put all the Marines ashore and took aboard Army. And apparently he had nothing to do with it, and after he'd--it's quite a story in itself--after he'd sailed, they were beating back and forth in the Med and they raised the French fleet. And as the story goes, it's well chronicled in British Naval literature. Bing was a very meticulous man, he never made a mistake, apparently because they never did much.

As soon as he raised the French fleet, his chief of staff, who was flag captain for the quarterdeck, and there they brought up the written battle instructions from the Admiralty and they pondered them every comma and period and semicolon in them, and they were so insistent on doing what the Admiralty told them--they studied it so long--in the meantime the French fleet got to windward and got away. And this was quite a cause celebre within the British Isles. And the result was that there was a terrific political battle going on at the time, and Bing was charged with cowardice in the face of the enemy. Everybody figured, of course, he won't get tried. And they convened a court martial, and the prevailing opinion according to the writers at the time was that they all figured this was as far as it was going to go.

He did get tried and then he got convicted; and they figured he wouldn't get the maximum sentence. And he got the maximum sentence. But apparently it was mandatory, for cowardice in battle and that was to be executed by firing squad. And everybody knew he'd get released; the prevailing opinion was that he'd get pardoned or commuted sentence because he was a vice admiral of the Mediterranean command. There weren't many vice admirals in the British Navy or sea commands at that time. And contrary to the prevailing opinion, Bing was taken out on the quarterdeck of his own flag ship, and a squad of Marines gunned him down.

Q: Did it shake up the British Navy much, do you think?

Hittle: Well, I don't know. The British have had a rather snide observation of over the many years and one you run across among most British writers on military subjects to the effect that every once in a while it's necessary to shoot a general or a flag officer in order to encourage the others. But probably that old adage stems from the Bing episode.

Q: I'd like to get back, if I may, to your assignment to the Fleet Marine Force, the brigade at Quantico. General Shepherd had it at the time, did he not?

Hittle: No, I think he had the 1st Battalion, briefly after I got there. Alfred H. Noble had the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines.

And as you look back through the list of officers that were in the 2d Battalion and the 1st Battalion, then we formed up the 3d, and then branched it on out into the division on the eve of the war, it becomes manifestly evident within that 5th Marines at the time--in the late '30s and the first couple of years of the '40s there, 1940-41--was probably one of the greatest concentrations of ability to move down to high command in the Marine Corps in history paralleled by probably few organizations in the U.S. Armed Forces, because out of that 5th Marines came a great big chunk of the leadership of the Marine Corps in World War II.

Shepherd moved up to become Commandant eventually; Noble got four stars. Bill Whaling, my battalion executive officer and a great field soldier, a wise, experienced man. He retired as a major general. Johnny Clement who was battalion commander of the--I think--the 3rd Battalion, or one of the battalions; he retired a lieutenant general.

Go right down the list. Wasn't that the time that Graves B. Erskine, who was executive officer of the 5th Marines under Noble?

Q: Yes.

Hittle: Was a division commander in the war. Retired with four stars. Became, later on, a special assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

It was really a remarkable farsighted outfit with able people in command who had imagination and they were great professionals and disciplinarians. All of which adds up to one word: leadership.

Q: Were you tempted at all to go into the defense battalion program?

Hittle: No. I never was bitten by the mystique of the cannon cockers. I always figured they had a specialty of their own. And for some reason when my first job I had in the battalion was as a platoon commander, I was happy in it. I was under some excellent officers; and particularly NCOs who, when I look back: Gunnery Sergeant Petry, and Dusty Rhodes, Lou Diamond. Just go down the list. I was getting a post-graduate college education from them without knowing it. And whatever little I accomplished I owe an awful lot to those three.

Q: What about your fellow platoon leaders. Who were some of those? Were they the same ones who were at Basic School with you?

Hittle: Basically my contemporaries, yes.

Q: What was the nature of the pre-war training, of the maneuvers, the flexes?

Hittle: Well, pre-war training in the FMF was pretty rigorous by any standard. It was individual training; it was small

unit training; it was battalion and regimental training. And we didn't have all the maneuver area and business that they have in Quantico today. But we made good use of it--the creek areas along the Chopawamsic, out on the east side of US 1 which is all now housing area--that was all maneuver area then.

I remember very well every morning you'd fall in and then go out in the field for the day. And the way you got to the field in those days you'd hike from your barracks out to the maneuver area. After you got through hiking an hour you'd start working; and at the end of the working day you'd hike back an hour. Of course, if you went by vehicle like they do at the present time, a lot could be said for it, you'd have more time. But nevertheless, there's a certain virtue, too, in getting out and keeping hiking after you know you're so damn tired that you can't do it, but you still do. I think that if long hikes teach you anything, and particularly after a work day, I think that without even a lesson having to be expressed--the lesson is learned--that there's no troops in the world that can't be urged to keep going after they think they can't. With the right kind of leadership, any body of troops can be made to keep going after they've come to the conclusion in their own minds that they've got to take a breather.

Q: How about the enlisted Marines of the day?

Hittle: Some of them were the greatest. And some of them that I knew then, and the younger ones that were with me, one of the most rewarding things in life today is the Christmas cards, the occasional letter I get. Some of them'll come to Washington, come in and say hello and sit down and chat a minute. As I say, one of the things I learned in the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines was the abiding and unforgettable lesson of the essential goodness, professional virtues, and all around character of the United States Marine enlisted man.

Q: What do you feel is the highlight of this nearly 2-year tour with the brigade?

Hittle: Listen; when you work for A. H. Noble and Bill Whaling and people like that, there wasn't a day that didn't have a highlight in it from the standpoint personally and professionally.

Of course, everything pointed toward the winter fleet exercises and landing operations in the Caribbean.

Q: Down at Culebra and Vieques.

Hittle: Culebra and Vieques, yes.

Q: How about the experimentation as far as new equipment. . . .

Hittle: I'll tell you about the experimentation. I made one of the first rubber boat landings ever made from a submarine during the time our battalion was attacking and General

Clement's battalion was defending Vieques. The reason I did it was, after I'd left the platoon after I'd been there about a year, I was made battalion adjutant, headquarters company commander, and the S-2. So not only did I stay busy but I got a broad insight into at least platoons. And from that vantage point, regimental-level activities. And because I was the S-2, I would conduct the rubber boat reconnaissance of Vieques in preparation for our attack which consisted of going to sea--shoving off with the battalions and attack. And as I recall, at that time we were aboard the New York or Texas; the battleship was being used as a transport. The submarines would rendezvous with us. And we went over to the submarine; and she was an old S-boat, as I remember. And I think it was Captain Waterman, Commander Waterman was in command of her. They put five men of the intelligence section in the rubber boat and lashed the rubber boat to the deck--deflated, of course--and shoved off, cruised around the adjacent waters, and on a pitch black night two nights later, we surfaced; and they said to inflate the rubber boat, and I looked out there and all you could see was some back water: no moon, clouded skies. And he said, pointing, "There's your heading," waving his hand in the direction which I assumed was Vieques. He said, "The beach, that's your heading right up there." Of course, we were only a couple, 3 miles out. And we got out and started rowing that rubber boat. And before we'd gone very far only Corporal Bixby, who was my

intelligence chief, and I were the only two who weren't seasick. So we rowed the rest of them.

Somehow we hit the beach, hid the boat, and made the reconnaissance. Two nights later came back up, couldn't see a thing. The submarine surfaced about 50 yards from us, and that was the end of our reconnaissance. I was glad for submarine duty the next 2 days.

Q: Was this a rubber boat that Great Farrell had devised?

Hittle: I don't know who devised it. All I know is that on the way out, after we'd shoved off, and way out in those black waters I felt the boat was getting pretty rigid under me. And I said, "Secure that valve in the bow there." That was the compressed air going into it. Somebody had left, inadvertently, the valve open. If it hadn't been turned off it would probably have gone up in a great big loud bang like a balloon in another 5 minutes. Sometimes you do things by intuition that are right.

Q: I noticed that you underwent a course of instruction at the Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice in March and April of 1940.

Hittle: We came back from maneuvers, and the then regimental exec who was a very, very able officer and certainly made a great contribution to the corps, Colonel D. L. S. Brewster, he called me in one day and he said, "They'd like you up at Headquarters," he said, "they've got an assignment for you of

temporary duties." I guess it was 6 weeks, something like that, 2 months.

I went to Headquarters and I went in and saw Colonel Pedro del Valle, who was later retired as a general, and he was a division commander on Okinawa. And another extremely able, professional officer. And he said, "We can have one appointment to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Special Military Intelligence School, and we've selected you to go."

"Well," I said, "got any instructions with respect to me going?"

"No," he said, "you're just welcome to report in," he said, "and you just come back and tell us when the school's over."

So my wife and I came up and got a place out on--in those days you could find an apartment available in Washington--went out on Park Road out on 16th Street and got an apartment and went to school down at the FBI. It was one of the most useful periods of instruction I've ever had in my life. We learned what they did. They took the basic essentials out of their special agents course--their FBI course--and boiled it down, with the best instructors and the best demonstrations, the best lab work of the whole year-long course. And it was of great benefit throughout my career.

Q: Were there any other Marines who attended with you?

Hittle: No. I was the only Marine in the course.

Q: After that you went back to Quantico.

Hittle: I went right back to Quantico.

Q: You remained with the battalion, with the brigade, from March of '41 until after, actually, the division was formed.

Hittle: After I shoved off, went to Holland Smith--this was in the days when some people with clear vision could see that there were war clouds on the horizon. And the Marine Corps got instructions to form the 1st Division, and General "Howlin' Mad" Smith got the job. And "Howlin' Mad" Smith knew that you didn't form up a division on an 8-hour day. You took it to the field, put it under canvas, and that's the way you did it.

So I went down to Guantanamo Bay, went under canvas, and in that climate and under those conditions brought into being the 1st Marine Division. And one of the sources of pride I've had through my life is that I am a plank owner of the 1st MarDiv.

Q: You're looking at another member, not a plank owner.

Well, you got kind of cheated there, Mr. Secretary, because they hauled you right out to go seagoing again.

Hittle: Well, I didn't get cheated in a way because I was in on the formation of it. All the maneuvering was intensive maneuvering down there. That was the period, incidentally, when we loaded up. And as the archives later have shown

that--I understand--that the rumors were kind of right that we were going to Martinique. We got a loaded for that one, but something happened and it didn't take place.

But anyway there's one thing I remember so well about that is: It was a happy time of my life, too, because you didn't always wait for the government to look after you in those times. And wives were not authorized to go but there was no objection to them being in the vicinity, but the Marine Corps wasn't paying any wives transportation down for maneuvers. There wasn't any place for them to live, they thought, anyway. But some of the more industrious ones in the division there scouted out a location on Brooks Island down inside the Cuban area, midway in Guantanamo Bay, at the headwaters of Guantanamo Bay between Boqueron and Caimanera. That's about as far from civilization as you can get.

And there was a little island down there called Brooks Island--Title Brooks--named after a man who owned it who had a Cuban wife and that had been in construction company's board and room place. They had little individual rooms down a long, almost shedlike construction, and the partitions only went up about three-quarters of the way. It was spartan living. Our wives came down on their own. My wife flew from Miami to Havana and then got the cross Panama train all the way down to Santiago. About 17 of us lived down there. Everybody chipped in for the common mess at night. If we had the duty, we couldn't get back. If we didn't have the duty,

well, why, we would find a boat going that way; and then we'd be off in the morning in time for our formation and the day's activity.

And among those that were down there were later Colonel and Mrs. Lytz, Walter Lytz; Brute Krulak and Amy Krulak were down there.

And it was one of those times you look back on that are happy times in the Corps.

Q: Let me just turn this over.

Hittle: Okay. I think we'd better come to an end on this.

Q: We were talking about your going to sea.

Hittle: No, I wasn't cheated out of that. I left with great regret in May of 1941 because I wanted to stay with the division because I felt in the 5th Marines and the 1st MarDiv I found my service home and companions that, if there was a war I wanted to go to with. But in this little business it's not where you serve, but how. And I got orders to the Marine detachment on the USS Washington, which was then under construction in the Philadelphia Navy Yard. She was one of the new 35,000-ton, 16-inch battlewagons. So I joined her there as a middle Marine. At the time Bill McKean was the captain that had her. We commissioned the ship; and shortly after commissioning, Bill McKean made major, I made captain. I moved up and took the detachment and then we sailed for Europe.

End Side 1, Tape 1

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Begin Side 1, Tape 1

Q: We wound up at the time you were assigned to the Washington.

Hittle: I've got to go at five. So, we've got half an hour.

Q: All right, half an hour, fine.

Assigned to the Washington; new ship, just newly commissioned.

Hittle: I would say that was the spring of 1941.

Q: Yes, sir, April '41 I have here.

Hittle: And the Washington was in the Philadelphia Navy Yard getting ready for commissioning. We formed the detachment. I may have mentioned before: the commanding officer of the Marine detachment was then Captain William McKean; I was the middle Marine; and the junior Marine was Jonas Platt, who is now a major general. We formed up the detachment, the ship was commissioned and went on the shakedown in the Carribean, as I recall it was, and there we operated up and down the east coast.

And I remember very well we were in Norfolk at anchor on the 7th of December, and I was in the number 3 messing compartment and somewhat forward; and when the corporal came up he said, "Did you hear the news?"

And I said, "What news?"

And he said, "The Japs just bombed Pearl Harbor."

And I said, "Where did you get that rumor?"

And he said, "It's no rumor. I just came down from the signal bridge and just then the ship's communication system came on. It was the officer of the deck. And he said, 'The Japanese just bombed Pearl Harbor. This is not a drill.'"

So some of the best souvenirs I've got of the war is that when the Marine detachment's communication orderly came around I had him give me one of the carbons of the signal from the Commander-in-chief, Pacific, that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. And I still have that from the USS Washington printed across the top of it.

Q: The fact that you picked up the message from CinCPac to CNO or CominCh rather.

Hittle: I think it was CominCh. Yes, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. I think that's what it was, but don't hold me to it. It may have been an ALNAV.

But anyway, ^{the} /way it was received in the Washington, I got one of the original messages that World War II had started.

So after that we moved up toward Rockland, Maine, for the measured mile run, and shortly thereafter we formed up to join the Home Fleet.

Q: Why?

Hittle: Well, that was when the British were down to their last battleship and Churchill said the British people weren't existing on a ship to ship basis. And that's when Churchill arranged with President Roosevelt for the United States to send a task force to join up with the Home Fleet because the British were down to their last battlewagon then. So they sent over the USS Washington as a flag, and along with it cruisers, destroyers, squadrons. And the Wasp was there ahead of it.

Q: The Wasp was there.

Hittle: Yes, the Wasp was part of the task force.

Q: You were telling me about the flag--the officer who had held the flag, Admiral. . . .

Hittle: John W. Wilcox.

Q: Yes, Wilcox. And you were saying that at this time you'd tell us the story about his disappearance and the involvement.

Hittle: Did you get that before or not?

Q: No. You said at the end of the last tape that you'd put it on this one.

Hittle: Well, we sailed from Portland--either Portland or Rockland--under radio silence. And commander of the the Task Force 99 was Admiral John W. Wilcox. We hit a big storm up off the Grand Banks and the seas were so heavy that on the

Washington we were dipping water with the upper deck 5-inch mounts. And there were 2 inches of water down the ventilators into the living spaces. And I think it was in the afternoon, but I'm not certain about it, we got a man overboard signal in. So with a storm like that, everybody went to their foul weather parade to muster. We did a 180 turn, we noted, which is very unusual in submarine waters and then came back around after a short run--got back on the original course.

So as soon as this muster was over and secure was given, why I immediately sent up and relieved the captain's orderly--the admiral's orderly--on the bridge, to see what was going on. There's the old saying that: The only intelligence system that a Marine officer has aboard ship is the orderly.

And that's one of the reasons--well not the only reason--so he came down and said that very strange things took place. Apparently they, after life buoy watch, saw what he believed was someone floating by and had let go of the life buoy, and sounded "man overboard!" That's when they send everybody to foul weather parade. And the junior officer of the deck had the clipboard with all the divisions on it and checked them all off as they came in over his headset, turned around to the officer of the deck, saluted him and said, "Sir, all hands foul weather parade mustered and accounted for."

And the exec turned around and said the same to the captain; so the captain turned around to the chief of staff, who was down on the bridge, said the same, "All hands foul

weather parade mustered and accounted for." And then there was a dead silence. Somebody said, "My God! Where's the admiral?"

So they did the only thing they properly could do: They had a search of the ship to see if he'd fallen or been hurt, or was against the bulkhead someplace in the storm. And he wasn't. So the next thing they did, they immediately convened a board of inquiry on the Washington. And about the first person who was called was the captain of the Marine detachment, who was me. And the rest of this I want to put off the record on this and, hell, normally you can put it on or keep this so that it's not made public until . . . (cross talk) because it's a disparagement of an individual, if it be so construed.

And the first question that was asked me was a very good question. The question was, "Where was the captain's orderly when--the admiral's orderly--when the admiral went over the side?" Because he's supposed to be with him at all times. And I said, "Well, to answer that question I'll simply have to reiterate what I'd told the executive officer a few days before, and it was: That if they saw the admiral around the ship without the orderly that it must not be assumed that the orderly was a derelict, because the admiral had three doors to his flag quarters, one port and one starboard, and then they covered one aft--a covered entrance. And that's where the orderly took base. And the Admiral had a new game in which he'd tiptoe out of the starboard or port door, come

around and tap the orderly on the shoulder and say, 'Hee, hee! I fooled you that time!'" So that's the reason I want this off the record for a while until I release it.

So being under radio silence, there was no way to tell the British we didn't have the admiral aboard. We sailed into Scapa Flow on schedule, and it was really a very dramatic thing: This was the first joining up of an official task force with the Home Fleet since that great dramatic episode of similar circumstance in World War I. And they had the Coastal Command out to try and cover for us at dawn.

Q: How far out?

Hittle: It was a good run, now, I forgot. Well, of course, they didn't have very long legs on the Coastal Command, anyway. They took Beeches, I guess, C-46s. And the British sent out a few destroyers. And from the director we raised the British Cruiser Squadron, I think the Frobisher and the London were two of them, and I forget which the other one was.

But the night before we had a sub attack going in, making the approaches because the Germans obviously had our course G-2d fairly well; and once we got on that--in that vicinity, on that heading. And one of the most dramatic things--and we'd never seen it before--was a sub attack at night, particularly the ASW, because when you dropped the depth charges you could see them explode way down below. And then the water would come up in a cascade of light like the

transparent fluid of a volcano. And that was going on for a good period during the evening.

Q: Could we get back to the court for a minute, please, because you only dealt with the first question asked you; and I assume that--or it may be assumed from the answer to the question asked you--that the rest of the testimony was pretty much along the same line.

Hittle: I don't know what the rest of the testimony was. I was the Marine captain. I was in command of the detachment.

Then well before we sailed, Captain McKean was promoted major and I was promoted to captain from first lieutenant. And I moved up in command of the detachment soon after we were commissioned. And Joe Platt became middle Marine and Bob Knox became the junior Marine.

Q: Were there any other indications of the admiral's. . . .

Hittle: Only heresay, what people said about him.

One thing that wasn't heresay: Of course, when you're getting ready to go into action, one of the things you do, you remove everything on the weatherdecks that's subject to splinter from the shot hit from the enemy. And as soon as we got into cold weather why you had the ship's carpenter putting a little midwestern winter glass in the vestibule entrance, the side entrance on the weatherdeck. That was one of them. Of course, there were a lot of stories.

In all fairness to him, at one time he must have been a very able officer. He was very punctilious in his dress.

Q: Was he particularly old?

Hittle: I don't remember if he was old for his rank; but I remember he was very carefully picked for the job because that's one of the first big potentially combat commands of the war. The British had been fighting the war for a long time, and we had to put some high-powered ability over there with them, because the one thing we found out was when you sailed with the British in wartime, they knew how to fight a war at sea.

Q: Was there any reaction after a return--after you got into port?

Hittle: Yes. The British came over to pay their respects and so forth. And looks of amazement and disbelief when the word got around to the visiting group that the reason the admiral wasn't aboard was: we lost him at sea.

That same day the Jerry's put a spotting plane over, and there was a big antiaircraft barrage. But, Scapa Flow had regular visits from the German planes. It was well pock-marked with bomb craters over the island of Flotta and the other islands. We operated in and out ultimately from Scapa and from Balfjord in Iceland, shadowing the convoys inbound and outbound from Murmansk. And our shadowing operations and usual track would take us about even between Spitzbergh and

the North Cape. And then we wouldn't get beyond the narrows with the capital ship. Right at that point the smaller ships were taken and they turn fleet element. The capital ships go Home Fleet, they do a return. It was a strange war. It was almost like fighting with the clouds in the water. And we'd run right along the edge of the ice pack.

We had one incident up there that I don't think had really been reported adequately, and it could have changed the whole course of the war. We were making one sweep up there and I think it was right after we arrived, we were making one sweep north, and we were off the Norwegian coast fairly well, and the two battleships were in column. And King George V was flag with commander-in-chief, Home Fleet aboard and, incidentally, Washington behind her. And this was when the Tirpitz was . . . every time the anchor chain jingled, why it sent shivers up and down the convoy route. And our job was to nail the Tirpitz if we could, or the Hipper or the other big ships. And it was pretty fragmentary to put the thing together because the ship it happened to there weren't many survivors. There was a beautiful tribal-class destroyer that . . . they were probably one of the most beautiful ships: fast, lean, sleek, very maneuverable. It was on the bow of the King George V. And the way this thing was reconstructed, at least in the bar in Flotta, getting back to Scapa Flow, and the ships' officers got around the destroyer . . . let's see, what was her name? She was the Punjabi, the tribal-class. She apparently got a submarine

ping to starboard of her, and apparently on the head and starboard of the King George V, put on speed; she crossed over the bow and took defensive action with her depth charges. Somebody made a mistake either in the computation or in the sensing of relative speeds or the helmsman or somebody, and what happened is that: Just as she started to cross, with all her depth charges ready to go, all alarms going in general quarters, started to take the track across the bow they thought was safe with the King George in routine operations. They went into a fog bank. And just as they went into the fog bank, the King George V cut her in two pieces right at mid-ships. The result was that it was a tremendous explosion; and it testifies to the training of the Washington because without a thing being done everybody on the Washington turned to at general quarters, just automatically--it was a reflex action.

What had happened was that the King George V got a successive series of blasts from the depth charges, which are armed that as they sunk, hit the destroyer, the depth charges went off under the keel of the King George V, and she lay dead in the water.

Q: She had all dead engines?

Hittle: All dead engines. Dead in the water. When I got up on deck to go to my director, I saw her ahead of us. She was at 10 degree list. Dead in the water; and these explosions

going on. On either side of us the water was full of British bluejackets.

Q: Dead or alive?

Hittle: Well, most of them at that point were alive. Some of them were saved by some of the rescue ships, but 10 minutes in that water you were dead.

We were moving right ahead of it, and then we moved over the area of the depth charges and we caught a series of blasts under our keel. I remember one that went off under the bow: it was just like it lifted a buggy whip up and down, which showed the strength there was in those battle-wagons. What it really did, it did spring, tear some of our plates. We kept in operation until late July or first part of August before we returned to Brooklyn and we did go into the yard and repaired them at that time. But it showed the toughness of those ships.

The blasts under the Washington were so heavy from that, that just as I came out from wardroom country to go up to my 5-inch director, there was a 4-barrelled 1-inch gun, a pom-pom, way up on the upper deck there. And the blast was so heavy that it blew every magazine out of that 1.1 pom-pom, and all the shells came raining down just like a handful of hail. You could count them all coming down and looking at them because they had a fulminate of mercury cap on them, and they just rained all over the place. And the miracle of it was: Not one of us down there--there wasn't an explosion on

one. It would be hard to computerize how you could have that many falling in such a small area and not have one explode by hitting on the cap.

Q: Did the KGV stay dead long?

Hittle: Well, probably one of the most dramatic aspects of it was that she was ahead of us, and we were headed right square for her stern. Here were the two battleships on which the . . . really the survival of the convoy depended. If we were taken out of action, why the German High Seas Fleet, including the Tirpitz, wouldn't have anything between them and these states. And this is one of those times when a naval officer's training and ability, regardless if he'd never did anything before or after, paid off; because the senior watch officer was either Commander or Lieutenant Commander Tom Dell--his name was--he was the ship's first lieutenant. And as soon as the King George V got this tremendous blast and went dead in the water, all her switches were blown and everything. Here we were doing well over 20 knots, these battlewagons in column stern. We were headed right for the stern of the King George V. It would have been one of the most disastrous, immediate _____ of all strategic occurrences of the entire war or any war if we had plowed into the stern on her. And Tom Dell, without ever giving an order--he didn't have time for it--he just lunged forward, knocked the helmsman out of the way, and he took the wheel himself and spun her a hard left. The result was: We just shaved past

the stern of the King George V. So that's just one of the little incidentals of how the war in the Atlantic, and really perhaps even the immediate survival of Britain, depended upon the resourcefulness and the reflex intelligence on one man.

Q: The momentum, even though you had a tremendous space between the two, the momentum of the sheer weight of this thing that you start crabbing even to make a hard left.

Hittle: Right. You just sheared by was all. You could almost reach over and touch the other ship. But the British damage control was excellent. They built tough ships.

And I guess it was within 20, 25 minutes that they had the damage control going on her; and she had a big gash in her bow. It just looked like you could sail a destroyer through it. And they had her shored up, apparently; the internal water-tight integrity was strong. And she was back up to around 14, 15 knots, and we fell back in column behind her again. And she held her position until the--I think it was the . . . what was the sister ship of the Repulse? The Repulse is the one sunk off southeast Asia, wasn't she?

Q: KGV was, too.

Hittle: No, no.

Q: She never got there?

Hittle: No.

Q: Prince of Wales?

Hittle: Prince of Wales was sunk off . . . wasn't she?

Q: Bulwark?

Hittle: No, no. It was one of the big battle cruisers came out and took over. It was the size of the Repulse class, whether it was her or not.

Q: And there was a great disaster . . . sunk off of Singapore, around in that area there.

Hittle: When the British paid the penalty for not having naval aviation. . . . (cross talk)

Q: Reknown?

Hittle: Yes, that's right. It was the Reknown that was sunk out there, wasn't it?

Q: I think so.

Hittle: Well, this was the Repulse that came out, yes. She was the sister ship. Magnificent ship! I guess they're all right if you don't put one down the stack. The Hood blew up in one shot from the Bismarck in the . . . what was it, the Greenland Strait?

Q: Yes.

It must have been a real fear amongst the British Navy-types of the Scharnhorst, the Gneisenau.

Hittle: There was not fear of them at all. All they wanted to do was to get at them.

Q: Couldn't they get at them?

Hittle: Oh! They got them, they finally got them; they finally got the Graf Spee. Great seamanship! And not one ship as big as the Graf Spee was, with either the range or the weight. Yet they went after it with those high speed, fast, lightly armored light cruisers. And then they finally boxed the Bismarck, and then they eventually got the Von Tirpitz, too. (cross talk)

Q: Didn't the Germans have radar controlled guns?

Hittle: I'm not so sure the Germans had radar control at that time. If they had they would have done better than they did. I would be hesitant to say they had radar on those ships because our radar was mystifying to some of the German surface ships as well as destroyers. They had their submarines on the surface for a long time there; couldn't figure out how they were getting such an accurate fall of shots without visibility. But German gunnery was always good.

But the British knew how to fight a war at sea and they knew that their survival depended on it. There was no fear that I ever discerned among them. What they wanted to do was to go get them. It was the tradition of the Royal Navy--and it was a noble tradition as to: whenever in doubt, close

with the enemy. And one of the remarkable things about British history--just to digress naval-historywise--many a sea captain lost his ship, but he was decorated in defeat because he fought his ship well. And nobody ever got in trouble in the Royal Navy in the days of the sail and closing and coming alongside.

Q: Of course, there's been a lot of postwar literature and movies about the Royal Navy.

Hittle: Yes.

Q: Then there was Noel Coward in "In Which We Serve" which is a great one, you know.

Hittle: Yes.

Q: Well, I don't know whether they've put one out on the . . . what was it, PQ-17 that. . . .

Hittle: I was on . . . the Washington was on PQ-17.

Q: You were?

Hittle: Yes.

Q: That will go down in the annals of naval history.

Hittle: No; the USS Washington and, of course, all the Marine detachments of that ship and, I think, the Tuscaloosa was on that one, too. She was in one of the shadowing forces.

But I'm not correct on that. I know where the Washington was but I can't testify to where the Tuscaloosa was.

Q: I see where the book just came out on PQ-17, and the admiral sued and got. . . .

Hittle: \$96,000 for defamation of character.

Q: He did get it. I didn't see the final result of that.

Hittle: Because the reason that the fellow wrote the book, it's called The Destruction of Convoy PQ-17. I read the book; I have it. It was well done. But apparently he misopoke himself when he said the admiral or whoever gave the order to pull out the shadowing ships, and for the _____, did it flippantly or without knowledge or something. And they proved, I think conclusively, in spite of the secrecy surrounding the records at this time, that it wasn't necessarily so because the orders came from the Admiralty, and that's what everybody at the time knew. We were all aware, at least in our own minds there was no doubt, that the report was correct: that the order to turn back with the capital ships. And the way it developed up there it was a very simple one. Apparently what happened was--this is the story we got at the time, and I got it from some of the naval officers very close to the situation--that the Admiralty in London overestimated the German aircraft strength in the North Cape area--land-based aircraft. And they gave them too high a capability. And based upon that estimate, which was at fault,

they probably took the only action that . . . it's hard to fault them for taking it. Someone with hindsight and boldness, which even under the circumstance might have said, "Go get them."

You've got to remember that whoever made their own mistake and if they lost a couple of key ships, they could have lost the Battle of the Atlantic and come close to losing the war or prolonging it indefinitely with the disastrous and expensive consequences both in treasure and blood and lives.

But the basic upshot of the thing was that they gave the signal to scatter. As a matter of fact, the Washington went to general quarters for the Tirpitz. We got the signal the Tirpitz was sighted headed out, and the Washington took a heading going in to engage, if we could find her. We got that close. We went to general quarters for the Tirpitz in the Arctic.

Q: The Washington and the American task force. . . .

Hittle: Well, no; this was the British, too.

Q: But the American ships. . . . (Excuse me)

Hittle: Well, all that night we were down in the communications center--one of my friends was in communications--after I got off watch and pulled out and I went down there. And message after message came in of some merchantmen who had been scattered in the Straits. They were under either submarine, air, or surface attack, and were sending SOSs.

Q: Couldn't do anything about it.

Hittle: No. Once you scatter, you're done. A few of them got through. By ingenuity one small task force of three of them tied up alongside the ice and painted the ship white, and doused all fires and everything. And they got by the search and made it in to Murmansk.

But there was one interesting episode in this thing that probably one of the few, if not the only time during the war a Marine detachment, the Marines went aboard a merchantman and put down a mutiny.

Q: That so?

Hittle: Yes. It was the latter part of May when we were in Balfjord getting ready to convoy with the assembly and go. And about 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning--and I was right where any Marine officer should be, I was in my bunk--and the executive officer came down and he said he wanted to see. I went up and he said, "We got a strange flash message from a merchantman way up in the Bay, the Fjord. 'Please send Marines to make crew arrest.' Must have someone berserk aboard."

And I said, "That word crew looks awful curious to me."

"Well," he said, "take whatever you need. Go up and see what you can do about it."

So I broke out a little better than a platoon of our detachment, gave them nightsticks and pistols and helmets,

and brought alongside the large motor launch. This is one of the few times in recent times the boatswain says, "Away the Marine boarding party!"

So we went up the bay. It was a spring night, with the result that it was half _____ light all over. You could see, but not well. And the water was smooth as oil. And right up in the distance we saw this great big freighter moving up . . . solitary there--looked like something out of Joseph Conrad--but not a sign of life or nothing. Here again I want this put off the record because this has never been cleared. So we came alongside; and as we came alongside nobody hailed us--nothing. But somebody on the weatherdeck threw over a Jacob's ladder that unrolled on the way down with a clank; and the coxswain put the bow up to it, and it was one of those times when you earned your pay: You don't say, "Sarge, go up and take a look!" the only thing you can do you say, "Follow me!" And that's when an officer earns his dough. And I went up to the top; kind of hanging going up the steep sides of a great big freighter you don't have time to do anything but climb. You don't know whether you're going to get a handshake or a meat axe between the eyes when you get to the top rung. So after I got up to the top rung and there were two--I found out later one was quartermaster and the other was ship's boatswain--and they said, "Are we glad to see you!" And I came over the side, and each had a pistol in their belt.

Q: American ship.

Hittle: Yes. He told me what was happening. So I told the sergeant in charge of the platoon to take them up to the well deck, the midships' well deck, where they were raising hell. They were going around; they were all drunk, and they were raising the roof, screaming insults at the old captain, the old seadog. He was up on the navigation bridge. He was just standing there with a cocked .45 in his hand, leaning on the rail with his cap back of his head. And they were screaming at them that they were going to get them this time. Two or three of them were yelling and shaking broken 2x4's in their hands. Then (they said), "You old bastard! We're going to get you this time, cut off your balls and throw you to the sharks."

So we immediately put a wedge in between them, herded half forward and half aft. You never know who's going to come up with a thing that breaks up the enemy, or in this case breaking up the riot or the mutiny at this stage of it. We were herding them into the after crew's compartment there . . . them great big, burly guys . . . crew member was obviously drunk. I had a little corporal there, couldn't have stood over about five foot six if he had high-heeled shoes on, and there he was helping herd these guys in without using any force or anything but just edging them further and further back into their compartment, their messing and sleeping compartment there. And all of a sudden this great big,

burly crewman says, "Corporal, you little so and so," he said, "I'm not going to go another foot. You can't make me do this!"

And the little guy--he doesn't bat an eye. Just like a flash of lightning he brought his club down on the guy's head and decked him right there. And from then on it was a very malleable situation--the spirit was taken out of it. It's the little things at the right moment. Instead of him talking, yelling, remonstrating, everybody getting their blood pressure up, and then the new surge of courage along with the belly full of booze--why the decked guy there by this little Marine was the thing that broke up the affair.

But it was a long story on this ship. They had trouble all the way through. The captain had sailed her under most difficult conditions. He was a disciplinarian; the crew wasn't, apparently, ready for it.

And I made a quick tour of the ship after we got them fore and aft; and I was going along the weather deck on the big starboard side, moving forward, with the chief boatswain. And a few of them came up and I couldn't believe my eyes. Here strapped to the lifeline, spread eagled, was obviously a crew member. And this light mist had been falling like it does in the Arctic. His hair was ice and his clothes were ice, and here he was spread eagled there. And I said, "What the hell is going on here?"

He said, "Well, I'll tell you. As soon as the mutiny broke," he said, "the captain sent one of the ship's officers ^{him} and/foreward--or aft rather--to get to this fellow who the captain felt was the ringleader, troublemaker. So they were taking him up and putting him in the forepeak, which acted as a brig. And they got that far," he said, "and this fellow swung on them, cursed him and said, 'I'm not gonna go another step with you!' And all of a sudden I looked up and there was the old man slyly looking down at him from the deck above, the navigation bridge, and the old man looked down at him and he said, 'Okay, let him have his own way! Lash him to the lifeline where he stands.'" So they untied him, took him up, and put him in the heat of the forepeak. But those were just some of the background of the USS Washington Marine detachment at sea.

Q: Sounds like one of the Moore-McCormick liners which we sailed to the Pacific in.

Hittle: No. She was run by the Maritime Administration. She was an older ship but she had a lot of speed; she had 14 knots for a big ship, which was very good.

But anyway, they had to put the crew off--most of the crew off--and turn them over to the consul in Reykjavik. They sailed with a skeleton crew and the Marines aboard that evening to Reykjavik. I put Captain Platt in charge of that. And they took off board the _____ before dawn the next day; and they sailed to Reykjavik and turned them over to the

consul, and then they took up a survivor crew for . . . they didn't make 16, which they should have gone on, so, because they had to wait they made the ill-fated 17.

Q: Talk about coincidence!

Hittle: Well, that's about all the time I've got.

(cross talk)

Q: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

End of Session II

Session III - 12 May 1970

Begin Side 1, Tape 1

Q: The last time, Mr. Secretary, I think we just about covered everything about the Washington tour including the mutiny, which you went into. I don't think you mentioned the fact of your detachment. Were you still over in England at the time or did the ship come back?

Hittle: No. Did I discuss the last time the episode up in the north there, when the Washington was in column behind the King George V and they had that near catastrophe off the Norwegian coast?

Q: I think you had mentioned something about it but hadn't gone into it completely.

Hittle: Well, what happened was: The Home Fleet was beginning a sweep north along the Norwegian coast to keep the

German fleet into the fjords, at their anchorage, while one of the P-2 convoys stood out from Iceland into Murmansk. And there was a line of ships--battleships--the King George V, the flagship of the Home Fleet, was heading the column and Washington was astern of her. And then, of course, destroyers on either flank and ahead. And it was a peculiar type of weather with the clouds actually on the water. You could see a ship disappear very clearly into a fog bank and then emerge from the other side if you were ahead of it; and it was dense and practically opaque within the fog bank. In the combination of strange circumstances or unusual and unfortunate circumstances, what had happened was--as we reconstructed it--one of the destroyers on the port bow of the King George V, ahead was believed a sub contact on the starboard bow of the King George V and put on flank speed to cut across the bow and go to attack. And it was one of the tribal class; she was the HMS Punjabi, which was one of the most beautiful class of ships ever built--the tribal class of British destroyers. And they were big ships for destroyers--fast, lean, and very graceful. What happened was: She went across the bow, just as they went into a fog bank, and something happened; and right in the middle of the fog bank the King George V caught her broadside midships.

And the next thing we knew was--we were in the wardroom--we heard the heavy depth charge going off. What was happening was that the depth charges were all armed on the Punjabi when

she was sunk, and so they all started going off under the two portions of the ship; the bow and the stern were floating aft on either side of the formation. Most of the British blue-jackets were still alive in the water, hundreds of them; and it seems like it, at least 150 probably from the destroyer crew. The King George V immediately went dead in the water, and we were astern of her at over 20 knots. It was one of those times when somebody does the right thing you train them for in life, and the senior watch officer--senior officer of the deck--who was a commander on the Washington, Commander Thomas Dell, who later retired a rear admiral, he saw immediately what was happening and he didn't take time to give orders or anything; he just gave a great big shoulder block into the helmsman, knocked him out from behind the wheel, took the wheel and swung a hard left. And just the fraction of time he saved there was the difference between catastrophe and saving the Washington as the backbone of the battleship force to keep the German fleet in; because we went by the stern of the King George V we cleared it by about the width of a coat of paint.

And we took up formation . . . we caught depth charges completely under the whole length, practically, of the keel of the Washington. And I came topside while they were going off. One went off right under the bow, and the bow of the Washington went up into the air just like the end of a buggy whip, which is testimonial to how they were constructed was, that all it did to the Washington--all, but considerable--it

sprung plates in part of the hull; but it was double-bottomed. (The King George V was dead in the water.) The depth charges hit the Washington with such a shock that it was throwing switches all over the ship's fire control switches, safety switches. It hit it with such impact that one of the 4-barrelled 1.1 mounts on the upper level . . . the shock was so great coming up from the keel that it threw all of the loaded magazines out of the receiver of the 1.1; and these were all fulminate of mercury caps on them, which were really contact percussion caps, you know, and they were just raining down. And fortunately, defying the law of averages, none of them hit on the point of the projectile. But you could count them coming down just as if they were in slow motion.

The upshot of the thing was that King George V went to major damage control procedure and in 20 minutes, with a gash in her bow which must have been 10 or 12 feet high and 15-20 feet long at the waterline, and having been dead in the water and a list of about 10-15 degrees on her, in about 20-25 minutes she was back at almost 20 knots and held formation until one of the battle cruisers Reknown came out--I believe it was--let's see, which one was sunk off Malaysia?

Q: Prince of Wales.

Hittle: And the Repulse or Reknown.

Q: The Repulse, I believe.

Hittle: Yes, and the Repulse. The Reknown was the sister ship of that battle cruiser class. She came out and replaced King George V, and we continued the operation. That was the reason the Washington, later part of the summer, came back to Brooklyn.

Q: Tremendous testimony to British seamanship.

Hittle: Oh, yes! They build the ships tough. And all the testimony is the way they built those battlewagons in the United States-class. They were fast, they were probably faster than the British by a couple of knots.

And we took our depth charges, though not as many, because most of them went off right under the keel of the King George V. But we caught some and sprung the plates, but that was all. It actually ruptured some of the plates there-- the joints, but didn't keep us from continuing for a couple, probably 3 months more.

So we came into Brooklyn, why I called up Headquarters. In the meantime my middle Marine had made captain, too; he was Jonas M. Platt, who is now major general. . . .

Q: Due to retire.

Hittle: Yes, due to retire. And that in itself will be a loss to the Marine Corps: a man of unusual qualities and abilities.

And Lieutenant Robert Knox, who was then a first lieutenant; so they were ready to have someone move up and out

and that was me. I called up Headquarters and told them I was in . . . called up Alfred H. Noble, who was then at Headquarters who had been my battalion commander, he was personally--and asked if there were any orders there. And he said, "No." He said, "I'm glad you called, otherwise I wouldn't have known you were in."

So I was detached and sent to Quantico, instructed in the ROC. And we had five classes at a time going through, five blocks at a time.

Q: Were you there with George Roll's group?

Hittle: I was with George Roll and Russ Honsowetz . . . no, Russ wasn't in it then, which meant that every 2 weeks, 10-weeks course, why you caught the whole cycle again. If it was summer you were out in the field and mosquitoes all summer and in winter you were catching sleeping in the snow because nothing was called off. And every class had to have the climax of the training which was an amphibious landing taking off from the boat basin and going up the Potomac to Stump Neck on the Maryland shore and going ashore there for a short operation; and it was worthwhile for initial training. The only thing was in the winter why you had to carry with you one of the small softball/baseball bats to break the ice ahead of you as you went in. That was the mark of somebody that'd been doing it frequently; the others didn't know enough to carry a baseball bat along. But the instructors that caught it every 2 weeks did. And anybody that was

fortunate enough to come out of it without having been numb and frozen from the knees down for the rest of their life was extremely fortunate, because many a time that water was so cold you had to stand there and buck the ice to get in that you'd be frozen for a day or so. But quite surprisingly, I guess, youth has its advantages and nobody seems to have suffered any undue effect from it.

Q: Were you part of the group that was told that you were frozen there at. . . .

Hittle: I didn't get frozen. No.

One of the things I think I was fortunate in doing through my life besides stepping. . . . (interruption) No, I wasn't frozen at Quantico. I was there and it was during that time that they set up and established the Command and Staff School. While I was at the ROC, I was instructor in supply, tactical walk, and a couple night problems, and also topography. And when they established the Command and Staff School I was instructor in staff functioning and I was chief of the logistics section. We established that logistics includes: combat, field supply, evacuation, and everything generally associated with that.

Q: How did you happen to get into logistics? Was it just assigned to you, because there was nothing in your career before this time. . . .

Hittle: I just had an interest in it. It was always my belief that it was the essence of the system, that if your logistics were wrong, nothing else would work.

Q: Because I noticed that in your later career--I saw in your correspondence--General Hogaboom turned all his files over, and you were at a logistics conference at Pearl.

Hittle: That's right. I was very interested in it because probably logistics is the heart of the amphibious operation. The more I got into both staff functioning and amphibious history, the more convinced I became that was one of the most critical areas. And through having interest, I wound up getting assigned to it.

Q: The thing that's interesting is that of all aspects of the amphibious development--development of amphibious doctrine, pre-war period leading up to FTP-167--the thing that was always weakest in its conception and its carrying out, was logistics. For instance, the establishment of the shore party and beach party. They said that the shore party consists of military police and hospital corpsmen, and so on, and working details without stating exactly where the working details. . . .

Hittle: The reason for that is a very simple one. You can do a field exercise with troops without ammunition, and they would know where they were going. You could have the

operational end of it; you could set up your intelligence; and you can have a constructive problem and react fairly realistically under your scenario as far as your intelligence is concerned. And also by your personnel computations in your adjutant and your G-1 sections, on casualties and so forth, strengths, replacements, things such as that. But the thing about logistics is: if you're going to have a realistic exercise, you've got to unload all the ammunition; you've got to load and unload all the ammunition on the same number of ships and put it on the same place and the same number of shore party-pioneer party personnel, working parties, that you would in combat. And you'd never do it. You'd have token spies. And it's the old story: You never really know what you need until you do it.

Q: Well, was the mess at Guadalcanal. . . .

Hittle: I wouldn't say it was. I wasn't at Guadal, so I can't comment on that.

But the history of amphibious operations up until World War II, when the Marine Corps really got hold of it and expanded on its doctrine, was that logistics was always misunderstood. The more you read of Gallipoli, which was really the laboratory study example for the formulation of doctrine for World War II by the Marine Corps, probably the number one breakdown in failure of the Gallipoli operation which could have turned the course of history, was the failure of logistics. Guns for ships in one ship and ammunition was loaded

in another. And they never did get them sorted out. It's a wonder that Gallipoli came as close to success as it did, the corollary of it being that had they had an element of good logistics in the sense the Marine Corps involved it; had they had it in Gallipoli and understood amphibious operations, why it could have been a success. The Dardenelles could have been secured; very possibly the Russian revolution could never have been a success. It was one of the critical battles of the world, and it turned on the failure of an amphibious operation.

Gallipoli did two things as far as amphibious history, as I say, concerning the development of amphibious doctrine. To the European military mind, which has never understood in a real sense balanced sea power and certainly not amphibious operations in the sense that the Marine Corps had developed it along with the U.S. Navy and exploited amphibious warfare, Gallipoli, by its failure, confirmed in the European military mind that you cannot conduct successful large amphibious operations against a well-entrenched enemy with heavy fire power. And consequently, amphibious operations remained a very special type of small naval landing party endeavor.

The Germans never understood it. They conducted a landing which was really nothing more than a ship-to-shore movement in the Wessel Islands during World War I. And that in itself confirmed that, in a sense, in an assault landing you couldn't succeed because they conceded without really an assault. So as far as European military thinking was

concerned, amphibious operations couldn't be conducted against fast-firing of automatic weapons in the atmosphere of modern weaponry. On the other hand, after World War I, in Quantico it became the intellectual birthplace of amphibious warfare because of farsighted people. Holland Smith, Houston Noble, Graves B. Erskine, "Bigfoot" Brown, and people of that imaginative, farsighted, practical, and highly professional type of thinking, foresaw the war in the Pacific.

Q: Who, Mr. Secretary . . . we know who, say the tactical brains were at the time, the intelligence branch, the operational branch; who'd you say was the real logistics brains down at Quantico?

Hittle: At that time?

Q: Yes, sir; at the Schools.

Hittle: At the time the doctrine was evolved?

Q: Yes, sir.

Hittle: Oh, I would say probably Graves B. Erskine was; because Graves B. Erskine, you see, was the G-4 before he was the division commander. When the 1st MarDiv was formed up, Graves B. Erskine was--as I recall--G-4 of it under Holland Smith.

Q: Then he went to chief of staff.

Hittle: Chief of staff.

And he had helped pioneer a lot in the formulation of the pre-war doctrine--foresaw this. Of course that was both an advantage and, in some cases, an unenviable situation, too, that I wound up out in the Pacific as Graves B. Erskine's G-4 in the 3d MarDiv. And G-4 work, as in everything else, went on in that division. And I say this not facetiously but advisedly, Graves B. Erskine knew as much or more about any job in that division than the person who was doing it because of his great breadth of professional knowledge. But, in spite of his high standards and sometimes the criticism he got for enforcing high standards, allowed him--to digress and get ahead of the game a little here--I found him to be a very, very reasonable, understanding, and in a sense easy man to work for. Once he felt he could put his confidence in a person, he gave him his confidence and let him get on with the job. One thing he would never tolerate was a person not doing as well as he could. If a person tried and just couldn't cut the mustard because he wasn't capable of doing it, but his heart was in the right place, Erskine would always find a place for him. But the man he'd can was the one that could do better but wouldn't.

Between the return from Iwo and--just to digress here a moment--between the return from Iwo and getting ready for the assault on Kagoshima, we had a complete reorganization of the division. And we got nine new battalion commanders. And within a period of a few weeks--one maneuver in a few weeks--

Graves B. Erskine had relieved, I believe it was, five of them and set at least a couple of them back for reclassification down to their regular permanent grade. But he told me one night as we were talking about this, he says, "You know," he says, "if this were peacetime," he says, "I could have the time to train all of them to be good officers. But I haven't got the time now." He said, "They've got to start with a certain capability standard in order to get ready to go ashore in Kagoshima." And, he says, "If I don't relieve them," he said, "under these circumstances and put someone who is more capable in their place would cause Marine blood. And that's the price I won't pay."

Q: Was the relief by General Erskine the kiss of death for these people?

Hittle: There were very few who went any place afterwards.

Q: Getting back to my original question about the problem of logistics, I think the point I was trying to make or ask you about was not so much the off-loading but the pile up at the beaches, or the inability of the sailor, the coxswains in these landing craft to understand any form.

Hittle: It was essentially training is what it consisted of. The operations, the maneuvers that we had on the eve of the war in 1939 on the Caribbean principally at Culebra and Vieques, was really the foundation of our assaults in the Pacific, not only practice-wise for the Navy and Marine Corps;

but when you take that 5th Marines with the artillery and the brigade, and see where those people went as the Marine Corps expanded, it provided a great big chunk of the battalion and the commanders and division staff, regimental command for the entire Marine Corps. It was probably the heaviest concentration of professional ability probably in the history of United States military organization. And I say that without any reference to any particular person but simply as a collective characteristic.

Q: A tremendous group; no question about it.

Hittle: Just take almost anybody from first lieutenant up in the brigade at Quantico that started maneuvering, and the 5th Marines was the backbone of it, of course; started maneuvering there in '39, '40 into that period, and chart it through. It's a fascinating thing in the progression of leadership.

Q: And they're all famous names in the Marine Corps today.

Hittle: Holland Smith, Graves B. Erskine, Bill Whaling, Alfred H. Noble; you have three 4-star officers scattered all through it.

Q: General Greene?

Hittle: Yes. Greene . . . you can--Bobby Hogaboom--you can just go up and down the list. Brute Krulak.

Q: It's a fascinating chapter in Marine Corps history. There's no question about it.

Hittle: And the fascinating part about it was that Holland Smith, when he got the orders to form up the division, he knew if you were going to perform for combat you couldn't do it on an 8-hour day in barracks back in the States or on a base. So he took them down to Cuba, as we discussed before, formed up the division under field conditions and under canvas. He started soldiering from the day he got there.

Q: It's interesting.

Hittle: But out at Quantico at this time--to get back in that period after return from sea--was when the Command and General Staff School was started; and that was largely the brainchild and the result of the understanding and the insistence that it be done on the part of Arthur Worton, who was chief of staff at the Schools at the time.

Arthur Worton was probably one of the most able executive minds and professional minds that the Marine Corps has produced. A man of tremendous executive ability.

Q: Well, I find in interviewing him, and it was certainly a tremendous experience, and I don't know of any person who exudes love of Corps and faithfully so, deeply so. . . .

Hittle: And I really feel convinced that if he had not fallen into a boat and not had that accident on the eve of Iwo and

had to be hospitalized with a broken knee, that had he made the operation, which he would have done, that Arthur Worton gone on to three and four stars.

Q: Despite his later run-in with the CNO, the deputy CNO?

Hittle: I see no reason why he shouldn't have. Saying your piece in this world and standing for what you believe should be a virtue and not a professional handicap.

Q: Unfortunately, Mr. Secretary, we have little men and Yahoo's.

Hittle: Little what?

Q: Little men and Yahoo's.

Hittle: Well, there are those. At the same time in spite of them we have a remarkable number of those who will say their piece; and that's what keeps the organization coherent and professionally sound and morally intact.

Q: Yes, sir. Absolutely! No question about it.

I asked you before whether or not you were frozen, but you were there . . . you got there in '42 and you didn't leave until October '44. It seems to me that maybe General Roll got there earlier. That whole group that got off the ships was told that they were frozen at Quantico, and not to ask for combat duty.

Hittle: Nobody ever told me I was frozen at all. Nobody ever told me, if there was a job to do--I knew that I was going out sometime in '44 probably--and you had to have some continuity at the Schools. They were running people through there practically in relays.

Q: Yes, sir. I remember.

Hittle: And actually I tried to get out on a couple of occasions, and it wasn't a matter of being frozen but we just had a job to do. And the principal one was to get that Command and General Staff thing going over there.

Q: This is another problem that the Marine Corps faced, especially in the '30s in the sense that it really never had any command and staff structure, that the concept was primarily an Army one because the Army had much more troops and larger units.

Hittle: Well, our basic staff doctrine for Marine division, for a Marine organization, was essentially Army. And the Army was very sound on its staff organization. We didn't put as many people in higher staffs as the Army did and we didn't have the rank that the Army did and the general staff setup within divisions. But Army staff doctrine was sound, was one of the strongest points. I believe in Army doctrine organizationally. There was no reason for the Marine Corps to move out and have a different staff concept because the basic general staff or the basic staff system of the Marine

Corps was, actually, application of the Army doctrine. We took field service regulations, staff operations, and that was it. We modified it to include some of the things peculiar to amphibious operations like the transport quartermaster within the general staff under the G-4, and pioneer company, and such as that--or a pioneer battalion, such as that. But NCBs and so forth. But aside from that, why the Marine Corps doctrine was essentially Army doctrine and for good reason: we couldn't come up with anything better.

Q: Why I was thinking primarily of the fact that the early thirties, except for those farsighted individuals in the Marine Corps, made people could conceive of a Marine unit larger than an expeditionary force or brigade at most.

Hittle: That's right. That was a term in which the Marine Corps existed. Once we started moving into the formative period with World War II looming over the horizon, and we began to think in terms of things more than brigades, like in the brigade you had to have your 1, 2, 3, and 4; and we had it when I first went to the FMF in 1939, so it existed before. We had 1, 2, 3, 4, in the battalion. And in those days, as just about ever, the Marine Corps was always making the most of personnel economy. One time I was Headquarters Company commander, 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, the S-1 and the S-2 and the mess officer. So anybody today who says they're overworked, well they should look back and see what people did in their spare time then when they had it.

Q: The organization of Command and Staff School at Quantico was copied, more or less from the Fort Leavenworth course, was that right?

Hittle: A lot of it, yes. A lot of it was. The format and some of the concept of instruction, but it was always adjusted to amphibious operations right from the beginning; Arthur Worton made it perfectly clear and mandatory that it wasn't going to be another Army Command and Staff School on a small scale and on a quickly organized basis. There was only one reason for it, and that was amphibious operations.

Q: I understand that one of the reasons that the school was established was that there was a crying need for senior company grade and junior field grade officers in the staffs out in the Pacific.

Hittle: And above that, too.

Q: And above that. And most of the first students were these people who had been in the defense battalions in the backwash of the war.

Hittle: They brought them back and put them through; I don't know what percentage they were.

But there was no doubt but that this thing was proving its ability to fill a need right from the beginning because we had Army officers in there real early, taking the course, and we had a large contingent after the second or third group

started. As a matter of fact the first group, I think, started through with European officers--European allied officers. And the Royal Marines that went through that class--I've stayed in contact with them in the years up until now--almost without exception they went to colonel and general officer rank. One of them became the amphibious ops officer for Mountbatten in Burma, Cornwall who later became a major general in the Royal Marines, and Norman Tailyour became Commandant of the Royal Marines. So Quantico has quite an alumni association in the foreign armed services, and exerted a tremendous influence in the military thought of the foreign armed services in amphibious warfare.

Q: Were you training the Dutch Marines down there?

Little: They were there, too; and some very high ranking ones went on to higher ranks from Quantico. But it was at Quantico--getting back to the staff instruction--one day I was talking to General Worton as we started to form up a class, get the curriculum together and I said, "You know, if you keep talking about all this staff functioning and so forth," I said, "and staff organization, why shouldn't we have at least a 1-hour lecture in the background in the practical and historical origin of general staff."

And he said, "That's a good idea!" he says. "You do it!"

So I figured it would take me about one afternoon if I got the right book in the library to put an outline together, and so forth. So I went into the library and I asked for a

book on general staff history. And she said, "I'll get it for you right away," the librarian said. She came back a little while later to my office. She said, "You know, funny," she said, "we don't have one."

So I figured well, that's a blank as far as the inventory of books in the Marine Corps Schools library, so I went up to the War College Library in Washington and told them I wanted one. They didn't have one either. And the upshot of the thing was, there was no single book on the comprehensive history of general staff organization. So I started to do research on it; why I did a lecture and a few weeks later a friend of mine--I was at a get-together in Washington--ran into a man who was the publisher of the Stackpole Press, Military Services Publishing Company. We were talking and I mentioned to him what I was doing.

And he said, "Listen," he said, "I need a book on that. Will you do one for me?"

So I knew I only had about 5 months or so before I left, and I said, "I'll try to." So my routine was: When I'd go home at night about 6 o'clock, my wife would have dinner on for me, about 7:30 why I started doing my research. And in the last 2 months I did the writing on it and got it out before I left. I never saw it in print before I left--The History of the General Staff. That's how you get into something you didn't intend to do when you started a 1-hour lecture.

Q: I was about to ask you, as a matter of fact as a personal note, I took the course at the Institute using your book, and now I can't get a copy of your book; it's out of print.

Hittle: Oh, no, it's not!

Q: Is it not?

Hittle: No, no. It's in its third printing.

Q: Is Stackpole still publishing it?

Hittle: Yes.

Q: I'll have to ante-up and buy a copy of it.

Hittle: Well, the peculiar thing about it: It's been reprinted in French, Polish and, of all things, Yugoslavian.

Q: Do you have Yugoslavian and Polish credits in the bank over there?

Hittle: Nobody's ever sent me any zlotnicks.

Q: Because Sam Griffith was saying that he has Czechoslovakian credits for his book on . . .

Hittle: Sun Tzu.

Q: . . . on Sun Tzu. (bell ringing) They're in a bank there any time, and he's going to take a visit over to Prague with Belle and enjoy a vacation.

Hittle: I think that they probably . . . I think that they made a token payment or something--highly token, as a matter of fact, without being high--to the company at the time, to clear the record. As far as making anything out of the Communist economy, I have. . . .

Q: What were the problems that you found when you did the research for the book, aside from the lack of research materials? Was there a conceptual problem?

Hittle: There was really no conceptual comparative study of the staff system. It had to be really sorted out. And it became a fascinating search as far as rationale and, really, assembly of basic documents. It emerged into a format that I used. And for doing it today, I couldn't see doing it any different. It emerged first as the common origin of the staff doctrine, and some of it was fairly sophisticated as you look back on those people up to and through the Gustavus Adolphus period. And then from that period it seemed to. . . . Certain types of philosophy began to emerge in staff organization. The German and the French were dominant. They seemed to go in two different paths, both philosophically as far as the role of the staff and chief of staff and also staff organization. And, contrary to many of the writers--some of the writers, there weren't many--contrary to the majority of those who did write, I found the Napoleonic period had a tremendous influence on staff organization and functioning, whereas much of the staff literature such as

existed, contended that it didn't. But much of it did: that was my conclusion out of it. And I feel most of the researchers have confirmed that.

But the British staff emerged, begins in its formative emergence, and it was somewhat of a combination of French, German, and a melange; and that's what it is to this time.

The German became very fixed and the French also took on its formative . . . and the French was really the genesis of the very logical staff organization: the chief of staff, the 1, 2, 3, and 4. And it was a necessary add-on.

Then the way it was translated into the American was: we really had no staff organization as such up until World War I. And it was through the American Staff School at Langres, France where the Expeditionary Force was, the French doctrine was transfused into the American.

Q: I'm going to ask you, projecting forward to the unification fight, it would seem undoubtedly that your intimate knowledge of staff organization and the history of staff organization, tremendous assistance to the Marine Corps or to the opponents to unification in the sense that you could see what were the pitfalls and where the dangers would be.

Little: Not so much unification, because it was inevitable. And I felt that from the beginning that a unification of a constructive type was a necessity in the modern technological and organizational context in the times we're living. But the thing that which the Marine Corps was bitterly opposed,

and justifiably so, and events in Congress supported the United States, was the concept of a national general staff. That was the proposal that emerged and known as the Collins Plan of 1946, reportedly named after a famous name, General "Lightening" Joe Collins of the Army, who was reputed to have been the architect of the plan. And that's the one that went to the Senate, and the Marine Corps bitterly opposed it when it was in the Senate. General Vandegrift broke up the hearings before the House Armed Services Committee, and it was the end of consideration of the Collins Plan when he gave his famous statement that the Marine Corps is going to go and deserves to go with the knowledge and by the direction of the organization that brought it into being, and that was the United States Congress; and it was not going to continue to exist under the general staff--national general staff, there was no place for it. And the bended knee was not the position of the Corps.

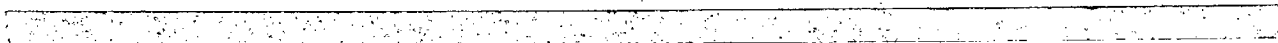
Q: Did you write that speech?

Hittle: I did not. I wish I had.

Q: Was that Brute Krulak's speech?

Hittle: Well, I don't know precisely who or which people did write it. Why, I have no comment on it.

Q: All right, well, we'll get ahead there to that point. As a matter of fact. . . .



Hittle: That was just the opening gun of the long and bitter battle, but we finally emerged with a very sound system of defense organization at the seat of government based upon the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

And as you say, with what research I had on . . . what was very helpful to me, one was with respect to a national general staff and two, in joining and taking up the cudgel in defense of the Joint Chief of Staff which was the target of the extremists in the unification fight.

Q: I think at this point we'll turn it over, Mr. Secretary, if I may.

End Side 1, Tape 1, Session III

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session III

Hittle: I think we have a storm coming.

Q: Yes, sir.

Continuing on with your tour at Quantico, is there anything that sticks out primarily in your mind?

Hittle: Well, Quantico was really the intellectual heart of the Marine Corps for World War II as it was before and since. But it performed a roll no other institution in the world could perform because none were attuned to--no other service, no other school was attuned to amphibious operations as a way of warfare. And it proved once again that amphibious operations are a specialty. You got to have specialists to have amphibious progress, techniques, and doctrine. A very

interesting case could be postulated and explored on the basis of: What would have happened in the conduct of American warfare, U.S. warfare, in World War II if it had not been for the Marine Corps Schools in Quantico, Virginia, particularly in the view of the fact that the key to the projection of American power was sea power; and the purpose of our sea power, after control of the seas were gained, was to conduct amphibious operations and to project our national power ashore.

Q: Well, that's the basic philosophy, after all. . . .

Hittle: So, that being so fundamental, what would have been the course of the war and the fortunes of war for the United States if we had not had the special type of knowledge that was required to conduct it? And we wouldn't have had it without Quantico.

Q: Well, what was the argument, or what were the arguments presented by the people who played down the importance of the amphibious operations? Certainly the Army files. . . .

Hittle: Well, I'm not so sure they played it down. It was a case of having a different philosophy of war. The Army very properly is attuned to land warfare, and you cannot be land warfare specialists and amphibious specialists. That was the whole essence of those in Congress during the unification controversy who insisted and finally prevailed that there should be a Marine Corps and it should be charged with

being landing force specialists. It was a very simple position and yet it was so sound that it was adopted as the law of the land. And that's a genesis of two things: One, the unification act of '47 and its prescription of rolls and missions for the armed services--each of the four armed services.

The heart of the controversy was whether or not: (1) there should be rolls and missions for the Marine Corps and the basic purposes for which it exists and (2) whether it should be in the statute and not an Executive Order and to make sure it was not toyed or tinkered with in subsequent years Congress put it into the statutes. It became a matter of law and then was further amplified by the Marine Corps organic act in which, a few years later, the structure of three Marine divisions and three Marine airwings amongst our armed forces was ordered.

Q: Marine Corps which act, sir?

Hittle: Yes, the statutory provisions for the Marine divisions, the Marine air wings.

Q: Now, how did the Army types expect to get ashore, how did they expect to get to their proposed theater of operation?

Hittle: Well, I'm not basically aware of what their doctrine was except that it was nowhere nearly as advanced and developed as the Marine Corps was, and the proof of it being Marine Corps doctrine was used in amphibious operations throughout the war.

Q: Do you recall during that in the early war years the Army tried to establish these amphibious engineers to. . . .

Hittle: Well, those were aberrations.

Q: Like several we had.

Hittle: They didn't go to the heart of the issue of the conduct of amphibious warfare because amphibious warfare conceptually is one of the most simple and, from the application standpoint, it's one of the most complex endeavors in all the spectrum of war because it's the bringing together of practically every instrument of war: naval air and the landing force.

Q: Tell me, were you able as a staff to learn much from the people coming back from the Pacific?

Hittle: Oh, yes.

Q: Application lessons learned was great.

Hittle: That's right, because the application of the knowledge right from Guadalcanal on was continuous.

Q: For instance, in the field of staff functioning, what do you recall would have been the thing that stood out most as being. . . .

Hittle: Well, one of the most important things we were learning as we went along was the techniques of--and this is

application rather than staff functioning--because the principles of staff functioning are matters of degree of efficiency and not really how they operated. Probably combat loading from the standpoint of the logistics endeavor and beach party operations--shore party operations. Combat loading is really the heart of your amphibious logistics endeavor, because if that's not done right, nothing will be done right. If you don't put it on with a keen understanding of how you're going to get it off and being able to get it off, you're not even going to be able to progress to the point where you've got a pile up on the beach. Of course, that's the thing that must be avoided.

Q: So that, you feel, was the most important lesson learned rather than in the field of operational. . . .

Hittle: Oh, I would say anything was the most important. And you really can't put weights on them. Of course, probably the most important thing was that if you got courage, guts, and command of the sea, or even local command of the sea, and transitory--I even reduce it beyond that--you can put through amphibious operations a force ashore that would turn the course of a war, and that's exactly what happened at Guadalcanal. I wasn't there but I look upon . . . I have no personal involvement in it except from a professional standpoint, but I look upon Guadalcanal as one of the critical battles of world history. It was a relatively small force, a Marine division with Marine air; naval power secured local sea and

air superiority; and it wasn't permanent. And put ashore the Marine landing force, and although not only was our sea power control contested, but at times it was badly fragmented. And yet, the Marines in following a doctrine of an active defense and not going into what is called final defensive positions like French doctrine so long espoused, as Bill Twining, who was on Guadal and one of the leading figures in the defense of Guadalcanal, said, he said they rejected the final defensive position idea on Guadalcanal because really a final defensive position is nothing but something in which to hole up and die, and you don't win wars doing that. You stay on the active defense. And that's exactly what won the battle.

So the broad doctrine of your support by sea, the use of the sea, and the need for control of the sea was probably one of the great lessons that was relearned there. And that's one of the things about warfare like so many other parts of human activity: it's not being unaware of the fundamentals and the principles, but it's simply relearning how important they are and that you cannot violate them with impunity.

Q: It's not a question of once you know the book you can throw it away; you still have to live to the book.

Hittle: Well, you don't have to live to the book, but you have to use the principles. And imaginative thinking in Guadalcanal was both the . . . it was improvisation based

upon immutable principles of warfare. And one of the greatest requirements of all of that is courage and guts.

Q: They certainly had it there, there's no question of that.

Are you finally broke loose from the Schools in October '44.

Hittle: I went straight to Guam.

Well, I went through Pearl Harbor. And you mentioned this just a little while ago, Colonel Jordahl, he was the G-1 of FMFPac at the time. I was under the impression I was going to go to General Cates' 4th Division. And I went to head-
Colonel
quarters and said to/Jordahl, "When am I going over to Maui?"

"What do you want to go to Maui for?"

I said, "Well, I understand I'm going to 4th Division."

He laughed and said, "No, you're not going to 4th Division," he says, "you're going down to Guam and be the G-4 of the 3d Marine Division."

A couple of days later, after a couple of briefings, I got in a DC-4 and went to Guam. Still marvel at what Marine air transport and NATS (naval air transport) did during the war. They had pilots on there that looked like kids out of high school, and some of them had never seen the working edge of a razor. And they put them in these . . . which was really the plane that broke the transoceanic was the DC-4, the R-4D. And those planes take off, great big load: cargo, mail, people, and so forth; and they never dropped a one.

And they had no weather radar, either. You'd hit some of those thunderheads and you'd drop a couple thousand feet or you'd go up a couple thousand feet, and you'd just fly right on through.

So I arrived at Guam, the Marine division was still doing some of the mop-up on the island.

Q: Who was the G-4 at FMFPac at this time?

Hittle: I just don't remember who was.

Q: In other words there was no requirement for you to maintain liaison.

Hittle: Oh, yes! There was. It's just that the name slipped my mind. I think Colonel Knapp was G-4, I'm not sure.

Q: Ray Knapp?

Hittle: I think he was; I'm not sure.

Q: What kind of a reception did you get when you arrived at the 3d Division?

Hittle: I walked in, reported in, and went to work. That's what your reception was. Reported in. There was no G-4 to relieve because Carvel Hall was sent home ahead of me.

Q: Tail between his legs?

Hittle: Well, they sent him home without a relief.

Q: General Erskine had quite a fetish about having motor transport and so on in proper order.

Hittle: He just had a honest to goodness understanding of the fact that if you didn't maintain your equipment when you were in base camp, you weren't going to have it running right when you were in combat. And the margins of success--victory, life and death--in warfare is such that you don't leave anything to chance. That was his philosophy. If you had materiel, you kept it up, you were accountable for it. And the only difference we had in the 3d Marine Division all the time Erskine had it, on accountability of property between peacetime and wartime, was that if we didn't send in a slip to Quartermaster General of the Marine Corps; everybody was accountable for their gear. Just because it was a war it was no reason for them to throw it away, lose it or break it up carelessly. If you lost equipment, you surveyed it; and they determined whether you would be held responsible for it or not.

Q: I think that degree of supply consciousness was unique in the Marine Corps at this time.

Hittle: Well, the degree of it was unique as far as Erskine was concerned. I know of no other division that did it.

Q: Well, the fact that there was any supply consciousness. . . .

Hittle: You bet! You couldn't tell the 3d Marine Division under Erskine by lost and left equipment littering along in its wake.

Q: Was it a happy staff to work with?

Hittle: I found it to be. He shook it out when he had Bob Kriendler, Bobby Hogaboom as colonel as chief of staff. Robert Kriendler, who was a reserve and he was a major, he was made the G-1 in spite of the fact that on the T/O it was a colonel's billet. And he was made for the simple reason that Erskine considered him most qualified man. He made no difference between regulars and reserve. Erskine didn't. It was the individual.

We had two or three successions of 2s; we had a very capable 3; I was fortunate enough to be the 4 and lasted out; and then we had an extremely good special staff. I would say it was a very cooperative and mutually trustworthy staff.
(jets overhead)

Q: I think Bob Heinl was in naval gunfire.

Hittle: He was naval gunfire, yes. Probably one of the most capable that this country's ever produced.

Q: When you got there they were in cleaning up operations on the island.

Hittle: Well, they pretty well cleaned it up. The Japs . . . raiding the post office to get the food and packages, a few

things like that, there'd be a few ambushed here and there. Even when we left for Iwo Jima, a couple of times Japanese attacked the bulldozer operators and the truck operators. But they were generally cleaned up.

I remember one time--this was after Iwo--we had a big maneuver down on the Ylig in the jungle country. It was a large scale staff exercise with command units but not all troops, and late one evening why Erskine called in the two commanders, regimental commanders, and gave his attack order for the next day and told the commander . . . I think it was the 9th Marines who was. . . .

Q: Craig?

Hittle: No, no. The one that had the _____ to his name. I've looked his book over, on Sun Tzu. . . .

Q: Sammy Griffith.

Hittle: Sam Griffith had the 9th Marines--I think it was Sam; one of the reasons. . . .

Q: Yes, I think he had the 3d Marines.

Hittle: Was it the 3d?

Q: Yes, sir.

Hittle: Well, anyway, they came in and he said, "Sam," he said, "you jump off and attack down the slopes of Mount Tenjo," he said, "tomorrow morning at dawn."

Sam said, "Yes, sir!"

Of course, he hadn't been in the division long; you could assume that Erskine ran them all constructively like the others did. But he required the actual time, space, travel, and hiking that everybody else did. You went through the drill. And so he said, "Well, take off!" Well, that's what going through the jungle, crossing the Ylig in the pitch black, climbing up Mt. Tenjo, and attacking down in the morning.

Well, the upshot of the thing was: that time and space was estimated what he could do it in, but he was beginning to run out of time. So the exercise was secured the next day at noon, and we lost contact with them, with that regimental command unit. And just as we were getting ready to secure the camp, why the MP guard around the headquarters flushed a Japanese out of the bush. And they brought him up there to Erskine's command tent.

The exercise was all over and everybody was standing around and the Japanese language officer was talking to this Japanese straggler, and he was really a tattered-looking individual: clothes were torn and he had been living in the bush, and he had a beard on him like a Japanese sandman. And just as he got through interrogating him he saw Erskine standing in the tent a few feet away. And he said, "General, you got any questions you'd like to ask this Japanese prisoner?"

He said, "Yes, I have." He said, "Ask him if he knows where Colonel S. B. Griffith, III is?" (laughing)

But Sam finally came out after one of the longest hikes, I guess, in the history of maneuvers on the island; Sam was a great soldier. Erskine never lost his sense of humor. He talked rugged, but he always maintained his sense of humor. Many people didn't understand it, but he did.

Q: Still a great man.

Hittle: Yes. He's one of the great soldiers turned out in this country.

Q: Imagine once you got there that you embarked pretty much into planning for Iwo.

Hittle: That was the beginning of assembly of supplies--that's another phase of amphibious operations that was not properly appreciated on the eve of the war. And we learned by experience and quick. And it became something in which the doctrine really was not as precise as it should be. Probably because every situation was different, you had to improvise. But we made up a separate plan for assembly of cargo with 3d MarDiv for Iwo.

And the original orders that came out were very optimistic, as you know; it was 5, 6 days supplies, something like that, but you could take more if you wanted to; so we took 30 days. And the assembly of supplies--it took us, as I recall, about 2 weeks to assemble supplies because we spotted

every type of supply by ship and by unit. _____ Of course, you had to get your ship allocation and assignment plan before you did that for your units.

Q: Were you able to break ships loose from MacArthur?

Hittle: Well, I don't know where they came from. But the Navy put the ships there on time, and they were very cooperative. And we loaded, as I recall, 25 to 27 transports--ATs and AKAs--which was an awful lot of ships; and about 50 amphibious types, LSTs and so forth, and other class.

We assembled it and brought it in from various areas: from the FMF supply dump, the ammunition storage--which is another story I want to tell you about because it is something that's little known--and then from base camp areas. And it went off; every truck had a trip ticket, every trip ticket was turned in; and at the end of each day on a graph we were able to tell how much at each place was assembled. And we started assembling for 25,000 men to take them, to feed them, and to bring them back and look after them and keep them supplied in action; why the complexity of the thing becomes almost astounding. And yet it's the old principle: There's no problem that's so big it can't be handled if you break it down into pieces. And that's the way you have to do this complex job--amphibious logistics.

Q: Tremendously complex thing.

Hittle: And when we loaded out, I think we had five ships alongside at a time. And our schedule for loading out we missed by 4 hours. We got through 4 hours and 4 we thought we'd finish, oh, I think, this 7 to 10-day period, load up.

Q: Did you have all the ship's characteristics data that you needed?

Hittle: Oh, we had all for combat loading. One of the things that was helpful to me in the job as G-4 was that I'd taught combat loading. And it was something that the Marine Corps really pioneered.

Q: I think that's probably one area of staff functioning where the commander doesn't look down your throat or over your shoulder.

Hittle: It's too immense! You just have to go ahead on the basis that whoever you trust that job with knows his business. And fortunately in the division I had a . . . the special staff transport quartermaster was probably one of the best the Marine Corps ever turned out. He was in it from the beginning. He'd learned from practical experience. Charles Byrd. He was a major, he was a Reserve; he'd come to duty early; we soldiered together down when the division was formed up in Cuba before. And we were real fortunate: He was a down to earth, solid guy, and he'd been in it so long he knew every ship's captain and executive officer in the amphibious force, which helped tremendously. And the Marine

Corps really never gave the recognition to Charlie Byrd that he should have. He was one of the great stalwarts of amphibious logistics throughout a critical part of the year.

Q: Is he a World War I veteran?

Hittle: No, no. He was Reserve. And he came back to duty early. And he finished, I think, 20 years service and went out after the war. He's living out in California the last I heard of him. But Charlie Byrd was not a person, never made a lot of _____ or anything, but he got the job done.

Well, one of the episodes that is worth recounting and it shows that once in a while you earned your day's pay by doing what you're supposed to do and not cutting corners. One of the things that you're supposed to do, before you assemble your ammunition, is to go down and go over--just to check it over, visual check and so forth--at the dump. And just before we started assembling ammunition I got a hold of Colonel Williams, who was Pioneer battalion commander? A real able officer, and he was in my quonset, and I said, "Let's go down," I said, "and check the ammo. Take a look at it." Well this is pro forma, apparently, but you did it because you were supposed to do it, see!

And we went down and here was this mountain of the FMF ammunition supply depot down there of ammunition, of every kind in the world, of course; it was all out under . . . the only place you could put it was in the weather. And so we walked around it and it looked perfectly good. So together

we started climbing over a few of the boxes and so forth, and all of a sudden our feet went right through one of the wooden boxes. Reached down; it was rotten! Opened up some stuff-- machine gun ammunition--it had been under water someplace. And opened it up and the ammunition containers were rotten, the gaskets were gone; pulled it out and belts came apart in your hand. Got into cloverleaves of mortar ammunition. The boxes looked good after they dried out. You got into them, they had been under water so long they were corroded; firing pins wouldn't even pull; and that was the shape much of the ammunition was in.

Q: Where'd it come from?

Hittle: Well, some of it had been on the island; some of it had been shipped in. It was one of these things that will happen in warfare without . . . in other words somebody had had it under water in that tropical downpour, in low ground or something someplace. It had been dried out by somebody or the weather had just cleared, and obviously without knowing it, why it was assembled for use on Iwo. And so we threw some typical cannisters back in the jeep . . . (jet overhead) went into the command post, and Bob Hogaboom was there. "Was the general there?" He came on out. He heard us there. We had a long table; we laid some of it out and said, "Here's what we're being provided with and set for loading." And I opened up the machine gun belt, came apart in my hand.

Erskine shook his head, called up the brigadier general who

was commander of the FMF supply depot there on Guam, had him come out immediately, get more ammunition, replace every bit of it. And they did it. They brought it in from nearby islands and every other place; and we got the unit supplies we were supposed to have, inspected it, and it was in good shape.

I often think: That was the one time that was going to be inspected before it was assembled for loading. And the reason the pioneer battalion commander and I went and did it because that's on the check-off list. (jet overhead) And if we had passed that out to the front line units at Iwo is something still today that can give you cold chills. But, the moral of the thing is that the Marine Corps did things right. In Graves B. Erskine's division there's only one way something should be done and that was the right way.

Q: Of course, the 3d Division had a tremendous reputation.

Hittle: Well--I'm not reflecting any others, because they were all good divisions--but as I say, that was the one that I was serving in at the time, and those were the standards that Erskine required. But the lesson that's learned and it's the old one is: Things are to be done because there's a reason for them. And if somebody'd said, "Well, it must be all right or the ammunition depot wouldn't put it out," it could have been an assumption that could have had fatal if not catastrophic results.

So, I say, sometimes you earn your pay in this soldier business!

Q: WAS there anything innovative in what the 3d Division did logistically, do you feel?

Hittle: Yes, we did a number of things innovatively. One of the basic things we did was: I think that we probably had the most highly organized assembly of cargo going; at least I was told that by those who knew it. But then you get on the beach, you know, and you go in with C-rations, C and K, and that gets pretty tiresome. And that operation's strung out into a meat-grinding affair.

So after we were there we got the ships unloaded and we still had the transports out standing by with other supplies because we didn't put everything on the beach to start with.

I got hold of Charlie Byrd and I said, "Every morning," I said, "you got yourself five amphibious . . . (noise), every morning," I said, "you go down to the intelligence section here; you pick up as much as they'll give you of captured odds/ends, miscellaneous things, souvenirs, and so forth."

Every morning he'd start out with these five ancient tractors and gather them around all the ships out there and go out and be friends and start bartering Japanese souvenirs for fresh food. Take anything they could get: case of eggs, hundred pounds of potatoes. It was just a bartering operation all the way around. And yet after about 5, 6 hours, when they came back in and assembled, we'd have fresh meat,

we'd have potatoes, we'd have onions--all the things that you could add to your C-rations in your field of fresh food. We were serving hamburgers to the men in the assault battalions.

Q: Well, now, Island commander at Guam was General Larson, who was supposed to support the division.

Hittle: Yes. But I mean this wasn't in the supply plan, see. This was just something that was improvised. In other words going around shopping for fresh food day after day, and we'd issue fresh meat, fresh potatoes; if you didn't have anything else, give them boys orange, give them something to warm up their C-rations, have fresh onions cut into it and chop up, and it made it a different dish.

Q: Certainly did.

Hittle: So then the other thing we did, we'd held out--these things can be told today--we had a DC-3 that hadn't been put under proper control, was kept under the division, so we flew flights from the base camp on Guam up to Iwo with fresh beef that we'd distribute. And one day the assistant G-4 came in, Bill Lind, with a cargo of fresh beef, was unloading it into a truck, and an Air Force general came up to him at the airfield there and said, "Who's that fresh beef for? What are you bringing it in over this field for?" or words to that effect.

Bill looked him in the eye and said, "This is a military secret, sir," and drove off.

But that's what we did. And we also flew up some beer, from camp, because that ground was powder dry; people were thirsty all the time in combat. And we were able on a couple occasions to issue two cans of beer to everybody in the division.

Q: Wasn't there a problem with, I think . . . General Worton I think may have told me about it . . . but the Navy just wasn't providing the division with fresh food, fresh meat.

Hittle: It wasn't supposed to. That's what we were doing, going around shopping for it. It wasn't in the logistics plan for the Navy to provide the fresh meat. They might, but they didn't provide all we needed. But under the barter system we got going there we were able to serve stew, hamburgers, things such as that from time to time. Not everybody, but occasionally. And we was the only division that was doing it.

And of course, then afterwards, we had to screw around to see what our justification was for going around and having this improvised supply system. And I went through the big order put out by Nimitz's headquarters; it was a book about 3 inches thick for the operation on Iwo; and I was going through the logistics section and it said in there: All ships will assist in supporting the troops ashore. So we took that as a term of reference and wrote a very, very appreciative letter to Nimitz's headquarters from Holland Smith and then on the Nimitz, pointing out what a fine

provision this was, how the ships had assisted, and recommend that it be done again. So that's how we got out of breaking the rule.

Q: And Holland Smith went along with it.

Hittle: Oh, yes! Everybody thought it was great!

Q: Wonderful.

By the way, Mr. Secretary, do you have an appointment?

Hittle: I do, yes.

And that brings us up to. . . .

Q: Iwo.

Hittle: To the move to Iwo.

Q: Yes, sir. We'll talk about it next time.

Hittle: Okay.

End Side 2, Tape 1, Session III

Session IV - 30 July 1970

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: When we left last time you were getting ready to go to Iwo Jima. You spoke about some of the problems. . . .

Hittle: You mean historically or actually?

Q: Historically. Have you been there actually, since. . . .

Hittle: No, no. There was a memorial on Sunday and a reunion of the 3d and 5th Divisions; and gave a few remarks because it was really a remarkable turnout.

Q: Really.

Hittle: I'm surprised that as many people came as far as they did for the reunion.

Q: I saw the story in the paper.

Hittle: I didn't see it, no. When was it, on Monday?

Q: No. Monday in the Star, I believe.

Hittle: Did they have any pictures?

Q: Yes, sir.

Hittle: Didn't get any coverage . . . I mean I didn't see any coverage on the reunion; that's what worried me about it.

Q: There was coverage on TV: the memorial service at Iwo Jima Monument.

Hittle: It was a very impressive service that they put on. Aside from my remarks, of course.

Q: Of course, we've got one coming up next week.

Hittle: That's the 1st Division. I'm eligible for that, too. I'm a plank owner of the 1st Division.

Q: I know, I know.

Hittle: Old Holland Smith sure was right when he said, "You're going to form up the division for war, and you haven't got much time to do it." And this was on the eve of the war, you know. He says, "You don't do it in the barracks," he says, "you don't go home to a separate house every night. You go into the field and you work and live as a team." And that's just what he did: He sent us down there, and it sure was the field on that point down on Guantanamo Bay. Went in under canvas and came out a division.

Okay, where do we go from here now on Iwo.

Q: The last time we were together we talked about some of the problems in mounting out logistically, and talked about . . . the last thing we mentioned during the last interview was the bad ammunition that you had had to repack or replenish.

Hittle: That's right, yes.

Did I get into the cargo assembly, the combat loading in the division?

Q: No, sir.

Hittle: Well, we had a successful embarkation down there. The assembly period for material, for the combat loading, is probably one of the most intricate and in a sense complicated of all the logistic efforts in connection with a major amphibious embarkation. It requires every one of the various different types of organizational as well as common supplies that come from central stocks and so forth to be delivered at the right place and in the right amounts so they can be moved from the embarkation area aboard ship in the right amounts and the right sequence. And when you start talking in terms of a city of 25,000, which is really what a reinforced division is, moving out of a base camp into ships for an assault, it's uprooting a city of 25,000 people: shelter, food, hospitalization, and then transportation; utilities, clothing, everything that a normal city would have, in a sense, except permanent housing, of course. And adding to it all of the materiel that's required for war, plus the organizational arrangements and the adjustment of the embarkation, in both personnel and materiel to the specific tactical scheme of the assault at the destination. As I recall, there were five major berths for embarkation of APAs and AKAs at Guam. We assembled cargo over a period of about pretty close to 2

weeks. It was almost around the clock effort; at least some of it was going on round the clock.

The command post for the assembly was the G-4 logistics office, the quonset at the division headquarters. And that was manned around the clock. And records of visual graphs of each type of supplies were maintained for each organization and each ship; and they weren't according to the embarkation plan which is, I think, easy to visualize a rather voluminous and at the same time an exceedingly practical one, because if you make a mistake you got X number of thousand tons of food, ammunition, weapons in the wrong place as a monument to your stupidity.

It was a remarkably smooth embarkation assemblage. Then the embarkation began: we moved in five ships at a time, in relays of five. And as I recall, I think there were twenty-five or twenty-seven . . . twenty-seven APAs and AKAs for the division, plus LSTs and others. And the total embarkation sailing convoy was the troops; in other words, the amphibious ships. Total, I think--this is recollection--somewhere in the vicinity of fifty.

Q: That's for 3d Division alone.

Hittle: This is the 3d Division reinforced, yes. That was about 25,000 people with whom we embarked, Marine and Navy, for Iwo Jima.

The embarkation went well. We had, I felt, one of the most accomplished, knowledgeable transport quartermasters

that any division had during the war, Charles Byrd. Served with him when we were both lieutenants. Charles was a Reserve who came on active duty in, I think it was late '39 or early '40 when the augmentation began; and stayed on active duty until he retired after the war. He made some very important contributions to the techniques as well as the doctrine of combat loading.

But anyway, we proceeded with the planning. And at the end of the embarkation, with twenty-five ships to load or twenty-seven ships in five relays--I think that's about what it came to, five relays plus two--we beat our preset plan by 4 hours for the whole operation; and there were no time controls on it except to get it done efficiently. So we felt very well satisfied with our time, space, and assemblage factors.

Q: Did you have all the gear you needed, or were you short any supplies?

Little: We were pretty well. . . . Of course, you may always run into individual things or special categories in which you didn't have enough. But by and large, our supply for Iwo was quite good for a very simple reason: You make up a plan, the initial order from higher authority we received, guidance, indicated that we were taking a minimum of 5 days of supplies for the assault on Iwo. As I recollect discussions with the division staff--chief of staff--that derived from an evaluation, an estimate, because of the size and the overwhelming

preponderance of power we would have, that the assault _____ we would have would be 8 square miles of ground should be completed in approximately 5 days, and then reserve forces and island garrison to wipe up and come in.

I saw the Chief of Staff, Bobby Hogaboom, and I said, "We got the room," and I said, "no reason to go short, why can't we go with a full month's supply; if we don't need it, we don't use it. We'll either leave it there or bring it back; in any way it will be useful. And if we do need it and don't have it, well we'll be in trouble." And there certainly was nothing but agreement to that.

So we went out from Guam for Iwo, 3d MarDiv with one month's of supply and the maximum amount that we could carry under existing orders of unit supply. And as events turned out, it was a fortuitous decision because it had hardly begun for the sustained defense at the end of the third or fourth day and went ashore what . . . the 3d Division began debarkation D plus 2½ or 3 as I recall. Some of the units were hardly in from the beach when we went ashore then. There were still large numbers of casualties being taken in the Motoyama Number 1 area. Matter of fact when--as I recall--General Erskine, General Hogaboom, Colonel Tex Butler was G-3, and myself as G-4, when we first went ashore ahead of the division, which was the reserve division coming in, and we went to General Smith's headquarters where General Erskine reported in, and that was to the left of Motoyama Number 1 in the area between Motoyama Number 1 and the beginning of the

rise of the Suribachi slope. And coming back from there they were running this little logistics trail alongside Motoyama Number 1. We were going on up to forward of Motoyama Number 1 where the plateau began, and this was in the defiladed site there that the 3d Division headquarters was going to go in, and went in. And all the way up there, why we were tagged with what seemed _____ a very short distance by bursts and either they were trying to register on this jeep going along there with mortars and couldn't catch up with us with a registration or else one of their 75 howitzers, direct fire. Anyway, I'll never forget as we looked around, all the way up the field, why right behind us at regular and short intervals the bursts were following us along. And General Erskine who was never lost for a pertinent remark under any circumstances, he looked around, sized it up, turned around again and said casually, he said, "Every year those rounds are going to get closer." I guess every reunion they probably do. That is how we got ashore.

Q: Was it unique that you were considering the problems of mounting out for other operations, the fact that you had space. . . .

Little: No, because the AKs had the space. If we'd only taken 5, 10, 15 days, we wouldn't have used the space. And as it was, we had no severe adjustments that had to be made beyond the plan in the entire embarkation. There were a few

cases in which pallets were broken and some instances, rather, in which a small amount had to be placed in the ship for bulk cargo. But the only adjustments that were permitted in our embarkation, deviations from our embarkation orders, was approved by either Major Byrd, who was the transport quartermaster, or myself personally. So you see, there were very few.

Q: My point is that it was unique that you had enough shipping, and that shipping had been allotted.

Hittle: No, because your shipping, see, is really a tactical allowance by organization rather than by cargo requirement. In other words in what you are required; in other words, roughly the ideal of a BLT for ship. Of course, there were the odds and ends adjustments and then the groups would go on the . . . smaller groups that went on the AKs with the heavier equipment and so forth, and then also on the LSTs. Of course, your LSTs are limited largely by your square footage for your rolling and tracked stock. But your AKAs and APAs are combination both of cube and square footage limitation as far as your cargo. And what we put aboard was. . . . In other words the assignment of the ships was determined by the troop requirements rather than by the cargo; and consequently, the cargo space was a constant factor within the limitations of the ship.

Q: I was thinking primarily of the problems broken out later where the shipping was in such short supply that--of all types--that, for instance, adequate transportation could not be taken. Or the loading of transportation was such that. . . .

Hittle: I can't comment on that because I wasn't in on Okinawa. As a matter of fact, we were getting ready in our turn. At that time we were, upon our return from Iwo--to jump ahead here--we were reorganizing, reequipping, repairing gear and beginning initial training for Kagoshima, for the massive assault on the southern end of the Japanese home island, Olympic.

Q: Well, but as I say, the limitations on Okinawa, shipping was based on the use of the shipping or the allotment of Iwo, the fact that it would be made available on a turn-around basis to the Tenth Army.

Hittle: I can't comment. All I know is that we had the normal amount of shipping for that type of operation. Consequently, I'm glad we took 30 days.

The debarkation was a difficult one logistically in many ways on Iwo because, one, the flood of beaches; we took over a section of the beach. Paul Chandler, our--a lieutenant colonel--quartermaster, he ran the division DUWKs. Very able, experienced man. He was another one of these people I often think, who didn't go down in the history books; but what they contributed made history. And they're the essence

of the devotion and dedication and hard work and the superlative professionalism that made these kind of operations possible.

Q: Of course, Paul Chandler was a quartermaster clerk who was a POW. . . . (interruption) As I was saying, he had been with 4th Marines and had been taken prisoner, but one who had been repatriated.

Hittle: And after Iwo--I remember now--after Iwo I returned to Guam, and the Marines had moved into North China. He went to North China, as as I recall the story was: he went to the man with whom he left some of the division funds and they were there, and he got them and returned them. Wasn't that correct?

Q: Correct. Yes, sir.

Hittle: That's right. He left them with the Chinese whom he trusted, and he kept them for the U.S. troops at the risk of his own life all those years of the Japanese occupation.

Remarkable story! Remarkable story! And here again it's a reflection on the kind of person Paul Chandler was, because in the first place he had friends of that type of honesty; and two, he knew those kind of people with whom he could leave the U.S. government funds. And when the war was over, back he went. It's a remarkable story!

Q: How about that beachmaster, that naval officer named "Squeeky" Anderson. Did you ever run into him?

Hittle: Yes, I did. Very capable man. I didn't know him extremely well, but he was a good beachmaster.

It was a littered beach on Iwo--broached boats, sunk and damaged small Japanese lighters that had been caught during some phase of the fire preparation of the island; and the moment the wind came up and raised the surf on those beaches where we were unloading, why the unloading, for all practical purposes, had stopped. And consequently, the landing and forward movement of critical items of supply, for instance, such as artillery ammunition, other critical types of ammunition, really depended upon the surf; and at times it was touch and go. And the boat crews and the beach parties were heroic in many instances, under the conditions in which they'd bring in the ammunition and get it landed. Even sometimes they lost the boats in doing so. The trade off there was that important.

I remember just a few days after we got into place, and the Japs were holding real strong, and it was decided at Corps headquarters--General Smith's headquarters--that there would be a three-division assault. And particularly on the part of the 3d Division, up the center it was a tremendous concentrated barrage. It was probably one of the biggest of any divisional artillery preparations during the war. And it was all laid on for the next morning, and I came running in from the beach to report in to General Erskine; it was late afternoon. It was all ready to go in the morning, orders had been issued, and General Erskine said to me, "Are you going to

have all the artillery ammunition up to the guns in time?"

And I said, "No, sir." And I said, "We're not even going to have it ashore." And this always stuck in my memory as an indication of what a realistic and practical man Erskine was. It wasn't any bombast or anything.

He simply said, "When can you have it?"

I said, "Twenty-four hours later." I said, "We'll have it in time for the barrage." And of course, I had taken a little guesswork on the surf. But as the things then stood, it looked like we'd make it.

And Erskine took a turnaround and he said, "All right. Put a 24 hour delay on the attack." Turned around and said, "Twenty-four hours later?"

I said, "That's right." And it was.

And he said, "You'd better have it there."

Q: How about this question of the 3d Marines not being employed ashore except in piecemeal; that the regiment never fully committed. . . .

Hittle: Well, I don't know. What I can say is that the 3d Division, with what was ashore, broke the back of the Japanese attack. What the considerations were on the part of General Holland Smith and Erskine on that, I don't know. I was never taken into their confidence as a lieutenant colonel G-4.

Q: Of course, Erskine just practically led that division personally.

Hittle: He exercised great personal leadership. But he was such a fine leader that he never upstaged, in a cheap sense, and he never demeaned the position of a competent commander and leader.

Q: Do you recall the time he was bedridden?

Hittle: I know he was under the weather for a while there, yes. But the division went on just the same. He was a fine officer; and Hogaboom was chief of staff. You couldn't ask for anything better than that.

Third Marine Division was blessed with some outstanding officers and leaders. Erskine was one of those people who, in my book, having worked under him for close to 2 years and closely so, I thought was so highly professional--professionally qualified. It was said in the division that he knew more about anybody else's job--and genuinely so--than the person that was doing it. Of course, that's a descriptive expression rather than probably a technical one. But he knew what people's jobs were and he was able to gauge how they were doing. And a lot of people, at the time since, criticized Erskine as being hard on his standards--ruthless standards--and so forth. He was never ruthless; he was considerate. But his charity with respect to putting up with second class performance, below standard performance, ended when it came to required military professionalism. And if a person didn't try, and could do the job, Erskine had no place for him because they weren't performing as they were supposed to

do both in terms of their mission and their obligation to the organization. And yet, if a person didn't have the ability but their heart was in the right place, Erskine could always find a place for them where they could function successfully as a Marine with self-respect and effectiveness at that level. If a person had ability and was trying, was sincere, even if they had a misjudgment--providing it wasn't all the time--Erskine was always understanding about it.

Q: He had pretty well shaken down the division before Iwo as far as. . . .

Hittle: Yes. He got a hold of that division. You bet it was shaken down! It was an Erskine division; and it bore the stamp of his professionalism all the way through it.

Q: There were no reliefs necessary during the operation at all.

Hittle: I don't recall . . . yes, there were a couple of reliefs. I know of one; there might have been more. To say there weren't any reliefs, and for what reasons, would be wrong. However, there was no epidemic of reliefs. There were a couple who came pretty close to it that if they hadn't done better than they were doing, were going to get relieved.

After we came back and got a new--just to jump ahead of this matter of Erskine's standards--came back from Iwo and got our new replacements, so forth, the next operation--as I recall--we got nine new battalion commanders that were

ordered in. And I think it was within a matter of a month or so, five of them had been relieved--either four or five had been relieved.

And Erskine . . . one night I was talking with him in the office, I was mentioning the high percentage of those who had been relieved, and he made a very revealing statement. He said, "You know, Don," he said, "that if this were peacetime, if we weren't pressed for time," he said, "I could probably train every one of them to be good, able battalion commanders." He said, "I haven't got the time to train them now; and if I leave them in that job," he said, "with the most standard performance they're demonstrating professionally, it's going to cost Marines' lives, and I'm not going to let that take place."

Q: Was there much competition between the three divisions in V Corps.

Hittle: Healthy competition, yes, but none that ever hurt anything. It was all constructive competition that I saw.

Q: No cutthroat.

Hittle: I never saw any of the cutthroat stuff in the divisions, no. There was competition, and some pretty strong competition, but it was the kind of competition that should be between good organizations striving to do the best.

Q: Was there anything . . . of what lessons, logistic lessons, were learned?

Hittle: Well, I would say that in spite of the different kind of operation, the intensity, the close quarters, the fact that Iwo was probably different than any other operation that we've had in many ways--concentration of forces, viciousness of the action--I would say that it showed that the basic principles of amphibious logistics, technique and doctrine, that the Marine Corps was following was basically sound and adjusted with common sense in the situation. That's just about what it boiled down to; that the principles were sound under which we operated--embarkation, combat loading, dispersion of cargo, the landing of it--even in the concentrated beach area that if you had ever done it that way in a problem in a school, they'd have taken a second look at you; but because of the restriction of available terrain and beach area, you had to do it that way; and yet to be dispersed within the space you captured, and according to the principles of dispersion of your beach areas, you're doing the right thing.

Q: Was there anything innovative?

Hittle: Yes, there were two or three things innovative. All I'm talking about now is the 3d Marine Division. This thing began to get pretty tough on. . . . We had lots of food, but after a while C-rations, as they existed then and I guess as they exist now, they don't become too delicious after a couple weeks or so, or even after a steady diet of eating out of a tin can. So we had a couple ways of getting around that

thing. It wasn't a matter of bringing in all fresh food, but you have got to get supplementary fresh food so you can pass out something to the men whether it's fruit, whether it's potatoes. When they have a little can to heat fire there and warm up their C-rations either in a can or mess kit, then they can fry onions. Onions are one of the best things in the world put into canned food, because they have a crunch and a tasty flavor to it. Everybody likes them.

So what we did about the sixth or seventh day after we were pretty well ashore--ashore and organized, and beach dump operating--I got together with Charlie Byrd, the division transport quartermaster; and Charlie was an entrepreneur in every sense of the word, plus the fact he knew the skippers, executive officers, supply officers . . . in fact, in every transport in the whole fleet area, the whole sea area where the ships are laying off. And so I got a daily commitment from the chief of staff of three amphibious tractors. We got them every morning, close to dawn, and Charlie Byrd--either he or one of his assistants who would follow his instructions and he trained, and also knew the people in the fleet in the amphibious forces--so they'd go over to the intelligence section and get all of the miscellaneous, broken, partly broken, intact, and so forth Japanese materiel that had been turned in, captured, brought back--and of course in the previous 24 hours--and dumped equal amounts in tractors and then go down to the beach and head out to the fleet just like a bunch of bumboats. Go alongside every transport and go aboard. And

of course, the sailors didn't get a chance to get ashore and get anything of a souvenir nature, and they knew they were contributing to one of the most historic battles in modern history. And they were anxious to get anything as a souvenir. And Charlie drove a hard bargain; in one place he'd trade a broken gun or rifle or something for as many boxes of fresh oranges as he could get. Anything he could get: fresh eggs, fresh oranges. It was just like collecting for a miscellaneous supermarket--onions, anything. Then he'd move on to the next ship. He came back and sorted them out at the division supply dump. Paul Chandler and I'd get together and decide what we'd issue. And we'd pass it out by battalion--so much onion, so much fresh potatoes, oranges, even eggs, and so forth. We set up in the rear area there, back of the battalions, improvised ovens made out of 50-gallon drums, and baked fresh biscuits--with shells going over--because these were little things that mean so much. And we kept some amount of fresh food going up like that.

And then as we began to see that it was going to be a long one, we fell back on another device that we had. By some strange set of circumstances, after the Guam operation, a C-46 wound up without a pedigree as the unofficial property of the 3d Marine Division. It could make the trip non-stop from Guam to Iwo with a load. And so I took my assistant G-4, Bill Lynn, who was a reserve but had been with the division for some time--very energetic; a very successful businessman he was and he is now--and Bill's job was to go back and

forward with the C-46 to the base camp at Guam, where he'd on occasion fly up a load of beer--get up high so it was cold--and on infrequent but on several occasions we were able to issue two cans of beer right up the front lines. And after spitting out that inescapable dust at Iwo--black sand dust on Iwo, it just enveloped you like a sticky cloud--that cold beer tasted pretty good.

And one of the most important things he'd bring back would be boned beef, because what they could do would be make stew out of it; and then if there was any lull, take it forward on a battalion basis or even regimental basis, and sometimes with the biscuits they made, they would eat them with hamburgers. And I'd seen boys up at the firing line, the 3d Division during that time that were getting this, that would take a big bite of a hamburger and set it down on something to keep it out of the sand, and get their rifle up and squeeze one off and go back to their hamburger. That wasn't usual, but that's just an indication of how Erskine wasn't operating by the book; he was operating by the practical things of life: to look after your troops the best you could.

On one occasion I remember, the C-46 came in and we had a truck back up to it at the airfield corner there--we tried to keep this thing from being too well known so that the play wasn't broken up--and in the midst of unloading frozen beef from the plane to the truck, an Air Force colonel or brigadier--I forget which it was--came up to Bill Lynn (bell rings) and he said, "I'm in charge with this part of the air

installation here," he said, "I don't know where that beef's from or where it's going." But just as he said that, the last box landed in the bed of the truck.

Bill Lynn said to him--probably this is one of the reasons that he came out with a Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, I think it was Bronze Star--he said, "Sir, my orders are confidential and I can't disclose that to you." And he got in the truck and drove off.

Q: Good thinking.

Hittle: And one other postscript on that fresh food and so forth: Erskine issued an order to me. He said, "Now listen! We're getting fresh meat, some steaks, some hamburgers, just as it comes." He said, "There's not to be an issue of fresh meat to anyone in the division headquarters until every person forward of the division headquarters has had one issue." And when Erskine said that, why it wasn't with a wink or anything else. It was meant. And that's the way it took place. Of course, it was so unorthodox, there was some criticism, as there always is, of people that get outside the strict parameters of directives.

So we got back to Guam, and there were a few rumbles about how 3d Marine Division had foraged the fleet, and a few things like that, with amphibious tractors and so forth. And so it's the old story of how you legitimize what you improvise. So I told Erskine we were going to have to do something. He said, "Okay," he says, "you did it down there. You figure

out what we're going to do here." So I got out the instructions from Admiral Nimitz's headquarters on the operation--great big set of books--and got down to the logistics section. If you can always find a reasonable term of reference, you're all right. So I got into logistic, and it had. . . . There was a separate sentence in one place that said, "All ships will support to their utmost," or something to that effect, "troops ashore." And so we wrote a very formal letter based upon that as the instruction from Fleet headquarters, and then referenced that paragraph there, set forth what had taken place and so forth; how they had provided from their limited supply for the troops ashore in such enthusiastic manner to carry out that very important part of the instructions from CinCPac (Commander-in-Chief of Pacific Ocean area) and recommended that that had worked so well that it be specifically emphasized in all future operations, and expressed admiration and thanks for such foresight on the part of Nimitz's headquarters in writing those kind of orders, and then sent it all the way up the chain so everybody could put an endorsement on it recommending that it happen. So I put an endorsement on it for the future, in approving the letter, why it could approve what we had done without authority. So we never heard any more about that.

Q: There was some problem, was there not, during the time you were on Guam before the operation, in getting provision--getting fresh meat.

Hittle: Only spasmodically. The supply system--when you consider how much there was that came in out there--was in pretty good shape. Fresh vegetables were hard to get. You very seldom have all the fresh food you want; but nevertheless, the chow on Guam was pretty good. And I watched pretty closely.

By the time they got to Guam, (plane overhead) that supply system and logistics for Navy was functioning and mighty well in the Pacific. And by the end of the Marianas campaign, those who had been at Guadalcanal and Bougainville were able to evaluate Guam in pretty satisfying terms.

Q: Did you have any problem with your relationship with the island command? I understand General Larson was pretty hard to get along with.

Hittle: No; Larson . . . oh, you mean on Guam? I'm still back on Iwo right now.

We didn't have any trouble with Larson. Erskine put in his base camp. He kept Larson informed. He had him out once in a while for dinner. I think they'd known each other from way back. All I can say is that we certainly couldn't have had much trouble because we had a very fine base camp; and typical of the way Erskine looked after his troops--here it was a base camp in a forward area--and before all the skirmishing and everything was really finished, they were laying out the base camp. One of the basic rules of it was that we were going to preserve the scenery; we just didn't bulldoze

down everything. The streets were cut, the tent spaces were taken out among the beautiful palms. And if you go back and see the pictures of the times, it was well laid out and it was attractive.

Q: Plus it had a nice big swimming pool.

Hittle: Oh, blown out of the coral shelf. And there again it was an example of how Erskine did things to look after the troops. The clubs were, of course, of local construction; they were well done. And we had a central water supply that came from the Ylig River across the rise, (plane overhead) the Seabees put in for us. And every pyramidal tent had flooring and screening; and practically all of them, by the time the camp was underway and functioning, had electric lights in them.

Q: So anything that sticks out primarily, that you haven't discussed about Iwo?

Hittle: Yes. Another thing: One of the things that was the most significant on Iwo--just an example of what a phenomenal place it was--the soil on Iwo was hot below the surface. And when the wind was down and the moist air was on there--particularly when there was no sunlight, it was cloudy--if you scratched the soil the reaction of the warm, underlying sand with the air would set up a misty, smokey spiral. And after there had been a preparation there stirring up the hot soil or something, you'd look out into that and it would look just

like a surrealistic rendition of something from Dante's Inferno. Of course, it had other aspects to it: You could take a C-ration can and dig a hole of 6 inch to a foot or so, and you could get it warm without having to light a fire.

My G-4 section--part of it--was in a Japanese gun position and they had a concrete . . . (interruption) they put their bedding rolls back in a couple of these adjacent vaults. One of them woke up in the morning and he said, "I've got to go to sick bay because I've got some strange fever." He was almost pink-red, his temperature was elevated. It was as if he'd been in a low temperature oven for the night. What finally evolved . . . because when he went back there, all the walls were warm from the subterranean heat. We decided we were going to have to go down for fresh water. And so we took a drag line over on the opposite side of the island, the 3d Marine Division's open beach area; and about a hundred, 200 feet from the beach the engineers dug with the drag line for the water level, hoping we'd get fresh water in that far. What they hit was hard water, some sulfuric content, it was slightly brackish; but it was 160 degrees. So immediately we decided that we could put this thing to use. So we put in division showers there, and brought back by platoons boys from the front as they could be relieved after they'd been there. Marched them through, issued new clothes, handed them underwear, and so forth; had them throw what they were wearing into big boxes, and go through the shower and get dressed, and go on back. And it was so hot,

though, that we had to put a big canvas water tank on a scaffolding--platform--up in the wind so that it would cool it below the 160. Not many times did you ever have to do that in combat!

Q: No, I never heard of it.

Hittle: That was just part of the phenomenon of Iwo.

Another improvisation to show you how the Marines improvised: One of the most difficult things for our fresh water production in the distilling equipment that we had lined up along the beach, was to get the intake out where the surf wouldn't fill it with sand. And you just couldn't get one to hold out in that area, for the surf would come up and take it right out again. The intake pipes are out way beyond the beach because it was open sea. And finally one of the young Marines on the water purification unit, he got the answer to it. He went down to a small Japanese coastal ship--or it had been an island vessel there; it was lying right in the surf where it had been sunk; it had a bunch of holes in it but it was solid in the water--and looked inside to make sure there weren't any Japanese floating around dead in there, which would have fouled the water, of course. It was all clean; it apparently had been emptied in good weather before we'd made the assault--the cargo hold had--so they put the water intake into one of the holes there, and they had a perfect water intake acetyline tank. The surf would keep it full, and yet the holes were far enough above the sand line

that the sand never came in. So that solved the intake problem for the water purification team.

Q: The water tasted pretty good, too, huh?

Hittle: Well, when the water comes out of the water purification unit, why you know where it comes from; but nevertheless, it's not bottled spring water. At the same time it's drinking water and it's pretty high quality.

Q: You left Iwo in March, the end of March.

Hittle: Yes; let's see . . . it was secured 1800 the 16th of March. That's when it was announced. But the fighting continued for quite some time. And it was some pretty tough fighting on the part of the 3d Division in the clean-up and so forth.

And one other thing that flies back through my mind, and it shows in a sense how calloused you get, yet at the same time it may not be as calloused as it is a person thinking in terms of their own problems in combat; and it's one of the things that has to be resisted at all the times commensurate with your obligation to your own unit: I think it was the third or fourth night we were getting a tremendous artillery thing--probably the third night we were there, as I recall. And we'd been unloading all day and got practically all--the large portion--of our ammunition up, and it was a little further down behind us, the other end of Motoyama Number 1, the dump was; and it was close to midnight I turned my sleeping

bag in the sand and tried to get a few winks of sleep. And it seems as if I was only shut my eyes and one of the sergeants came over and told me to wake up.

I said, "What's wrong?"

He said, "They just hit our ammunition dump. It's going up."

And after all that effort and getting all that stuff into Guam and out of Guam, over there, loaded, unloaded, through the surf and everything, that's what flashes through your mind: Where're you going to get more? And I turned around and I looked and I looked again, and I said, "What in the hell did you wake me up for?" I said, "That's the 5th Division dump; that's not ours." I went back to sleep. But we adjusted our ammunition the next day and went on without any difficulty because the back-up on supplies was excellent. Even when we started running short of mortar, 81mm mortar ammunition, which. . . . You couldn't keep up the supply with what we had because it was used in such tremendous amounts, and properly so. It was saving lives. It was needed in that operation. The minute that we started running short on it, we were getting the air drop right on Motoyama Number 1 there by air from the Marianas in very adequate emergency amounts.

Q: I think probably one of the most spectacular things of the things of the Pacific War was the logistic chain, the plan of implementation of resupply. . . .

Hittle: Emergency resupply. Spot resupply. It was very efficient.

Q: For instance, ships would be loading at Seattle so many days before D-Day, and so scheduled that they would arrive D plus something or other.

Hittle: And then from surrounding island bases, the backup island bases, you had this air drop. And my, it was a pretty sight to see that air drop come in, and there was the ammunition just as you needed it--in time.

Q: I think this is an area that ought to be explored more thoroughly from an historical point of view.

Hittle: Well, it would be well worthwhile because--particularly at the present time when it's the fad of so many people to cast aspersions on anything the military does--after all, we won that war, and it was no accident because it was a powerful and astute and clever enemy. And it was done with leadership and it was done with professionalism of a degree for the military that you seldom find in any field of--if ever--of a civilian endeavor. It was on a scale of magnitude and imagination in practical thinking, that at the very least is remarkable.

Q: Of course you have the situation that, number one, it was a war that professionals had been preparing themselves for since the end of World War I which was. . . .

Hittle: Some professionals had.

Q: Well, those who were successful.

Hittle: No. The only element of the Armed Forces of the United States that was preparing for that kind of a war that we fought in the Pacific, that visualized it, could see it coming and knew the necessity of devising the means of fighting that kind of war both conceptually, doctrinally, and with the proper equipment, was the Navy and Marine Corps. And it evolved out of a very, very small group in the Navy and the Marine Corps, right down at Quantico in the post-World War II /I ?/ period. And it came out in the fleet tactical practice what was in . . .

Q: FTP-167.

Hittle: . . . FTP-167 (Fleet Tactical Practice 167). It was evolved by . . . not the only ones . . . but the ones that evolved it were: Erskine, Noble, Holland Smith, Ellis; people of that vision and intellect and practical and proven military experience, because they saw what was coming. And it was as a result of what went on down at Quantico, because they were specialists in the amphibious way of life--amphibious warfare. Together with some farsighted naval officers that evolved that doctrine that came out of that little pamphlet, FTP-167, was the basic blueprint for the conduct and amphibious operations without which we could not have won the war in Europe or the Pacific.

Q: Of course the thing which is sad as you look back at it, is the fact that those naval officers who were farsighted in this amphibious assault business never did go too far in the Navy.

Hittle: Well, I don't know. Kelly Turner?

Q: Kelly Turner was a late comer. I think of people that go back like Walter Ansell and the people who were assigned in the early thirties to the Schools.

Hittle: Well, I didn't know them.

Q: Ansell was very much involved with this first period.

Hittle: Of course, some of the people--there were the most parts I didn't go back in the Navy and Marine Corps--were those that gave the genesis to this. And our departure from European military thought, I think--European naval thought rather--were those in the Spanish-American War who integrated within the fleet organization, the Marine landing force, when they sailed and took Guantanamo Bay.

Q: Huntington's battalion.

Hittle: Huntington's battalion and what was the name of the ship? Leopard? I think it was; but was a transport integrated into the fleet structure. The advantage of the departure from European naval thought.

Q: And the genesis of the advanced pay concept.

Hittle: Well, it was the genesis of modern amphibious operations; Fleet Marine Forces as far as the fleet . . . within the fleet structure under the unity of naval command.

Q: Yes. Departing from this: It's going to be interesting to read the results of the blue ribbon panel to see how the Marine Corps fairs under that.

Hittle: A copy just came in. I haven't read that part, yet.

Q: Have you anything further to say about Iwo?

Hittle: No, I think that pretty well covers. . . .

Q: How about command? You demean yourself by saying you were only a lieutenant colonel. But you were on a staff.

Hittle: I was G-4. (cross talk)

Q: And the problems of command that occurred down at Guadalcanal, between General Vandegrift and Kelly Turner. . . . It was a well-integrated landing operation.

Hittle: There may be difference of opinions at the time, but there weren't problems at command, that I can say.

Q: Holland Smith had a unique position in the sense that he really didn't have a command. . . .

Hittle: He was in charge of the Marines in the Pacific, and nobody had any doubt about it--and properly so.

Q: But I'm sure that his presence made Harry Schmidt feel as though someone was looking over his shoulder.

Hittle: I don't know about the feeling between Schmidt and Holland Smith. All I know is that I don't think there is any Marine in the Pacific had any doubts that what Holland Smith ran the Marines in the Pacific. And they looked upon him with great respect and admiration--professionally and personally. I didn't know anybody that didn't.

One thing I might mention in passing here is the turnover to the island command--that means the island garrison--was a rather interesting little side play on it. I'm sure it's in no history book. But Erskine became the Corps island commander after securing the 4th and 5th Divisions, main elements. And then the island garrison forces came in. And there was still some fighting going on at the time--mopping up operations. There was a colonel who was either island commander or second in command. But anyway, the one who was running it at the time. So, as G-4 at the time, I felt I should go on down and see his subordinate who was a colonel also, who was in charge of the logistics and so forth on the island. So I had been the G-4; right after he'd come ashore and set up, see if we could do anything to get help and get squared away; and I asked him, I said, "On the way out _____," I said, "when the turnover had taken place. _____ gear aboard ship. But if there's anything we can do to help orient and so forth, why we'd be glad to do it. All you do

is assign an officer; and anybody who doesn't need it."

Whereupon I got a real pointed dissertation that he got his feet wet in amphibious operations and they knew what it was all about. Also, it was no monopoly of the Marines, and that if they needed any help, why they knew where to get it but not to bother about them because they'd take care of themselves. I thanked him for his time, and left.

Then they began unloading some materials in the Army ships. They were unloading them in DUKWS instead of amphibious tractors. And they kept coming ashore for the garrison, of course, and they had some things the Marines hadn't seen for a long time: DUKW-loads of pineapple juice, fruit juice--tremendous amounts--B-rations that the Marines hadn't seen. And the Marine shore party was directing traffic and so forth to the 3d Division. Paul Chandler told me--about 5 or 6 days later--that one of the quartermaster officers from the Army garrison command came down to see him just before he was getting ready to wind up his affairs; and he was in a high state of bewilderment. And on this occasion he said he'd been unloading food supplies for 2 or 3 days and he couldn't find where any of them had gone. And Paul said, "Well, if you need anything, feel perfectly free to come up and I'll see that you get what you need." What had happened was: some of the drivers coming in saw _____ and some of the stuff was still falling on the beaches. Said, "Where do we take this? Quick!" Words to that effect. They weren't looking very good. And the Marine shore party boys were just saying,

"Over there." And every time they pointed, it was the Marines' supply dump. So, I guess the only moral of that thing was that if you really know amphibious operation and resupply, you'd better run your own shore party.

Q: I was going through General Hogaboom's correspondence and I saw some mail. . . . He left a rear echelon there, did he not?

Hittle: (cross talk)

And I think we left Chandler there for a while; I'm not sure. I don't recall.

But I remember I took off with Erskine and Hogaboom and the G-4 staff, and some of our principal assistants in a C-46. Made one round of Iwo and back to Guam. The last I ever saw of it.

Q: There was, I think, a full colonel that had been left behind to send division troops to. . . .

Hittle: Oh, yes; must have been.

Q: I'm trying to think who it was. Wasn't Montague.

Hittle: I don't know who it was.

Q: But I didn't know if you knew about this or not.

Hittle: Well, I probably knew at the time because the G-4 part of it was the major part of it--the windup of any part of a division operation.

Q: You don't recall how long the troops remained there. . . .

Hittle: No. They probably sailed back after that thing was secured.

Q: What was your first major duty when you got back to Guam?

Hittle: Well, I guess all of us went down to the club and had a few belts. I can tell you: When you went into that airfield at Guam after being on Iwo for just about one month, it looked like Times Square. Everything in this world is relative. The camp looked like that came nestled in the palm trees, electric lights, showers, running water, central locations--that looked awful much like a nice city.

Of course, one of the main things was to get the gear in shape and get on with the job. And it was only a very short time after that that Erskine had us already training for Kagoshima.

Q: You went to a conference for a time, I guess about 2 months, nearly, at Pearl Harbor. A shore party board was convened.

Hittle: It wasn't a shore party board. My recollection is: It wasn't anything like 2 months. But in order to bring the doctrine up to date after the Marianas and the Iwo operation, they convened a board of those who were doing it. And in view of the fact that I had been teaching logistics in Marine Corps Schools before I went out and I had the opportunity to

go through the operation in the G-4 job, I was one of those designated to go back.

Q: It was 3 weeks.

Hittle: It was 3 weeks. I didn't think it was 2 months, no.

And after that long on Guam and Iwo, and knowing I had competent assistants, why I didn't protest the temporary duty back to Pearl Harbor.

Q: That is unique. You were trained as a junior officer primarily as a line officer, and the first time you got involved in logistics is instructing it at Quantico. (bell rings) And the next thing you know, you're a G-4 of a division.

Hittle: Well, I don't know of any better preparation in the world than to serve your time as an infantry officer, battalion officer, before you move on up to a staff job. At any stage of the game, I'd rather gone back to a battalion command; but you go where you're told to go and you do the best job you can.

Q: Then you get marked as a logistics man or, of course, artillery.

Hittle: No. I left that and went to a job as battalion commander. After I left Guam I went to North China. I had the JEMCO job in North China, and then I had 2d Battalion,

7th Marines in a tactical situation strung along the Peking-Mukder railway. I had 2200 people.

Q: Well, talk about that in a second.

Hittle: Okay. But let me give you one postscript on Iwo.

Q: All right. Fine!

Hittle: On Iwo--oh, I guess it was about midway through Iwo, maybe before--replacements couldn't catch up with casualties; they were getting chewed so bad forward. Erskine issued orders that division headquarters would have to send forward an allotment from each section, and I had to send forward . . . I think it was two or three, three, I think it was, from the G-4 section. And I designated a couple of them anyway and had a couple more to go. One of my clerks told me that the sergeant in the G-4 shop, a Sergeant Montgomery, wanted to see me. He was outside the bunker, so I went on out. And Montgomery was my G-4 stenographer, clerk; very able guy, older than most of them. But he was kind of on the frail-looking side; ascetic looking, in a sense; was anything but a gung-ho type, recruiting poster Marine. And he said, in his quiet, usual voice, half-apologizing, "I understand you're going to have to send somebody up forward."

And I said, "That's right!" And I misjudged him. I said, "But you're not going." Thinking that's what he was concerned about.

He said, "That's what I want to talk to you about. I want to go!"

"Sorry about that, Montgomery," I said, "but I've designated who I can spare easiest. And I can't spare you back here."

The first time in his life he stood there and he argued with me. And he dug his heels into the sand. Told me that he's older than most of them and he's spent a lot of his life hunting; he came from Calistell, Montana, I remember. And he said he could look after some of these kids, and he'd never feel right unless he did go.

So I said I wasn't going to change his mind. And I said, "Okay! You know what you're getting into. Simply because you won't feel right the rest of your life, as you say, unless you do this," I said, "you volunteer. I'll take you instead of designating somebody."

He went up; and the story I got was from one of the lads that went up with him, came back wounded that night. He said that within an hour Montgomery was up there leading 2d command of a platoon--all the officers were killed--and had a sergeant second in command, and they were moving out in attack over a little rise; and just as they got over the rise, in a little saucer, a Japanese machinegun opened up on them and pinned them all down, just grazing their backpacks they were so close to them . . . (tape ran out)

End Side 1, Tape 1 Session IV

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session IV

Hittle: . . . and they were so close to them. And in the meantime, the Japs' small mortar was beginning to register on them; and either way, if they stood up they were dead. And if they stayed there, they were dead. And they had to get back over the line, and they couldn't do it because of the machine guns. So Montgomery yelled over to the platoon sergeant in command. And before he could be told no or anything, paid no attention when he was told not to, told him he was going to draw the fire. And he did; rolled the boys over the saucer there. And he finally stood up firing his M-1 from the hip, he walked deliberately right straight into the machine gun.

Well, the boys got back. And in order to get through that place, the battalion called down an artillery barrage. It just churned everything up and drove the Japanese back in that particular location. Never found Montgomery. But after they got back, since it hadn't been done otherwise, why I got a hold of the thing and saw to it that he was recommended for a decoration. He got a posthumous Navy Cross. And just to show you that once in a while you can carry out one of life's big obligations for one person: On the 26th of next month, September, why I'm going down to New Orleans to the Avondale shipyards and I'm going to speak at a launching of a new 1052 class--DD 1082, in this case--the 1052 class named the Elmer Montgomery.

Q: Yes, I was going to ask you that.

What part of Montana you say he came from?

Hittle: Calistell, Montana.

Q: How do you spell that?

Hittle: C-a-l-i-s-t-e-l-l.

We had a hard time find any of his survivors. He wasn't married. His mother passed away in the meantime. We found two of his sisters; and one of them was going to christen the ship.

Q: How wonderful!

Hittle: As I told them at the Marine Memorial the other day at the ceremony for 3d and 5th Divisions, in my remarks I used that as an example of how those who helped to take Iwo are not forgotten in the Corps and in the Navy.

Q: Times have certainly changed, though, I think.

Hittle: Why?

Q: I just don't know. I think the dedication that they had, it was a

Hittle: I have charge of . . . it comes under this office here, of the Department of the Navy Board of Awards. All of the awards, practically all of the higher awards have to go through here; I'm delegated the lower echelon ones to be given in Vietnam.

And speaking of dedication: I see the same kind of American kid doing the same kind of things to save his buddies. A Congressional Medal went across my desk yesterday, recommendation from the Board that I signed forward to Secretary of the Navy and the President, in which a Marine corporal was out there with his squad and they were in a real fire fight over there south of Da Nang in one of these bunker complexes, and it was either a grenade or a mortar landed right in the squad. And before anybody could do anything, the reflex action, this fellow threw himself right on it to take it. So I say: The same kind of American doing the same kind of sacrifice for the country.

Q: I guess when you get down to that type of thing, it's more. . . .

Hittle: A question of appreciation on the part of some of the kooks today and those who exercise the right of speech only because people like that die to preserve and protect it for them, of course, is what the discouraging part of this whole thing.

Q: Yes, yes.

Hittle: They're running around with long hair, dirty clothes, filthy language, opposing everything the country stands for; besmirching the flag and desecrating it, and call it free speech. And the thing that in the final analysis assures the continuation of our way of life, our constitutional

government, and freedom of speech is a guarantee which they abuse, are the people that they ridicule: that's the man in uniform.

Q: I'm glad you didn't throw bearded types in there.

Hittle: Well, yours is neatly cut. (laughs)

Q: Thank you, sir. (laughs)

Hittle: I noted considerable interest when I was up in Newport day before yesterday visiting a destroyer force. Many of the ships had just come back from the Mediterranean and other deployments. And a very interesting. . . . Just like it has always been, many of the sailors had their beards neatly clipped, which has always been the case. (cross talk) A lot of people think they're not permitted in the Navy; but they are. There's one sailor there, first class, he had a goatee-type, resplendant red beard. I said, "How long did it take you to get that one?"

He said, "Well, it took me 7 or 8 weeks."

I said, "You married?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "What does your wife say about it?"

He said, "She hasn't said much. But that's because she doesn't like it." (laughing)

Q: I've seen down here at main Navy, I've seen some officers, I saw a captain with a beard. Looked very distinguished, as

a matter of fact. But I've also seen some officers that are junior officers, lieutenants, with side-burns. Is this permissible now?

Hittle: Well, maybe to the extent of how far that your side-burns can come down with contemporary haircut. But it doesn't change the neatness of the haircut or anything like that.

Q: I imagine this must be a pretty big problem to have the services face up to contemporary customs and. . . .

Hittle: It's all common sense, plus the maintenance of military standards. That's what it amounts to.

Commandant of the Marine Corps, for instance, for Marine Corps purposes. . . . Yes, yes, come on in. We've got to break this up. . . .

End Side 2, Tape 1, Session IV

Session V - 9 November 1970

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: Mr. Secretary, we had pretty well covered Iwo; and I think at this point we will go to China and JEMCO. And I think perhaps you ought to explain what JEMCO is.

Hittle: Well, we broke up the 3d MarDiv on Iwo. One of the things that I think was worthwhile about the deactivation of the 3d MarDiv was that it was done in a deliberate and highly efficient manner, because all of the rolling stock--vehicles, armor--and many of the things that sometimes were left in the Pacific in other areas, other units, were in strict accordance with the existing directives on the deactivation of divisions. They were sent to the repair shops, maintained, prepared for trans-oceanic shipment back to the States, and shipped back in good condition. And consequently, the 3d Marine Division equipment arrived back in the States, it was available for Marine Corps inventory and backlogged in storage for some of those lean years after World War II ended.

Q: I might ask you at this time--I called up last week--who was the former Dean of Men at the University of North Carolina who headed up the divisional education program?

Hittle: I'll give you the same answer I gave you then: I can't remember. (laughing) I'm liable to before the program's over.

The 3d MarDiv wound up in an orderly manner; and the commanding general put out an all-hands and widely distributed info addressee document--message--announcing the end of the 3d MarDiv temporarily. And that was quite prophetic, also. But if you don't have a copy of it, you should get a copy of it because it marked the end of the 3d Marine Division's deactivation at that time.

Following that, I was embarked on one of the escort carriers, along with a draft of about 1200 Marines from the 3d Marine Division, and sent north to Tientsin. Somebody in Washington with a stroke of strategic genius and historical understanding, decided that we must face up to the Communist challenge to take over the Pacific littoral or the China littoral of the Western Pacific, because of the Communist pressure upon the regime of the Republic of China. Understandably the Communists were after it; and understandably it was in United States interest not to let it fall by default. Consequently, one Marine amphibious corps, about 50,000 Marines with aviation in there, moved into North China basically from Tsingtao on the Shantung Peninsula north to the Great Wall. The basic strategy--as you are well aware of that--of the United States was to nail down key cities, key ports, and the lines of communication for us--the railroads. The Chinese Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek, Republic of China, had the mission of waging a defense outside of the immediate defensive areas occupied by Marines.

I went in first part of November . . . no, no; January-- spent Christmas and New Year's at sea, as I recall; it was right after New Years--and a few days later we made our approach to the anchorage off the Tangku Port. It was ^a/bitter cold North China day, as only those days can be. And the ice was thick and the locally based LCP's were used as icebreakers for the smaller boats to get back and forth to the beach.

Q: You didn't have to land at Chinwangtao?

Hittle: No, no. We went into Tangku Port, which is the seaport for Tientsin.

Q: I thought that was a closed harbor. I guess it never did get closed in wintertime.

Hittle: I don't know. There was an awful lot of ice and the channels were kept open by Navy shipping.

We went into the old Tangku Port and set up a temporary staging barracks. And there were bunks there; and that was about it. We had bedding rolls. The only heat in those old brick warehouses, which was what they were, were 50-gallon oil drums modified to hold the wood and coal. Even though those things were bright red, they were so hot, all it did was take the frost out of the air for a short distance around.

But anyway, the next morning we had a hot meal so everybody realized they hadn't frozen to death during the night, and held formation and had a hot meal. I think I was executive officer of the administrative draft going into Tientsin.

We all lined up, formed up waiting for the local train to pick us up, take us into Tientsin. No trains showed.

Finally one of the officers and I got into a jeep, went down the dirt road alongside the fence, and far in, the train was--the locomotive--was parked; and the engineer and fireman were there, huddled around the fire on the outside drinking tea with a couple of the local residents. So we sign-languaged and a few other odds and ends. Well, we got them moving, got the steam up in the engine, get it down to where the detachment was that was going to Tientsin, a couple miles away. Just to make sure, the other officer--Lieutenant Colonel Davis, a reserve from the midwest--came back in the cab to make sure it got there.

Unfortunately, the railroad was outside a big anchor iron fence, a chain link fence. And nobody had a key to the gate; nobody could find the local custodian with the key to the gate, whereupon we were told--got the word from the radio at Tientsin--that unless we got embarked by within an hour it was, why everybody go back to the barracks until the next day. Nobody wanted to go back in and freeze until the following day and go through the routine again. So, amid some expressions of apprehension of who was going to pay for it, see what odds and ends of administrative difficulty on the part of some senior officers other than in the draft, why I had one of the 2½-ton trucks back up a couple hundred yards, get going good and strong toward the gate, and the gate didn't last long, neither did part of the fence. But those

thousand Marines got aboard the train on time and they made Tientsin before dark, which was the requirement.

Q: Had a cold ride up there, too.

Hittle: Yes. It was a cold ride. Everyone was glad they were on it because it would have been a colder night where they were, and at least they were into the warm barracks and better chow at Tientsin. So that's how we got to Tientsin.

Next morning I reported into division headquarters. No, I reported into Corps headquarters. Reported in to General Worton who was chief of staff. I told him I was going down to the division; I'd been informed by the Corps adjutant there. So then I went down to the division, and Colonel Frisbie, later General, was the chief of staff of the division. So I said to him, "When will I get into a battalion."

He said, "I don't know when you're going to get into a battalion," he says, "but you'd better get right over to your new job."

I said, "What's that?"

He said, "You are now designated as JEMCO!"

I said, "What in hell is JEMCO?"

He said, "Well, I don't know everything it is." He said, "But JEMCO, J-E-M-C-O, stands for Japanese Equipment Materiel Control Officer."

I said, "Well, what does that mean?"

He said, "Well, you are now in full charge," he said, "of all the Kwantung armies--Japanese Kwantung armies--possessions and activities, between the Great Wall and the Shantung Peninsula."

I said, "Well how much of a staff do I have?"

He said, "Well, you've got a few over in your office," he says, "you've got a few to work with--officers; three or four. You've got the Japanese quartermaster office under you." He said, "Your principal subordinate in that is General _____, who is quartermaster general of the Kwantung Army--Major General."

So I went over and checked in. I guess I had about eight or nine Marines. One of them was a reserve who had been an official . . . I think it was Standard Oil in the Pacific for many years. A very good administrator. And, incidentally, he and one other reserve businessman ran a ballpark estimate of the value of the inventory that we were controlling, aside from its political side. One came up with \$300 million and the other came up with over half a billion. This was inventory; because this was the economic and military empire that the Kwantung Army accumulated during the occupation. Ran everything from railroad spurs to railroad repair yards; equipment, rice mills, armories, and then warehouses that were beyond imagination. And all of this existing in a material-starved economy, at the end of a long occupation in the Orient. Everything of tangible value had tremendous value. Conversely, everything that was tangible had big value.

Also we had under my office the repatriation center for the Japanese civilians being repatriated, forced out, by the terms of the settlement, out of North China. And these were a rather pathetic group, most of them. There were very few rich people. They were, by and large, those who had followed the Japanese occupation, some under encouragement, others simply striking out for themselves in a new land. But they had been the preferred people. And the Chinese, in their wisdom, had decided that those who had taken the cream out (bell rings) of the economy were to leave. And yet, nevertheless, there were many innocents in the group in a comparative sense of war waging, and particularly the children and the older people--grandparents. And there were several thousand at a time in the repatriation center down at the Fort.

Q: There's quite a conglomeration, as I saw it. Not only did you have the Japanese, but you also had a considerable European colony, not only the Germans. . . .

Hittle: There was a large German contingent of those who had come out to tap the wealth of the Orient under the Nazi regime, and they were working so closely with the Japanese. Those were also repatriated. Chiang Kai-shek got the occupiers out--the military and the civilians--and probably very properly so, too.

Q: Of course there was a large Jewish refugee group there, too.

Hittle: Well, that was different. The refugees, the White Russians and the Jewish refugee population, were a different thing.

My recollection--as long as I was there--anyone who was a refugee was not forced out of North China. It was a very humane attitude at the end of the war, the best that I could see there, as far as the refugee foreigners were concerned.

But to get back to JEMCO: We took over the management of that, and it was starting from zero. Every day I took about half a day, got in a jeep with a guide and just drove around Tientsin and the suburbs; and whenever I saw a warehouse and looked closely and had a Japanese sentry on it, why I put it down and took the inventory; I put it down and added inventory, the typed material, an estimate, because that was something that was being held out on me because we could only go on what they gave us, which was then still there in large force. The Kwantung Army, as guards on trains, guards on the warehouses, some on the lines of communication--they were in the position to profit by it.

Q: Why did JEMCO come under the division instead of Corps?

Hittle: Well, the division was the one probably best equipped to handle it with the greatest immediate contact with the operating units, because guarding all of these things had to be coordinated as we took it over. And transportation, trucks, so forth--everything we needed; it just made for a more direct type of coordination.

I found, in the course of those trips around, a large number of warehouses--godowns as they're called in the Orient--some filled with electric motors, some with metals, some with raw materials; one warehouse we ran across was almost completely filled with copper wire, things like that for electrical purposes; transformers, generators, outboard motors, almost anything that a huge continentally based military complex would require, that had economic activities also. Clothing--warehouses full of clothing in that cold North China climate. Of course, that was at a great premium.

The upshot of the thing was that simply by going around, we found a large number; and we'll never know how many warehouses we didn't find, but they could't have been too many because we narrowed the areas of activity and recombined it in such a way that, by and large, I think we got most of it.

Probably one of the most memorable incidents took place when the decision was made to turn over, as we knew it would in a couple or 3 months there, turn over the JEMCO assets to the Chinese government, Chiang Kai-shek. As soon as the announcement was made, why I had a very formal call by the adjutant of the Kwantung Army, who said that the lieutenant general whose name escapes me, at the top, one of the senior soldiers, wanted to call on me. So I made the necessary arrangements, schedules, made an appointment he requested. He came in, very tight-lipped, very stern, very arrogant, wearing his sword. Apparently he hadn't turned it in yet;

I didn't make a point of it. With him was his assistant adjutant and his aide; his scribe had one of these over the shoulder desks in which he was taking down everything Japanese in longhand--everything we said. So I turned around to one of my staff sergeants, told him to take it in shorthand. He's never seen a shorthand character in his life; but he broke out a pencil and started taking notes like mad so that at least the Japanese would think that we were getting the same thing he was getting. He wasn't getting away with it. But in very arrogant and stern language, with the interpreter, he informed me he was protesting; that in the transfer of authority was made on the control of JEMCO, that the repatriation camp would be going to Chinese control and that the Chinese would drastically reduce the rations for the Japanese out in the cold weather, waiting shipment back to the repatriation center. Children, parents, grandparents. And I said well--after he got all through--I said that it is my understanding that the Japanese were going to have the same rations as the Chinese, that the Japanese had allowed the Chinese under similar circumstances in a concentrated area; whereupon he hissed a little, bowed, and walked out. And I often thought that if the war had turned out differently and the tables were turned, under different circumstances, why he was the kind that would have taken drastic and quick action on anybody in my category or anything else, _____.

The other incident in connection with repatriation camp that was very interesting was: Well, the only time I think

I was really conned--that at least I knew about openly.

General _____ was a completely different type of person. He came into see me one day--he was a very _____ character, which was unusual for a Japanese; laughed, twinkle in his eye, _____, a very good officer apparently--and he told me he said, "Listen," he said, "I've got to get more food," he said, "for the camp out there. He said, "I don't want to argue whether the Chinese _____," he said, "it's what we did to the Chinese. The fact is that what we gave them is probably not enough." At least he conveyed it to me in those words. And he told me that there was a warehouse--and I found it; we had a big warehouse--must have been hundreds of tons of frozen beef in it. And he said he claimed all of it. He said that's what they paid for, and he wanted to have it for repatriation camp. We'd just had taken it up on the inventory; we just found it. Something he'd been holding out on us, anyway.

So "Well," I says, "I'll tell you: If you get me bona fide, acceptable business receipts for what you actually paid for, and you can claim it." I said, "And within reason I'll turn that over to you," I said, "for use in the repatriation camp." The next day he came in; I had one of the local businessmen there, I think he was from one of the banks, and he certified it was right. There was no reason that I could assume that he was in collusion because he had been doing work for the Marines, too. And it came out to about 16 tons, something like that. So I said, "All right, you can take

that, but you don't get any of the rest. You showed that you paid for that, the Japanese Army, out of your office; you can take it to the camp. Absolutely that's all it's for! Absolutely!" So I turned that over to him.

And the upshot of the thing was that if all the stuff that the commander of the Kwantung Army turned over to anybody after the Marines got rid of it, the only thing that hit the black market with a splurge--I later found out--was frozen beef. And _____, with tears in his eyes, came over and conned me out of . . . for the use of what he said was the old women, the old men, the babies, the parents, all at the repatriation camp. I can't help but think up to this day that he must have been laughing more than usual as he walked back with his boots filled with American greenbacks to Japan.

But he turned over the entire warehouse operation--all of JEMCO on a given day. And it was quite a transaction; the biggest economic transaction probably in China in many, many years, and certainly since the war. And in an economically starved area, all of this mass of everything from rice to railroads, automobiles, clothing, everything of tangible value, food, electrical equipment. So it was a rather complicated procedure and it had to be very formalized.

We held the first meeting with the representatives of the Chinese government, and held it in a large meeting room there in the Italian Concession where the Marine headquarters were in Tientsin. In came representatives of this ministry

and that; everybody in there seeing who was going to be there for this operation because it was the biggest monetary transaction or its equivalent, in a long, long time. Then after all the representatives of the big people arrived, the Koos, the _____, and the rest of their representatives in the ministry came in and sat down back of the room.

I noticed a very tall, distinguished-looking, well tailored Chinese colonel sat down back there. A lieutenant general who was a old friend, quartermaster, of Chiang's was in charge of it--a man of good reputation. But it later turned out that the man who was really there representing the government and Chiang was this Chinese colonel, Chu Chen Lee, his name was, or Lee Chu Chen. And in the course of this, he and I became very good friends. And he was one of these unassuming people. He was, I think, a graduate of the University of Michigan in aeronautics, with an advanced degree in aeronautical design, who had been manufacturing business in Germany. He and his wife, his family were in Germany when the war started; didn't need to come back at the end of it. Came back and said he wanted to enlist because of the threat of Communism. Came back as an officer in the Ordnance Corps to do what he could. He was one of the most hard-working, one of the most decent and ethical people I've ever run into in my life, and that's probably why Chiang placed complete trust in him to supervise this half a billion plus transaction in a black market economy. And he never pushed himself with suggestions at the meeting or anything; but would always

be indirect, apologetic. But when he spoke, you knew they were listening. They always did what he suggested in his very subtle way.

I decided that there would be no divided ownership of this materiel. The day we started it, regardless of how late it was, that day would be finished. There would be no question of who it belonged to at any given time. We started in at dawn, and he and I--Lee Chen and I--as the principals, went to every warehouse, at which point I would take the Marine or the Japanese sentry off and they would put on a Chinese sentry, and he would sign for the responsibility for that warehouse by number, by address, and by general makeup of its content. And we finished it up by about dark that night. And the transaction was a clean one; the cleavage was clean; the responsibility and turnover was complete as of a given day.

I stayed in touch with the situation after I went north to take command of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines at the mines. I stayed in touch with my business friends for about 3 months or so. And as of that time, none of that materiel had yet reached the black market, which surprised everybody. But what happened later on I don't know.

But Lee Chu Chen was a person that would not even take a surplus pen or even a piece of furniture home to his apartment out of the office. One day I asked him, I said, "Well listen," I said, "why is it that you can maintain such standards here."

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. Fortunately," he said, "they're not welcomed." He said, "But between my wife and I, we have money," he said, "because I'll tell you frankly: My salary is such that it pays my rickshaw fares." And he said, "That's why you must understand that some officers, some NCO's in the Chinese Army," he said, "within reason, have to supplement their income in order to live and do their jobs." But as far as we were ever able to see, he was a completely dedicated and honest person.

Later on, just as I _____ with Chu Chen Lee, he was placed after that in command of the Nationalist Arsenal, Chiang Kai-shek's major arsenal, in Shanghai. When the front collapsed and the Communists were breaking in on Shanghai--I got the story later on--he commandeered eight ships in the harbor. He took all of his key technicians and their families, he loaded on all of the machinery from the arsenal with all the raw material, all the fabricating material they had--brass, powder, chemicals--sailed the convoy for Taiwan, disembarked, put it up under canvas and under the open sky, and went to making products again for shells, repairing weapons, things such as that. About 3 months after he got the thing in operation, got some of it under a roof; and as a result of working day and night, he died of a heart attack. But that's the kind of a person that so often, in some of our distorted history of the Chiang government on the mainland, weren't given credit for existing. Yet there were many soldiers like

that I ran into in the Chinese Nationalist Army. But he was the most memorable.

Since that time he had three boys. And since that time, whenever I've been in Taiwan, I'd call on his widow who has since been married to a very high educated government official in Taiwan. And his sons went through school; I'd stay in touch with them and they'd stay in touch with me. They went through school in Europe; and two of them now are American citizens, and one of them has just gone to work as one of the outstanding computer industrialist programmers in the United States. From time to time I hear from him. But I always look back on him as one of the really inspiring people dedicated in the country to the fight against Communism that I've ever known. So that winds that one up.

After winding the JEMCO and turnover--I've got to get out of here in about 5 minutes--I went north one day to 2d Battalion, 7th Marines at Linsi, which was the town beside the Kailan Mines. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines had the interior guard of the Kailan Mines which, along with Tangshan, were the coal producers for all of North China practically from Hangkow north.

Before the war the three mines . . . Chao-Ko-Chuang was the largest and it had in it what was known as the Hoover Shaft, because it was these mines that Hoover helped develop--President Herbert Hoover--and it was the basis of his great wealth. And the Hoover Shaft is still known as such, as a kind of in memory of his contribution to the engineering of the mine.

Q: That was Chao-ko-chuang?

Hittle: Chao-ko-chuang. You have to look it up.

These mines, before the war, shipped out by rail every day about 24,000 tons of coal, some of it to Tientsin and Peking for local consumption in the area. The great bulk of it north to Chinwangtao, about 60, 70 miles north, maybe a little less. It was the ice free port that they had in the Gulf of Chinti. And it was right near Chanhaikuan, the point at which the Great Wall met the sea. Chinwangtao had been developed as a coaling port.

And an old man who I came to know very well up there, has since died, had come to North China as a young man from Ireland--about 18 years of age when he came--and was a very important figure in the mining industry there, had been the one primarily responsible for scouting out and making the determination that Chinwangtao was the best coaling port. His name was Baldwin. He was over eighty at the time I came to know him at the end of the war. I used to go fishing with him, used to go visiting with him. He lived with his Chinese wife who was blind, in a very, very, almost humble cottage; but quite content and serene with what life had given. His son, incidentally, I came to know--grandson--who came out at the end of the war, half-Chinese, and came to America as a student; had British citizenship because of his grandfather's and then his father's citizenry. Got a scholarship to Oberlin. I wrote him a recommendation, which I'd like to think

was helpful. And after that he went north to McGill University, became a physician, and he's one of the outstanding physicians in Canada today. I hear from him from time to time. Old man Baldwin passed away many years ago. After the Red takeover, him and the stories that came out through the grapevine that I occasionally heard, was that he was such a respected and yet powerful, dominating man that even the Chinese Communists were not too rigorous with him because of his past association with the Capitalist system. And like the Japanese, why he'd give them a tongue lashing whenever he thought that it was appropriate. And for some strange reason, most of the times he got away with it.

I took over the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines down at Linsi late one night, got off the train, a little guard detachment sandbagged in at the Linsi Station in a roaring sandstorm out of the Gobi Desert; it was about 20 degrees below zero. I got off that train. No lights except a few flickering lanterns in what, I suppose, was a railroad station at Linsi at the time. And the Marine corporal, with a parka wrapped around him, waiting for me there with the station detachment. I thought that this was probably the closest I would ever come to a setting out of Kipling.

Q: Or John Thomason.

Hittle: Yes. Well, anyway. . . .

Q: We'll close now.

End Session V

Session VI - 24 February 1971

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: We left off last time, Mr. Secretary, we discussed JEMCO and you talked about arriving in Chinwangtao to take over your new command in the dark of night, cold night. But. . . .

Hittle: Pardon me just a second. It wasn't Chinwangtao. I arrived in Linsi.

Q: Linsi it was?

Hittle: Linsi Junction. L-i-n-s-i. And Linsi is the city that's located on the Peking-Mukden Railway between Tientsin and Chinwangtao, and it's right adjacent to the Kailan mines. They're the big coal mines of North China, the three large mines. The _____ is the largest, and it's also the location of--I think what I mentioned--was the Hoover Shaft that was named after former President Hoover, and more or less memorializing by its name the early career of Herbert Hoover when he was in North China and helped develop the coal industry, including those mines.

Q: I think you also mentioned some of the personalities that you knew there at the time--man by the name of Baldwin--mentioned the Linsi Mine and the Kailan Mines, Tangshan. And now you . . . mentioned here on the listing here . . . we have you as division transport quartermaster for 1-17 February '46; you say you'd like to get this record clear as you never were.

Hittle: I never was the division transport quartermaster. And whoever was making the muster role at the time didn't know who was holding the job. I don't recall who it was, but it sure wasn't me.

Q: Well I think at this time there was quite a bit of transition inasmuch the low point people were going home; demobilization was on.

Hittle: Yes, there was quite a bit of turbulence right at this time. Being the end of the war and the phasing out of those on the point system who were first eligible to go. And then the replacements coming on out.

Q: What was the quality of the replacements?

Hittle: Well, the replacements were excellent; and in many cases it was the regulars who were coming out, replacing the reserves who were going home.

In other words, the reason that I came from the 3d Marine Division on Guam to North China was because I was a regular. And as you know, regulars didn't get any points as far as getting out of the service, and they didn't seek any. We were just picking up the usual mission of the regular Marine, and that was to do the Marine Corps jobs other than in times of intense crises when there was mobilization.

Q: The regulars did come under the point system for rotation back to the States?

Hittle: No. I say they didn't, as far as your getting out of the service. You were a regular and you went where you were ordered to go.

Q: A lot of them had--thank you--had considerable time overseas, too. Wouldn't they be rotated after what was then decided as a normal tour?

Hittle: I didn't know what a normal tour was. You did the job and you stayed until it was done and you got relieved. That was about the way the thing worked, and very properly so.

Q: So there were some people in 1st Division who had been overseas through two and three operations.

Hittle: That's right.

Q: Now, let's talk about your having a battalion. It must have been quite a thrill and experience for you.

Hittle: Well, command, I think, is what every Marine aspires to. It's when you bring to bear the bulk of what you learned in instruction and what you've acquired in experience.

Q: Exactly what was the mission of the battalion at this time?

Hittle: Well, the mission, like so many times the Marines are called upon to do something of an unusual nature, the mission was rather unusual. There were two basic missions of the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines: one was the interior guard

for the Linsi mine and the other mission was to put the guards on the coal trains between Linsi and Tientsin, and to get them through the 150 miles of sometimes contested countryside at that time in which the Communists were doing anything they could, whenever they could, to upset the economy, disrupt the rail traffic, cut off coal. The battalion at that time--as I recall--was reinforced, which meant it had a platoon of tanks, they had 37mm anti-tank guns, had its own transportation; and the total was something in the vicinity of 2200 personnel--Marines in the battalion--which was a good-sized battalion by anybody's measurement.

As I look back on it, why, I continue to be really impressed by the fine jobs those young Marines did. We put four or five Marines--perhaps six--under a corporal, sometimes a PFC if he was the senior one available on rotation, put him on a coal train, three or four of them going south sometimes in a day. And there'd be one or two of them up in the cab and a couple or three of them back in the caboose; have a United States flag flying on the caboose to show there were Marines aboard. And they'd take off without--in those days--regular communications that would carry any length of distance, and start south with a trainload of coal, and a long trainload at that, vital to the economy of the country. And there were many a hair-raising episode as far as their contacts with Communists and efforts of Communists to disrupt the communication.

I remember one incident in particular in which, when I saw the report, I called in everybody connected with it--the five Marines on that occasion--and commended them. The train got stopped, and there was a company of Chinese Communists who had just moved in from the hills right into that little locality, and they demanded that all the coal be dumped at that particular point. And of course they had two reasons for it: one was to curry favor with the local inhabitants and give them their own supply of coal--and a great big one at that; and the second one being to show their power by disrupting the communications and in turn the objective of disrupting the supply of coal to Tientsin and Peking. And this young Marine lined up his five Marines facing this company of Communists armed with largely Japanese weapons which, all the Marines in the Pacific knew, were very good. And he informed them through the interpreter they had, as they went along on the train, that he had his instructions to get that train through to Tientsin and he intended to do it. And the Chinese commander, who had a sub-machine gun, he fired a blast over the heads of the Marines. The Marines--one of them had a BAR--and so he let a few rounds of automatic go right over the head of the Chinese company commander, and things got pretty tense. And you can't visualize a western shootdown or standoff any more tense than that one was, because gradually each one lowered their shots another few inches until they were just about doing a William Tell at each other. And those five Marines stood right there facing

the company of Chinese Communists, battlehardened and _____ Army campaigners; and it got to the point that the next exchange would have been right through the Chinese company commander's head. They were that low, it was obvious to everybody. And the Chinese company commander went into a speech, into^a tirade, warning the Americans, and then marched off the company. The boys got back on the train, took their positions, had the train crew get underway, took her on to Tientsin. But these were some of the unsung jobs that the Marines did in those days, as they do today and will be doing tomorrow. But it was a job that was unappreciated because it was in the aftermath of the war; national attention was on demobilization rather than the protection of the Pacific basin which we had labored and fought so hard to win, and China was vital to it. What was going on in China was grossly misunderstood by the bulk of the American people, a large element of the press and, unfortunately, by some governmental officials at the time.

But after I returned to the States, I took the occasion to go through the records to verify who the Marines were that were performing this particular duty, and I recommended a number of them for decorations. I'm glad to say the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved practically all of them.

Q: You were there for approximately 6 months, 5 months.

Hittle: I think it was 5 months.

Q: No, did the battalions go down to Peitaihao?

Hittle: After we'd gotten the situation relatively stabilized in the Linsi area, the battalion moved on to the north. And I set up my command post in Peitaihao, which was a small village about 3 miles from the track on the Gulf of Chihli.

Q: A resort.

Hittle: It was a pre-war summer resort area and yet it had a population the year round.

It was also the headquarters for the regiment, the 7th Marines. And I was the only battalion at that particular regiment. I had about a third of the battalion at the Peitaihao location where we were using as a barracks a one-time Japanese field hospital. And the rest of the battalion was distributed over about 40 miles up the Peking-Mukden Railway, guarding the bridges. The general strategy was that the Marines would do the interior guard duty as the guarding of the bridges; and the Chinese Army, under Chiang Kai-shek's Army, was beating off the Communists and beating them up pretty badly at the time. It was doing the outer area defense, exercising that responsibility.

Q: The Japanese were completely gone from the area.

Hittle: The Japanese were gone from the area at that time, yes.

Q: There were no Japanese troops performing any guard duty such as they had been doing. . . .

Hittle: No, it wasn't. The only indication that we got of any Japanese troops in the area was one time at the battle of Koco-chen, which was in May of 1946, as I recall, in my zone. A Chinese Communist brigade came through the Great Wall and came south.

Q: What battle was that again, sir?

Hittle: The rail junction at Koco-chen. K-o-c-o-c-h-e-n. Hyphenated. Koco-chen.

We had received information that through the grapevine intelligence, which is the kind of intelligence you get in one of those occupation situations; and it's a type of intelligence that has its own special characteristics, and it's very definitive in its characteristics. And you certainly don't dare disregard the grapevine as you begin to interpret it and understand it. But the information was that a Chinese Communist brigade had moved south out of Manchuria through the Great Wall area and was marching south. And on the basis of that, I prepared an estimate of the situation and a periodic intelligence report, and the time and space worked out so that we figured it was about 3 days before they would have the capability of hitting within our zone. And on the third day, they--the Chinese Communists--launched a coordinated attack against the rail junction at Koco-chen, where

tremendous supplies of the countryside, which was a rich agricultural producing area, had assembled for moving it in the city--in Tientsin, Peking, and the other areas, and Tangshan.

It was a vicious battle and tremendous casualties were taken. But it was one of those that proved to me that anybody who was saying that the populace of the China mainland was against the government of Chiang Kai-shek and for the Communists in these rural areas, which we'd been told so often in some elements of the American press, was absolutely wrong, because the basic defense of the village was in . . . the road junction was in the hands of the militia. And the militia was nothing but the local shopkeepers and small farmers and the small landowners. And in the evening they'd draw their weapons from the local armory that the small detachment of the Chinese Nationalist Army maintained there, and then they'd go out and take their positions. In this one action that began with a coordinated brigade attack at dawn within a period of about 3 hours, of course, they suffered over 50 percent casualties in the defense. But they held them until the Chinese Nationalist Army commander for the area, the corps commander, put troops through by special train and launched a counter-attack and drove the Communists off.

But the point that brought this into consideration right now was your question with respect to the Japanese troops. The only evidence I had of Japanese troops--and it was heresay--but it was part of the combat report from both

the local militia people, whom I talked with through an interpreter and also through the Chinese Nationalist officers who were in the vicinity when I arrived there by the end of the action, after coming down from Peitaihao. They said that there was one company of Japanese troops in that brigade of Chinese Communists; and it was the weapons company that provided the basis of fire support for the brigade action. And, according to that story, this was a Japanese element that had come over intact from the Kwantung Army at the time of its surrender to the Communists and also within the area dominated by the Russians in the north.

Q: Of course, the situation was entirely different in Tientsin and Tsingtao where the Japanese troops maintained an outer perimeter defense.

Hittle: Well, it may have been so. My only contact with them in Tientsin area was . . . I had the office in JEMCO which was staffed almost entirely by--as I pointed out previously--by Japanese Army logistics personnel, officer and enlisted, and also the guards on the flour trains and the wheat trains that were transporting food within the area, particularly for the repatriation camp where the Japanese were. The general procedure was to give them a few rounds of ammunition, let them stand guard. And it became an intolerable situation because the Chinese would entice them into shooting and using warning shots or even shooting somebody to

expend their few rounds--3 or 6 rounds--of ammunition. Then they'd take over the guard van and the food supply if they wanted to engage in hijacking; this was the hijacking element. So finally we just had to put regular guards right on the trains means business.

Q: Can you think of anything else that might have been unique?

Hittle: Well, there's one incident, one occasion there, when up at Linsi the Chinese Communists were operating in the outer area--in the vicinity--and there was hardly a night but what there was an action someplace around, where the Chinese Nationalists were engaging in Communists at night in defending the area, keeping them from a real incursion. And one occasion the head of the mines in Linsi was giving a luncheon for myself and my officers, a couple of my NCOs, and I received word that right at that time--right in the midst of the lunch--that there was a regiment of Chinese Communists that were coming up the draw to the north, in the outer defense area. And so I went over to the vicinity immediately, and when I arrived there why the local regimental commander was there who was part of the division that was guarding the Linsi area. And this was a really rag-tag group of Chinese Nationalists. They'd been fighting up in that area without supplies, replenishments of clothes, and they were a pretty ragged looking bunch. And on a number of occasions some snide remarks were made as to whether or not they had much fighting capability. But I went up forward, and when I

got there the regimental commander had been making a reconnaissance and he was going to another area, and I waited there to see what was going to happen. A Chinese company commander, a Nationalist commander, was in charge of the situation, and he just sent out a patrol. And the patrol commander came in, about a dozen infantrymen, and he was a pretty bedraggled-looking individual, and he started giving his patrol report. Although I couldn't speak Chinese, why I could immediately see that here was a man who knew his business, he was a real professional, he spoke in precise terms. And then I had my interpreter come over and give me a running account; and it was one of the most precise, informative, and professional patrol reports I'd heard any place. And when he finished, why the company commander asked me if I had any questions for him. I said, "Yes," I said, "what's the direction of the main force?" And he pointed over through the hills, which is not a very precise manner of doing it. Then he stopped and asked questions in Chinese. My interpreter turned to me and said, "He wants to know if you have a lensatic compass?"

And I said, "Why, yes." I always carry my compass. So I gave it to him. And he took it out, he oriented it, put it on a stump, and proceeded to take a bearing on the location where the force was and read it off in degrees for me--what the bearing was. That was another occasion, as I recall, when a piece of equipment--I guess--was, by one manner or another, turned up lost because I figured anybody with such

professional soldier and that, was helping us out so much, he needed a lensatic compass and I could get another one.

But that was another insight into the kind of soldier that you ran into, and you really didn't realize it because of their appearances sometimes, until you saw them in action. And as a result of that patrol report, the regimental commander sent out a reconnaissance patrol. And I asked how many he was sending out. He said, "A battalion."

I said, as a matter of interest, I said, "Why are you sending out that many?"

"Well," he said, "we find them. I want to chase them out of where they are so they don't get any closer." Which really made good logic.

And the manner in which that battalion moved out, took up its formation and moved across country, and made a show of force in such a way that after a few mortar ranging shots by the Communists, they took off and cleared the area.

Q: These troops were aggressive then.

Hittle: Oh, the whole tactic of the Chinese forces up in the North China plains area was to seek out and to go after the Communists. They kept them on the jump. It was an aggressive fighting organization up through the north there. They were real combat-ready and well combat-experienced troops in the north, and their spirit was good. Until the time came when the decision was made to withhold ammunition because of what was then the feeling that Chiang Kai-shek was not

cooperating and was being obstinate by not agreeing, according to the reports at the time, to participate in the coalition government with the Communists. And then the order went out to stop providing ammunition and supplies for Chiang's Army.

Unfortunately, the Runnians continued to supply the Communists. We weren't supplying the Nationalists.

Q: Did you have any forbodings of ill fortune, forbodings that Chinese Nationalists weren't going to be able to hold?

Hittle: Yes, up until this time Chinese Nationalists were clearing the country in an orderly manner; trains were running more and more regularly and on time; crops were getting in; the foodstuffs going to market; the currency was accepted by the peasants, though it was highly inflated it was nevertheless accepted; and economic light was coming back along with all the other viabilities of a community, coming back into that rich North China plain.

But I remember I was at Peitaihao, and a Chinese colonel friend of mine came down to see me one evening, which was unusual. I'd known him for some time; he's a very distinguished officer and very able. And we had an after-dinner drink. I was just finishing dinner when he came in. And he looked pretty dejected and low. I said, "What's the matter with you, colonel?" I said, "You don't look very happy."

And he said, "Well," he said, "I really feel unhappy."

And I asked him why. This was long before the announcement was made. And he said, "We've just received information along our channels that your government is insisting on a coalition government by President Chiang Kai-shek with the Communists." He said, "Of course, that would be our doom if we did it. So we obviously will not do it," he said, "and this is nothing but trouble ahead for us." He said, "If this position is continued," he said, "it will mean the loss of China." Which was frightening in its accuracy as a prophecy because, in many ways, that the way. . . . (female voice in background)

Okay. Turn it off for just a second. (interruption)

Q: That gives a pretty good indication that. . . .

Hittle: Well, one of the sad episodes of the whole thing was that after the orders went out to no longer fly in the ammunition to Chiang's forces, why there would hardly be a period of three or four nights at a time in which I wouldn't receive at least one call from one of the detachments along the Peking-Mukden track there, that were right out in the North China plain. The sergeant in charge or the officer in charge, as the case may have been, telling me that there was a Chinese Nationalist officer at the barbed wire asking for ammunition. He had been in a firefight with the Communists and was out of ammunition or about to go out of it. And of course, we had our instructions not to issue them any ammunition.

But here was one of our allies who was going to be doomed to be dead along with his troops if he didn't have some, and yet we were under orders not to give him any. And it was the most difficult situation. The only thing I can tell you about it is that I think my battalion probably lost more ammunition in that period than any of the battalions in recent history.

Q: How were you resupplied as far as your battalion was concerned? You were way up. . . .

Hittle: Supply was excellent! The supply system had been worked out during the war. There were really no significant shortages. Ammunition was in abundant supply although not a lost was used; but food was excellent, fresh food supplies. The clothing supplies--although you had spot shortages, which are inevitable under many circumstances, nevertheless it worked out very well. And on the PX, we used to load up a freight car once a week with the usual PX supplies taken down from one detachment to another along the tracks--and that's a traveling PX for them.

As far as entertainment was concerned: although there were no official issues right at that time of generators, somehow there were enough moonlight requisitions someplace that we got generators for portable movie equipment and we'd take them up and down the tracks and show them outdoors to the track detachments in the evening. And of course, this is one of the biggest things that ever happened in the North China

plain because the local officer in charge or NCO would ask the villagers in the vicinity to come over and see it. And although they couldn't understand a word, it was probably the only time in their lives they ever saw a movie picture. And I can't help but believe but what in that crowd there were always a pretty good scattering of Communists coming in to watch the movies, too. And the surprising thing was that, although the crowds were there and it was a tempting target, there wasn't one occasion under which the Communists caused any trouble during the movies, which were either right outside or just inside the barbed wire compound. And I can only ascribe that to the theory that either the Communists didn't want to disrupt their entertainment or they knew that if they did, the company sergeant would be sore at them.

Q: The morale of your men was pretty good, generally?

Hittle: Oh, the morale was excellent! Of course, there's always some dissatisfaction and disinclination as far as being isolated under those circumstances, but we used to rotate them regularly from the battalion headquarters back into the tracks. And as far as the officers were concerned, to get a track command was a real achievement.

And there's one other aspect of this that was very unusual, and it would be very difficult to find a similar circumstance again to get this kind of an experiment, in a sense. We'd always heard that units are a reflection of their commanding officer: they take on the character. And

here I had, oh, about fourteen, fifteen good size units, and then some very much smaller ones, over a sector of 40 miles, each unit an entity to itself within barbed wire in the North China plain. Very little outside influence except occasional visitors. And the really interesting thing about it was that I could change the commanding officer or senior NCO, depending upon the size of it, and within a matter of a day or so the unit would take on new characteristics that were discernable to somebody who was constantly in touch with them and knew them well. And on a number of occasions a very sharp, alert, top-notch unit--clean all the time, well shaven; in other words a first class fighting outfit in every sense--would lose an officer as its commanding officer on rotation. And on a couple of occasions a substandard one, who we didn't know at the time--you don't know many times until they're tested--would take command, and you could walk into that compound within 48 hours and you could see a deterioration take place as far as the smartness of the organization was concerned. And if it was bad enough, you could relieve him and put someone else in. And again, within 1 or 2 days, the whole spirit as well as appearance of the organization was changed. It was almost a laboratory example in organizations reflecting the characteristics and standards of its commanding officer.

Q: Did you rotate these units?

Hittle: Oh, yes. They were rotated in and out, and also by individuals. You could only keep them in the tracks so long.

Q: Where would they go for liberty near civilization?
Tientsin? Peking?

Hittle: Well, when springtime came, Peitaihao really wasn't bad for liberty. And of course, everything is relative. If you've been out in the middle of the North China plain with the Gobi dust storm coming down at you, and standing watch and that--isolated from the world--and then go into a comfortable village of nice homes, warm billets, roaring fireplaces, good food, and a club, why that's a big improvement. But as far as liberty: We would try to get them down to Tientsin on a rotational basis.

Q: Did any of your boys ever see Gobi Devils?

Hittle: I don't know if they did or not. They didn't make any combat reports on it.

Q: Well, in July of '46, you were detached?

Hittle: Yes.

I might say though, before that, that as far as the situation in the North China plain was concerned--and this is really the breadbasket of China as well as the center of the coal supply for Hangkow, north--when we went into North China, it was 2 or 3 days to get from Tientsin northward, fighting the way, repairing track on the way--a complete disruption and turmoil.

And I think as I pointed out: When I left Peitaihao to go to Tientsin to proceed to the States in late July, the Peking-Mukden express was in on time, was out 3 minutes later from the Peitaihao junction, and it was approximately 3 or 4 hours on schedule--whatever it was--into Tientsin. And if anybody wants a criteria of whether or not tranquility, order, and normalcy had returned to North China from the time the Communists disrupted it until this period in the late summer, as a result of the military operations and the governmental endeavors of Chiang's government, this to me is a persuasive answer: When trains run on time and carry the cargo, there's a standard of orderliness that is manifest, I think.

Q: Of course, I remember a trip from Tientsin to Peking: General Peck was on the train when the tracks were blown up. The train had to stop.

Hittle: Well, that depends on when it was. I made the trip there after the Marines had been in for a while, before I went north. I went from Tientsin to Peking on temporary duty for 3 days, and the trains were running at that time almost on time, with no interference. But for our transportation--for the battalion commanders along the track--the railroad, the Peking-Mukden, usually provided a separate train that would usually be one or two flatcars with sandbags ahead of the engine, and then the coal car, maybe one freight car, and then either a caboose or a regular passenger car. And that's really what made it possible along the tracks to administer

them and command them with any degree of protection, because if you had to wait to catch the train coming in each direction once or twice a day, you'd never have made it.

Q: Of course, they reestablished that luxury run, luxury cars.

Hittle: The Wagons Lit?

Q: The Wagons Lit.

Hittle: Yes. I never saw those. That must have been after I left.

Q: General Farrell was telling me about the trip he made in '26 or '27.

Hittle: Well, in those days it was one of the--in the pre-war era--it was one of the luxury trains of the world, the Wagons Lit, from Peking to Peitaihao, and Chinwangtao north to Mukden.

Q: I guess at some place it joined with the Orient Express.

Hittle: I don't know if it did or not.

Q: Or the Trans-Siberian.

Hittle: Very possibly.

Q: Well, those are things that only historians. . . .

Hittle: Won't come again.

Q: No, I'm afraid not. Won't come again. (airplane sound)

Had you expected to go to Quantico?

Hittle: No. I was up there still enjoying a command under field conditions. And I got a telephonic message one day, relayed to me from the regiment, to turn over the battalion and proceed immediately to Tientsin for further transportation with special assignment to Quantico, Virginia.

Q: Special assignment. Who asked for you there?

Hittle: General Twining asked for me. He was then colonel at Quantico. And that was when General Vandegrift had authorized the formation of the Commandant's Board. Whether it was called that then or not, that's what it amounted to.

Q: Marine Corps Board.

Hittle: Special Board, yes, really to capture the amphibious knowledge that had been produced by World War II and to prepare the new amphibious doctrines as a result of it--the doctrinal text.

And then I joined that group that was working on the doctrinal text from experience of World War II. It was a far-sighted proposal because, like so many things, the knowledge is transitory and it goes and stays with the memory of the people. And to have moved in so soon while the experiences and the lessons were still fresh in peoples' minds was a very, very wise thing. That became the basis of amphibious doctrine that supplanted the one that we had used in World War II--the text that we had used in World War II. And then

[REDACTED]

that, of course, was phased into the transport helicopter in the vertical assault doctrine. And the same people, by and large, who worked in the first group were the ones who worked in the second.

Q: Colston Dyer?

Hittle: Yes, that's right. Colonel Dyer, Colonel Twining, then Colonel Krulak, Sam Shaw--Colonel Shaw, Navy Medical Captain Bill Beatty, myself, and one or two others.

Q: Now, I'm trying to recall if you talked here what your connection with Bill Twining was, General Twining, since you had not served at 1st Division.

Hittle: No. But I had known Twining. And then from then on I served more closely with him, by and large, the rest of the time we were in this vicinity.

But he provided the intellectual guidance, stimulus, and in a sense, the overall direction for these types of endeavors on the part of the Corps in that post-war period.

Q: Well, I know you . . . I think that perhaps what we ought to allow you to do is just go on into free association in this particular time because here we're getting into a dual two-headed direction, if I can use that term. You're involved with the reevaluation and formulation of amphibious warfare, and yet this monster of the unification fight. . . .

Hittle: The unification fight had heated up tremendously in part of '46. And by the time I got there, it was moving into the preliminary phase which became the long, tough part of the issue that was resolved by the National Security Act of 1947. And it was an extremely critical period for the Marine Corps because it involved that whole matter of whether or not the Marine Corps got roles and missions that it would perform, as part of the statute, whether it was at the whim of executive orders. And the only ones who were really for it--roles and missions for the Marine Corps--to begin with was the Marine Corps. And there was a community of interest that was developed with naval aviation, because naval aviation was going to go, too; it was marked for the kill in that period of so-called unification, which was really not unification. But the Marine Corps had the struggle cut out for it, and the struggle was waged; and fortunately it was won.

Q: I'd like to go into this.

Hittle: What do you say we do that on the next one?

Q: Okay. Can I ask you a few questions about it? Number one, do you think that the implications of this fight were fully understood by most Marine officers?

Hittle: No. I certainly do not. And I really don't blame them. Unless you were close to it under any circumstances, you didn't have the opportunity to be intimately associated. But on the same issue, though, it wasn't understood by a

number of Marine officers for the very simple reason they didn't want to get mixed up in it; and one of the best ways not to get mixed up in it was not to know about it.

Q: These are the senior officers you're talking about.

Hittle: Yes. And one of the refreshing, reassuring, and heartwarming aspects of this thing was: how many retired officers, who had really nothing to gain in any sense, simply out of their love and belief in the Corps, would walk in with their hats in their hands and say, "What can I do to help?"

Q: A second question: You made a point that naval aviation was allied with the Marine Corps on this and. . . .

Hittle: It was not as much allied as it was a community of interest.

Q: But wasn't there a feeling that no one over in the Navy really understood the threat?

Hittle: No. Some of them really did. People like Arleigh Burke that early . . . although he wasn't in it at his time, understood it. Admiral Radford was leading the fight for the defense of naval aviation. And Admiral Bogan was one of them. There were a few others that were risking their entire careers and everything they had to. . . . They had lots to lose at this time, professionally and personally. A few of them got in and carried the load. But the key to the whole

thing was: whether or not the Marine Corps got its roles and missions in the law. If the Marine Corps got their roles and mission in the law, then the naval air would get it. But, naval air would not get it unless the Marine Corps got it first. That was the importance of rolls and missions going into the law not only for the Marine Corps but also for naval aviation.

End of Session VI

Session VII - 23 March 1971

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: As we left off last time, Mr. Secretary, we were talking about your assignment in Quantico upon your return from China, and the unification fight. I think perhaps before we get into it completely, these two questions might give us a broader background and give us some of your thoughts on a matter: first of all, what was the background for the unification fight which, I assume, took up most of your time down at Quantico?

Hittle: (phone ringing) Just a moment. Telephone just rang. Let me see if it's for me.

Q: Yes, sir. (interruption)

Hittle: I'll tell you one thing. . . .

Q: All right. I've got it on now, sir.

Hittle: Yes. Just to digress here a moment, talking about the interest in this job and the satisfaction you get out of it: After having soldiered, fought, and marched, lived as a serviceman at sea and at shore--Marine Corps and Navy for a quarter of a century--I think gives you a little background as a person of what the serviceman needs and the fact that he really doesn't expect a lot, but he expects a fair shake in life. And seldom in a job like this does a person have the privilege of getting something started of a tangible nature

for the serviceman, and then before he walks out the front door for the last time, in a position like this, seeing the tangible results of the initial effort. And that was my privilege to see the tangible results of the initial efforts.

Q: Signing of the new pay bill.

Hittle: No. Well, that's always good, but that really isn't tangible yet. And nobody's going to spend the money because it just reported out of one committee.

But the thing that happened yesterday, as far as I am personally concerned--something that I'd started 2 years ago, a little after I became involved--was that I went down to Norfolk, flew down to Norfolk with my wife, and I officiated as the dedicating officer from the Secretariat, at the first of the Navy Lodges, the temporary lodges; it was the first one that was completed at the Naval Station in Norfolk. After seeing the beat-up quonsets that have had a few bunks in for temporary lodging for service people and their families, and grateful to get them in past years, barracks that have gone through a jury-rigged remodeling just for a respectable roof over a person's heads while they were waiting and looking for quarters, why I got real satisfaction out of this because I really never expected--until we finally got this thing started--to see such fine accommodations for the enlisted man and the officers we have in these Navy temporary lodges, the first one we opened up. As I pointed out in the little talk I gave down there at the opening dedication

remarks, that this is the first one opened because it's the first one started. One hundred units, and this first one at the Naval Station. We've got thirteen units of various sizes going in throughout the country, and it's not pie-in-the-sky because all ten and a half million dollars was contracted out 6 weeks ago; I signed the final contracting approval and gave them the go-ahead because I'd been in personal charge of the entire program from the time it started--the design, the award of contract, specifications, everything connected with it. And gladly I had the satisfaction to see the first one open. The thing that was decided right with the start . . . I said that it doesn't have to be luxury; nobody expects that. But it's what's known as in the phrase: deluxe class motel. And it's the upper bracket of the motel accommodations. Everyone of these hundred units in this one has: wall-to-wall carpeting, two big double beds, a settee for another bed, a couple of nice occasional chairs, a coffee table that raises up to be a dining table, large closets, separate bath for each one. And in every one we started out, and one of the instructions I gave them was: I said, "We build only once, so we're going to do it right." And this was for the guys in transit with a family. Everyone has a kitchenette, electric kitchenette in it.

Q: Oh, wonderful!

Hittle: So a man doesn't break his back financially going around the corner to some greasy-spoon restaurant and paying

75 cents apiece for a dozen little hamburgers for two or three kids three or four times a day. And this is going to be a continuing evidence of the fact that the needs of the serviceman are recognized--something being done about it. And I couldn't express it any better, the philosophy behind it, that this has also proved that the serviceman deserves to enjoy just as good things as he defends.

Q: Absolutely! I think it's a very sound. The feeling, as the knowledge of this kind of thing becomes more widespread, there would be greater feeling on the part of not only the enlisted but as well as the officers.

Hittle: Well, they need it also because one of the things that really kindled my interest in getting something done like this was: I talked to petty officers, NCOs in the Marine Corps, chiefs, and senior NCOs in the Marine Corps, some junior officers, some senior officers. As I pointed out, the drive across the country for permanent change of station, you wind up after a long last day's drive, dark; Norfolk, San Francisco, San Diego; your wife, two or three kids, cat and a dog, and some of your suitcases in a station wagon--what do you do? Where do you go? You've got one place to go. You go to some commercial motel, commercial rate; and the serviceman doesn't get a dime of per diem once he gets to his destination. And so he's paying pretty close to 40, 50 dollars a day for motel and eating expenses for his family; and within no time he's busted the family's piggybank

that's taken him a long time to save anything. And in the first place it's unfair to impose this burden on him, and second place it's just such a burden that induces many of our good people to leave the service.

Q: What would it cost the. . . .

Hittle: Eight bucks a night for a family.

Q: That's great!

Hittle: Whether it's one person or a family of six or eight, eight bucks a night.

Q: And that's handled by. . . .

Hittle: The Navy Exchange Services is operating it. But it was built under direction of NavFac, but the overall direction of it and detailed control of it was in this office here. And the device which we used was--and it was all built from non-appropriated funds--the device that we used on it was the turn key contract in which a bidder for these type of specifications would submit design, cost and quality, and furnishing specifications; and then the low bidder and then the evaluations along with the low bid would be handled exactly the same procedure as appropriated funds. And the upshot of it is that they're really beautiful places, and it's high time the serviceman got them.

When I went down for the groundbreaking last fall, why there'd been some opposition from some commercial lodgings

there then organizations in the Norfolk area, and they even-- according to the press--hired a lawyer to take the Department of the Navy, which, of course, included me, to court on this thing, to stop us with an injunction. And in a TV interview at the groundbreaking I was asked if I thought it was right for taxpayers' money to be used to go into competition with taxpayers. Well that question is just about as germane as: have you stopped beating your wife. I told him that that question really doesn't apply because it wasn't taxpayers' money; but even if it was, it would still be proper. That it was non-appropriated funds out of the servicemen's recreation fund that they themselves had contributed, and it belonged to them. And I said it was the view of the Department of the Navy that there was nothing wrong and everything right about using the serviceman's own money to do something necessary for the serviceman; and whether people like it or not, we were going ahead and do it.

Q: Great!

I made the comment a few . . . off the tape before we turned this on that you seemed to be getting great satisfaction having a heck of a lot of fun in this job and that I can see now that you're just about riding cloud nine with having accomplished this. . . .

Hittle: Well, riding cloud nine You're around here long enough to know that if you can do a few things that are right in the time that you're allotted the privilege of having one

of these positions, that if you can leave the serviceman a little better off and he and his dependents, start a few policies that have the potential for improving the serviceman's situation in the future--and that means improving our national security--if you can make the organization work a little bit better both for, in this personnel work, from the standpoint of serviceman as well as national security in Navy requirements, why then I think you've shot the course in better than par. I think that the group we have in the secretariat here today is shooting the course better than par. As far as I'm concerned, this is the most rewarding, satisfying job I've ever had in my life.

Q: Of course we're getting a little far afield from our chronological listing, but while we're talking along these lines, I think this is a very great concern not only for the Secretary of the Navy but all the armed services chiefs, this question of the intention, making things better, more attractive, more satisfactory to both commissioned and enlisted servicemen as far as finding the service career worthwhile, profitable--not profitable in a sense--but meaningful.

Hittle: That's the word for it. It has to be meaningful to a person because anybody who's worth his salt wants to do something useful with the very limited amount of time--in the long view sense--that he's allotted in this old world. And if a person doesn't feel that his capabilities are being used to a reasonable degree, if they're not doing something useful,

and as long as the conditions of service are reasonably satisfactory, the serviceman's remarks will match. He doesn't expect pie-in-the-sky and champagne with his meals or anything like that. He expects a fair shake. But the most important thing he wants to do is be able to--within a reasonable adequacy--to look after his family, educate his kids, be able to say after he's put in a career he can look his wife in the eye and say, "Well, we did what we wanted and the family didn't suffer on account of it."

There'll always be softer jobs and more money outside the military. And consequently, it takes the kind of a person who (1) believes in doing something for his country, and (2) gets a satisfaction out of feeling that what he's doing is important. And that's why job satisfaction is one of the most important single things in retention. Next I think comes housing. Next, someplace along the line, comes family separation in many cases with sea deployments and repeated deployments as the most important. But, quite surprising, the guy you want to keep--officer and enlisted--never puts money first for consideration. But it's only fair play that they don't be penalized for being in the military service.

Q: Have the same opportunities as the civilian (cross talk). . . .

Hittle: At least worth thinking about it.

Q: Yes. Why I think it's important. There's so much being written today, I think, about. . . . (interruption)

End of Session VII

Interview Session VIII, dated 27 July 1972

Tape 1, Side 1

Q: As we were discussing off the tape, we were at the point where you had returned to Quantico from China for the purpose of helping prepare USF 63 and 66. Well, I'll let you discuss what it was.

Hittle: Well, my recollection, Ben, of this is that just prior to my return from China, and unbeknownst to me, of course, General Twining was back at the Schools and he had as usual foreseen the need for something extremely basic, and he had obtained the approval of the then-Commandant, General Vandegrift to proceed with the project of preparing a successor to FTP-167, and this successor being the accumulation in doctrine form of the...and the distillation, of course, the refinement of the amphibious knowledge that was gained and still available on the basis of those who experienced it and developed it during World War II.

Q: Had you known Twining from before?

Hittle: Yes, I had known Twining from before, yes, and I was one of the group that was tagged to come back and work on this doctrine. At the same time, the Navy and the Marine Corps coordinated, again, through Twining's, largely Twining's initiative on a comparable piece for the Navy's amphibious doctrine. In other words, ours would be the landing force part of it, and the Navy's the comprehensive naval side of the amphibious document.

Q: NWP...

Hittle: ...64, wasn't it? That was the project that we got going on, and it was basically a full-time effort as far as I was concerned for some several months, and following that, it was a matter of refining our publication and then getting together with the Navy, and very interestingly, the principal Navy senior representative that we worked with continually on that was then a four-striper, Captain Claude Ricketts, who later became the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, and one of the finest naval officers that I've ever run into. And his designation to that was a very fortunate thing as far as the Navy and the Marine Corps were concerned, because Ricketts not only had a high order of intellect, but he was a very practical, pragmatic, and combat as well as staff experienced naval officer.

Q: Who were some of the other Marine officers who were working with you on this?

Hittle: Jim Murray, Brute Krulak, Sam Shaw, Wayne Shisler was helping on it...

Q: Wayne Shisler?

Hittle: Yes, he was assisting to some degree.

Q: This was the nucleus of Chowder, in a sense.

Hittle: Well, it really was, yes. But what we did, we would farm out parts of it to those, by subject matter

to those elements within the Schools' staff who had the academic responsibility for teaching that particular subject matter, phase of landing force operations, and also who we were sure had the breadth and experience to prepare rough drafting coordination with this group.

Q: It seems to me that the Marine Corps learned quite a bit about its educational system in the war in the sense that at the end of World War II it took^{right} up where it had left off before by getting outstanding^{people as} instructors, Hogaboom, Weller, you name the rest of them.

Hittle: And, of course, in addition to this, there was teaching that went along with it. The Marine Corps never let you get by with just one job for as long as I can remember it. We were taken into the staff and given teaching assignments in the early part of the school.

Of course, I think I should mention that the amphibious landing force medical part of it was largely the knowledge and efforts of Captain William Baty, Medical Corps. Bill Baty, of course, was the most able medical officer. He had, in the early part of the war, just before, gone to a Marine division. He really got a shot of Semper Fi, and Bill never wore it out of his system. He was Marine and Navy all the way through; wore his green uniform with great pride. He was probably one of the most experienced people in the landing force side of the medical problem that there was. He had suffered some severe eye difficulties as a re-

sult of combat. The story that I got and it seemed to be confirmed on it was that during one of the major operations of his division out there, I think it was the 4th, he stayed on duty so long and forgot himself so completely that he didn't drink any water or eat any food, and that he lost weight so fast over a couple of days during the critical time of the operation, that even his eyeballs were affected, and he very soon developed very severe cataracts which soon resulted in his having a cataract operation and he needed thick glasses. It didn't affect him as far as his effectiveness as a medical officer, and it sure didn't affect his golf any, although he had what they called gun-barrel vision, and he sure was dedicated to his fellow servicemen, because he had difficulty in getting his eyes back to the point where it was safe to drive, and consequently he didn't drive at Quantico, but one of the most constant daily sights around the Quantico base was, after working hours, when he could have gone back and completed his duties, he didn't have any medical assignment as such, treatment of patients at the hospital, but Bill never stopped treating patients because he liked people, and he got himself a bicycle and you used to see him riding around the post making house calls on his bicycle with his black doctor's bag on the handlebars. He just, Bill was just another one of those people in that endless line of devoted servicemen who have served in the Corps

and at Quantico.

Q: Is he still alive?

Hittle: Yes, he's still alive. Bill retired as a rear admiral, Medical Corps, and he went back to be the team physician at the University of Alabama where he was, in his youth, a star quarterback, and he was that, and then he became the public health director for that county in Alabama, the university county.

Q: Tuscaloosa?

Hittle: No, I think it was University City. That's what it is, in that vicinity.

Q: He and "Bigfoot" Brown must have spent a lot of time telling sea stories?

Hittle: I don't know how often their paths crossed during the war. My path crossed with "Bigfoot" Brown out...the only time we had a chance to talk together, to compare notes real well was out in China, occasionally out there. And I'll never forget that on one occasion, I said, "As an historian and with an interest in this part of the world, how do you size up our mission out here?" "Let me tell you," he said, "Marines in North China today are the foot in the open door of China," which fit it pretty good. As long as were there, there was an open door.

Q: He was pretty succinct in a lot of his comments.

Hittle: Yes, he was a remarkable man.

Q: I see that the duty you had down there was as Secretary of the Academic Board of Marine Corps Schools, while you were still a member of the supervisory board in the preparation of USF 63. What constituted your duties as Secretary of the Academic Board?

Hittle: That's a pretty hard question to answer because it cut across a lot of activities. One was with respect to publications, the plant that turned out publications. It involved some instruction, which I welcomed, because I always enjoyed instruction. And it also included the matter of rebuilding, which was a very definted part of the program at Quantico, the continued building, should I say, of a much larger scale of the Marine Corps library at Marine Corps Schools.

There are a couple aspects of that which have been overlooked on several occasions, because that was the period of growth for a very good reason. One, we wanted to do it, and two, we had the funds, because there were still some available funds for miscellaneous good purposes for service personnel left in our post exchange accounts, and some of those things could be made available, and also out of other funds, and we obtained some pretty sizable amounts, in the thousands of dollars, for books. I had the pleasure of having the assignment of going ahead with Miss Lejeune, who was the Librarian at the time, to rebuild, build up the library professionally as far as books, and being somewhat

of a history buff myself, I decided that what we would do was to get to that library as many of the classics sets of military history that we could, because they were a quickly disappearing item in the book world, the used book world, and I felt, unfortunately, I guess, in many ways because I was right on it, because the price of many books, particularly the sets, had gone out of the stratosphere.

Among some of them that we got, and at that time we got some criticism for paying high prices, but they were practically steals in terms of today's prices for them, Cole's History of the Royal Navy, which is probably the history on a grand scale of naval history. I got Forsythe's history of the British army, which is a collector's item of great value today. Another one that I had them run down, and got these through booksellers in England and at very modest prices, was Napier's history of the Peninsular campaigns, and then we filled it in with just good, solid, military classic books. Of course, you've always got some explanation due for anything, for expending funds and, of course, we were carefully monitored by somebody at a desk somewhere in Headquarters Marine Corps, it always has been and always will be the case, which is a good thing anyway, but one interesting thing that I remember about that--and there's no use bringing up names; he's departed now from this life--a very senior field officer called up and said that he'd like to come down and go over the list of books that we ordered, and I'd put in about a \$6,000 order in just one batch, and I figured,

well, just by the law of averages, you just might get a few questionable ones in it, because I believed in not being too technical and getting the things that applied to warfare and your politics can fit in that. So he came down, went over the list, he brought down the list to go over it with him, rather, he came into the room, sat down, chatted a minute, he said, "I want to tell you. I've gone over your list here. We'll approve it largely." I said, "I wouldn't be surprised if you had a few questions on it; I guess that if I'd received it, I'd have had them too," but myself, I couldn't imagine which ones they were.

He said, "There are three that are questionable ones, but we've pushed those ones aside. There's ^{no} reason to discuss them, but there are three here that ^{we} just don't see why they should be bought for a military library with the expenditures of Marine Corps money." "OK," I said, "What are they? You are probably right, but if I can think of a reason, I'll give it to you if I've got it. What's the first one?"

"Well," he said, "here's a book called Waves. I just don't see why we need that." I immediately sensed that what he was thinking about was probably a current novel or something on lady members of the naval service, or something like that, but I immediately pointed out to him that that really wasn't the case, that it was a definitive study that emerged out of the war on electronics, hydraulics, subsurface, every other kind of wave motion that was, that it was really

a research book for anybody in amphibious operations, communications, or anything. He said, "Well, I guess that's alright. Now here's another one. It's kind of a novel, I guess, and I don't see why we need this in a military library." "Well," I said, "what's this?" "Here it is," he said, "the title of it is The Red Badge of Courage by somebody by the name of Crane." So, I kind of restrained my surprise and explained to him that if there ever was a book written on the baptism of fire and the reaction of the individual fighting man at the combat level, that was it, whereupon I guess I justified my case and he checked it off as all right, and then he said, "Well, I've got one more that we didn't see any reason for it to be connected with military purchasing for a military library." "What's that?" "Well, its some book, a legal book, Precepts and Judgements. Its by somebody by the name of Foch /pronounced "Folk"/." "No," I said, "that's Precepts and Judgements by Marshal Foch." I explained to him that that was one of the great intellectual works by the supreme Allied commander of all the Allied forces in World War I, whereupon he checked that one off as approved.

But, I always look back on that as interesting commentary. People can draw any conclusions that they want from it.

Q: I can't imagine who that was, but I guess that it could have been one of any number of people. I just wanted to make one correction, the author of the history of the

Army was Fortescue, not Forsythe.

Hittle: You're absolutely right, a magnificent piece of work, as is Napier's history.

Q: They're all classics. I wonder if they are still down there now.

Hittle: Well, we enlarged the library by thousands of copies, and if we hadn't have done it at that time, and people at Headquarters hadn't have made the money available, one, the money wouldn't have been available later on, and, two, if the money had been available, the books would not have been obtainable. So, the Marine Corps down there has not one of the largest, but one of the best professional libraries from the military, and particularly the amphibious, standpoint there is in the world. I know that we've got books there that other professional libraries would give a lot to have.

Part of things that I had them do was to obtain, to fill out the complete works of Mahan. I don't think there's a professional library...I know that when I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy when I went around, I'd look, and to me, that was one of the interesting things, when they'd show me the library, they'd show me Mahan. Of course that was just casual as far as I was concerned, and I guess as far as their reaction, but it certainly wasn't as far as I was concerned. I was quite surprised to see that even at the school at Monterey, the graduate school at Monterey, its far from being a complete Mahan.

Q: The curriculum, the postwar curriculum, I imagine that it was very much like it was at any other time following a war, trying to derive lessons learned from the experiences of...

Hittle: There was a greater emphasis placed on it at the end in that period when they brought the students back to get as much of the experience into the solutions of the various officers than had been found to work before. There always was, there was a very deliberate effort at the Schools at that time to get that in there.

Incidentally, one of our outstanding instructors right about at that period, as I recall, just about that time or maybe a little later, but in the same time frame, was Bob Cushman, who was back there. He was a senior lieutenant colonel. He was then one of the best instructors that we had at the Schools.

Q: He was quite a prolific writer, too.

Hittle: Oh yes, and a good writer.

Q: This assignment continued on until 1947. Does the Chowder effort phase right into this period?

Hittle: Yes, you can't really draw a line on it, because it was something that involved...I wasn't in on the first part of the Chowder effort, Krulak and Twining were working on that...

Q: And I think Dyer, too.

Hittle: Yes, and I want to mention in that group Colston Dyer, a very able officer. But the Chowder effort was in existence, but as a result of the "Bended Knee" speech, by General Vandegrift in his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the original bill was killed.

Q: You're entering right in the middle of it and I think that just for the record, you ought to go back a little if you will, and tell me from your point of view, what was the threat facing the Marine Corps, what actions were being taken to counter this threat?

Hittle: Well, the threat that was facing the Marine Corps was one that evolved out of the war, a cumulation of many things, and the thing that made the accumulation of reasons and motives dangerous was that there was a necessity at the end of the war for some kind of reorganization legislation that reflected the experience of the war, just as everything was learned in operational senses in the war, there were things in governmental and service top-level problems that were dealt with as a result of the experience of the war.

So, the Army really took the initiative on this thing and there were those who were convinced within the Army, who felt that this was the time to wrap up the defense organization in the way that they thought it should be in based on their experience, doctrine, and so forth, and it was essentially a general staff doctrine, the extreme application of the general staff concept. It was generally focused on a Commander, U.S. Forces, a Chief of Staff or whatever

you call it, in other words, one guy in uniform in direct command of all the forces. In a set up like that there simply wasn't philosophically a place for the Marine Corps and from what we could gather, from the standpoint of practical effects, there wasn't going to be a Marine Corps in the sense that we knew it.

And the places where there had been difficulties or a difference of opinion between the Marine Corps and the Army, those are things that lent credence to the Army position that the Marine Corps was an interesting, that it had been a useful but in the future an unnecessary adjunct to the armed forces in the sense in which it had been developed, and there were pieces that indicated that it was. The original bill, which was known as the Collins Bill, and that was the one that was originally introduced into the Senate to be the Reorganization Act of 1946, and that was so-named after "Lightning Joe" Collins, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and that thing was going great until Vandegrift unloaded on it with his testimony and the "Bended Knee" speech, which I'm sure aware of.

As to my feeling about it, I think that it should be required reading by every junior officer in the Marine Corps.

Q: For the record, I believe that was the speech prepared by Twining and Krulak presented by General Vandegrift at a hearing and which said that the Marine Corps...

Hittle: What is said was that there was no place under the legislation for a Marine Corps, and that it was the wrong way

to kill the Corps, that if the Marine Corps generally-- paraphrasing--that if the Marine Corps had earned anything, it earned the right to be disestablished by those who established it, and that was the Congress of the United States and not by surreptitious method, such as reorganization, and that that's the way the Marine Corps wanted to go, because the bended knee was not the tradition of the Corps.

And the Senate Armed Services Committee didn't hold any more hearings after Vandegrift. Then that was followed the following year by the basic legislation which became the National Security Act of 1947. It was a less centralized concept, it still provided for an Army, Navy, Air Force, and a Marine Corps. The same objectives were long-range, we were convinced, with respect to two things--naval aviation and the Marine Corps, because in the neat packaging of the general staff picture, there was no place for naval air, because there was a new Air Force...

Q: The trielemental theory...

Hittle: It was completely the trielemental of the neat compartmentation into air, land, and sea, and if you didn't fit into a principal role, there was no place for you because you should be part of something that was neat, and organizationally intact on the chart. But unfortunately, the requirements of the international security of the United States required naval air and a U.S. Marine Corps, and we were convinced of it, because, not only did it mean that naval air

and the Marine Corps would go, but if those two were adversely affected either as to control and/or size or even existence, it meant that the nature of U.S. seapower, which had evolved since the Spanish-American War and according to what Forrestal called the "balanced fleet" of our naval power consisting of all those elements necessary not only to fight at sea but also to project power from the sea, our balanced fleet would be destroyed and consequently the sea power ^{that} of the United States had developed and kind of uniquely required would be destroyed, and that would matter not ^{to} per se/the Marine Corps or naval air but to the requirements of national security over which this issue was fought, and it was a broad-gauged philosophic issue in which honest men differed violently, and yet, because broad issues have to be decided many times on component specific issues, it narrowed down to naval aviation and the Marine Corps itself. And those two issues were finally decided on the basis of what happened to the Marine Corps in legislation.

If the Marine Corps got what it wanted and felt was necessary for the good of the country and the preservation of the Corps, then the pattern of reorganizational content of the National Security Act would provide for the security of naval aviation and all this focused on what was referred to very properly as "roles and missions," and today that term is badly misused because people who should know better, in and out of uniform, use the term "roles and missions" for anything from what a rifleman does to what some minor

elements of the armed services do.

But roles and missions in its real and applied sense pertains to the prescriptions either by the executive, which was then proposed, or by the legislative, as was opposed by the Executive Branch in the National Security Act of 1947 as to what the basic tasks and jobs and purpose of each of the armed services was to be. That's what the roles and missions section of the National Security Act is, and the whole...there were other parts of the bill over which there was considerable difference of opinion and on which the Marine Corps prevailed on practically all of them, but the guts and the heart of the thing was whether or not the roles of the missions of the military departments, the military services, was prescribed by Executive Order after passage of the Act or whether those roles and missions were incorporated into the Act and were part of the legislation itself and became a Congressional prescription and mandate.

That's the fight.

Q: Actually it was fought on many levels. For instance you had the conflict between the Executive and the Legislative Branches of government as well as the conflict...

Hittle: How do you mean that?

Q: From what you just said, the conflict was whether the Executive was going to determine the roles and missions or the Legislative. So, its like a three-dimensional chess

game in a sense.

Hittle: No, its really the same level because they are co-equal branches of the government, the White House and the Congress.

Q: True, but this is one conflict, yet in another on a perhaps vertical or horizontal...

Hittle: On a multi-level basis it crossed the whole spectrum of the military, and in the past.

Q: Oh yes, and then there were these other ancillary conflicts such as the elementary human rivalry between the Army and the Marine Corps, supposedly dating from...

Hittle: Well, the Army couldn't understand. Basically the Army position was that it couldn't understand the purpose of having a Marine Corps.

Q: Now, I've been told, I think General Twining told me that the Navy, that there were goodniks and nogoodniks in this whole thing, and that Forrest Sherman, for instance...

Hittle: Oh, there were high level people within...this badly fractured internal Navy relationships, for instance Forrest Sherman and Lauris Norstad were the two that the White House decided to carry the ball on this legislation, the National Security Act of 1947, which, in a sense, was an extremely deft move on the part of the proponents of the legislation, because if, it got away from it being an

Army General Staff bill, and Forrest Sherman was a very able officer and Norstad was too. But we just couldn't disagree with them more, and, of course, within the Navy, you see, were people like Radford, Bogan, and others who were the emerging heroes of the war, people who had accomplished things on a high command level who were diametrically and vocally and strongly opposed to Forrest Sherman--took issue with him both privately and publicly. And both Radford and Bogan testified openly against it. And of course into that fight one who rallied to the cause and one to whom not only for his combat inspirations in the history of the Marine Corps but for what he did and what he was able to do voluntarily getting into this fight was "Red Mike" Edson, and he was extremely helpful in this thing, and effective. And "Red Mike," rightfully or wrongly--people will disagree whether the move was necessary or not--he at least felt that he had to testify against the bill, and in order to be free to testify against the bill, for maximum effect, he had to put in his resignation. It was a foregone conclusion in many quarters of the Corps that "Red Mike" was destined, because of his intellectual ability and his combat ability, to be a Commandant of the Marine Corps.

But this was the reason, the unification fight, was the cause for "Red Mike's" retirement from the Corps. The Corps could ill afford to lose a man like that. I'll always cherish my relationship with him during that period. A man of great maturity, wisdom, sagacity, and devotion.

Q: Now, there was a lot of backstairs intrigue through this whole thing, was there not?

Hittle: There was a lot of backstairs intrigue, but there was sure a lot of backstairs activities.

Q: I think that one of the backstairs activities was your relationship with Clare Hoffman...

Hittle: Well, that's true, but you have to get back in- to why Clare Hoffman was the key to this thing. It was one of those imponderables that those who had so carefully planned this legislation never expected, and these are the X factors in any plans in Washington.

Actually what happened, you see, was that when they decided to introduce this bill, carefully calculated, the Executive Branch did, where they wanted it to go for hearings. They decided that they certainly weren't going to send it to the Armed Forces Committee, where it should have gone.

Q: Strong Navy partisans there.

Hittle: Well, the chairman of that combined committee was the long-time former chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee Carl Vinson. So, they put their heads together again and said, "Uh-uh, this is government reorganization. It can be ruled very properly to be a matter to go before the Government Operations Committee." They thought that this was just fine because the chairman of that committee was Clare Hoffman, an old curmudgeon from Michigan. His only

interest is in labor legislation. At that time he was having a running vendetta--publicly, privately, and otherwise--with John L. Lewis of the mineworkers' union over issues that he was often mad at Lewis about, and Lewis was mad at Hoffman for being mad at him, and it was quite a running political battle.

So, they said, "That's fine. Let's introduce it and get it sent to the Government Operations Committee because Clare Hoffman is too busy on this labor type of legislation. He's investigating, and so forth, John Lewis and other issues and we should have it sent to a subcommittee which will be headed by former Senator Wadsworth, now Congressman Wadsworth," and Wadsworth was father-in-law of Symington, Secretary of the Air Force, a great supporter of the legislation. So, they sent it to the Government Operations Committee.

Well, there are a lot of strange things in this old world. My father was a practicing attorney in Michigan and in his youth, and although he was younger than Hoffman, they occasionally clashed in Michigan early day law suits, and so forth, but had a deep respect for each other. But Father called him up and said that I wanted to see him. "Send him around," and so I talked to him a few minutes about why he should keep the bill in full committee, and he said, "I can smell a rat when I smell one, and I smell a rat here and I am going to keep that and hold hearings on that myself. You can bank on that."

Well, that was the turning point, and the old man,

despite all the pressures that were brought to bear...he was immune to pressure, Clare Hoffman was. He knew nothing of the military, but he had that great incisive mind that could sense issues. He knew that he had an issue there, and he didn't have to be a technician to deal with broad issues in government, and so he handled it accordingly.

So, as the hearings progressed, my cover was in Quantico. I was still a member of the Board in Quantico, and that's the way it had to be, because the viciousness of who was going where and doing what...because this was in opposition to the Executive Branch, really, in some ways, and the one thing understood from the time I got into this thing was that if I came a cropper, got tagged, caught, it was a private operation...and nobody ever told me this, it was just one of these things that you realize and you either accept it or don't. You're a dead duck, that's all, and you're career is at an end. But it was a challenge and the stakes were so high, working with people like "Red Mike" and Twining, Jerry Thomas, Kru-lak, and Jim Murray, and people like that, why, its worth the gamble.

So, the upshot was, what to do, I was on a pretty stiff schedule. I'd spend my day, most of it, during the hearings in Washington; I'd have a meeting after the hearings with Hoffman, privately, in his office, as to the general nature of who was going to testify the next day and some of the questions that I thought were appropriate, the nature of the thrust. I'd get into my station

wagon, get back to Quantico, have a quick meal, and get down to the office with Twining and Krulak, and the others, and then start drawing up the questions. At 6 o'clock in the morning, I'd leave--or even before that--for Washington for my meeting with Hoffman, because he usually got into the office after having been up and out to Great Falls fishing, and he'd be in the office by about 7 or 7:30, and that's when we did our work for 15 or 20 minutes, go down to get some breakfast in the cafeteria, and then the committee would meet, and we'd go through that routine.

But, the interesting part was that I was told--I don't know from personal observation--I was told that many a time, when I'd...after the meeting in with Hoffman, why Norstad would be up meeting with Wadsworth. (laughs) But anyway, the whole issue focused itself down and finally got to the point of, it focused itself on whether or not there was any validity to the Marine Corps apprehensions. That's really what it came to, because everybody was in favor of the Marine Corps. Some of them wanted to, we were convinced, destroy the Marine Corps, and that was not included in the law.

So it finally got to the issue, the old man said to me, "How do we establish this?" "Well," I said, "You have the documents. Get them to produce the documents." "They're known, there's no secret; they they've been referred to in the press, and so forth. You're not disclosing anything. They're the 1478 Papers, but they're classified. They're

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Secret. The JCS 1478 Series, and these were the series incidentally, as you're aware, which the military services put their input in as to the proposals, of the proposed legislation and their concepts as to what the military services should do, and there were proposals in there, one to the effect that the Marine Corps should have nothing more than lightly armed battalions, rifle battalions. Another one, nothing more than regimental size.

Q: The Marine Corps put no input in to that.

Hittle: Well, the Marine Corps had no means, not before the Commandant, which was the next step in the thriving survival of the Marine Corps, that we wanted to assure that he would get on the Joint Chiefs, de facto or otherwise. But that wasn't in this, and this was an example where you didn't have an input. We only put in what the Navy would throw in for you, and the Navy was split.

So, the upshot of it was, he said, "I've got to have the 1478 Papers," so the person that testified for the bill, he'd say, he'd start right off, the old man, he was tenacious. You never deflected Clare Hoffman on an issue. But by taking side streets, strange avenues, dead end detours, or anything else, he'd always say, "Now..."

I remember [] one of his statements on one occasion was, he'd asked a question and someone took him on a long rambling deviation, and when he got all through thinking that he had completely confused and forgotten what the question was, Clare Hoffman said, "That was an excellent answer to

question, but that wasn't the question that I'd asked you!"

Well, anyway, he started off during that particular phase of the hearings, laying the groundwork for the 1478 Papers in his own way. He'd say, "Do you know what the 1478 Papers are?" And the witness, who was either a Secretary or a high-ranking officer would say, "Yes sir, I know what they are." "Well, would you produce them for this committee?"

And the stock answer was, obviously, "I'd be glad to if I had the authority, but I don't."

"Well, who should I go to?"

So, the next one would be the person, and he'd say, "Do you know the 1478 Papers?" and go through it all again, "Yes, but I can't produce them."

So finally he got hold of one of the top senior people-- I've forgotten who it was, but the hearings will show it--and he said, "Well, who has these papers?"

"Well, the custodian of the papers is a captain," and so forth and so forth.

"Does he actually have them?" "Yes." So he turned around to the counsel and said, "Get him up here for tomorrow morning."

This captain came up--I've forgotten what his name was-- he was the secretary of the Joint Chiefs; he said, "Do you know what I mean by the 1478 Papers?" The captain said, "Yes." "Can you produce them?" "No."

"Well, tell me," he said, "who can produce those papers?"

And of course every time anybody sidestepped it, it just reaffirmed to the old man and his supporters on the committee that there was something to it, and so this captain said, technically correct, and it was obviously a power answer, he said, "The President of the United States," so the chairman said, "Thank you very much," and turned around to the counsel and he said to tell this lady who was his secretary to come behind to his back office and motioned to me to come back there. So I went around sideways and went in. The hearings, I think, were still going on. Someone was still asking questions.

He said, "I want to dictate a letter." He said, "Dear Mr. President:" and the nature of it was, it was to the effect that the "Committee was involved, as you know, in the consideration of this legislation. We have come to the point where it is necessary for the Committee to have access to the JCS 1478 Papers. I would feel," he kind of smiled as he dictated this part, I remember, "we feel that they are so important," to this effect, "unless they are made available, we do not see how we can continue due consideration of the bill in these hearings."

So, I guess since its 3:30 and I've got another appointment in a few minutes, perhaps we can continue this later on.

Q: Fine, because I have a couple of questions. The fact that the Marine Corps had a set of 1478 Papers that "Red Mike" Edson had purloined...

Hittle: Well, I can't testify to that. All I know is that we had a set of 1478. The had undoubtedly been obtained from a source in the Navy; I don't know, but that's something that I didn't know before.

Q: I also wanted to ask about Clare Hoffman and his love for peanuts. Bob Heinl said that he and Dutch Schatzel and you went up to his office, and you used to sit in his office and eat these peanuts while discussing the problem of the bill, or is this an apocryphal story?

Hittle: Well, he's a pretty damned good reporter, Bob is, so I wouldn't question the story about the peanuts.

End, Side 1, Tape 1, Session VIII

Session IX, dated 16 August 1972

Tape 1, Side 1

Q: As we left off last time, General, we were in the midst of talking about the unification problem. We discussed how the "Bended Knee" speech came about and its effect, but we want to get into this unification business a little bit more.

Hittle: What generally do you want to talk about at this time?

Q: I think we discussed the concept that the Army had, going back to the Collins Plan, and before that, how the Army wanted to do away with the Marine Corps...

Hittle: Well, I can't testify to that. All I know is that we had a set of 1478. The had undoubtedly been obtained from a source in the Navy; I don't know, but that's something that I didn't know before.

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Hittle: What generally do you want to talk about at this time?

Q: I think we discussed the concept that the Army had, going back to the Collins Plan, and before that, how the Army wanted to do away with the Marine Corps...

Hittle: It was a general staff concept...

Q: But the protagonists, Twining, Krulak, Edson, Jerry Thomas, Jim Murray, they were fighting...Bob Heinl, yourself, Dutch Schatzel later, a whole group of people were putting up the sandbags to keep the Marine Corps from being inundated. There was some real deep-down dirty fighting on the part of the other services, I think...

Hittle: Well, the issues were pretty tightly drawn, the stakes, of course, were large, and in so many instances of this kind of a situation, emotions were running high. And not only were they running high between the services, but there were differences of opinion within the services.

Q: Within the Marine Corps, also?

Hittle: Yessir. There was no monolithic feeling that the Marine Corps should engage in this kind of activity to protect itself. Without mentioning names--there is no purpose in it--after I got well immersed in this thing, on one occasion a very prominent, well thought of, and a technically highly capable officer, with a good combat record, one day was talking to us and he was very critical of Twining, and Krulak, and myself in this operation in which we were engaged, trying to protect the Marine Corps. And he said, or words to this effect, " I just think that this is ridiculous and improper that the Marine Corps should engage in such kind of activities, particularly since people of such high rank as Marshall, and like that, in the Army, and Spaatz and

and those people figure that this is the best thing for national security. Why should the Marine Corps question it, or the Navy, either?" I said to him that that was his opinion and I didn't agree with it and was glad that it wasn't the prevailing opinion. But there was a number of them, there was an awful lot of carping that went on among some of the officer groups with respect to the efforts of the Chowder Society in this thing, trying to get this thing done.

Q: I understand that at one time General Vandegrift went out with a letter to the general officers asking for their assistance, and he also held a meeting of the Washington-based general officers--of course, there weren't as many in those days as there are now--and that there were three reactions. Number one, lethargy...

Hittle: It could never happen to the Corps. That was it.

Q: ...Number two, a complete lack of understanding.

Hittle: That was widespread.

Q: And Number three, complete cooperation and involvement.

Hittle: Basically, the willingness to do something, whether there was a knowledge of what to do, was something else.

Q: The officer to whom you were referring to was maybe the one I've heard was critical of this movement, and he called it "wheels within wheels."

Hittle: Well, there was a lot of carping that went on, but you know the most unfortunate aspect of it was that those who didn't want to expose themselves to the professional risk of what was going to be necessary and was necessary, taking up the challenge to protect the Corps, really wrapped themselves in a cloak of self-announced, self-righteousness, that one, it was the wrong thing to do. Consequently, they weren't doing it, and three, because they weren't doing the wrong thing, they were far more superior to those who were.

Q: Actually, you were a bunch of Peck's bad boys, making waves, radicals.

Hittle: Upsetting things, challenging certain authority. A person could easily, and the extent to which it was done by some individuals in the Corps, demonstrated how easily it was to rationalize why it was to protect the Corps.

But I really think that once again we should review what the issues were. The basic issue of protecting the Corps, when all the fine print was read, was whether or not the roles and missions--in other words, the basic purposes for which Congress believed the various services existed to contribute to the national security, whether those basic purposes, the roles and missions, as they were called, should be a matter of Executive Order issued by the President after passage of the legislation, or whether it should be included in the legislation itself.

Of course, and Executive Order can be changed or

cancelled, discontinued by the whim of an individual, that being the President, but nevertheless we know that there are many influences and agencies that work in the name of the President. The other thing is that...

Q: Or a new administration.

Hittle: Or a new administration, and if its placed in the law, it then became a major issue to ever take it out and to modify it in later years, so indicated that it was much more permanent within it. (phone rings)

Now, we were talking here before the telephone call about getting roles and missions in law. The other aspect of it is, and was, the precise wording of it, and one of the basic changes between the proposed roles and missions that the sponsors of the legislation contended should be issued by the President after passage of the law and not contained within the law, and the roles and missions that we believed should be placed as part of the National Security Act of 1947, when enacted and part of the statute, involved the matter of what appeared to be very technical minutia, but it was very fundamental, the matter of the role of the Navy, I believe it was, as to, as I recall and I am a bit hazy on this now, that in one of the provisions for the Navy, and of course, being an element of sea power this meant so much to us and particularly this one provision, because it related to the whole amphibious issue, was that the Navy be maintained so forth and so on for operations at sea. That was

the proposed language of those who wanted the roles and missions issued in the Executive Order. Basically, those roles and missions were satisfactory to be translated into law instead of Executive Order except for that little part in that, and the Marine Corps issue, and then the Navy went with us on that--Radford, Bogan, that group--that the ^Navy should be trained and exist, so forth and so on, however that passage went, for combat incident to operations at sea.

In other words, if it were operations alone at sea, that meant that the Navy/^{was}really philosophically as well as operationally restrained to the beach line, everything seaward of land, which was really the trielemental theory and the division of labor as had been so artificially developed within the general staff thinking in Europe.

But the moment you said "for combat incident to operations at sea," then that opened up the whole arsenal, in a sense, of the capabilities of sea power as it had been developed in the United States Navy from the Spanish-American War on, which meant that it was a protection of not only the traditional war at sea, the sea lanes, and so forth, but also the projection of power from the sea, which meant naval air as well as missile firing, as it came along much after the National Security Act, which showed how flexible, far-sighted, and general the roles and missions were and didn't have to be changed with the Missile Age, because it was really the vindication of projection from the sea.

But also it provided the statutory entitlement and

charter for the conduct of naval campaigns, however you want to define them, at least the application of amphibious operations on a grand scale, or on a small scale, because an amphibious operation, of course, in the seizure of a naval base, whatever...part of your seizures depend upon gaining of a naval base, they are really generic terms in many ways, but the combat incident to operations at sea was so vitally necessary for the Navy to retain naval air as well as the conduct of amphibious operations, and that was necessary for the Marine Corps, because the landing operation is part of the amphibious...was the basic role of the Corps.

And incidentally, before I forget it, I didn't mean to interrupt you, but I didn't want to lose this train of thought, a very interesting thing happened, and that was after the roles and missions were put into the law and the law emerged with them in it, the White House nevertheless went ahead and put out an Executive Order on roles and missions, and very interestingly they put out the roles and missions that did not precisely follow the ones in the law, although the whole thing was redundant. Nevertheless, the White House staff and approved by the President at the time, but they put out the original version of "combat at sea" as a role of the Navy rather than "combat incident to operations at sea," which showed, in a real sense, that either it wasn't understood by the White House staff, and those who were pushing the roles and mission controversy from the White House and

Executive Department standpoint or they were so determined that it had to be in the restrictive sense of naval power, and very interestingly, no sooner had that Executive Order been published, than nothing less than the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States called the President to task in a letter to the President on this issue and pointed out that what was being put out was not in accordance with the law. The White House changed it.

Q: Well, you were with the Veterans of Foreign Wars...

Hittle: At a later time. But as you know, they took an active role in this entire controversy.

Q: I think that it was General Thomas who told me about making that American Legion convention in Chicago during a snowstorm, when the other representatives, I think it was Louis Johnson, a proponent of the Army position...

Hittle: Well, don't ever forget that Louis Johnson was one of the founders of the American Legion, one of the early commanders of it. That was really the basis of his influence, and in this particular issue, the Legion did not take a vigorous stand on this roles and mission business, this is no criticism, its just a statement of fact, for reasons which for them was good. But the VFW, in this particular instance--and incidentally, I'm a member of both--the VFW, however, took an early stand

on the protection of the Marine Corps and the insertion of the roles and missions in the National Security Act.

Q: This point that you made about the White House not understanding it, I have a feeling, as we've discussed before, there weren't very many Marine senior officers that understood it, and certainly even fewer naval officers, and those that did, here we come into personalities again, Forrest Sherman had an axe to grind. Not only was he making his own suit to fit himself and what he wanted to be, but he also, if sea stories are true, had a grudge against the Marine Corps.

Hittle: I can't comment on that. The only thing I can say is that on this issue, personally, I disagreed with him. I am not in a position to attribute motives to him one way or another.

Q: Well, now, you were a very small group within the whole of the Marine Corps which was being cut down.

Hittle: For want of another name, it was known as the Chowder Society, and that almost became a code word on it.

Q: I certainly think that it has become a code word, and Bob Heinl has pushed it, and refers back to the Little Man's Chowder and Marching Society and Brute Krulak.

How long were you involved with particular phase?

Hittle: This went until the law was finally enacted. The critical vote on it was in the House Government Operations Subcommittee that was marking up the bill, and I think that we won that by one vote. We had people... I forget right now, it escapes me whether it was a 5-3, no, a 3-2 or 5-4, I just don't recall what that vote was in the subcommittee, the exact number. I do remember, though, there are people whose names will never be remembered by the Corps, but they were vital to its continued existence and they made a lasting historical contribution. Of course, I mentioned Clare Hoffman, the chairman, and then there were people like Congressman Carter Monasco, who stuck with us through it, George Bender of Ohio, who later became senator. There were people of this type, if they had been convinced of the correctness of our view, why, the Corps would probably have not been protected, but they stuck with Mr. Hoffman.

5-1
(was worth)

Q: It was a non-partisan effort, actually.

Hittle: It was a Democrat and Republican effort. Finally, of course, the Senate didn't have it and they gave it a lot of gobbledygook over on the Senate side, tried to get some kind of other language, but nothing protected as well as the purpose for which it was brought into existence and maintained in the view of Congress. So the issue was joined in the Joint Conference on the legislation between the Senate and the House, and the pressures on the committee members was terrible. This was the one section that the

fight
/was all over and showed the determination of not getting the protection for the Marine Corps in the bill, and of naval air. This was the turning point, really, in the organizational history of the armed forces of the United States, and because it was the organizational turning point, it also became the turning point in the whole national security attitude of the United States, because, if the organizational turning point had not been made in the manner in which it was, why the strategy would have had to be tailored to the reorganization.

So it was really an historic development and, as I say, a benchmark strategically in the history of the United States and national security itself. This went on until late.

I don't know whether in the previous interview or not I mentioned the manner in which I worked with Mr. Hoffman at this particular time in marking up the draft legislation.

Q: No, I don't think that you did. I think that you mentioned sitting in the hearings.

Hitte: Well, prior to this, as it began to get very...

Q: May I ask you one question here? You mentioned last time that you were sitting in the hearings and that he would adjourn or get a note and he would call you into his office. I take it you were in uniform.

Hittle: Yes, I was in uniform. I never covered the...

Q: Yes, but was your presence the reason for any pressure to be put upon the Commandant from or via back channels to the White House to get you out of there?

Hittle: I was told there was. One officer told me that one of the high ranking officers in one of the other services said that they had me tagged real good and that they wanted him to get me off the Hill. But they didn't, and it was at this time--and Hoffman was a very perceptive man, as I say, without any military background, he was extremely perceptive and had great intuition--one day he said to me, "Have you got any official status?" "Well," I said, "I'm a Marine." "No, no," he said, "the opposing forces are extremely strong in this. Do you have any status here as my assistant in helping me in doing what you're doing?" "No," I said, "except they told the Commandant, which is my charter as far as I'm concerned." "Well," he said, "you need some status because there could be some difficulties with the people involved in doing what you're doing." "But what he knew and what prompted it to this day I still don't know. He said, "I think you better have some status," whereupon he wrote a letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps asking that I be officially assigned as his advisor on legislative matters, the National Security Act; whereupon the Commandant approved it, therefore he felt that I had

status, and that it was a protection to me, which it obviously was, and I was grateful for it.

But, I was back in Quantico that night that the Joint House-Senate conference went on and there were a couple of times when it looked like a deadlock on this. Finally I got a phone call in Quantico late that evening.

"This is Clare Hoffman."

"Yessir."

"Relax," he said, "the roles and missions are in." He picked it up himself and called me. I later heard that there was some real loud discussion and argument over it during the conference, and that some high-ranking officers were in and out, working on this, because they had the Administration guessing at the time and they had the entree to it.

When it went to the floor, it had no difficulty in the House and the Senate, I think it was one of the members, Henry Cabot Lodge, who was a senator then, he was honestly supporting, and vigorously so, the Army position, and I understand that he was so disappointed in it that he made a very critical speech, and Chan Gurney was the ranking Republican--I think the chairman at that time--I was in the Senate at the time, in the galley, and he had a real Dutch uncle conversation, you couldn't hear what was said, I believe it was with Henry Cabot Lodge, over in the corner of the Senate chamber, whereupon there were no other voices of significant opposition to the acceptance of the House-Senate report.

Q: Now, the National Security Act was passed in 1947, and the next thing that went on was the functions discussion.

Hittle: Well, they followed it at Key West and Newport.

Q: In which the Marine Corps had no part, not being a member of the Joint Chiefs.

Hittle: That's right, and that gave us the justification for the Marine Corps bill later on. But, its extremely important that people keep in mind what the Functions Paper and what the roles and missions are.

The roles and missions are what are in the law, the basic purpose of each of the armed services. The functions were the amplification and implementation of the roles and missions, in other words, the more detailed assignment of chores.

In spite of all, some people tried to contravene and skirt what the roles and missions were, nevertheless, they really couldn't do it. (phone rings)

OK, where were we before the phone call?

Q: Functions, We were getting into the functions.

Hittle: Well, as I said, the distinction between functions and roles and missions are a necessary thing to keep in mind.

Q: When they got to work on the functions, we didn't have any Marine Corps representation, and at this point, it seems that the Marine Corps could have been left out in the cold

completely, is that right?

Hittle: Well, this laid the foundation. Once you had the roles and missions and you had your staff established as part of the major element of national security applications of power, which the Marine Corps did through the roles and missions, and in the law--no longer a matter of individual determination, even though it could be the President's determination--then the requirement was there and the lack of top-level Marine Corps, or equal Marine Corps representation when Marine Corps interests were involved in the Newport and the Key West Papers, that really laid the foundation for the Marine Corps bill.

Q: I understand that down at Key West, General Silverthorn was kept outside, cooling his heels.

Hittle: That was my understanding. I wasn't there, so I couldn't comment on it to any degree/^{of} other than hearsay knowledge that that was it, as far as it was related to us.

Q: Now, with the working group, which consisted of Army, Navy, and Air Force members, were you or was the Chowder Society called upon to prepare supporting information to uphold the Marine Corps view of its functions in the working group or ad hoc committee?

Hittle: My recollection is that we were on sidelines on that, preparing material.

Q: You don't recall what your participation was?

Hittle: No; I'd have to review my papers.

Incidentally, for a matter of record, for anybody doing any researching on this period, of the roles and missions controversy, I have placed in the archives, under the procedures that have been set forth by the Marine Corps Historical Section about a 15 or 20 page or more resume of the actual day to day activities that went on, as I saw it as one person in connection with the roles and missions controversy, National Security Act of 1947, the whole era of the National Security Act controversy, as it applied to the legislation.

Q: Is this sealed?

Hittle: Yes, it is sealed because I am a great believer that if you say even something that could be interpreted as critical of somebody, that its best to have it after enough time has passed for historical perspective to be able to judge the correctness or incorrectness of it.

Q: You are not a believer in confrontation, then?

Hittle: I'm just not a believer that there is anything to be gained by stirring something up when someone is still alive.

Q: There was an Army staff document, speaking of the Army-Marine Corps divergence over Marine operations on land which said that Admiral Boone had agreed that Marine operations

ashore should be limited, that the Marines had forced him to stand on the ^{language of the} law, that the law said that the Marine Corps shall provide Fleet Marine Forces for the conduct of such operations as may be essential for the prosecution of a naval campaign. Did the Marine Corps bring pressure to bear on Admiral Boone or other naval representatives? Did they have any contact with them?

Hittle: My recollection is that there was always Marine Corps representations being made almost as a continuous process of reminding those who were dealing with the Marine Corps affairs, although the Marine Corps was not a full representative, of what the law was and that you had better adhere to it.

Q: Well, the Navy, as I understand it, was really, first of all, not alert really to the danger it was facing until...

Hittle: Too many naval officers as well as some Marine officers weren't alert to it. They simply did not face up to what this meant to the future of American sea power.

Q: Of course, it was the Navy which was on the firing line in this case. The Marine Corps could only cheer them from the sidelines, in both the roles and missions and the functions matters.

Hittle: That's right, because if they didn't uphold the Marine Corps, they were not upholding the naval role of amphibious operations. Some in the Navy had the quaint and naive belief that the Army would never really challenge

the Navy's control of amphibious operations, so it might be easier to have the Army conduct the landing. I've had naval officers of that time express that view. Of course, what they didn't realize was that there were some Army officers at the time who believed that the proper role of the landing force commander in the overall Army command was conduct of the naval part of it.

Q: This takes us off on a tangent on this business of command...

Hittle: Of course, one of the biggest things in the period past this, in the preparation of the doctrine and so forth that followed and everything, all through this whole period there was a continual missionary and convincing effort on the part of the Marine Corps leadership in this matter to convince some of the Navy, not all of them, but some of the Navy that one, the Marine Corps really was out fighting for the Navy's primacy of interest in the conduct of naval operations, particularly primacy of command should be vested in the Navy, in a Navy officer in amphibious operations, and this matter of primacy of command was something that is so simple, and yet it was so hard for some people, both Navy and Marine Corps, to understand. But those who wanted to get it from the other service understood it real well, because if the Navy had not set forth, as the Marine Corps urged, and that's what we put in in the landing force/^{doctrine}command system of it, Twinning

supervised which he brought me back from China to help out with in '46.

Q: The point that I was going to make before was that the lack of understanding of a very large segment of the Navy concerning not only its vital interests in amphibious warfare but its just lackadaisical attitude, even today, there's a reluctance on the part of the Navy...well, the Marine Corps has always been unhappy about the fact that the Navy hasn't upgraded its amphibious section in the office of CNO, that there hasn't been a really senior officer, that the people who are involved aren't always aware of what amphibious warfare is all about. For a long time, from the very inception of the amphibious doctrine at Quantico in '33 and '34, they never sent the best people there. The people involved who had commands in amphibious forces, naval people, never really made it to the top.

Hittle: That has changed. It has gotten far better than it was; let me put it that way, with a little more emphasis. Command of an amphibious ship today is a major command. What you say is a generalization of some of the things that existed in that time and under those circumstances is pretty, I wouldn't take issue with it in a limited application, but...

Q: I admit that it is a generalization.

Hittle: And an accurate one as a generalization of what it

was at the time. It took World War II and after, and really it took the operations of the Cold War in many ways to get a more widespread and basic understanding of the part of naval officers' importance in amphibious operations, and still, today, just as in the Marine Corps in some matters, there is a gap in some people's understanding of the interrelationship of the Navy and the Corps; fortunately, not on the part of those who are in the highly responsible positions and certainly not on the part of Cushman, the Commandant.

But nevertheless, within the Navy there, historically, in modern times, there has been a lack of understanding of the meaning of the balanced fleet. In other words, that the Navy consists...too many people believe there was a destroyer Navy. Other people thought of a battleship Navy; some, an air Navy, and others, a submarine Navy. The most difficult philosophical, and strategic, concept ^{I think} to get general acceptance of on the part of too many naval officers, and in some cases Marines, too, was that the strategic sum of the combination was far greater than simply the mathematical total of the parts. It was the combined effort that rose in geometric proportion rather than the mathematical, insofar as its effect. It was Lebanon, it was Korea, it was Santo Domingo. It was all of these really when the chips were down that the most important signal was "Land the landing force!"

Q: In your function as Assistant Secretary of the Navy

for Manpower and Reserve Matters, did this ever come up? Was this a consideration that you had to face?

Hittle: In the determination of manpower allocations, and so forth, it was not ever a confrontation, as such, but it was always a consideration as to the allocation of your available manpower resources. Where do you put your people?

But, I think one of the most important this is that there has been a growing realization of the importance... one of the most useful things that happened was something that the Navy, at the time, opposed, by and large--a large number of the Navy opposed--and that was putting the Commandant as a member of the Joint Chiefs in a limited sense of de facto membership in the Joint Chiefs, because it did precisely in many ways what we tried to tell the Navy would be the case at the time, and that was, it gave a broader representation to naval views, of sea power views, let me put it that way.

Q: That's all very well and good, providing the Commandant always sided with the Chief of Naval Operations.

Hittle: As a whole, though, for instance, the relationship that existed between Lem Shepherd and the then-CNO, Radford, was...well, anyway, there was that great controversy, if you recall, in 1954, which was the General Order 5 controversy. I was in the midst of that thing, right up to my neck in that, because that was another organizational turning point for the Navy and Marine

Corps and really a solidification of the...resulted in the solidification of the forces of sea power rather than a divergence, which the Navy said would have occurred if the Commandant is ever given a comparable status in the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The potential tragedy of that was that it was so totally unnecessary and it was forced upon the Corps, but the Corps, once the issue had been joined, had no choice but to come to grips with it and win it.

I've got another appointment here, reluctantly.

End, Side 1, Tape 1, Session IX

Session X, dated 29 September 1972

Tape 1, Side 1

Q: As we just discussed off tape, we will be going back in our next couple of sessions to your China days, the railroad detail. But perhaps I think we had better finish up our discussion about the post-World War II period at Quantico. I think we have pretty well covered Chowder, and perhaps when you get the transcript you will be able to edit in matters which were not discussed.

I just noticed one entry here, in April 1948, you were still Secretary of the Academic Board of the Schools and you went on a tour, Fort George C. Meade, Baltimore, Scranton, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cincinnati in connection with matters pertaining to the Marine Corps. Do you remember that trip?

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Hittle: I remember that very well. It was set up at a time when the Army was conducting around at its bases for its reserves and its regulars an interservice education program, and there were no gimmicks to it. It was a straight program as far as the Army was concerned, and what it consisted of was officers from different services, one each from a different service, making the rounds of their main Army bases to tell them about the other services, and General Shepherd tagged me for that one, asked me if I would go, and the ask was the command in that league, and so I made up a presentation on the Marine Corps, laid it down cold turkey as to what the Marine Corps was for, and so forth. It wasn't designed to be an irritant to Army listeners, but it was designed to set forth clearly for this rather important element of the Army, a better understanding of the Marine Corps.

(interruption)

Now we're back to what, I think it was the Sixth Army area that conducted this, and...

Q: It was the Third Army at Fort Meade.

Hittle: It was? Oh, yes, and I was on this circuit for a couple of weeks or more; I guess three weeks.

Q: It was more like a month.

Hittle: Yes, I guess it was a month, all right. It was very worthwhile. They gave me an Army car and an Army driver. They were hospitable and they had good turnouts

every place I went. And it wasn't any one of these things, an earthshaker or change the course of history or even interservice relations, but it was a good opportunity to not only get to those audiences, but in many of the towns we had a radio interview or a press interview, or something like that. It was a very timely opportunity to get over the Marine Corps mission and roles at the...really, with thanks to the Army.

Q: Now, one question that I don't know whether we ever laid to rest when discussing the unification fight. I don't know if "unification" is the proper term to use, but I guess it will do as well as anything. Who was the real villain in this piece, if there is any?

Hittle: Oh, I think that the sponsor of the unification thing was a collective and individual, and I guess with the sharpening of perspective, there comes a time with a few things like that, people's opinions, I get the... with very, very few exceptions, there were well-motivated people in it from their standpoint, wanting to do things.

People on the other side who didn't believe in the Marine Corps, believed in the Army and didn't believe that there was any place for the Marine Corps. It was that simple. With them, it was a matter of organization and the will of the wisp of better combat efficiency, which the Army is still trying to capture, that will of the wisp, in many ways. With us, it was something much more deep. It became an article of faith that they were

trying to destroy, and that is really what it amounted to, and I guess that's why, in the final analysis, they got licked.

There were some, and I just don't see any purpose in mentioning their names because you can't document it and it's unfair, but there were some that were just out to sink the Marine Corps and to break up the Navy from its teamwork and from its balanced fleet nature and, in other words, that really meant the virtual destruction of naval air.

The two things that had to go, and the reason that the Marine Corps was the key, in order to eventually result in the type of organization that would be amenable to a general staff directorate, with all of the implications that means, then, two things that had to go were the Marine Corps--because it, the Marines just didn't fit into any kind of a neat package of general staff design. The other thing, of course, they had to get away from the balanced fleet concept. Basically, that was it, the balanced fleet concept of the Navy as it evolved since the days of the Spanish-American War in the United States and reached its highest point of effectiveness as well as size and development in World War II. The other thing was naval air.

Once those things were broken up and eliminated, with the Army absorbing whatever the Marine Corps was doing, on the false assumption that the Army could do it, if it was necessary--and that was the other thing, people didn't understand why you needed a Marine Corps

and certainly didn't understand what the Marine Corps was designed to do and what the Army should have done, would have to do in the event of the Marine Corps' demise.

The other, of course, was naval air, and that would have gone to the Air Force. So, in the thing from which this stemmed was really, in many ways, the fight of the Air Force for autonomy to get out from under the Army General Staff. The sugar coating that was thrown to both was that if this took place, both the Army and the Air Force would get something. The Air Force would get naval aviation and over-water operations, and the Army would get what had been the Marine Corps, the amphibious landing operations and the...so, out of that, people who wanted to carry out that kind of concept, went after naval air and the Marine Corps. But they had to knock off the Marine Corps first, because they were very realistic and knowing that if they knocked off naval air, that did not necessarily mean that they were going to destroy the Marine Corps. But it was absolutely certain, with the base of support we had developed in Congress, and with the broad support which the Marine Corps, simply by being the Marine Corps and doing its job, had developed in the country. They had to admit that if they could nail the Marine Corps and get it down to a coal-pile guard, then, the field was open for the break-up of the balanced fleet, and that meant naval air to the Air Force.

The original front man for it who lent his name to it in their protest for the basic idea in which they made their original try for a home run around the bases from the

was the Collins Plan, "Lightning Joe" Collins, who was the Army Chief of Staff at the time. Let me see, he was either Army Chief of Staff or Army Chief of Operations at the time. But anyway, "Lightning Joe" was one of the heroes of the war, and he came up...and the plan that called for a general staff set up, lock, stock, and barrel, was the Collins Plan, and that was the one that died in Congress, in the Senate Committee when Vandegrift made his "Bended Knee" speech.

Then they came back much smarter, with a much more subtle and plausible case with the same basic objective, because the same people were pushing it for the same purposes. And they came back with a unification act in 1947, except that was the one in which they came to grips with the issue.

Q: What about the role of jealousy in this matter? The Marine Corps traditionally prides itself for the chip on its shoulder, that it is going to take on all comers, and the Army is jealous of the Corps because of all the publicity it got in World War I...

Hittle: That's valid because there is some real bitterness involved in all this. But in all fairness, I think that probably today I would have to say something I wouldn't have said in the heat of legislative battle, and that is, as I look back on it, most of the people were honestly motivated, although the fact that they were honestly motivated in no way reduces the damage they would have done if they had been successful.

Q: This is an iffy sort of question, but certainly, in your functions in the Department of the Navy recently, did you foresee any of this same type of thing, encroachment upon functions, roles and missions?

Hittle: Yes, yes. They continually...and I guess the reason for it is, you've got conflicting philosophies of military power, of how military power should be organized, and that's the basis for it, and it surfaced because they become the tools by which some see that they can make an adjustment through lowered budgets without losing what they had before the budget was lowered. In other words, its the interplay of a convenient philosophy with a lessening of money. Behind the great bulk of policy disputes within the Pentagon, and its only natural, is that its the product of the system, and you're never going to eliminate it regardless of any system you're going to have the organizational disputes over organization because of the spur or reduced budgets.

Q: I think that General Krulak may have put it in a nutshell when I asked about this a couple of years ago when we were discussing Chowder and he said that in times of peace, the services are looking for funds and in times of war they are searching for missions.

Hittle: That's absolutely right. I would amplify it to say that they used the search for missions in times of

peace to make up for the lack of funds.

One thing I do want to add to a previous question there, about motivations, and so forth. One of the things that disturbed me the most in the unification controversy was the fact that there was either a general failure on the part of the centralized organization's performance--the general staff-type organization advocates--either a complete failure to realize what it meant in these terms or a indifference to it, and what I am speaking about is, the tremendous political implications of the establishment of a general staff organization for the direction of the military, and to me, as a history buff and a political science buff, I really think that those were the most profound issues and they were some of the most difficult to articulate to people who were engaged in military philosophical discussions.

Q: It was highly emotional, though.

Hittle: It was emotional, but you see a general staff organization historically, a national general staff at the seat of government has never been able to exist without conflict of a major nature with the government form itself, and no democratic type of organized had ever really been able to survive the existence within it of a national general staff. Its a very simple equation. The person who directs a national general staff within a government becomes, in effect, the de facto most powerful man in the government.

Q: By mere control of the armed forces?

Hittle: Yes, and all of the economy which it represents.

Q: To support those armed forces?

Hittle: That's right, and it becomes social in the educational system, it goes into every thread of the woof and warp of government and the people.

Q: Well, in a sense, we're not too far from it now with our massive Department of Defense...

Hittle: Yes, but the very thing that the Department of Defense is getting criticized for is really one of its virtues in terms of the preservation of our form of government, and that is, there is still a decentralization which is represented by the interservices' differences of opinion, and the further you go toward a monolithic system, as a national general staff--regardless of what you call it--you can call it "weekday Sunday School," but as long as it has that organization, its the same beast, its a national general staff. The closer you go towards increased centralization, the more long range problems you build in towards the survival of your form of government.

Q: Tell me, did you write your book on the history of the general staff as a result of your involvement with this unification business?

Hittle: I had written it before, and these are some of the things starting in very naively, strictly from the historical survey standpoint, where the things began to come home and hit me on this, how, even in the autocratic system of Prussia. Soon as they got that national general staff established, the great general staff, the Emperor or anybody else could say he was it, but he wasn't.

Really what it becomes, when you try to translate the Occident to the Orient, in comparative terms, is that the chief of a national general staff is inevitably, with the interplay of personalities with the chief of state, the chief of the general staff, all you need to do is to get a combination of a weak or indecisive chief of state and a strong chief of the general staff and even a minor internal or external crisis, and you've got the focal point of power.

But all of this is leading to what I really think is was probably was one of the basic conclusions you come to, a generalization, but I think that its an interesting one and a pretty defensible one, that what you have when you have a supreme chief of staff is really a shogunate. You really have a shogunate; that's what it is. You really have a shogun. (phone rings)

Well, as I say, overgeneralizations are always subject to criticism, but as a fundamental comparison, I guess about the closest comparison you can make from the government functioning standpoint and the standpoint of

the individuals involved, the chief of the general staff and the chief of state, is some degree nominal, is that really you're chief of a great general staff is the Occidental equivalent of a Japanese shogun. When you establish a national general staff, you inevitably move towards some form of a shogunate.

Q: Its a quasi-military government.,

Hittle: Its more than that. In other words, the government apparatus is not what it appears to be. That's really the nature of it.

Q: Of course, in the context of this unification fight, had a general staff been superimposed over the military, one service would have been supreme.

Hittle: Yes, one service would have been supreme, and it was inevitable that it would have been the Army, because, in any large country, the Army is really your manpower mobilization base. There are more people involved in it.

Q: Had the Marine Corps not fought this thing, was there any other area of government ready to take up the cudgels?
Or was nobody else aware of or sensitive to it?

Hittle: No, the Marine Corps was the only ones that sounded "general quarters" and manned the battle stations.

Q: Who recognized this first, do you think, in the Marine Corps?

Hittle: I guess probably Twining.

Q: Well, I guess that you must have heard the story that he told me of how, when he was still in the South Pacific he visited his brother, who was then with some large Army command, although an Air Corps officer, and Collins was out there, I guess with the 25th Division, at the time, and not one word of praise about the Marines on Guadalcanal but just a lot of bad-mouthing, and as the party grew heavier and the drink disappeared more, the threats and the anti-Marine Corps comments just grew in intensity.

Hittle: Oh well, you know that the story had a lot of circulation and reportedly validity, but after Holland Smith relieved Ralph Smith on Saipan that the statement was made by General Marshall that never again would a Marine ever be in a position to command an Army outfit.

There was a lot of this background that went into this thing, but, as I say, it was venal and personal, and so on. (phone interruption)

Q: We were talking about venality, and so on, and I think that we've probably exhausted this subject.

Hittle: I think so, but let's not assume for any moment venality as a characteristic of human nature is exhausted. We don't want to give that impresson on the tape.

Q: Advanced Base Problem #10. Do you remember anything about that in particular? I've got it marked down, but I don't remember why. Were you involved with the preparation?

Hittle: Yes.

Q: In March of '49 you were the executive assistant, still with the Schools, on Advanced Base Problem #10.

Hittle: Which one was that?

Q: I don't have the code name for it. I don't recall; I don't know. I could check it out.

Hittle: Well, let's leave that for next time and find out what it was, because I had two or three problems that I was working on on bringing transports up the river, having them lay off Quantico and having a landing operation, the also the development of...and put on the first one of those professional demonstrations down at Quantico...

Q: JCOCs? Joint Civilian Orientation Conference/

Hittle: It later became JCOC because other services thought that it was a hell of a good idea, but the Marine Corps kicked that one off. We started off with a Marine Corps combat demonstration, and I proposed that.

Q: For civilians?

Hittle: Yes, Congress, press, businessmen, and I wrote a memo proposing such a demonstration because of the closeness of Quantico to Washington, to give people an understanding of the Marine Corps, and so forth. As it usually happens when you propose something, why, Lem Shepherd said, "You proposed it. You do it." So

Session XI - 7 December 1972

Side 1, Tape 1

Hittle: Okay, where are we.

Q: In June of '49 you had been at Quantico for 3 years, and at this time you had been transferred to NROTC, University of Utah. Was this a desirable assignment? How did you happen to get that; did you ask for it or was there something you'd rather have had?

Hittle: I almost went down as the Assistant Naval Attaché to Peru, it just occurred to me. I forgot. But the reason, I guess, that I didn't go to that assignment was that it appeared in Washington that there was some more fundamental follow-up issues coming along with respect to how things were sorted out after the unification fight. And it was about this time, as I recall, that Admiral Radford who was taking a deep interest in what was going to happen with respect to naval air and the Air Force issue, asked that I be assigned to his office. At least that's what I was told. And General Cates at that time said that he'd prefer that I didn't get over in one particular spot, and on a separate issue was, to be kept available for whatever happened to come along--not be tied down to one.

So, after some discussion of duties and so forth, I was asked if I was interested in going to NROTC duty. I said I'd be interested, but where? So one of the ones I was

interested in because I never lived there, was the University of Utah. So I was sent out as executive officer. At that time I think there were five units that had Naval ROTC/Marine executive officers. And so I did a tour of duty there.

In the course of it I was ordered back on temporary (phone rings) duty on a couple of occasions.

One of the basic reasons I wanted to go to NROTC was that this was something I didn't know anything basically about. And yet, as I--at least in my own way--visualized the office of procurement in the post-war period, it appeared to me that the Naval NROTC system had some great inherent virtues to it of tapping into a source of officer material that we had never tapped before, and in a manner in which we had only tapped previously in a very few isolated cases in some of the old and established Ivy League NROTCs, and then one other, Berkeley, which did not really constitute a system.

But the nature of the NROTC as it was known as a Holloway Plan, after Admiral Holloway had set it, primarily for setting it up, was a great step forward with the national competition for the scholarship for 4 years and a regular commission in the Navy or the Marine Corps. And then the contract student who could take it for a reserve commission and have an opportunity, depending upon the qualification of the individual and the need of the service, to go on to a regular commission. And since this seemed to me to be one of the principle roots by which officer material would come out of the educational institutions of the country, I wanted

to get to know it. And, I guess, the only way to do it is to be part of it. And I never regretted going to Naval ROTC duty, although at the time in the healthy competitiveness and so forth after the war--professional and so forth in large numbers--for a few of my friends, at least, said, "What the hell you doing to NROTC at this stage of your career?" But it turned out to emphasize the old truism: it's really not where you serve all the time, but how. And I guess I served all right because my career was, I think, made better as a result of it. I had a knowledge of something I didn't know anything about before. And increasingly the Naval ROTC system has taken on a larger part in the furnishing of naval officers and Marine officers, and particularly during the South Vietnamese conflict, which is now winding down. I just don't know how we can cut the mustard without the NROTC, and the officers that could be called up as a result of it.

Q: Of course, when you went out there you were sort of shifting into low gear because you had been going full speed now, what with the war and what with Quantico and unification.

Hittle: And all of the follow-up. I guess I kind of looked forward to somewhat of a more cloistered life. But I got out there, lived in temporary quarters in the guest house at Fort Douglas, where the Navy had a set of quarters through the alertness and ingenuity and determination of the then-professor of naval science, Captain Camp his name was. And he's another one of these who, as the years go by, are kind of

forgotten as individuals, but a typical example of one who never went to flag rank but who did outstanding work as a combat officer during World War II. And he made his contribution after the war and he passed away too early in age from pneumonia. But he was the PMS at the time.

And when the Naval ROTC went out, he just leaned on the Army heavy there--Fort Douglas--and got quarters for his officers.

Q: Great!

Hittle: And that's one of the things that made it one of the more pleasant jobs.

I guess two things were important as I look back upon Naval ROTC duty. It gave me a personal experience and consequently a practical knowledge and insight of the role of an NROTC unit, NROTC faculty within the organization of the university, and within the faculty system of the university. And this proved to me to be a tremendous asset when, later on . . . when no knowledge . . . when I went to the Naval ROTC I would ever use it in such a manner. . . . I was fortunate enough to become the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve; and the Naval ROTC, naturally, was one of my responsibilities. And this was a crisis in the whole ROTC organization--Army, Navy, and Air Force--at the peak of the protests and campus reactions during the Vietnam War. It gave me a personal understanding of curriculum, the faculty participation of the university in it, the role of uniform

instructors, and the necessity for them; and I was far able-- at least in my own mind--to deal with the problems and the protests, the criticisms, that were emerging from various universities and campuses through the country with respect to uniform personnel, the NROTC, weaponry, the so-called inadequacies of curriculum, college standards, and all of those things. And it was on this basis, I think, that that experience in the University of Utah convinced me of the inherent virtues, goodness, and soundness of the Naval ROTC system as it was run by the Department of the Navy.

It gave me a personal knowledge, within a university atmosphere and area on the campus, that our curriculum and the manner in which the selectivity was done, was superior to either the Air Force or the Army at the time. And it gave me a basis for being able to judge what compromises could be made in regular college faculty participation in Naval ROTC instruction; because one of the ways that we eased some of the tension in the crisis while I was assistant secretary in the Vietnam War over Naval ROTC was to make some of the instruction in Naval ROTC like navigation, some of the mathematics that went into gunnery, some of the history courses, national policy, and so forth, that was basic courses within the curriculum of the Naval ROTC--to make those joint courses in which the naval officers and a faculty member participated in the instruction. Or in some cases, those were traded off or substituted with comparable courses that accomplished basically the same thing within the university curriculum.

I was able to do this with the knowledge it would work, because we pioneered in that in the University of Utah, of inviting in--back in '49, '50, '51--college instructors and other members of the faculty who were interested in these subjects of Naval ROTC; and we encouraged them to help participate, take some of the classes from time to time, and also work to try to find courses where the students could go to a regular college faculty.

But there were certain things within the NROTC curriculum that had to be taught by a naval officer and one in uniform, gunnery--things such as that--leadership. And it was this experience of the Naval ROTC at the University of Utah that stood me in good stead and being able to talk college practice and evaluate the often specious protests of the various university deans and so forth, who were knuckling under to the extremists within their faculty in condemning ROTC.

As a result of that, I was able, in my own mind--and by and large Secretary Chaffee gave me full authority in this field--and it was mine, really, by law anyhow, under the mandate set up in statutes for the office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy and the other military departments--Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve--I was able to draw a line beyond which I knew I wouldn't retreat or back down with respect to the demands of the various faculties and colleges with respect to ROTCs on the campuses. It gave me an understanding of what was negotiable and what wasn't, and still retained the essential hard requirements of Naval ROTC to

turn out officers for regular assignment as deck officers and other assignments within the fleet. It was the result of that that my policy, as I may have mentioned previously, wherever we had an impasse with a university or college, was to formally ask for a 1-year cooling off period and interim status quo, during which time we could--without pressure of deadlines--discuss possible alternatives and let the university passions cool; which I was certain they would, because no movement like it was on the college campuses at that time could maintain their peak of intensity. And it was a certainty, although there were. . . . I was amazed how many people didn't realize it, it was a certainty that the issue would pass, be taken over by others in some large degree, and reason and logic would largely return to the Navy/Marine Corps college relationship. It was on the basis of this Naval ROTC experience, being part of a college faculty, knowing the importance of the head of the unit being given the status, while he was on the campus, of professors. That was one of the things during the Vietnam War they were so critical about--he shouldn't be a professor. I insisted he should because there were certain symbolisms as well as practical requirements for these matters. And also that at least some courses would be taught by officers of the Naval service and the Marine Corps.

And in addition, I was able to deal--having been on a college campus and worked with the college faculty--I was able to at least to a small degree, talk their language and know what they were talking about, and not be snowed by it

when they came along talking academic credits and graduate credits, and resist their efforts--which I strongly did--to take all credits away from Naval ROTC. And when it got to the point where the combination of the things that certain colleges require and demanded in order to permit the NROTC to remain on the campus, that reached the point where, having been in a Naval ROTC unit on a university campus, I knew that you no longer had a real NROTC and there was no use kidding ourselves, letting a university kid themselves and the tax payers pay for something they weren't getting. And it was on that basis that I was able to draw a base line in a limitation of the things we had to have to remain on a campus.

Q: You had to close down how many, then?

Hittle: As I recall, we started out and closed down either five or six of the Ivy League. I did it reluctantly because I sincerely made a plea and repeated to the university as far as status quo for 1 year; and in the history of a nation or even a university, 1 year isn't a tick of the clock. But they demanded it right then. And in some of the meetings that we met with these faculty and university administrators who should be characterized by reasonableness and a search for truth and objectivity, there was an adamant attitude and an arrogance that bordered on almost crudeness. But in spite of that, I sought continually--and the record will show--both in writing, telegrams, and verbally, a status quo for 1 year until we could adjust the difference. And when they refused

even the status quo for one school year in the interest of the students who were there, and in many cases the interest of the students who were in that university as a result of the actions and agreements prior to the crisis, to have a NROTC; and these students came in good faith and they entered into the curriculum. And in some cases--and there's no use getting into identifications now--some of these universities couldn't have cared less about the students, what happened to them in the Naval ROTC. As far as even their status on the campus--the continuation of their scholarships or anything.

Q: Were you able to take care of the students?

Hittle: By and large, most of them. They let the classes continue. A couple of cases--my recollection--that we were willing to transfer to another school; and we were actually shopping quietly what schools would give them a full transfer of credits because it was not the doing of the student.

We closed out Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth. Cornell was reasonable; it was right on the verge of going. We met twice with the faculty at Cornell, the administration and faculty Cornell represented, we worked out a solution--Cornell still has it--which showed it was possible to do. And then there were a few others. Stanford was ready to go; I understand Stanford now wants to get back in. And now some of the Ivy Leagues do.

But the one thing it showed, and the administration of these universities let this happen--were not smart even from

their standpoint--because these places, many of which we closed like Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, and so forth, were prestigious universities. . . . (cross talk) were all assets to the unit.

Q: With a long history.

Hittle: Yes. They were all assets to the system.

There were some who came to me within the Navy and said: you can't let these prestigious schools leave the system; it'll weaken the system.

Well, my attitude on the thing was: When you have to beg to stay, you no longer stay under terms that are honorable for either the students or the Department of the Navy. And that there may have been a day when curriculum and faculty and the atmosphere was so much superior in the eastern Ivy League that you got a better student and the service needed to have them. But the standards of American universities and colleges are such today that if you get a degree at any good college, what that individual does afterwards is up to the individual. And you can bring them out of the midwest colleges, out of the Big Ten, out of the far west, and some of the real small ones that aren't even part of conferences, and these students will go to flag rank. And they've shown that they can, within the Navy.

So, in a sense, it was an unfortunate episode that I digressed down here. But it was part and parcel in the follow-up of my duty at the Naval ROTC. But it was

unfortunate in that the colleges were so adamant, so determined, so indifferent to national security requirements, and to the interest of their students who were in the NROTC, that they themselves were responsible for the loss of the units in those schools.

Q: And, of course, I think probably the administrations were, in many cases, prisoners of the faculty.

Hittle: Well, I watched this thing real close. And after having been in an NROTC, I had a little feel of what went on on a college campus because at the University of Utah I was an associate professor, and with full rights and so forth while I was there. It was a hospitable atmosphere. And it was to the benefit of. . . . I think everybody gained from it--the naval officers, the Marines, and the college faculty--the interchange. But these things which happened on American campuses, U.S. campuses, during the protest and the Vietnam conflict, were in large measure the abdication of responsibility by trustees and by college officials. It would never have happened if the college officials and the trustees had properly faced up to their responsibilities in running an institution. Some would, yes. But in large measure it would not have been nearly as serious as the situation was.

Q: I wanted to ask you. . . . Well, of course, you got your master's degree while you were there, too.

Hittle: While I was there I enjoyed the teaching and I took classes, which I didn't have to do but I did anyway, because you've got to participate in anything to know what the problems are and what's going on. And I enjoyed teaching. But at every school, regardless of the size, usually there's a few outstanding people who are authorities in their field on the faculty. And having had a deep interest ever since I was in the Pacific in World War II and in North China, I became interested because they had at the University of Utah one of the great Chinese historians, a Doctor Helmuth Callis, who was recognized as an author and a writer--I mean a lecturer and an educator--in the Chinese field of history and art and culture. And so I started taking courses from him. And at the same time there was a Russian immigrant by the name of Evosky, I believe his name was, who was on the faculty as an instructor. He was a Russian--really a fugitive. His history was that he had been one of the outstanding geographers in the Soviet Union.

Q: Evosky?

Hittle: Evosky, I believe his name was, as I recall, the way it was pronounced; but I don't know how it's spelled.

And he had his Stalin Prize even. But because of the fact he was Ukranian, so forth, he was beginning to get caught up in the first of the reverberations of the on-coming purge of the late thirties. And in the late thirties he went to Poland and never went back, and he came to the United States

as a displaced person after the war. And he was one of the great economic, agricultural, and physical geographers of the Soviet Union. And he was at the University of Utah as a faculty. So I took Russian history both from Callis and western geography from him, along with Chinese history and other Oriental history from Callis.

And I've been doing it for a couple years, toward the end of my tour. And one day the Dean called me in and he says, "Are you trying for a masters?"

"No," I said, "I'm not getting credit. I'm just taking the courses."

"Well," he said, "we just checked your record," he said. "If you'll take on a few more credits for the next semester and get in a dissertation, why you'll have your master's."

So I put on a burst of steam, I locked myself in the office, took a few days leave--locked myself up for about a week, 10 days--and wrote a thesis. I was never too proud of the thesis but it was acceptable to the university. So I got my master's degree in Oriental History and Geography, which was another reason Naval ROTC duty was useful, and could be more useful to anybody who wants to do that.

Q: What was the thesis?

Hittle: The thesis was on the immediate post-war relationships between the Soviet Union and China. And that also stood me in good stead later on, to have had the formalized education in the subject matter.

Q: At this time the immediate post-World War II unification fight had ended; it went into another phase, I think, the functions. Well now, you had the revolt of flat-top admirals about this time.

Hittle: Well, that went on and I was back in Washington, I recall, a couple times I got called back on TAD. As a matter of fact, I was going to point out that I arrived and reported into the University of Utah, and I took about 10 days, 2 weeks to get quarters--I digressed at that point--before they were painted and so forth between occupants. And the day that we moved into quarters, just as the van backed up with the furniture from Washington, the telephone rang and there was a telegram there for me from Bill Twining from the Commandant directing me to report to Twining at Quantico--or I think he was in Washington at the time--immediately per TAD. And to this day I could never have convinced my wife that I didn't rig that to get out of settling the furniture.

I went back on the build-up of the controversies that were coming along in the establishment of the Marine Corps position and the preparations of the papers. And I went back on a couple other occasions.

Q: Now, we didn't get into the fight concerning the assignment of the Commandant to the Joint Chiefs as an interested party or the fourth star for the Commandant.

Hittle: Well, that was one of the things I went back for, was the device and how we would make our move on that. And I wasn't a constant participant, but those who were carrying the load in the thing were in frequent communication with me as I went back on a couple of occasions, and I actually did some congressional work on it when I did get back, with certain key individuals. But that was the thing that had to be done. It was laid out again by the group that steered the Marine Corps through the basic unification fight.

Q: The Chowder group.

Hittle: Basically that's the product of the Chowder group.

Q: I understand you also acted as a travel agent, getting a plane for General Shepherd in June of '50.

Hittle: Yes. That was an interesting episode. He and Mrs. Shepherd came through and stayed with us. And the first night he was there, as I recall, he got a telephone call. He said the plane coming through for him and he had to be aboard it because he had to report immediately to take command at Pearl, and move on to Korea.

Q: Well, now, I've got a conflict in stories. His story was that he was out fishing with Jimmy Ord at this fish hatchery and . . .

Hittle: Yes, that's the day.

Q: . . . they were about out in the middle of the lake when Going across country they'd heard about the war breaking out and they. . . .

Hittle: No. They were staying with me at the time. (cross talk)

Q: Oh, they were with you at the time.

Hittle: Yes, the Ords and the Shepherds.

Q: Well Jimmy wasn't married yet; he was still a. . . .

Hittle: I think he was meeting his fiance at our place. But I'm pretty sure that's what transpired there. The daughter was with us. And matter of fact, I think they were married, weren't they?

Q: I went to the wedding out in Pearl, and that was after they arrived--1951.

Hittle: I think he met her there or something. (cross talk)

Q: Well, he was an aide. He'd been aide to General Shepherd at Quantico (cross talk) and traveled out to. . . .

Hittle: Well anyway, it was while he was with us and getting a few days' relaxation that he had to leave, and Mrs. Shepherd and the others stayed with us--stayed over for a visit.

And he headed for . . . I guess it was because Inchon was on fire.

Q: Well, Korea had just broken out. And Radford's message to him wasn't clear as to whether or not he had to get out there in a hurry or. . . .

Hittle: Well, he left in a hurry, I can tell you that.

Q: Because the previous CG, FMFPac had gone. There was no one there.

Hittle: That's right. And then Mrs. Shepherd stayed on.
Now I recollect it--June.

Q: Well now, you were at Salt Lake Cit- for 3 years.

Hittle: Shade under 3 years; yes.

Q: Did you ever run into a history professor by the name of Crampton?

Hittle: No, no.

Q: And from there you went where?

Hittle: I went back to Washington. No; I went back to Washington. . . .

Q: Legislative assistant to the Commandant and office of the Secretary of Defense.

Hittle: That's right. One after the other; not at the same time.

Q: No, this was the period from. . . .

Hittle: I remember I went back; I wanted to go to Korea. Korea was still on. I went in and saw General Shepherd and reported in to him. And he says, "I got this new job," he says, "just set it up: Legislative assistant," he said, "and you're going to be it."

I said, "I'm honored with that," I said, "but when do I get a battalion?"

Q: You were still lieutenant colonel.

Hittle: Yes, I was still lieutenant colonel. No! I didn't want a battalion, I wanted a regiment, because I was a colonel then. I made colonel when I was in Salt Lake City.

And he kind of looked down and he said, "Well, I'll make you a promise." He said, "I won't keep you here over 2 years." He said, "That thing will still be going on," he said, "so you can get out and get a command."

So in the course of human events, I left the job of Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps almost 7 years later. Went over and became assistant for legislative affairs to the Secretary of Defense. But it really wasn't that simple, because in the meantime I had some illness and physical disability. And consequently I couldn't go to the field.

Q: And you retired; came back on active duty.

Hittle: Retired one day and came back to active duty the next.

Q: As a brigadier general.

Hittle: Yes.

Q: Then you made it on tombstone promotion.

Hittle: That's right. But I served over 2 years in that rank.

Q: So that was a permanent promotion.

Well, we've compressed in about 3 minutes here, 8 years. And I'm sure there's more to say about that 8-year period as far as legislation goes.

Hittle: Yes, I'll take a crack at it next time.

Q: Okay, fine! Rather good place to break.

End Session XI

Session XII - 28 July 1976

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: We were talking earlier of what we had to catch up on. I think we should probably begin in 1952, 6 months after General Shepherd was sworn in as Commandant. You were brought back to Headquarters Marine Corps from Utah to become the legislative assistant . . .

Hittle: That's right.

Q: . . . and served in that capacity until 1959 for three Commandants: Shepherd, Pate, and Shoup. And I think perhaps we ought to take them one by one; and that was a very important billet at the time, a very active billet. And I think we've briefly discussed some of the ramifications earlier in the sessions, but I think it's been such a long time I ought to try to refresh your memory and get what we. . . .

Hittle: Actually for the record here so that it doesn't become lost in the transcript of anybody scanning it in the future, the two Commandants that I really served for as legislative assistant were General Shepherd and General Pate. I left the position so early in the period of General Shoup that I really didn't serve in that position in a really continuing meaningful way, because very shortly after General Shoup became Commandant I moved over to the Department of Defense where I was appointed as the assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs.

Q: Well now, what exactly were your duties, and what were some of the highlights. It was a very active period because it was during the unification fight.

Hittle: Matter of fact, the position as legislative assistant to the Commandant was established with my entry into the position.

Q: There hadn't been one before?

Hittle: No. The legal assistant to the Commandant usually handled basically the legislative activities. But it was my impression at the time and my recollection now, that the experience that was gained--some of it the hard way during the long unification struggle of '46 and particularly '47 and then some subsequent activities--led to the conclusion that there should be a new office established and one that was specifically assigned the legislative coordination and conduct of legislative affairs as far as the Marine Corps responsibilities were concerned. And this, then, was separate from the specifically legal activities that had previously been combined with the legislative.

Q: Of course, according to several historians and several people involved with the period of the unification fight in the forties, they felt that the Commandant, General Vandegrift particularly, was not too well served by his so-called legal assistant who really was not sensitive to the. . . .

Hittle: I would not want to reflect adversely upon the service of the legal assistant at the time. However, I can say that it was the general impression--at least to myself and as I sensed the impression of others I was working with in the unification struggle--that there was a lack of enthusiasm for the determined fight that was put up by a very few people in defense of the Marine Corps and, specifically, the quest for Marine Corps roles and missions in statute rather than in executive order.

Q: All right. Well now, comments already also have been made that in the forties--the post-World War II era--that not too many people in the Marine Corps really recognized the fight that the Marine Corps was having; that it was fighting for its life. Other critics have said that it really wasn't all that way, this is sort of a revisionist's view.

Hittle: Which is the revisionist's view: That there was a general knowledge or that there was not a general knowledge?

Q: No. The revisionist's view was that the Marine Corps was not really in that bad a shape; that it was an over-exaggeration, that the Marine Corps would not die, that it wasn't fighting for its life and didn't have all these problems.

Hittle: Well, I guess nobody was closer to the center of the struggle than a few of us, including myself. And I can say that whoever takes the position that the Marine Corps as a whole was alert and appreciated the danger to the meaningful

existence of the Corps, just doesn't know what he's talking about. It was my impression at the time, and my belief rather than an impression, and it was a reaffirmed one almost every day without exaggeration, that too many Marines in responsible positions who should have been shouldering up and at least doing what they could in the way of giving support rather than carping criticism, looked upon and expressed themselves as critical of the effort to protect the Marine Corps in a manner in which it was being conducted in the fight for roles and missions in the statute. This I believe then and I believe even more firmly now was a psychological storm cellar for them; that they equated in their own minds--and honestly from their standpoint, I guess--but I think unfortunately from the standpoint of the Corps and from the standpoint of those who were taking the risks to defend it, they equated the effort in the political arena with being something that was not proper for a Marine officer to be engaged in. And consequently, they were the purists and the military stalwarts, and the others were the mavericks and those who had strayed from the proper area of Marine Corps activity.

Q: Well, agreed! And I think that's a very valid indictment in view of the situation. And there certainly were some who, you know, were much of the attitude of the British officer after World War I who said, "Good! The war's over; now we can get back to proper soldiering." They had this view of this political infighting. But what can you say when as

respected a Marine officer as O. P. Smith, who allegedly said that this whole thing was wheels within wheels. Apparently there are some of these people just didn't understand the nature of the fight and what was going on.

Hittle: Well let me say this about O. P. Smith. I worked directly under him at Marine Corps Schools at some of the period of critical effort in Washington. I always looked upon him--my relationships--as a man of rare and unquestioned rectitude, with a standard of ethics that most people could hope for and would seldom achieve. He was a noble man in many, many ways. As I look back upon it--since you mention that--he was never close to the center of conflict and the effort. He was in a position though, as I recall, as commandant of the Marine Corps Schools, was he not?

Q: Yes.

Hittle: I mean technically that was his title at the time.

No effort was made to keep him uninformed. Rather a definite effort was made, and a conscious one, to keep him apprised without overburdening him with details. And I will say this about O. P. Smith, that I can recall one and perhaps more--I'll have to search my notes for it--but I can recall one specific incident, and I would say that my impression was that there were others, that when there was something that had to be done and he was aware of it, he never stood in the

way of the action that was necessary by those under him. And in a sense his school staff in this sense was a cover for the. . . .

Q: Chowder effort.

Hittle: . . . to defend the Marine Corps. He didn't stand in the way of the effort. And he may not have liked the fact that officers within the educational setup under his immediate command were doing some of these things. But in my conversations with him and in my assignment as one of his subordinates, I have no recollection of him ever engaging in the kind of criticism, carping, or just plain detachment from what was going on. And I was looking back upon the unification controversy, I have never had any reason in my mind on the basis of my own personal relationships and conversations with General O. P. Smith to ever put him in the category of those who were sitting on their hands or those who were carping and undermining the effort to save the Corps, or rather to protect the Corps--and save it, too.

Q: I understand that at one time General Vandegrift had written a green letter--or something akin, whatever it was for that time--for all general officers outside the Washington area and had a conference of all general officers in the Washington area at the Headquarters, and laid down the rules of the game, outlining what the battle was, briefed them and exhorted them to use whatever political influence or any

other kind of influence they had to save the Marine Corps. Now there were a number of these people whom you say were carping critics who sat on their hands and pooh-poohed it or took the attitude that Marine officers are gentlemen and they don't participate in this type of thing. Others, of course, who were much more active, notably Jerry Thomas and certainly Merritt Edson. . . .

Hittle: And Merrill Twining.

Q: Oh, yes, absolutely! Well, I'm talking about general officers at that time. Certainly Merrill Twining, Bill Twining, at the time.

Hittle: I would say the two general officers other than the Commandant, that you're correct on that--Jerry Thomas and Red Mike Edson.

Q: But this is what happened: Bill Twining said--General Twining told me--that there was a point that . . . almost up, I guess, until the time that he retired as Commandant, General Vandegrift was very much into this thing and supported it. But there was a point in which he said, "No more." He'd had it. And it was almost--maybe General Thomas told me--it was almost either that pressure was brought to bear on him or he was tired or he could have even been blackmailed. Was there any indication, do you remember this particular. . . .

Hittle: Let's go off the record. (interruption)

Q: We were talking about the situation, the attitude of the people of the time of the fight in the late forties. And then you went out to. . . .

Hittle: '47.

Just so it ties in when you say the late forties, I came back the latter part of '46 to Quantico--as the transcript previously shows--to the task force that was under General Twining there, the small group that had been assembled.

Q: Chowder group.

Hittle: The Chowder Society.

Then I had gone, after the unification fight and the successful obtaining of the roles and missions and statute, I had gone to the University of Utah to the Naval ROTC for duty out there.

Q: We talked about that. You were getting your master's and meeting General Shepherd, arranging for him to go on to Pearl when Korea broke out.

Hittle: That's right.

And from Salt Lake City Naval ROTC I was ordered back to the job we talked about--legislative assistant . . .

Q: Legislative assistant which we spoke about earlier.

Hittle: . . . to the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Q: Okay. There were still some problems vis-à-vis the Marine Corps and its position on the JCS when you got back to Headquarters, were there not?

Hittle: Yes. There was still some real bumps and dangers ahead. One of the difficulties was the fact that there had to be some type of legislative recognition of the Commandant of the Marine Corps within the JCS structure. And that came along later, of course, in the Marine Corps bill.

The real dangers that were immediate were: the successive reorganization attempts at the Department of Defense level and sponsored by the President, the Rockefeller Commission study, and then the other reorganization attempts. And some of these were of a nature and for the specific purpose--I'm convinced--of those in the Department of Defense who were thwarted by Marine Corps' efforts with respect to the National Security Act. It was a real effort on their part to accomplish by reorganization, which they could not accomplish by outright statutory change. And this was the route they decided to go. And this illustrates also, I think, very, very clearly how certain objectives within the Department of Defense and, of course--it probably applies to other major departments of the executive agencies in government--how your top appointees, President and his Presidential appointees, can change. And yet the same basic objectives endure and almost eternally and frustratingly so.

Q: Well, do you think that the climate in the Marine Corps and Headquarters Marine Corps particularly, and the senior officers had changed? There was a greater awareness?

Hittle: Oh, there absolutely was when General Shepherd came in and General Krulak and the others that were in this office up here--that were in Headquarters. Yes.

Q: You had a new group, you had a new younger group.

Hittle: You had a group that understood the issues and had been through the mill. Now that didn't mean everybody at Headquarters, because the Marine Corps was too large and there were too many sources for people coming in that hadn't simply been exposed to it. But from the top down, there was that climate.

Q: One of the problems, I think, that arose at this time was . . . two problems: When General Shepherd took over in '52, January, as the new Commandant; General Thomas was the assistant commandant/chief of staff; Colonel Krulak then was secretary of the general staff. . . .

Hittle: That's right.

Q: Two things: Number one, the role of the Marine Corps within the Department of the Navy.

Hittle: The fight of '54; General Order . . .

Q: 5.

Hittle: . . . 5. I was in the center of that thing, too. Of course this wasn't a legislative fight, but it impinged so clearly upon what the legislative had been and also this was another one of the struggles of the Chowder group. This was one of the struggles within the Department of the Navy between elements of the Navy and the Marine Corps, that at the time I deplored because it was an unnecessary fight that was forced upon the Marine Corps by certain elements in the Department of the Navy. (cross talk) My recollection is that . . .

Q: Sherman?

Hittle: . . . that Sherman may well have been part of the genesis of it. The real activist, as I recall in that struggle, was Admiral Duncan who was VCNO at the time.

Q: Air?

Hittle: No. Vice chief of Naval Operations.

Q: But for air?

Hittle: No. The number two.

Q: Oh, that was for number two.

Hittle: Yes.

Q: That wasn't "Wu" Duncan, was it?

Hittle: Yes, "Wu" Duncan.

It was basically a very, very subtle but extremely substantial effort on the part of this element of the Navy to utilize a rather innocuous provision of procedure between the Marine Corps and the Navy--without getting into the details of General Order 5--in an effort to revise it in such a way that it really subordinated the Commandant per se as the Commandant of the Marine Corps to the Chief of Naval Operations. And had it succeeded, it would have done by executive--let me change that--it would have done by administrative procedure at the Navy Department level what couldn't have been done by executive order at the Presidential or by statute at the Congressional national level. And this was a bitter, bitter fight. And as I say, I deplored it; it was unnecessary, but it had so many damaging meanings from the standpoint of the goal of the Marine Corps and the survival of the Corps as a fighting organization and the stature of the Corps as a military service; that the Marine Corps had no choice except to go once again to the same type of general quarters they went to for the National Security Act. And this was fought in Congress. And it was fought within the Department. And here again, once again, the main burden of the struggle fell on the one person through it all who had been the real intellectual leader and practical leader, too, who understood what the issues were and understood what had to be done and yet sought through it all to do it in such a manner the scars were not left in relationships, and that was Merrill B. Twining.

I worked very closely with the Hill, working up the support on this matter because we had to get leverage from the Hill on this, and we got it. One of our principal supporters was Mr. Vinson. He understood the issues clearly. And I must say that we were supported in this and very, very firmly so by the man who was then the chief clerk or the position of the chief counsel, Bob Smart, who was an Air Force Reserve colonel. He was in charge of the committee staff in the Armed Services Committee. He understood this, and Bob Smart performed a service to the Marine Corps of an historic nature, and there should be some recognition of it and in such a small way as I can do it right now. I want to salute Bob Smart-- who has passed away in the meantime--for his service to the Corps. Because while Mr. Vinson supported us and actively so, as I'll tell you later on, Bob Smart on a day-to-day basis together with his number one assistant, Russ Blandford-- just a few days ago retired as major general, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve--who throughout his entire public career performed yeoman services for the nation's security and also for the Marine Corps in addition, and along with the national security because he knew what the Marine Corps meant to national security and the compatibility of the two issues.

Pressure was brought upon the Department of the Navy through the legislative. There was an all-out effort with respect to our reliable supporters in the press and editorial assistance, also.

And incidentally, it is my recollection that in this same envelope that I mentioned to you previously with my personal recollection, at the time--as I dictated it--of the unification struggle, that there is also a paper in there on the 1954 General Order 5 struggle.

Q: Do you think that still has to be sealed? Should be sealed? Actually, you know, it. . . .

Hittle: For the time being, yes, because there is some very honorable men that I think were ill-advised, who had performed well for their country in all other matters, and in subsequent years have continued to be my friends--personal friends--and of whom I had to be very critical. And simply from my standpoint, if anybody else wants to talk about it, it's their business. But from my standpoint I don't think anything is to be gained by opening it up prior to their demise.

Q: I haven't seen it so I. . . . What was the role of SecNav in all this? He finally did initial--as I understand it--the agreement as to the interpretation of what General Order 5 should be.

Hittle: The Secretary of the Navy--and this is one of the reasons I do not want this thing opened--it was Charlie Thomas, a very able, intelligent, hard-working, and sincere man. And yet he was the crux in many ways of the difficulty because he was placed in an almost totally unenviable position,

if not almost impossible position from his standpoint since he didn't make the decision early. This was one of these things, incidentally, that had Secretary Thomas made a decision early that there would be no hanky-pank with respect to the Navy efforts of Admiral Duncan and his associates to change the historic Marine Corps/Navy relationship and undermine the position of the Commandant, which he could well have done. The record was a reaffirmed one coming out of the national security fight, that the General Order 5 controversy would have been snuffed out before it was kindled. His role was a difficult one; and it was a difficult one from his standpoint and from the standpoint of the Marine Corps.

At one stage of it, right in the middle of the controversy, Secretary Thomas--which was interesting from the standpoint of the Marine Corps--took off for a trip to Europe.

At this point I don't want to say anything that might be construed as an inuendo. But it was an interesting time to be out of town.

The way that this was finally resolved. . . . Just a minute, I want to check my notes here for a second. (interruption)

Put in there when you get a chance, if you will, the name of the JAG we're talking about at the time. /Colclough ?/

Well this was a long and a bitter struggle, and it created a long-lasting scars that, I think, have now been eradicated between certain elements of the Navy and the Marine Corps, and eradicated largely by the passage of time

and the departure of some of the Navy protagonists up on their side, and antagonists from our side--against the Corps.

Q: Thomas' departure for Europe. . . . Of course, this is the Eisenhower administration. Thomas is a political appointee. Eisenhower's role during the unification fight in the forties has never been spelled out, but there are certain key. . . .

Hittle: It has been spelled out very fundamentally, I think, in 1478 papers which were the crux of the Marine Corps' successful struggle in the congressional effort. . . . (cross talk)

Q: Nothing larger than the battalion, and reduce the Marine Corps to a Naval base guard.

Hittle: I wouldn't want to get into the details without refreshing my memory as to the specific Eisenhower recommendations in the 1478 papers because there were two basic sources of support for the position that was a difficulty for the Marine Corps. One was the Eisenhower papers and the other were Toohey Spaatz' papers; and we don't want to get those two mixed up. For that reason I don't want to deal this talk with respect to the specifics of either one of them.

However, but to get back to the General Order 5 fight, there was one incident, and this is something of which I have a personal knowledge because I was a participant in it. As we mentioned, I was working directly with the Armed Services

hearsay and what is personal knowledge--I was told that he had stated that he had repeatedly seen Mr. Vinson on the matter, and that Mr. Vinson was in support of the Navy position. Of course, if this is correct, this would naturally be of great comfort to the Navy advocates of the effort against the Corps.

Now this part that I'm now going to relate I know of personal knowledge. I went over and saw Bob Short. I saw Mr. Vinson. And as I recall, Russ Blandford was also there. A thorough discussion took place. I apprised Mr. Vinson and Smart and Russ Blandford of the critical timing of the controversy, that it was reaching the decision point, that Mr. Vinson's views were not being accepted with respect to the role of the Corps and the relationship of the Navy and the Marine Corps. And I asked him if he would consider--of course I had talked to Bob Smart and Russ before this, which is the proper way to do it and the only way to do it in confidence with those that you're sharing confidences--asked Mr. Vinson if he would take another formal position on the matter. And without the slightest hesitation he said, "Absolutely!" So the result was that Mr. Vinson wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Navy. And while I can't quote what the letter was--at this time I can't recall--my recollection was, "I've told you before, I'm telling you now, and if you don't do this to resolve this matter the way it should be resolved, and that is the recognition of the statute of the Commandant as the head of a military service and not

Committee on the . . . House Armed Services staff and also with Mr. Vinson and also with Dewey Short who was our supporter on this, also. The matter was going down to the wire and we weren't winning because the Navy, of course, simply by their proximity and daily access of a continuing and predominant nature with Secretary of the Navy had the inside track. It was just an administrative relationship in many ways. And of course, the people you work with and see all the time, it's much harder from the secretary's standpoint to overrule them than it is somebody up on the other side of the hill at the Navy Annex, and who he sees only intermittently compared with the constant stream of the Navy officers who are in and out of contact with the Secretary of the Navy and his immediate appointed staff. The thing was going down to the wire and we were getting close to the point where the decision was going to be announced, and it wasn't going to be what we wanted, as I recall. And it's my recollection--this part of the story I was told--that on this particular day or just a day or so before, the then JAG of the Navy, the general who was. . . .

Q: Sort of French name? Bourgeois?

Hittle: No, no, no. I have to put it in the correct form there. It just slips my memory at the time.

Had been discussing the matter informally--so I'm told--with other flag officers and senior officers in the Navy. And I was told--and here again I have to emphasize what is

subordinate to the Chief of Naval Operations, we'll pass a law that will do it again." This letter was written and Mr. Vinson's office--I think it was Bob Smart or Russ--called up the Secretary of the Navy's office and asked them to send over a messenger to pick up a letter for the secretary.

Now this part is hearsay: I was told by a naval officer some time later that when this arrived there was general optimism that Mr. Vinson was sending over his letter of support for the Navy position, and the issue was about to be closed to the success of the Navy. When that letter arrived it was laid before the secretary and the others. It resolved the matter, because the last thing the Navy wanted and the last thing that Charlie Thomas, with his basic good common sense, wanted to get engaged in, was a Navy/Marine Corps struggle before the Armed Services Committee. And here again, Mr. Vinson with his understanding, his clarity of thought, and his willingness to use power for a good purpose and to everybody's advantage as it turned out--the Navy's as well as the Marine 'Corps'--he resolved the issue.

Q: Do you think there was political pressure on Thomas from the administration?

Little: I don't think that there was. Let me say this: I have no knowledge that the White House entered into this struggle with respect to a General Order 5.

Q: Eisenhower was President and he was now above it.

Hittle: They were on other matters. They were on other matters.

And as soon as this thing was resolved, I recall very clearly--whether it was a formal meeting or a quickly assembled one in the Commandant's office--but General Thomas says, "One," he says, "the Marine Corps' position has been upheld, and our effort now," he says, "is going to be to reestablish what has always been our good cooperative, friendly relations with the United States Navy as a part of U.S. sea power." Words to that effect. And he meant it! And a sincere effort was made on the part of the Marine Corps. And of course, a lot was done under General Shepherd's very enlightened leadership, General Thomas and Twining.

Then when the change was made in the Navy and Arleigh Burke took over, there was a distinct mood toward the kind of relationship that should exist. And Arleigh Burke, incidentally . . . I've discussed this many times and I knew Arleigh Burke on a personal basis while he was a captain and we were fighting the unification fight, and he was out on the limb professionally and everything else within the Navy. And he was one of those who, regardless of the consequences in a Navy uniform, were those who fought for the same things that the Marine Corps believed in. And Arleigh Burke never indicated to me or I don't think to anyone else after he became Chief of Naval Operations, any resentment, animosity, or feeling that the Marine Corps had done the Navy wrong in fighting over General Order 5.

Q: I was told there was a little more drama to this at the end, that once the letter came from Mr. Vinson to SecNav, that the agreement was drawn up and taken over, and there was a weekend over which Mr. Thomas had to initial it and sign it and what have you. And then it was brought back and put in a safe of the Commandant, or something to that effect. Do you recall anything along that line?

Hittle: That rings some type of a recollection here, now that you've refreshed my memory. And there was something along that line, and I wouldn't want to comment on it for the record here without, again, checking my notes and trying to refresh my memory more sharply on this.

Q: You keep referring to notes. It sounds like you have good collection of much like the General's red books back here which ought to eventually find their way into the archives.

Hittle: I've got some notes and they're stuck away in some paper box in my basement. And my daily resolution and my promise to my wife is to clean up my files in the basement one of these days. And I'll do that, I hope.

Q: I hope, for posterity!

You and Bob Heinl and General Twining . . .

Hittle: Orm Simpson.

Q: . . . Orm Simpson, Dutch Schatzel at one time. A number of people were involved with the really political aspects.

To what effect do you think this has influenced your career? Or has it had any effect on your career in the sense. . . . Well, number one, within the Marine Corps; and number two, within the military establishment as a whole. For instance, have there been some people over in the Army general staff or who were on the general staff, had long memories, who also had some influence somewhere and said, "Well, Hittle has been a fly in the ointment. We're going to nail him, he's going to make a misstep" or so and so or so and so?

Hittle: Well, as to how it effected my career, these are the great if's of anybody's existence in any profession. You never know what might have happened otherwise, good or bad. All I know is that--as I look back upon it--I'm personally grateful that in my individual case, I had the opportunity to be associated with the individuals I did--who stood up for what they believed in, knew what the consequences of their action could be, and the risks that they were taking, and did what they felt was necessary. And that's the only kind of people I want to be associated with. And it was a relatively small group that did this.

And there's something else that should be known about that unification fight: that it was always a source of satisfaction, that from time to time you'd get a letter or a visit

from one of the older retired officers or old NCOs that had been retired many years, who would just write in or come by and say, "What can we do?" And Twining like just about everything else had an expression to cover it. He said, "Well, it's the old example," he says. "There's always room for one more on the firing line." Everybody who wanted to put their shoulder to the wheel could, and unfortunately there were too many who didn't, too.

Q: But weren't some of the Marine Corps' best friends at some time or another an embarrassment, worst enemies? I think the Marine Corps League in particular.

Hittle: No. On the whole they certainly weren't. And in my opinion the Marine Corps League--and this is something I know something about--performed a valuable and perhaps critical service to the Marine Corps in the struggle there. And I'll give you the example on it. One of the things that had to be done with the Congressional support that we needed to win on this issue, to build up the background of substance; that it wasn't just a little clique as Congressmen were being told, that was trying to cause trouble in thwarting in what they said was progress and the necessary steps for unification for the good of the country. We had to show that there was a genuine, deep-seated feeling and belief in this country that the efforts should not succedd to demean the stature of the Marine Corps, and that the role of the Marine Corps and its

mission should be preserved in statute--in law rather than the whims of executive order.

My father at that time--and here again I can speak with personal knowledge, and it's simply because that I was party to it--was a senior member of the Michigan senate and the president pro-tem, and the chairman of the judiciary committee. I discussed with my father the possibility of a memorial resolution being passed by the Michigan legislature in support of the United States Marine Corps in this struggle. And he said, "Yes. It's a very legitimate thing," he said, "because of so many Marine veteran's." We estimated that, after a cursory search was made in the records section of the Marine Corps, probably around 50,000 Marine veterans in Michigan at the time. So I drafted a memorial resolution which was passed unanimously by Michigan Senate and House of Representatives. Copies were sent to the President, to the Secretary of the Navy, to the Senators, and to all Michigan congressmen urging that, for the good of national security. . . .

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session XII

Hittle: To drop back a few words there: Copies of this resolution were sent to the President, Secretary of the Navy, Michigan congressmen, and Michigan senators. The more we reflected on this, the Chowder group--and I talked to Twining further on it--the effect was such that it brought a focus of support outside of Washington of a nature that anyone who was

in political life in Washington could not be indifferent to it. The result was that we decided that this was something that should be done in other states.

At this time the Navy League's representative--and I wish you'd put in his name from the previous record here, Colonel . . . I'm sorry I don't remember it but I visualize it very clearly here--was frequently asking, "What can we do?" He's a retired colonel of the Marine Corps. We decided: Let's turn the Navy League loose on the mission of these resolutions in the different legislatures. The result was that within a very short time available to us, the Navy League had placed and successfully put through, through their sponsorship, this draft of the resolution in thirteen different states. And that had an important part. And some people may disagree with the details and some of the efforts of the Marine Corps League. Did I previously say Navy or Marine Corps League here?

Q: Navy League.

Hittle: That was incorrect.

Q: Marine Corps League.

Hittle: It's Marine Corps League all the way through. So please correct the transcript on that because it's the Marine Corps League that did this.

And incidentally, a copy of that resolution should be hanging somewhere in the Marine Corps library at Quantico because at the time I took a copy of it, had it framed, and put a little notation on it that this was the one passed by the Michigan legislature and which served as the model for thirteen other state memorial resolutions in support of the Marine Corps. And I think that that should be part of the archives of this period.

Q: Yes.

What about . . . General Twining referred to the end run that was being attempted on Clare Hoffman's committee and to the role of Wadsworth from New York. Apparently he was a real nogoodnick in this. He characterized him in not too glowing terms.

Hittle: I discussed this, I believe, in detail in my recollections

Q: Previous session.

Hittle: . . . of the unification fight . . . (cross talk)

Q: I don't know that you personalized it.

Hittle: . . . that I placed in the files

Q: Oh, okay.

Hittle: . . . in my summary and discussion of what took place.

However, to answer your question. The basic struggle took the following form in the House of Representatives. It was decided by those who sponsored, and that meant the White House and some in the Pentagon, who sponsored the unification bill of 1947, that they were not going to send it in to the then-recreated Armed Services Committee because Mr. Vinson was chairman, and too many from the old Naval Affairs Committee were senior members of that committee and they didn't want to start off with all of that opposition in the committee. So they figured out the following tactic--that the Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments had a legitimate reason to handle this type of legislation, because it was reorganization within the executive branch. And it would be a good idea, the sponsors of the unification bill felt, to send it to that committee, to have it referred to that committee for action for two very good reasons as they saw them. One was that Clare Hoffman of Michigan, who was chairman of the committee at the time, had no military background. He had never evinced an interest in military legislation specifically, and at the time he was engaged in a major confrontation with John L. Lewis over labor legislation and labor practices. At the same time, one of the senior if not the next ranking Republican in the committee was former Senator Wadsworth of New York, who was a very respected member of Congress as he had been in the Senate, and one who was recognized as being knowledgeable on military matters. There was another interesting aspect to it: that Wadsworth was the

father of Secretary of the Air Force Symington's wife; in other words, Symington's father-in-law.

The conclusion was--and I speculate--after some discussion that it would be the astute move to have the bill referred to the Committee on Executive Expenditures, which is now renamed the Government Operations Committee, the theory and the belief being that Clare Hoffman would continue on his then-present course of legislative interest and confrontation with John L. Lewis, and that he would gladly assign the unification bill to a sub-committee chaired by Senator Wadsworth. And General Norstadt, as I recall, was the prime contact with Wadsworth at the time.

Well, as this paper which is in your file that I placed there will indicate, the plan was executed. The unification bill of 1947 went to the committee of which Clare Hoffman was chairman. But from there on it misfired.

Q: Yes, yes. That's an exciting story.

Hittle: Basically the reason it misfired at the beginning was--it was another little personal aspect, and this I can say of personal knowledge--my father in his younger days had been a rather prominent trial attorney in Michigan before he became more involved in other types of legal work as the years worked on and before he became so deeply involved in Michigan governmental matters. He had come to know Clare Hoffman as an occasional opponent in Michigan court room. And while they were not personal, intimate friends, they had

a respect for each other and a acquaintanceship. So I talked to my father and he said, "Well, I'll tell you." He says, "I recommend that you see two people. You see Bill Blackmeyer." Bill Blackmeyer was the congressman from Michigan and he was on, as I recall, Armed Services, but he also was a close associate of Clare Hoffman being a colleague of his at the time. And he said, "Also, you see Mr. Hoffman," he said, "and tell him that I asked you to stop by, just discuss this with him."

Congressman Blackmeyer told me that he had spoken to Hoffman, and he was interested. And I followed that up on my father's suggestion, went over and saw Mr. Hoffman.

Mr. Hoffman was one of the Curmudgeons of the House. That's the understatement.

Q: Understatement. Ultra-conservative. Anti-labor.

Hittle: Ultra-conservative. A mind, though, of razor-sharp acuity and the deep intuitiveness of an unusually able person in political affairs. He could sense an issue and he could visualize and grasp the significance of them without having to have a college course in it.

So I told him, "You've got this in your committee, Mr. Congressman." I said, "Also, the reports are that I'm running into is that you're going to assign this, wash your hands of it, and give it to Senator Wadsworth in the sub-committee to handle it."

And he looked at me, and in his sharp, incisive voice he said words to the effect--and I can use this expression, "Well, I don't know anything about the legislation, but I can smell a rat when there is one," meaning that there was an unusual circumstance, without referring to anybody. He said, "I can tell you right now, we're going to consider this under my chairmanship and there's not going to be any sub-committee under Senator Wadsworth to make the decision of what this committee does." And that was the turning point in the unification act of 1947 as far as the Marine Corps was concerned.

Q: Had you gone up to see him in uniform? (pause)

Hittle: Yes, I think I did. My recollection is . . . the reason I say I think I did is that I don't remember the precise attire at the time. But I made a practice, even when I was told I was being tailed on the Hill as this thing got hotter, I made a practice of not in any way trying to hide my status as a Marine. I saw no advantage in it, I saw no purpose in it, and I saw a reason from the ethical standpoint why I should have a uniform on. I was doing my best, as I saw it, for the Corps, and I saw no reason to not wear a uniform.

Q: And you were being tailed.

Hittle: I was told one time that a tail had been put on me on the Hill.

Q: All right. To round out the question I asked somewhat earlier about the effect of this fight on your career and the career of others, but not so much within the Marine Corps because other factors had to come in--your own records and what you'd done--but was there any other feeling that you were a marked man by the other services or by the protagonists on the Hill?

Hittle: Not on the Hill, no.

There was some residual antagonism in certain extremist elements in the Army, perhaps some in the Air Force. And there was initial shock to some in the Air Force and the Army when I moved over to take charge of the legislative program for the entire Department of Defense. But I must say that by and large the cooperation. . . . (buzzing sound) Pardon me. That was to make a phone call which I've already made. That was my alarm clock.

The cooperation I got from those I worked with by and large and a genuine one, I felt. There were a few times when on other issues unassociated with this struggle when in the arena of the Pentagon efforts were made to torpedo me, but they were not--I don't think--directly involved in this.

I guess there were some within the Marine Corps who always felt that the Twining, Shepherd, Krulak, Schatzel, Bob Heinl, Edson group. . . .

Q: Jim Murray.

Hittle: Jim Murray by all means; one of the great stalwarts of the Marine Corps. And if there was anybody that didn't get his just reward for loyal and able and critically important services in the Marine Corps, I guess it would probably be Jim Murray if I had to give a number one example. I'm glad you mentioned him.

I guess there were some who always took the attitude that the struggle was a improper thing for the Marine Corps to engage in, and unfortunately, some of those who took that attitude and were so bitter about it and so antagonistic, not just to me but to the other group, were some who benefited most directly from the result.

Q: Who sat on your selection boards.

Hittle: No, I'm not saying that. I mean positions they held.

Q: Bob Heinl once made a statement when we were discussing this with General Thomas, that most of the people--General Krulak said this also and I think you've said it--involved knew exactly that your necks were stretched out, that your careers were on the line, that your careers were in jeopardy, that you were taking extra special measures and extra, extra special actions and took pride. . . . It was a band of brothers. This was a small group. But some of the people who had been assigned to this were somewhat reticent, even to admitting to having been a part of the Chowder fight. Is this true, without mentioning names?

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Hittle: I say that there is considerable substance in this thing, yes. I would say that it was. I wouldn't want to go into detail on it, though.

Q: All right.

We began actually, this whole session with a discussion of your assignment as legislative assistant. We backtracked a little, we got into a discussion of GO-5, General Order 5.

Hittle: Let me give you just one follow-up to General Order 5. We got the resolution as we wanted it--at the Secretary of the Navy level--through the efforts of the people I've talked about within the Corps and also Mr. Vinson, Bob Smart, Russ Blandford. Of course, though, there always has to be a subsequent and, in a sense, detached authority for recognition, and really the nailing down of the action that's taken, because that which is done by a secretary can be undone by another secretary unless there is some type of another affirmation--and this is something which was extremely important. This is a little-known within the Marine Corps operation, and this related directly to my and I can tell this now with personal knowledge and not hearsay, because what I'm saying now I have specific knowledge as a participant. Shortly after the General Order 4 resolution, the decision was made--and at the time the Marine Corps (and I was against it)--the decision was made within the Pentagon for a total revision of military legislation, defense legislation.

Now there's a difference between revision and statutory action. I shouldn't use the term revision here; a recodification of all military legislation. It had not been done in many years. There was, from the legal standpoint--a statutory

standpoint--a justification for a recodification of law pertaining to the military.

Q: This is when, in 195__

Hittle: You'll have to check it and see.

That was to be handled by the Judiciary Committee. We were opposed to it on principle because we had just gone through the fight on roles and missions, and little words in the recodification, even the arrangement and the annotated notes can have a long-range impact upon the actual effectiveness of the law downstream in future years. However the decision was to be made, and we talked it over--and here again Twining was in the center of it--and our conclusion was--and he thoroughly understood this thing--that we were faced with the old principle of turning a tactical loss, which this was, into a strategic gain. The upshot of the thing was that here again you had friends in the right place; the chief of recodification in the Judiciary Committee has been a long-time friend of mine, personal friend in the House. So I went to him with the problem.

Q: Who's this?

Hittle: I'll have to check my record, make sure I get his name correct. I only remember his first name. He passed away many years ago, and I'll have to check the records.

He understood it. And so the upshot of the thing was that he asked me to write a draft of the annotation in the preface--not the annotation at the bottom of the page--but in the preface to the codification book. It was the Committee report, rather. To write the Committee report, that section of it pertaining to Marine Corps legislation that was to be incorporated into the Committee report, that was to be incorporated as the preface to the codification.

I undertook this job of . . . and here again, it was another example of the critically important role that Bob Smart, as chief counsel for the House Armed Services Committee, and also Russ Blandford--by all means--played in the welfare of the Marine Corps and its contribution to national security. This could only have been accepted properly since it pertained to such a substantial comment and interpretation of the stature of the U.S. Marine Corps, that it had to be referred to the Armed Services Committee--informally, of course, to the chairman. And Bob Smart gave it his approval, and the chairman did, on the recommendation of course and cooperation of Russ Blandford. It went back to the Armed Services Committee--I mean from the Armed Services Committee--to the Judiciary Committee for codification. Period.

And here I'll digress just a moment. Involved in this legislation was not only the interpretation of the National Security Act of 1947 but also what was known as the CNO Bill. I forget the number of that; it was either 714 . . . we'll have to check and get the correct number of that. But that

had been passed subsequently and had an important relationship upon the General Order 5 fight, and deliberately so, because there were certain sections that were sneaked through in the so-called CNO bill at the time that were the logical--from the Navy extremist standpoint--basis for the philosophy of the General Order 5 controversy from their standpoint. So certain things had to be done in the codification to nail down the position of the Corps. You couldn't change the law. But the comments became body of what Congress intended, that the law would be upon a re-evaluation and re-examination of it as they understood it.

Q: I had the effect of law, too.

Little: Well, an ancillary effect because it became a prime reference of the interpretation of the law. Because Congress, as I will mention, takes specific action with respect to the report. Consequently, you have to negate--because Congress obviously didn't believe the Marine Corps (this was our position) was to be subordinated by any provisions of the CNO bill--the Navy re-organization which that involved, and the affirmation of the National Security Act again in its meaning to the Corps, and by indirection a reaffirmation of the stature of the Marine Corps and its Commandant vis-à-vis the Department of the Navy and the CNO, with a reflection on the controversy of GO-5. So after this was prepared and had been sent back with the blessing, approval of Mr. Vinson to the

Judiciary Committee, it was incorporated into the preface to the codification and part of the Committee report.

And incidentally, there are, as I recall, either eight or eleven pages--it's been years since I even saw this publication, and it certainly should be one of the archives' key documents and it should be in every responsible officer's book, ready reference--there were either eight or eleven pages at the beginning of the codification that constituted the committee report and the body of its intent and understanding of the law pertaining to all defense legislation. And of this eight or eleven pages of very small print, three of them were devoted to the stature, status, and legal position of the United States Marine Corps and its Commandant.

Q: And you wrote it.

Hittle: I wrote it. This was adopted as part of the . . . let me say, when the codification was passed, this was also adopted by the House as part of the body of the codification. It accepted the report--let me say that--which gave it further substance. It constituted an action of affirmation by the House of Representatives.

Now the next this was to make sure this thing didn't get off the track because there were already some who saw what was happening within the Department of Defense and the Navy, and the one place it could get derailed would be either not accepting it and casting a minor cloud on it from the standpoint of legislative history, by not accepting it by the

Senate or having it included, rather just leaving it out or having a different one put in that would conflict with it, and then there would always be a controversy as to what the legislative intent was, Senate vis-à-vis the House, and you have a standoff in many ways for legal interpretation.

Well, at that time there was a lieutenant colonel in the reserve by the name of George Green, who was on the staff of the Judiciary Committee of the United States Senate. George was a brilliant man--I think he's still alive--he was unorthodox in many respects from the standpoint of military protocol and sometimes spit-and-polish. He had a brilliant mind. He was a devoted Marine. He knew what the issues were. He was in partly, if not at times, in total charge of the recodification on the Senate Judiciary Committee. George had taken active duty in my office for some time while I was legislative assistant here at Headquarters. And there weren't many people who thought much of George simply because of his unorthodox, sometimes less than total neat appearance. But be that as it may, when the recodification went from the Judiciary Committee--was acted upon by the Judiciary Committee, rather--and when it went to the floor of the United States Senate, it had verbatim in it that portion of the House action in its preface and report that pertained to the Marine Corps. And I would recommend that as part of this, that that recodification be obtained, photostated, and be put in this transcription. As I say, this really nailed down the stature,

rather the status of the Marine Corps and reaffirmed the National Security Act. It reaffirmed the resolution favorable to the Marine Corps in General Order number 5, and it negated what would have been future terms of reference contrary to the interest of the Marine Corps in those portions of the CNO bill. And it set it forth very clearly from the position of the Marine Corps and its Commandant.

Incidentally--this is an aside--after Arleigh Burke became CNO, and I had known him, I had dropped over to see him one day, had a long talk and we were discussing the unfortunate conflict between Navy and Marine Corps and General Order 5, which he had nothing to do with from the Navy standpoint. And I said, "Well," I said in the course of the conversation, I said, "this matter, fortunately for you, Admiral," I said, "is resolved and reaffirmed clearly set forth." And I had a copy of the recodification bill there with the preface and so forth in it as it was adopted. And I said, "Of course, you've got them all over the legal section in the Navy here," I said, "but I thought you might want to glance through this." I gave it to him and he glanced through it and just started reading it.

Looked up and he said, "This looks familiar to me," or words to that effect.

I said, "Yes, if there's anybody to blame," I said, "it's me!" But this was another example of the bigness of Arleigh Burke because he recognized that certain things had to be done, and he operated on those parameters in support of them.

But the one thing that I do want to mention is that--as an aside--that after this action on the codification was completed, one day on just a little scratch pad, a little paper which is still one of my treasured possessions--little things sometimes are your most meaningful possessions--it was just a little note and it said on it, almost exactly this, "General Hittle, (pause) Marines for generations to come will be indebted to you for what you have done with respect to this legislation." It was signed "Lem Shepherd."

Q: He was aware of these things.

Hittle: He didn't miss a thing, and he understood what was going on. And he didn't like that General Order 5 controversy--as another aside. And I remember one time when I think the Secretary of the Navy called him in--when it was getting real bitter; we were going down to the wire on it and they were getting flak from all over the Hill--General Shepherd got called over. He was told, my recollection is--as I was told, now this is hearsay--he was told to cease and desist on this thing, and let official action take its course. Call off the dogs, was the expression.

He called me in and he delivered the message to me to stop my action on the Hill--do nothing more about it and let official action take its proper course. So I walked out of that office, went back to mine--I had an appointment on the Hill on that same subject--put on my cap, went down and got in the car, and went up there. I knew I was violating the

Commandant's orders and I knew that the Commandant knew that I was violating his orders. That's the last I ever heard about it. We continued the operation. But that's the kind of a man he was. He was duty bound to transmit the order to me to stop the legislative action with respect to bringing the pressure on the Secretary of the Navy and the Navy. He carried out his duty; but he also carried out his duty with respect to the Marine Corps and protection of it.

Q: That nature of your duties, or the atmosphere under which you operated during the Shepherd regime, had to be different as it carried over to the Pate regime.

Hittle: Not particularly.

Q: Your problems were still there? Different problems?

Hittle: Different problems.

Things that happened under . . . the things that were problems under Shepherd were essentially those, as they related to me, of the consolidation phase--if you want to call it that--of the post-unification period. And these other issues that came along, that had to be met, like General Order 5, the unfortunate CNO bill that got through without our recommended changes in it that would be used as a lever to undermine the stature of the Commandant of the Marine Corps, codification; all of these were part of the follow-up of that old controversy of an earthquake nature within the

defense establishment, particularly the Marine Corps and the Navy, stemming from the unification fight.

Under Pate, some of these did not continue or they were less intense--let me say--although there were a couple like the reorganization act that was proposed by Eisenhower--which was a bitter bill. The other things were more of an affirmative nature with respect to the Corps, such as clearing the way, whatever was needed on the Hill for the first amphibious carrier agreement between Pate and Arleigh Burke, which would never have taken place under the previous regimes. But Arleigh Burke in his understanding, so forth, and the personal friendship that existed between Ran Pate and Arleigh Burke was, I think, of historic importance to the development of the Marine Corps and Navy/Marine Corps relations, then and subsequently.

This is just another aside. As you know, the Marine Corps had developed under the Twining Board down there--which I was on the periphery of and part of--the transport helicopter concept. One of these days I want to get into that with you, what happened at the Marine Corps Schools as I recall the matter.

However, all of these things were great as doctrine and as progress, but they were only great to the extent that they could be implemented in a meaningful manner. And that meant getting a transport helicopter carrier, one assigned to the Marine Corps.

The Navy was, like everybody else, getting cut back in that period. They were having manpower problems, they had shortages, they were getting ships taken out of commission, their personnel in certain categories were being stretched thin as usual for the Navy. And yet the Marine Corps had to have this. And Ran Pate worked--I remember, because I was in Headquarters here. Orm Simpson was very close to it; his constant relationship to the Commandant as military secretary. And a very fortunate choice that was, too, because the Marine Corps owes a great debt to Orm Simpson for his wise advice, guidance to the Commandant, and his just plain intellect and common sense during that critical period. He was a very stabilizing and very far-sighted individual in his own quiet, able manner.

But anyway, on this one occasion the Commandant came back from a meeting with Arleigh Burke. And the essence of the meeting was that the Navy simply did not have enough crew to provide a carrier for the Marine Corps purposes; and that was principally, as I recall, the hanger deck personnel and some of the other technical personnel related to the aircraft aboard.

There were three of us got together at that time, as I recall. Sam Shaw was involved with this, research involvement, and he was a stalwart of progress and of protection of the Corps. And incidentally, he's got to be included in that little band, because Sam along with Jim Murray and the rest of them were those who understood the issues and were willing

to take the consequences; and they had the intellect to do something about it and the guts to do it also. But Sam, Orm Simpson, and I had a cup of coffee together. And this is approximately, as I recall, what had happened; I may be wrong with a few details on this. But anyway the essence of it was that there were either five or eight hundred men that the Navy couldn't provide--something like that. And this was critical: if we didn't get a transport helicopter carrier assigned under Arleigh Burke at that time, the chances are we'd never have gotten one. It was one of these turning points in the doctrine and the implementation of doctrine for the Corps. The recommendation of the Commandant was to go back and tell Arleigh Burke that he's cooperating, and the Marine Corps doesn't believe it should do these things and this is an exception, but we'll provide that part of the crew--we'll scrape up the Marines we believe so much in the doctrine. They went back, they made the deal, Arleigh Burke accepted it. The Commandant came back and he says, "We've got a helicopter transport." That was the essence, as I recall, the first one of them.

Q: The Thetis Bay? No. Thetis Bay was the one that. . . .

Hittle: No. I think it was the old Essex or one of the Essex class.

Q: That was the one out on the west coast?

Hittle: I don't know where it was, but that was assigned and that became the first one.

A lot of people today--since you mentioned Pate--lot of people underestimate, kind of brush-off the regime and the tenure of Ran Pate. But as one was here, saw what his relations were with the Hill, with Arleigh Burke particularly; and I saw the idiosyncrasies of Ran Pate and I also saw his strength of stature, and I would say that Ran Pate was a far, far better Commandant than many people today give him credit for--or even at that time.

Q: That's interesting.

Hittle: And I will say this: That if it hadn't a been for his spirit of cooperation, his common sense, his understanding of the issues--because he was a highly professionally capable man--and his relationship with, personally at that time, with Arleigh Burke, the Marine Corps would not have been as far ahead as it has been.

Q: That's interesting.

Well, given the relationship of Shepherd with Radford--although Radford was then chairman of the Joint Chief's, he still had his ties with the Navy--one would assume that the Navy/Marine Corps relationship at this particular period would have been. . . .

Hittle: My recollection is that Radford, I had heard, didn't like what was going on in the Navy effort and the Marine Corps

controversy over General Order 5. But this is purely a hazy recollection on this; but I had most specific recollection of Radford being a participant in the Navy effort. The thing that must be remembered about Radford was that he, Bogan, and Arleigh Burke were among that very, very small band of. . . .

End Side 2, Tape 1, Session XII

Begin Side 1, Tape 2, Session XII

Little: That Radford, Bogan, and Arleigh Burke were the principals in a very, very small band of Navy brothers who took the consequences knowingly of fighting against Sherman, against the White House, and against the establishment in fighting for the same things as the Marine Corps believed in: to get roles and missions in the Law. Because they knew as we knew, and we worked closely with them although not frequently, that if roles and missions did not go into the law for two agencies, for two elements--one was the Marine Corps and the other was naval aviation--there wasn't going to be any for a very simple reason that the basic concept of what was going to transpire as a result of unification was that the basic over-all amphibious role would go to the Army and the single Air Force proponents would get their way, and there would be a single Air Force with maybe just a little reconnaissance or something like that left to the Navy. There would not be a naval aviation under the Navy; that was the single Air Force concept.

Also they recognized something else that was very important. They recognized, as we did, that the key to roles and missions in the statute was the Marine Corps, because if the Marine Corps didn't get it, they wouldn't get it. If the Marine Corps got it, the pattern was set for a Navy roles and missions emphasizing naval aviation, and protecting naval aviation as a role of the Navy. And of course, the ancillary and follow-on for the pattern for the roles of the Air Force and the Army, which were not critical, but they were simply put in because of the pattern of roles and missions.

As I say, the fact that Radford rose to the position which he did was, I think a tribute to Radford, and in many ways a show of bigness on the part of the Presidency, because Radford was not in the long run penalized for having taken a strong stand. Bogan though, as I recall, kind of had to walk the plank. He was in the forefront along with Radford--and you would have to check on this--but by and large the Sherman group, as I recall--and being told; this is heresay--saw to it that he didn't go any further. Of course, Arleigh Burke because of his integrity and professional ability and just the character of Arleigh Burke, had a high survival factor.

Q: Yes, yes.

Of course, of that group you mentioned, Jerry Bogan was the only aviator. Radford wasn't an aviator.

Hittle: I believe he was.

Q: Was Radford a naval aviator?

Hittle: I believe he was, and I may be wrong. But you'd better check that one, too.

Q: Okay. Because this would be an interesting. . . . Now Sherman was not an naval aviator. Well, I have to check that.

Because again, wheels within the wheels, you also had this group within the Navy of naval aviators who were fighting or had been fighting from the very beginning, from before World War II and during World War II, for a role, an important role in naval strategy, naval concepts; for instance, the Spruance/Halsey, the conflict over Spruance's actions in the battle of . . .

Hittle: Philippine Sea?

Q: . . . Philippine Sea, I think it was. (pause) That's right. During the Saipan landing, not releasing the carriers, this type of thing.

Hittle: Well, there were a lot of undercurrents involved. But of the three who did the fighting, why it was those three that I remember most pointedly in the Navy.

Q: Actually, when you went over, when the Shepherd regime went out and the Pate regime began, it was just a carry-over. There wasn't any change; it was just. . . .

Hittle: There was really no organizational shock effect or anything. It was a continuity. And there were things that happened, of course, that were unfortunate under the Pate regime. But I say I can recollect these with a Well, I didn't like some of the things that went on. And some of it was unfortunate from the standpoint of the Corps, like Ribbon Creek, things such as that; some of the Commandant's actions, to be objective on things. And I told him at the time, so I'm not telling any stories that I didn't say, my recommendations contrary to some of his actions. I'm not judging whether he was right or wrong, but simply stating a fact as far as I know it.

Nevertheless, Ran Pate performed important services to the Corps that he has not got credit for, generally.

Q: Well, he was a sick man, was he not? Toward the end?

Hittle: I am not in a position to diagnose.

However, let me say this: There were actions taken by Ran Pate in the latter period that very interestingly have never discussed this with you before. I have come to the conclusion on my own, Ran Pate--and I say this with affection and sadness--really started to die long before he was visibly sick. And I think that some of the things that he did and said, some of the things he didn't do, could be explained in that sense rather than the Ran Pate that was in a key position in the Pacific during the war and who had done so much for the Corps--certain stages of his tenure as Commandant.

Q: During the time that he was deteriorating, going down hill. . . .

Hittle: I don't know if he was or not. All I'm saying is that he may well have because he died so relatively soon after his completion of office as Commandant.

Q: Well we do have on record in various interviews that there were times that he was just not operating; that the Marine Corps was being run by Generals Megee and Hogaboom. Hogaboom as Chief of Staff and Megee as Assistant Commandant.

Hittle: That may well be true. But I am not in a position to say whether that was the result of a physical deterioration or not. I can only speculate on my part as a layman that I concluded that on the basis of reevaluation and reflection long after his passing.

Q: Well let me ask you this then: Regardless of what General Pate's physical condition was, were there times when instead of going directly to General Pate that you had to carry on your business, that decisions were made which General Pate would have made, by General Megee or General Hogaboom?

Hittle: I would take basic exception to that. And I'm merely speaking from my own personal standpoint. There were a number of decisions that I did not take and actions that I did not have approved by the Commandant, not because I felt that he wasn't going to be able to make a decision or was not

functioning as Commandant, but simply because they seemed to be the proper things to clear with the chief of staff. That basically was the procedure. To the best of my knowledge--as I reflect on what you've said here--there were no decisions that I can remember of a fundamental nature that I deliberately took to the chief of staff or the Assistant Commandant because of a belief that the Commandant would not be able to act on it. There were some times when I was utterly dismayed by what he did about my recommendations, but it was only after he passed away--and years afterwards--that I came to the conclusion in my own mind as a layman, that the only explanation I could offer was that without any outward visible indications, that as a layman I could spot, he was a sick man and was, in fact, dying.

Q: During his tenure, probably the . . . oh, there were many little minor aspects--uniform changes, etc., etc.; relationships that he had with his general officers; probably the outstanding event was, that I know of, perhaps you know of, was the Ribbon Creek affair.

Little: Well, I have a very clear recollection of Ribbon Creek because having the legislative job with the Marine Corps, I was right square in the middle of the Washington end of Ribbon Creek. (interruption) Let's finish up about Ribbon Creek and then I'll tell you, since we're on that now.

Q: First of all, what were the circumstances when you first learned about it and what were your actions? And as I. . . .

Hittle: I was in my office in the second wing in Marine Corps Headquarters. My buzzer rang from the Chief of Staff, who was General Hogaboom--and I'll say that General Hogaboom was a remarkably fine man to work for both as a person and as a Chief of Staff--he said, "Please come down to my office." I went down. He told me, he said, "We've had a tragedy down at Ribbon Creek." He said, "Some Marines have been drowned. It looks as if the drill instructor made a mistake." And I must say here that this is approximately what he told me, as I recollect it; words to this effect. He added, he said, "There's going to be a press conference down at Ribbon Creek," he said, "very soon announcing it, and I want . . ."

Q: Parris Island.

Hittle: " . . . to let you know about it." Pardon me. Yes, Parris Island. Ribbon Creek. Yes.

He said, "I wanted to let you know."

I said, "I just have just one request." I got a cold chill on the thing. I said, "How long before that press conference?"

He said, "Well, very soon now." He said, "I've been told by telephone."

And I said, "Well, if there's any way of doing it, call them back and tell them to hold it at least an hour if they

can, if they have to bar the door." Because my purpose in this was: We couldn't have this announcement, regardless of how bad it was or not, without alerting people on the Hill who we would have to go to later anyway.

So Hogaboom said, "I'll try to delay it."

I immediately jumped in the car. And sometimes pieces fell in place, fortunately. Within the next hour I saw and alerted and told them what little I knew, but with the observation that we were letting them know ahead of time so they would not be surprised if they were asked for a statement, and that they would know as much as we knew about it, which was incomplete at the time. Of course my objective on the whole thing was: (1) that they would know, which was in fairness to the responsible people on Armed Services; and (2) that they would not inadvertently, without knowing the seriousness and the incompleteness of the information at that time, make a statement that would commit them to some kind of an action that they would later wish they hadn't taken. So fortunately I was able to see, within an hour, Mr. Vinson and Dewey Short; and on the Senate side--within that same hour--I saw Senator Saltonstall who was the senior Republican, and by the most good fortune--because it wasn't always easy to find him and see him--Senator Russell. The result was that when this was announced, none of them made any commitment in their comment as to what they were going to do except to wait for further information and have a more complete knowledge of the situation. Of course everything went wrong from then on

in many ways. Some things were right and some were wrong.

(interruption)

Q: What were some of the things that were going wrong? One, I assume, was General Pate's action.

Hittle: Well, one of the first things that we had to avoid was--if at all possible for the good of the Corps--was a congressional investigation. And I don't need to go into detail because it's well known. But the wolves were loose in Washington for a thorough investigation of the Marine Corps and its recruit training. Well, that's something that would have done no good.

Q: Why? (pause) Marine Corps training open to. . . .

Hittle: Bad publicity. It would have hurt the Marine Corps training, it would have hurt the Marine Corps from the standpoint of publicity. We should have had the chance to put our house in order.

Q: The assumption is that the recruit training. . . . (cross talk)

Hittle: There were things that were needed that were not done, I believe, I previously recruit. . . . It wasn't a matter of cover-up. It was simply a matter that an investigation of that type of an emotional situation with everybody who would then get in and were not in responsible positions

congressionally but would have a forum, would have done damage to the Corps for publicity purposes. (cross talk)

Q: Well, of course, recent events bears out this type of. . . .

Hittle: There was no effort at cover-up whatsoever, as far as I know, with respect to Congress. The basic philosophy and procedure under which we operated with Congress was in this and just everything else that I was associated with, was leveling with those who had to know. It's the only way I know how to do business with a government agency that has a responsibility.

But anyway, in order to take the initiative, Mr. Vinson decided to have the Commandant appear and make a report. This was critical because the press was focusing on it; TV, radio, public. There were a lot of people who wanted to criticize the Corps standing in the wings.

Pate really had a tough assignment on this one--as the Commandant. The statement, as usual, when something really was serious and wrong, you know who they called on--M. B. Twining.

Q: Called him in from the west coast.

Hittle: Right. It was the recommendation of Hogaboom, myself . . .

Q: Sam Shaw, I think, was involved.

Hittle: . . . Sam Shaw, and Orm Simpson to get Twining back. They called him in, they helicoptered him--as I recall--from Camp Pendleton to catch an airplane in either San Diego or L. A. And he came in with his pencil sharpened, sat down and went to work on the statement. The thing about Twining's method: he did it, but he always sought counsel and advice for improvements. He was a man who obviously and understandably took pride in his authorship, but at the same time he took advice, which he sought, and he wanted it--he wanted criticism. So it was a pretty good statement. As a matter of fact it was a very good statement, a very effective one because on it hung--in many ways--the question of further difficulties of a serious nature or an opportunity to do the things under conditions that they could be properly done to improve things.

After that was ready I went over, saw Mr. Vinson, Dewey Short. And they said, "Well, guess the best thing to do,"--and I agreed with them thoroughly--they said, "have the Commandant come over ahead of the hearing for an hour, come into our office and we'll go over this thing." So Mr. Vinson sat at his desk, Dewey Short sitting near him there. As I recall, I think that Bob Smart and Russ were in, also, Russ Blandford. The Commandant went over; I was with him. He sat down, he went through the entire statement with Mr. Vinson and Dewey Short.

Ahead of time Mr. Vinson had asked me, "What do you think of it?"

And I said, "It's the truth to the extent," I said, "that we honestly know it now. And I think we know what the truth is in this thing." I said, "There may be some details that will emerge later. I can't tell you that it's all of the information, but it's everything that we know after the Commandant's and his staff's diligent efforts to find out." It was a Twining masterpiece of straightforwardness.

And the chairman said, "That's very good!" He said, "That's very good! That satisfies me." He turned to me, he says, "I'm going to have to say something about this." He said, "You go on out, get together with Bob and Russ, and you write up my remarks right now of what my reaction is going to be after I hear this thing." (Laughter)

So knowing what he had said, why it was easy to do without putting words in the old Chairman's mouth. But the Chairman was also a very effective actor when he had to be. Told the committee to order everybody. . . . The place was packed! TV, cameras. They didn't allow any inside; it was all in the hall, of course, and over in the other room on the other side which was the press conference room which was the one they used for that meeting. And he said, "Well,"--words to the effect--"you may proceed now." The Commandant proceeded to read his statement. The Chairman took it all in as if it was brand new to him. And I think he deliberately wanted to hear it ahead of time so he could hear it twice and know what was in it. He was a very astute man; he always had a purpose for his actions. When he got through, why he said, "That's one of

the finest statements and the straightforward statements," he said, "I've ever heard in my career in Congress." He said, "I congratulate you on it," words to that effect. He said, "We understand what's going on."

The upshot of it was that there was really not an investigation that otherwise could have come out of a mishandling of that very critical episode: the report of the Commandant to the Armed Services Committee. And of course we worked closely with the Senate side. And Bill Darden who was chief clerk or chief counsel on the Senate side, and a very able man, was understanding and handled very astutely for the staff and for the members on the Senate side. And although we stayed in close contact with Senator Saltonsall and with Senator Russell, of course. . . .

Q: Then it went downhill.

Hittle: After this we had some difficulties.

Q: What compelled him to go down to Parris Island?

Hittle: I will never know! I will never know!

I'll never forget, Orm and I, that when he said he was. . . . I'm talking about him going down to Norfolk. I don't know the Parris Island part. I mean, I was thinking when you asked that question about the episode of when he went to Norfolk. . . .

Q: I don't know about the Norfolk incident.

Hittle: He said he was going down for the weekend to Norfolk. And it was right after this that we all got another cold chill when McKeon's attorney turned out to be Emile Zola Berman. I knew some prominent lawyers in New York, trial lawyers, and immediately called up. And I got a rundown on them. And they said, "Boy, he's a sharp one!" But he didn't even have to be sharp in a situation like this where the press was creating McKeon as the imposed-upon scape-goat, so forth, the underdog, taking the rap; and for him to get a counsel whose first two names were Emile Zola, (laughing) it was just one of these things that was so unnecessary.

But the thing I was speaking about: General Pate just casually said he was going down for the weekend to Norfolk. And previous to that, Berman as I recall--I'm hazy on this point--as I recall, Berman had wanted to talk with the Commandant. And the Commandant, because he was going to testify, because he was in a position such as he was, had followed advice not to see him. That's my recollection. I may be wrong on this point. But anyway, he had a relative in Norfolk--the Commandant did. And Orm Simpson and I went in and saw the Commandant before we left. We both had an intuitive reaction. "If you go down there, under no circumstances over the weekend meet with Berman." The Commandant indicated he had no intention on that. I'm not saying that he misrepresented it, but my impression was, he indicated he had no purpose in seeing Berman.

Well, later on, on Monday we found out that the Commandant had sat on the front porch of his brother-in-law's brothers place--some relative, it was--and had a long discussion with Berman. Well that was just one of the things that transpired. But these were some of the inexplicable things that went on. But through it all, in spite of the fact the Commandant did things which were contrary to the sincere recommendations of his staff, nobody could fault the Commandant for not doing what he did out of his own belief that we understood that he was doing the right thing, although we deplored some of the things that went on. And yet the bigness of him even at this stage of the game was that he would go in--if he trusted you--Sam was one, Hogaboom, Orm Simpson, I think I was--you could argue with him, take exception to what he was doing, and he never reached a point where he took it personally or held a grudge or got angry. That's just a little sidelight on the situation as it existed.

Well anyway, Ribbon Creek was a tragedy, was a tragedy for the people involved, for the Corps. And I can say this much--that the Corps would not have come through Ribbon Creek without further damage of a serious nature, had it not been for the fact that Twining was really in charge of what was being done with respect to it.

Q: He stayed at Headquarters all this time. . . .

Hittle: He stayed here, my recollection was, through the crisis; yes. Through the whole period.

Q: As I recall, the recommendation was that the Commandant not go down to Norfolk because there wasn't that much control over him.

Hittle: He was more exposed to . . . there was no means of protecting him from the extremist press and other pressures once he got there.

Q: He didn't know how to handle it.

Hittle: I wouldn't go that far. No. He just didn't follow our recommendation; I'll put it that much.

Q: And of course when he went down to Parris Island he just. . . .

Hittle: That was a dismaying episode as we heard about it, too. But that's well recorded.

But the upshot of it was that from the congressional standpoint--and that's the part in which I had the principal participation as far as I was concerned--the Commandant's appearance, the manner in which he conducted himself, was extremely helpful to the Congressmen in understanding it. And also his forthrightness. . . . And remember, when it got all through, it was the Commandant's responsibility of whether he took the advice at that time and accepted the statement that had been prepared, along with discussion through its preparation.

Q: Well what were his alternatives? He really didn't have any.

Hittle: Well, yes. He had alternatives at other times of not following advice. But on this occasion he followed advice. And his responsibility was performed, I think, extremely well. And at that phase of it he handled very well.

Q: Well, the thing I get the impression about General Pate is: Whereas you had other Commandants who were much more activist and much more active and would use their staffs properly, go through the Chief of Staff and give directives, that he was a much more passive Commandant.

Hittle: He was at that time. Because, we've discussed this, and I think this is what you're talking about. Some of the strength was ebbing on this man, and people didn't know it, and apparently the doctors didn't know it either. But death was setting in.

Q: I understand that there were times when he passed out.

Hittle: I don't know that. I have no knowledge of that.

Q: Now, having set the stage with General Twining's statement presented by General Pate, what was your role once General Pate had gone down to Parris Island and made an appearance? I mean, I'm sure you must have had calls from the Hill: "What the hell's going on here?" "What's he doing?" "What's he doing to the Marine Corps?"

Hittle: Well there weren't, in those specific terms. The essence of the calls I got and the questions were usually:

"Well, what's going on?" as you said. Words to that effect. And I explained it straightforwardly as I could, and I simply said, "The Commandant said what he did because he thought it was the right thing to say. And he's leaning over backwards," which I think he did, not to prejudice the case for McKeon. I think he did.

Q: But he compromised, as a final reviewing authority. . . .

Hittle: That was another complication.

Q: That's right. And I don't envy. . . .

Hittle: Those were difficult days around here. Those were difficult days. And that's an understatement.

Q: Then again I get the impression that after Ribbon Creek things kind of went down hill as far as his role and strengths as Commandant.

Hittle: How much time was there left after. . . .

Q: '58 to just about a year; less than a year, maybe slightly more than a year.

This happened about March or April of '58.

Hittle: Down hill. He was going down hill, then, physically. And I can't help but think that it took the mental strength out of him that he had previously shown. And yet, you know, he had flashes of the strength and decision-making, too.

I remember one episode: It was when we were having the boards created for conducting the screening of those that were so-called deadwood among the NCOs and so forth, not to ship over men such as that. And they were very difficult things because so many of them were seniors that were being given a good-bye ticket to them for any types of reasons, of inefficiency or lack of value. And on a couple of these things, without getting into specifics because they pertained to boards and names of individuals, I know of one in particular where a recommendation was made by the board that this individual, a senior NCO, be terminated--he was short of retirement--for reasons that at the time for the board were compelling. A little later on, a very respected officer told another officer and myself of what a yeoman-like job of courage and absolutely self-driving determination this officer had performed under most hazardous conditions in the Pacific.

Q: This was an officer that you were. . . .

Hittle: No. NCO.

And the board had already submitted but hadn't been approved by the Commandant. I went to the head of the board and I said, "Do you have any objection if I go to the Commandant on this thing?"

He said, "Not if you think it's right." He said, "If I'd a known this, I wouldn't have taken the action I did on an individual."

I went to the Commandant, told him about it, who said it, what the guy was supposed to have done far beyond the call of duty, although there was no doubt about the fact that he'd been hitting the old juice bottle too much since and it had impaired his usefulness. But he performed a critically important service to the Corps beyond the call of duty.

Commandant listened to it all and he said, "What's your recommendation?"

I said, "I've talked to the head of the board. He generally concurs with what I'm recommending to you, and that is that this individual, we've let him stay this long, he has only such a short time to go to retirement. Most of his service up until the last years has been honorable and valuable, and on one occasion it was critically important. The recommendation is: let him stay to get his twenty in, which is a short time, give him a warning and then he gets his retirement.

The Commandant says, "You know," he says, "that's the honest thing to do in this case." So he disapproved that part of the board, as I recall, and looked after this individual. And for all I know, this individual today may be out talking about what a poor Commandant Ran Pate was.

These are some of the things he did that were exceptional.

Q: I know you probably got some business to do.

Hittle: I've got another 10 minutes.

Q: Okay. Well, what about the changeover . . . then we can go into the Shoup regime, talk about the. . . .

Hittle: No, there was one episode ahead of this that I think is worth knowing about, and that's the Reorganization Act of 1958.

Q: Is that the Hogaboom board?

Hittle: No, no. I'm talking about the defense reorganization. I think it was '58; it was the big (pause) . . . it was late '57 or early '58, but it was one of the last periods that I was in the Marine Corps here.

The administration, the Pentagon sent forward a recommendation for reorganization of the Department of Defense. We knew this was coming because they were going to go the reorganization route to complete the National Security Act of '47 as they wanted it originally and not the way it was passed. The essence of that reorganization act and its effect would have been to establish the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the chiefs of services as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to a practical effect divorce them from their role as chief of service which would then devolve to their vice chief of staff or their Assistant Commandant job. This was really the supreme general staff through the back door. It also reduced the roles of the secretaries . . .

Q: Service.

Hittle: . . . military departments, and focused it in DOD and a number of other changes. McElroy was then Secretary of Defense. He was a very able man although he was all out for this thing. But this was undisguised disaster in many ways, in the long haul for the Marine Corps because this was just exactly what shouldn't happen because there was no place for the Marine Corps in a supreme general staff set-up.

They sent the bill over to the Hill, and naturally it went to the chairman, Chairman Vinson, for introduction-- which is the way of doing things. Well, not to dwell upon details, but the Chairman called me in, asked me what I thought about it. I told him. He called in Russ Blandford. And he said, "What changes should we make?" meaning his committee, not us, because he wouldn't share a responsibility with the staff or a member of the Executive Branch in that committee. And when he meant the committee under many circumstances, he meant himself.

There were some key changes that were made. And a number of places inserts were made such as, "The chairman will do such and such," with the insert, "on behalf of Joint Chiefs of Staff," which still left him in his original role as envisaged by Eberstadt, of being a part of the corporate body and not a chief of staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which was the key part of the corporate body concept of Joint Chiefs of Staff, is this matter of "on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" even though protocol-wise he is the senior member.

Another thing was that in setting forth the responsibilities of the chiefs of services--the uniformed chiefs of services--it said, "They shall have these following duties," and so forth, "for their service." But they left out the word "responsibility." And the moment you are not responsible for your service, you seek to be in charge of it, because command and responsibility go together. And that was the key omission that really, in effect, would serve to sever the chiefs of services from their service and make them part of the ivory tower Joint Chiefs of Staff--the supreme general staff.

Q: How long a time. . . . You were aware of the legislation before it went up, or had you been?

Hittle: We didn't know about it in detail by any means.

Q: Okay. So how long a period of time did you have to go over it and read it before you made your recommendations. I mean it wasn't just a perusal as you went through it with Mr. Vinson. You had a period of time to study it.

Hittle: As I recall, it was pretty close to the same day. It had to move fast because, you see, the chairman could not hold up a piece of legislation sent over for him to introduce. I may be off just a little on this, but my recollection is, it was a fast reaction operation that he wanted right then, because I can still remember sitting there and going through this thing and the changes that would come up as it was in

the course of perusal and discussion in front of him. So inserted in it was the matter of responsibility for his service, and once that happened, the uniformed chief was still the boss of his military service. Without responsibility, his number two man became what the reorganization intended would be the chief of service. That, with some other changes of words "not," and taking out words "not" in the other places, and the other ones I mentioned, just about reversed the whole philosophy and context of the reorganization bill.

Mr. Vinson looked at it. He said, "Well," he said, "it looked like small ones," he said, "but some pretty important changes." He knew exactly what it was, what he felt. He completely gutted the reorganization. He said, "Well, I need some other sponsors on this bill." He wasn't going to throw in the President's reversed bill, and very properly so as an astute politician and responsible chairman of a committee by himself. And of course Paul Kilday was still on the committee then.

Q: Illinois?

Hittle: No, no. Paul Kilday of Texas who was one of the most respected legal minds in the Congress, and a keen student of defense organization.

So he picked up the telephone, got Mr. Kilday on the phone. He says, "Paul, will you go with me on this bill?" He says, "I made a few little changes in it. It might be

some"--words to the effect--"it might be some criticism on it." And of course the answer was "yes."

The chairman was just about ready to say, "Well, that's it," and (chuckling) the sly person he is, he says, "I need a Republican." This was the Eisenhower bill. So the upshot of this was, he says, "You go over and talk to Les Arends."

Well of course, Les from Illinois was the senior Republican. So I went over and was in his office. I told him what had happened--leveled with Les. I says, "The chairman wants you to go on the bill with him."

Les says, "I play golf regularly with the President. This is his bill." He said, "He'll be furious," he says, "with me as his subordinate and as the senior Republican." And I think this is still to Mr. Arends' credit. When he got through I said, "Yes, everything you say is true, Les." I said, "But you know, ever since I've known you," I said, "you've been against what this bill does." Because Les Arends's one of the strongest supporters in the Marine Corps in the unification fight. He was always against a supreme general staff because he thought it was wrong for America and our form of government.

End Side 1, Tape 2

Side 2, Tape 2, Session XII

Hittle: Mr. Arends thought a minute. He says, "You're right!" He says, "Tell the chairman to put my name on the bill."

Now those are some of the moments in which you see the greatness of a good congressman and a responsible public official. He didn't take evasive action, he knew what the issues were, he knew what the difficulties were for him in doing what he did; but he did what he thought was right and what he believed in. These are the things that the public very seldom sees in a congressman who does things such as this. And I saw it rather frequently in Congress. But this is one that sticks in my memory. So the bill just reversing the President's proposal was dropped in the hopper and it came out with these changes. And I was told that there was a major shudder that went through the Pentagon and through some of the White House. Of course they had to send it over to the Senate, too.

Mr. Vinson said, "What are you going to do about the Senate side?"

"Well," I said, "I guess they'll have to do something over there." So a day or so later an identical bill was dropped into the hopper on the Senate side identical to the Vinson bill, word for word, by Mike Mansfield and of all things by Styles Bridges, the senior Republican on Armed Services.

Q: New Hampshire.

Hittle: And Bridges, Mansfield both knew what they were doing, too. And of course Styles Bridges, being a Republican, had a personal relationship with the President. But he had

always been a stalwart opponent of a supreme general staff, and he saw immediately what was in, and I showed him every change that had been made and what he was doing.

Q: You went up to see him, too.

Hittle: Oh, yes! And Mansfield.

Because there's only one thing to do and that is, tell him exactly what it is, because there's no worse service than you can perform for somebody than to not tell them the whole story on a critical issue like that. They've got to know and then decide as they think best. Neither one had the slightest hesitation.

And that was dropped into the hopper. Well, the reorganization bill was off the track.

A day or so later--getting into this story--Tom Gates, who was then Secretary of the Navy, had been in New York. He was enroute coming back in his plane. He got a message that Secretary McElroy was at the MATS terminal--you know, it's when they used to take off from down at National Airport--he was at the MATS terminal and he was departing for a NATO conference. But since Mr. Gates was enroute, why he wanted to see him prior to his departure, and would wait. Well, I was told, since Gates was the next senior one in his departure--I mean with the secretary away--why I was told that the general impression was, at least among some of the assistants, that this was a pretty nice thing, that Mr. McElroy was

waiting just to kind of tip his hat and so forth while Mr. Gates was the senior one in Washington, the secretariat.

This is hearsay to me, but it was so related, that Secretary Gates went aboard the Columbine to say good-bye. And the general situation he ran into was a angry Mr. McElroy who said, "What are you going to do with this Marine general by the name of Hittle?"

Q: He had your number.

Hittle: Well, hell! They all (chuckles) knew who did it.

And the general context of the situation was that he was told to take direct action because it was only a short time after both the White House and the Secretary of Defense's office had commented previously in a different situation about those who went through the back door approach to thwart policies, and that severe disciplinary action would be taken. So it was in that context that we were operating at that time.

So Gates came back and he called the Commandant. The Commandant called me. And then ensued a rather tense period of 3 or 4 days because Gates was under orders to take disciplinary action and to tell McElroy what he had done--and the White House. (pause) And the Commandant--I'll tip my hat to him--General Pate stuck; he didn't waver one bit! He wasn't aware of what we were doing, but we were doing it under his responsibility. And his whole position was that: I'll stick with you on this one. And he did! As I say, these are some of the strong points of Ran Pate. A weaker man would have folded and thrown you to the dogs.

Of course, during this time why the firecrackers over in the Pentagon and the level under the secretary, who had been pushing this thing, and it was their baby in many ways, were after my hide--as example A. Then I was getting phone calls from people in the Navy and the Marine Corps to the effect, "They can't do anything to you; just tell them to go to hell," which is famous last words.

Q: (laughing) Yes, I'll hold your coat.

Hittle: While you jump over the bridge.

So this became almost a negotiation of what was to be done in my case. Something had to be done. In other words, something had to be done. I was wise enough to know that. If anything is done, it muddies the water. If nothing is done--you got a clear-cut case of the secretary not doing what he's told, and further action to be taken by other than the secretary. So of course there were increasing numbers in the Marine Corps and in the Navy who were writing my political obituary at that time. (laughing) And probably with good reason had also some of them gleefully. . . . It became a three or four way negotiation: Pate, Commandant, and for the Secretary of Defense it was turned over to the White House. And the person handling it at the White House was one of the closest people then to the President, Brice Harlow.

Brice is one of the most honorable men I've ever known, and one of the most able. But anyway, he was a loyal assistant secretary. (pause)

The final resolution of the thing was this: Yes, that action was going to be taken in my case. That I was to be transferred out of the city until all the hearings were over. And my temporary duty assignment was to Brussels to arrange for the appearance of the Marine Corps Band at the World Fair. The upshot of it was, I was ordered out of the city, I was out until the hearings were over on the bill, on the reorganization bill. So people could . . . oh, some of them at the Pentagon were utterly furious because they saw through what they considered was the transparency of the agreements (laughing) or of the action. And here again Ran Pate stood firm. And on every conversation I was called in and he discussed it with me. I was party to the negotiation. These are the little things that never surface other than for those who are participants.

Q: So you went over to Brussels for this.

Hittle: So I was ordered to Brussels 'til the conclusion of the hearings which were about 2 weeks.

And one day I got a straight telegram--commercial--that says, "Mark-up started. Return at once. Signed Sam."

Q: Sam Shaw?

Hittle: Yes.

The hearings were over; that was the technical part of it. Of course, others that wanted to think otherwise would have construed that it was completion of congressional action.

But I got back. And there were some things that needed clarification in it again. There had been changes, I guess, slightly or modified in the hearings on the bill. Went up and saw Mr. Vinson. He said, "You supposed to be here?"

I said, "I don't know whether I'm supposed to be but," I says, "I thought that maybe you'd want to see me."

He said, "Well that's right!" He said, "Let's take a look at this thing right now." So that's how the reorganization act was . . . one of the aspects of how the reorganization act affected a lot of people and how, in turn, it was effective.

Q: How long did you have to stay in Brussels for?

Hittle: Oh, it was a couple, 3 weeks.

Q: Did you get over to Edinburgh meanwhile?

Hittle: No. I almost did. But I had an assignment and so I met regularly with the officials, and it was a detailed discussion I had and it was one that I could justify in terms of what was done. I kept a record at the time, I look at it some time, who I saw each day and so forth. If the question was ever raised: Did you do anything when you were exiled? But it was a rather short exile. But of course the kind of the phenomena--this will lead into the next phase--kind of an interesting aspect was that having been chased out of town personally by a Secretary of Defense, which was really the case, that could write an end to any kind of a professional career.

had
And as I say, there were a number that/already written, closed the book mentally on me and, as I say, a few of them gleefully so. It was only a matter of a couple, 3 months later, that after having been chased out of town by the Secretary of Defense, that a new Secretary of Defense appointed me to be in charge of the entire congressional relations for the Department of Defense.

Q: You know, that sounds like a good place to stop because we can take that up to your tour as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Good session. But I think we ought to correct for the record that the band that appeared at Brussels was the band from Parris Island.

Hittle: It was a Marine Corps band. That's right. I should have said, "A Marine Corps band," yes.

Q: Yes. Marine Corps band with the Drum and Bugle Corps from 8th & I.

Hittle: That's right. It was an assembled organization. A Marine Corps band.

Q: A drill team from. . . .

Hittle: That's right.

Q: Headed by Robert D. Heinl, Jr. (cross talk)

Hittle: I'm glad you mentioned the . . . yes. And all of the logistics in the arrangements were made during that period of temporary duty.

Q: And your old 4-section experience helped out.

Thank you very much, General.

End of Session XII

Session XIII - 5 August 1976

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: We spoke on the phone, and you've got about seven items.

Hittle: What period are we talking about?

Q: Well, we are talking about when you were still . . . the transitional period from the time that you were the legislative assistant to the Commandant 'til the time you went up to become legislative liaison to. . . .

Hittle: I wasn't legislative liaison; it was legislative assistant to the Secretary of Defense. It was assistant to the Secretary of Defense for legislative affairs.

Q: All right. So we're just about to that point there, they vetted you upstairs because of. . . .

Hittle: Well we haven't reached that here.

Q: No, we haven't reached it yet.

This aspect, I think, still refers to the time you were with the Marine Corps . . . in the Marine Corps House, the development of the transport helicopter concept.

Hittle: That was the work of the Marine Corps Board at Quantico under Twining. And I participated along with that. And I guess probably the most significant recollection that I have with respect to that project was that it got underway, like

so many of those things did, through the imagination and enlightened professionalism of M. B. Twining.

I remember one occasion there. There had been conversation about what changes were possible or required as a result of the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and so forth. This followed on so closely at the end of the war. I remember going in one day to Twining's office, and there he was with a great big piece of paper in front of him--sheet of paper--and on it he had concentric circles of different sizes. And there were time-distance sketches in terms of landing craft, and then the theoretical, hoped-for speed of a working transport helicopter. Of course, the conversation . . . why, he said something to this effect; he said, "Well, if you have any doubts," he said, "about the fact that we got to think ahead and get something different, take a look at this." He said, "The only way you're going to beat the new problem of an atomic bomb against an amphibious assault force is speed." And that, in many ways, as far as I was concerned, was the working genesis of the transport helicopter. And out of that came what was--at least in my opinion--was the most imaginative, the most practical, and probably the only real significant development up to that time as a result of atomic capability.

Q: This was during the '46-'49 time period when you were at Quantico.

Little: Yes, that's right.

Q: You were secretary of the Academic Board.

Hittle: And other miscellaneous attachments.

Q: I don't recall--when we're talking about this period of time--General Twining was involved, was the impetus for the codification of the amphibious warfare doctrine with respect to lessons learned in World War II, which resulted in the publications of USF 63 and 66, I believe.

Hittle: I was intimately involved in that, with responsibility for the logistic portions of it as well as being secretary of the Academic Board. A somewhat of an editorial oversight job was also my responsibility on it. But I had the logistic part; and I also participated in the discussions at Headquarters with respect to it, and also the resolution of differences with the Navy both with respect to 63 and 66. And here again it was primarily a Twining effort, product and contribution. The essence of that was, as far as its origin, Twining's recommendation to General Thomas and to Vandegrift at the time, that so much had happened in the advancement and the perfection of amphibious landing force doctrine during the war, that it was imperative that that knowledge and experience be captured as the follow-on to NWP what, 22 was it? The one that went to war with?

Q: Yes. Well, that's FTP-167.

Hittle: Yes, FTP-167.

Q: NWP was later.

Hittle: That's right. Yes; 67.

And that was, without difficulty, approved, because my recollection is that both General Vandegrift and Thomas saw that the wisdom of that immediately. And that was the primary reason at the time for my quick return from China was to get working on that under Twining, why I was ordered to Quantico.

Q: Had you known Twining from before?

Hittle: I had known him from before, yes, but never as well as I got to know him at that time.

Q: There was also an attempt, there was also at that time a joint services study on amphibious warfare going up, I believe, at the National War College--representatives of the various services--and it was stymied, I think, primarily because of this unification fight and also the reluctance of the Army and the craveness--to a degree--of the Navy, unwillingness of the Navy to recognize the Marine Corps role in amphibious warfare. Do you recall this involvement?

Hittle: I was not involved in that part of it, and I can't give you any first-hand knowledge.

This much I do recollect in the time frame we're talking about and the surrounding events, that one of the purposes of this amphibious series under Twining--63--was to get it on paper, rationalized, and in a form that would be useful for the Marine Corps and for the country and our allies. The

[REDACTED]

interesting thing that was transpiring at the time was that the Marine Corps was really the only one that was doing it. That it's always been my impression that the Army took a considerable interest ostensibly in landing force matters. But really, when it came down to priorities as far as their interest--matters such as that--they were really dealing in a side issue. That was the essence of the Marine Corps role in the preparation of this because you got to have somebody whose full time primary job is on something in order to do it right.

The other thing about the transport helicopter that I recall is: that the Marine Corps approached--as I was told--different aviation companies, producers. And yet the only one who really grasped the importance and the concept of the transport helicopter idea was Piasecki. And the interesting thing as I recall also about it, is that the Marine Corps went ahead with the development of a concept before they even had a helicopter that would provide the means for executing that type of amphibious landing force operation.

Q: Well there's a parallel for that, of course, in the development of amphibious warfare doctrine before you had landing craft.

Hittle: Yes, probably. But it's a kind of a hazy . . . it's more a philosophical than it is a material comparison. It depends on what you call a landing craft. I wouldn't dispute what you're saying, but to me there's a much sharper relationship between no helicopter and the development of the

helicopter doctrine than there was between evolving a doctrine out of the Dardanelles fiasco after World War I; because you still had ships' boats that could be landing craft. But as you talk about modern landing craft, you're absolutely right. So I wouldn't belabor the point because it is a comparison but a much sharper one as far as the helicopter.

Q: Yes. I think that--who was it?--^{Ken}~~Lorne~~ ^fHafner was down there at the time.

Hittle: Yes. And even before the helicopter had been on the boards, he was quite an artist, a sketch artist, and he sketched the concept. I remember that now. He did a very important and useful job and a very talented one.

Q: Going according to the notes on the matters we discussed, this is during the Pate regime when you were still at Headquarters. . . .

Hittle: If I may interrupt you here, we ought to go back a minute to 63 and the resolution with the Navy, because there was some interesting aspects to it there.

Q: 63?

Hittle: Yes. The amphibious doctrine.

Q: Oh, okay.

Hittle: Because that had to be resolved in connection with 66.

And the thing that emerged. . . . And I participated, I think, in every one of these meetings with the Navy along with General Twining and I think General Krulak and possibly General Shaw; I think General Shaw was in with some of them, too. My clear recollection of the key issue, as I saw it, that emerged with respect to the Navy, was the matter of primacy of command or the larger issue of command relationships. And in spite of all of the experience that the Navy had had during World War II with this very, very sometimes difficult problem both from the standpoints of personalities as well as organization, and not particularly with the Marine Corps vis-á-vis the Navy, but Army Air Force vis-á-vis the Navy. The paradox of our position was that we were in USF-63 and in our influence in realizing . . . rather, whatever influence we had in resolving the differences between 63 and 66 was an emphasis upon U.S. Navy primacy of command. Strangely, that was one of the sticking points all the way through; that for some reason, at least in the initial phases of our negotiations and conversations at the Navy Department, that there was a obvious reluctance on the part of some of the Navy to either fully comprehend it as we saw it--not that they didn't understand naval thought--but they didn't comprehend that the important issue and sometimes subtle issue of primacy of command in terms of the Navy's role in the future, and the emphasis that was placed by the Marine Corps that you had your juncture of command at the point of primacy and that you did not. . . . Incidentally that term "juncture of command"

was another Twining contribution which fully expressed where the landing force chain of command was combined with Navy command at the task force level, and that became the primacy point of command.

Our position was, and it prevailed ultimately, that primacy of command in an amphibious operation rested with a U.S. Navy officer. And the essence of the concept was that an amphibious operation is primarily a naval operation in character, part of whatever you may define a naval campaign to be. And consequently, the primacy rested with a Navy officer. But below that you had two distinct chains of command: one was the landing force and the other one was the Navy chain of command with coordination in between them at the successively lower levels. And one of the difficulties in our discussions with the Navy was to try to put through that each succeeding lower Navy officer below the point of primacy of command did not have an overall command status with respect to his opposite or embarked landing force commander. (interruption)

At this point I think it's important to mention how the matter between the Navy and the Marine Corps with respect to 63 and 66 was resolved and very well done. Up to a period when a deadlock obviously developed as far as the Marine Corps/Navy conversations were concerned on 63 and 66, the Navy was represented by a captain from the amphibious section. His name slips me at the time. And then when the deadlock began to take place, Admiral Ricketts moved in--later Admiral

Ricketts--who at this time was a captain who later became VCNO and one of the outstanding naval officers of the era.

Ricketts had the breadth of understanding, he had the reasonableness and the experience that from the time that he moved into the controversy and took charge of it, that there was a ready resolution of the Navy/Marine Corps positions.

There's just one little incident prior to the time that then-Captain Ricketts took charge of negotiating. We were talking about primacy of command and command relationships with one of the officers conducting--one of the senior ones previous to Ricketts representing the Navy--and it got to the point where the nerves were a bit frayed, and there was an impatience on the part, at least, of the Navy. The observation by this Navy officer was: "Well the way you're going," he said to us looking at Twining, "the way you're going, you're going to have a green-suited Marine on the flag bridge commanding the task force." You could see what the sensitivities, the apprehensions were of the Navy.

And Twining very quietly looked him in the face; he said, "You don't need to worry about a green-suit," he said, "up there taking command. If you don't go the way we're recommending you go, you're going to have a brown suit," he said, "and it won't be very long." Which ended that discussion. And it was shortly after that that Ricketts moved in and took over the resolution of it. I didn't know if you had that little episode related before or not.

Q: No, no.

This, of course, again is in the '46-'49 time period.

Hittle: That's right.

Q: Getting back to these notes that we discussed after the last session, still in the Pate regime, when you were still at Headquarters; camps on Okinawa, or was that handled when you were up at. . . .

Hittle: No, that was while I was in the position as legislative assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. And that is a little-known episode and a very important one. And once again shows, I think, in clear historical perspective how again the Marine Corps interests were protected if not even salvaged by congressional leaders.

It happened this way: It was under the Eisenhower administration. Charlie Wilson, Charles Wilson as they called . . . "Electric" Charlie ("GE" Charlie) was the Secretary of Defense at that time. And it was an early phase of the cutbacks in defense base expenditures. I got called in one afternoon to the front office. The Commandant had just been talking, I think, with the Assistant Commandant--no, the chief of staff. It was either one or the other; my recollection's a bit hazy here now as to who gave me the information--the Commandant or the Chief of Staff--that the Department of Defense had decided to terminate the base constructions for the Marine Corps on Okinawa. It was so serious that the decision had

been made that they were going to be cut out, and the line item on it that had been approved was, I think, \$36 million-- which bought an awful lot in those days in the way of three camps. The status of the construction at that time of the projects for the three camps on Okinawa was: the contracts had been let, ground preparation and site preparation had already been begun by the contractors with equipment on the ground with the employees. And the decision had been made in the comptroller's office at DOD and obviously approved by the Secretary of Defense to cut it out, and the Marine Corps had gotten sad news.

One of the first people I got in touch with, because of the importance of this, to find out where it stood, was the then-administrative assistant to Senator Leverett Saltonstall who was the senior Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee and who had extremely good relationships, of course, with the Department of Defense and the White House. And that individual I contacted was the administrative assistant was Charles Colson, who later became the special assistant to President Nixon with later results we don't need to get into at this time. But Chuck was a captain in the Marine Corps Reserve, he had served very well, very ably, and very honorably, and he never stopped taking an interest, and an active one, in the Marine Corps. So I contacted him.

He called me back a little later and he said, "Yes," he said, "I've checked into this." He said, "The decision at the DOD level, I am told, is firm, that there is no particular

reason for the construction to go forward in view of the fact that the Pacific War is over with, and that it's going to be a significant savings. It's going to take an awful lot to turn it around. Let me know," he says, "if on our position we can be of any assistance," he said, "but the most I can do right now is provide you with that information." Well, that was very useful information because it confirmed what we had been told down the military chain.

I also learned later, and this was confirmed also by Colson, that the termination orders either had been or were in the process of official distribution to the contractors, setting forth the directive for the termination and the negotiation of costs at that time. This is about as close as you can get to the end of a project.

And I should correct this right now: Senator Saltonstall was later to be the senior Republican on Armed Services; but at this time the senior Republican was still Styles Bridges. Styles Bridges was still alive at this time, although Saltonstall was the next ranking Republican on the committee.

So this called for immediate action. I got together with Russ Blandford, went in--and I may have told part of this before; but to put the whole story together, I think I'd better continue with it now--we went in to the chairman, Mr. Vinson, and told him what the story was, that speed was of the essence, that the only thing that could stop it would be action by him and by a counterpart on the Senate side, and we

needed him to fire the first salvo. Again, Mr. Vinson didn't have to have a picture taken, didn't have to look and analyze a long position paper. He said, "All right!" He said, "I'll tell you what. These people have been over here," he said, meaning Department of Defense. He said, "Just got through testifying and getting us to authorize the funds for this base construction on Okinawa." He said, "If it's that bad, what else were we misinformed on?" That was the ploy he took. He said, "You and Russ write a letter right away because I'm only going to be in the office a few minutes." So one letter was written up very fast by first draft dictation in Russ Blandford's office, was taken in, the chairman looked at it, and he signed it right away. The essence of that letter was that it was only a few months ago that you told us how indispensable this was, and you advised this committee to authorize the expenditure because it was necessary for national security. Now, if you were wrong so soon with respect to that, what else have you made a mistake on; and, consequently, if you proceed with this, he said, to the effect--Mr. Vinson did--this will probably require a review of all of the authorized construction projects. Well, that was something the DOD obviously didn't want. It would have bogged things down interminably and thrown the whole budget cycle off for an indefinite period on military construction as well as all other military that was dove-tailed with it in appropriations.

Went over and saw Senator Bridges--I did. Went in with Chet Wiggin who was his administrative assistant and a

Marine Corps lieutenant colonel, Reserve; a very, very able down-to-earth and intelligent person Chet was--common sense, practical. He was always a Marine supporter without being a wild partisan. He knew the realm of the practical and possible. And Chet, incidentally, very tragically was killed a couple years ago. He was a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and he was killed in a commercial airplane crash in Boston as you may recall, it crashed oh, I guess a couple, 3 years ago. But anyway we went in and saw Senator Styles Bridges. Bridges was another one who never wasted any words: he was decisive. And if he trusted you, he trusted you--period. And we explained it to him.

He says to me, he says, "Well, Don, get out there," he said, "with Chet and dictate a letter and get it into me." He says, "I'm leaving. We're going out of town in 15 minutes." So these are the time factors on which big issues often hang.

So we brought a letter into him--and this again was a first dictation draft that was rushed through. Chet put his okay on it and brought it in. Senator Bridges looked at it, smiled, and signed it. And this also was to Secretary of Defense. The emphasis from his standpoint and the thrust of his letter was that he was deeply disappointed at the decision not to put the Marine Corps bases for U.S. Marine Corps troops on Okinawa, because it would be interpreted by the Communists as well as our friends throughout the world as a weakening in the face of Communist strength in continental Asia. Well, no

Republican could really defend a position like that, you see, that there was a weakening in the face of Communism.

So in the meantime very quickly these two letters got over to the Department of Defense. And at the next meeting with the chiefs of services, in going over the agenda and so forth, General Pate told me that what transpired was, that Secretary Wilson was going through the different items from his agenda, in his basket there, and then he came to one and he said, "Oh, Ran," he said, "this is one that you'll be interested in." This is the way it was related to me by General Pate. He said, "Ran, this is one you'll be interested in. This pertains to bases on Okinawa." He said, "Will you take eighteen million?" See, the total cost was thirty-six. Somebody had to make a savings, see, it would save face. He said, "Will you take a beginning eighteen million on it?"-- words to that effect. But the figure was 18 million. And of course Ran Pate was smart enough to know, as he was very astute on these matters, that once you got an initial allocation of funds for a continuing project, you had a program and the program usually continued all the way, particularly on a base construction like that. And there was no discussion or anything. Pate said, "Yes." So the termination orders were never put into effect; the 18 million which was half of the construction went out for that fiscal year, and the following year it was funded for completion.

And incidentally, I think the two letters with a short covering memo--the letters from Vinson and from Styles Bridges--

are also in that manila envelope file that has been deposited with your historical section.

Q: Oh, grand! At least we have that for the record.

What would have happened had General Pate said: No, we want the whole boat. Or is this just a. . . .

Hittle: If he'd said, "No," there would have been probably no project, because Pate knew--and I think it's axiomatic--that there is a flexibility that you have to operate by within your principles, within the parameters of your principles within government.

And the base line of this thing as it evolved was that the comptroller and the budget people in the government--the comptroller in the Pentagon and the budget office in the White House--were really under the gun because they had proposed this and had shown significant savings of 36 million. And if you took all the savings out for that fiscal year, there would have been an issue. When you only funded at half, the issue was muddled, savings were still reportable and demonstrable on the part of those who had proposed them, their face was saved, DOD had not totally capitulated to pressure from the Hill, there had been an accommodation for that fiscal year, and the result was that the Marine Corps had the bases, the forward positions on Okinawa. And if we had not had those, the story of American efforts in the western Pacific in the ensuing years through, of course, Korea and the latter part of Korea and at least the stabilization in Korea, and Vietnam

would have been a far different thing as far as American security in addition to the specific efficiency of the Marine Corps.

Q: Well, was it a question just of funds in the sense that: "Well, the Marine Corps doesn't need them?" Or was there a decided effort to transfer the . . . because there was an effort, I think, in the fifties--late fifties--to transfer the.....

Hittle: This would be about when it was, yes.

Q: . . . late fifties--the Army taking over bases.

Hittle: That was part of it. It was not a totally clear issue of money in or out. There were these tangential issues that you have just mentioned. But the essence of the thing was a cutback that played into the hands of those who were trying to squeeze the Marine Corps, who wanted the Marine Corps out of the western Pacific--as you have mentioned--as well as fitting the format of savings by, at the time, and the comptroller within the Pentagon. And here again the Marine Corps' interest and the national interests were saved by members of congress and a couple members of their staff.

Q: By this time you were getting to be quite a marked man with your forays up on the Hill.

Hittle: The issues were basic; the issues were clear and they were important. And old Harry Truman said it right. He

said, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen." And then the risks were--as I related before with respect to the reorganization bill during the latter period when Secretary McElroy was in charge--that the risks were daily.

Q: Of course, this was your function and this is your stock in trade: a perception and a sensitivity regarding legislation and executive actions vis-à-vis the Marine Corps. Were there many other people in the Corps that had this?

Hittle: Yes. There were. I didn't have any monopoly on that type of understanding in a sense.

Q: Twining.

Hittle: Go down the list. Twining had it to an extremely high degree. General Krulak was very, very knowledgeable in it. General Shaw had an intuitive sense for it. Jim Murray, Bob Heinl, Schatzel. And then later when he was brought into it, of course, at that time under Ran Pate--Orm Simpson.

Q: Of course Jerry Thomas.

Hittle: And of course Jerry Thomas. And here again I want to say, in addition to Jerry Thomas as chief of staff, General Hogaboom. General Hogaboom demonstrated, I should say, to a surprising number of people in view of Hogaboom's long emphasis upon operational matters, a sensitivity and a willingness to discuss and take advice. He was very capable in this

field. And here again, I want to pay tribute in this aspect of the protection of the Corps, the perception and the decisiveness at that time of General Pate.

Q: And Vandegrift earlier.

Hittle: Vandegrift earlier, of course.

Of course, the person that set it up--and I don't want to be misunderstood by not mentioning him--was General Shepherd. General Shepherd set much of the stage for this struggle. And the thing about General Shepherd was, too, that during this bitter fight like on General Order 5 and so forth, he knew what had to go on; he knew what his parameters of activity were and so forth. And as I pointed out in a previous conversation, when he got his orders to stop the operation on the part of the Marine Corps, figuratively speaking he did like Nelson--he put a telescope to a blind eye, although he never had a blind eye. He gave me my orders and knew that I wasn't going to carry them out. He knew it and I knew it.

Q: Well, as I talk these matters and these days and these involvements over with you, and people whose names we've mentioned, of course Bob Heinl, for instance, has been accused of having defensive. . . . And Krulak, a number of people; it almost borders on paranoia. Now there was a clear and present danger facing the Marine Corps, in a sense.

Hittle: I think that anybody that inferred an even partial psychosis in this respect, either didn't know what was going on or deliberately misrepresented an understanding of it. In a struggle like the Marine Corps went through in the post-war period, and it lasted--and it's not over yet--but the great crisis. . . . (cross talk)

Q: A lot more sophisticated now.

Hittle: It's more sophisticated; but certain things have happened that give you a base for the Marine Corps, if a base is maintained as it is being maintained, of course, under the Commandants that have succeeded. In a struggle like this, like any other struggle with tremendous stakes at issue, if there is not a spiritual and emotional involvement, you don't belong in it because you can't do your job. It's a burden beyond normal duty as far as your time and your effort, and certainly it's a risk professionally. And if you are not prepared to take those risks for what you believe and do that extra work for what you believe--which is endless in terms of work--then you should be doing something more prosaic.

Q: Well, of course, competition's a healthy thing whether it's in sports or business or whatever. But as long as I've been associated with the Marine Corps in service and out, there's always been this constant harping and sniping, you know, like the fourteenth man in a Marine rifle squad is a correspondent, you know, information type. And the conflict

between the Navy and the Marine Corps which harkens back to the time when we had a bunch of detachments, sea-going detachments. And then, of course, the conflict between the Army and the Navy where the Army soldiers were called doggies-- this type of thing. But it always seems to me that the Marine Corps has always had to be on the defensive; it's always had, you know, more than a combative enemy to contend with.

Hittle: What you're really saying is that the Marine Corps had to fight the battle of Washington and win it in order to be able to fight in the battles against the foreign enemy.
(cross talk)

Q: It's constantly having to prove itself. But why should it have to constantly have to prove itself more so than, for instance, the other services--than the Army or the Navy or . . . and the Air Force came out of nowhere.

Hittle: Well that goes back to your philosophies, the opposing philosophies of organization for national security: how you organize your armed forces. And if you accept the orthodox philosophy of the European evolution of military thought, there's really no place for a Marine Corps in that simple philosophy of ground and sea in modern times, then amplified to air, in which you had the tri-elemental theory: everything neatly fitting into one of the three elements.

Q: Which is a misterm if there ever was; a misnomer if there ever was.

Hittle: But that, for want of a better term, is the tri-elementalism.

The Marine Corps, as we previously talked to . . . and people have explained it in far greater length, evolved because of the national need for it and because of the very fortunate circumstance that there were enlightened naval and Marine Corps leaders at the time who understood it. And our genesis basically as an amphibious force, grew out of that period when we stopped being a continental power in which what we needed was simply a Navy and a Army. And that was the period, it was the episode of the Spanish-American War when we became a world power based upon an oceanic capability. And the Marine Corps evolved directly out of the Spanish-American War and, essentially, out of the experience of Guantanamo Bay. It was the operational and organizational genesis of the Marine Corps as we know it today, although there were Marines with a tradition: the landing experience, in a sense, of small units that stretched back into the traditions of the revolutionary Navy and Marine Corps and the Royal Navy. But the Royal Navy never got a Marine Corps as we know it. And the Marine Corps made its point of departure from British naval thinking at the time of the Spanish-American War. I mean that's a rather long answer to your short question, but that's it.

Q: Well of course, I think probably even a more simplistic answer which encompasses many complexities--I forget who said

it; probably Krulak or Twining or . . . that if we didn't have a United States Marine Corps, one would have to be invented.

Hittle: That's exactly right! And the proof of the thing was: We had to have one, and it was invented. And it really came out of the enlightened understanding of what had transpired at Guantanamo Bay, because it was the first landing force--separate landing force--integration within the structure of the fleet.

Q: Well I think another aspect of this whole thing: It's very fortunate and, as you pointed out, that the Marine Corps has had its enlightened thinkers--which would have been a happy few, a happy band of brothers--because the Marine Corps, especially in its formative period in the early twenties, early twentieth century and even during the period of the thirties, had some pretty bad dunderheads who dragged their feet, who didn't have the concept, didn't have the. . . .

Hittle: Well all progress is made in spite of opposition--in anything.

Q: Well, the Marine Corps has been perhaps more fortunate in that degree. I think. . . .

End Side 1, Tape 1, Session XIII

Side 2, Tape 1, Session XIII

Q: I think before we get to philosophizing because we could probably spend a lot of time, I think we ought to go to your reassignment as the. . . . (cross talk)

Hittle: There was another episode in here.

Q: There was? Did we miss one? Don't have. . . .

Hittle: Well let's see. Let me check my notes. (interruption)

If you recall, Ben, you asked me if I had any recollections about some of the episodes connected with Quantico's base development under General Pate, or anything else of an incidental nature. And there is one down there that transpired both at Quantico and at Headquarters that may be of some passing interest. Basically it shows the value of the perceptiveness of a very able executive secretary, military secretary to the Commandant, Orm Simpson, and transpired something like this: It was after some of the real serious difficulties the Marine Corps had had during General Pate's period, the criticism to which he had been subjected, and so much of it was unjustified. But nevertheless it was criticism of the Commandant and also of the Marine Corps, and it wasn't doing either the Commandant or the Corps collectively any good. And one thing the Marine Corps that needed to do is get out of the news on matters of sniping at the actions of the Commandant or the Corps or any of its personnel.

And as I recall, the Commandant made one of his trips. And in his earlier years as an officer, he had known Trujillo, who was then the head of the government, chief of state in the Dominican Republic. And he made a trip to the Caribbean of inspection. He went over to . . . and included in the trip was the Dominican Republic and a visit with Trujillo. I'm told that in the course of it, why he had been doing some sightseeing down through the markets and so forth--naturally--and he saw some very fine mahogany lumber. I think it was mahogany, but it was some very fine lumber.

Q: Which he would know because he was quite a woodworker.

Hittle: That was precisely the point that next follows into place.

And being a talented woodworker himself, why he made the comment just in passing, "I sure wish we had some of that in the United States that I could obtain." Of course, meaning he could buy. When his plane took off, to the consternation of some of his assistants and when it got to Headquarters, to the closely held consternation of Orm Simpson and myself, the fact was that it had a large load of beautiful lumber like he had seen with the compliments of Trujillo.

Well, under normal circumstances, that would be a quite uneventful thing. But, under the conditions that the Marine Corps was operating, public relations-wise at that time, Trujillo being a bad name as far as image was concerned as a dictator; the Commandant getting it, it coming into the

United States--of course--a gift from Trujillo to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, it just raised all kinds of juicy, slanted articles against the Marine Corps and against the Commandant. And the lumber was brought up, as I recall, to Washington for storage for the Commandant. The question was, "What do we do before the roof falls in on this?"

because obviously too many people knew about it, or a lot of people knew about it. And in that kind of a atmosphere that we were existing then, sooner or later some member of the press would get it for a feature article.

Q: It wasn't just one stick of. . . .

Hittle: It wasn't one stick by any means. It was a good bundle of beautiful finished lumber.

Orm Simpson and I talked it over a number of times. And then, I think, a very reasonable decision was made: The lumber--without consulting the Commandant or anyone else as to whether it should be done or not--was consigned and sent physically, on behalf of the Commandant, to the personnel in charge of the construction of the chapel at Quantico, Virginia, for use in that chapel, from the Commandant. And today, while it would be difficult to identify, a large portion of the fine wood that went into the woodwork and the altar area, the choir loft, so forth at Quantico, came that route. Under that basis, everyone concerned heaved a sigh of relief because, when you come right down to it, there's nothing really wrong when you make an effort as the Commandant

ostensibly did to provide something that would add to the beauty and the permanency of the chapel.

Q: Did he ever get any for his own woodworking?

Hittle: No. But I understand that when he found out that he didn't have the wood, there was considerable irritation for a short time; but nothing was ever said in the way of reprimand.
(interruption)

Q: I think at this juncture--and we talked about this last time as to why you were suited upstairs: you were just too much of a thorn in the side of the Secretary of Defense being in the Marine Corps, and they figured probably they could use you better as the legislative assistant to Secretary of Defense.

Hittle: Well, that might be one interpretation of it, Ben, but really what happened was that McElroy had departed, and Tom Gates moved up from Secretary of the Navy to Secretary of Defense. The way that it took place was this: that there had been the change in the officers who were Commandant of the Marine Corps. Pate had gone, General Shoup came in; and obviously it is an understatement on my part to say that Shoup wanted somebody else--which was his privilege.

Q: Well you were too close to the Twining group.

Hittle: I was too close, and he had been told--and in my understanding, in fairness to him--he had been told a number

of stories which were not true. And I had a long talk with him on one occasion, and I might digress just a minute.

I was a Twining man; I made no mistake about it, but I never knocked anybody else. My personal feeling was that if Twining didn't get it, that there were capable officers who would give leadership to the Corps. And while I did everything within propriety that I felt I could do to support General Twining, because I thought that--and I still do--that it would have been one of the greatest commandancies in the history of the Corps if he had been made Commandant, I didn't knock anybody else including Shoup--although he was told differently.

After General Shoup became Commandant, why we did have a private discussion and he reviewed some of the things that apparently he had been told with respect to my activities. And I emphasized to him that--I made no bones about it--that I had been a Twining supporter and an active one but at the same time I had done nothing to knock anybody else, including him. He mentioned a few other items in discussion, and I simply said that anyone who believed that would believe anything. I served as effectively as I possibly could with General Shoup, and he did a number of things that I certainly felt were constructive. But obviously he had other people he wanted to put on his close team of associates at Headquarters, and advisors, and it was going to be simply a matter of time--

I felt--until in the course of events I was going to be transferred; but I made no effort to generate anything myself because I was a great believer that things usually work out for the best--for all concerned.

Q: Okay. Two questions here before you. . . . Why didn't Bill Twining make Commandant, aside from the fact he couldn't stand Tom Gates and. . . .

Hittle: No.

Q: It wasn't that?

Hittle: I never heard him be vindictive toward Gates.

I think the reason that Bill Twining did not become Commandant was that there was a significant sector of officers in the Marine Corps who had never understood the services that Bill Twining had performed, because they were not the kind of services that were the orthodox type of a professional career; and at the same time, Twining's closeness to different Commandants and the trusts above his rank that were placed in him--the trusts that were normally placed in much higher officers or responsibilities rather than trusts, of course--alienated and made some officers jealous. I have no doubt about that. At the same time, Twining was the type that there were--my feeling was, and mentioning no names--that there were some that would have had to go to work if Twining got to become Commandant, and the prospect wasn't

particularly pleasant to some of them. The whole culmination of all this, plus the fact that Twining had been ill, as we know; rumors had been circulated that he was in his terminal period--all of this tended to undermine it. And there were some that were close to the Secretary of the Navy at this time--Bill Franke, was it, who was Secretary of the Navy after Gates. And I think that as I reconstruct what transpired--and much of this is speculative together with some information of a hearsay nature that was given to me--that although Franke knew what an outstanding officer Twining was in his performance, how well Twining had acquitted himself and the credit reflected on the Department of the Navy and the Marine Corps when Twining was the staff boss for the Manpower Survey Committee, I think, under Mrs. Rosenberg . . .

Q: Anna Rosenberg, yes.

Hittle: . . . Anna Rosenberg. And a fine reputation he made for reasonableness and yet professionalism and objectivity, that as it became apparent that Twining was probably, at that time, headed to be Commandant as the frontrunner, all fires converged on him by those who didn't want him. It's the old story: the frontrunner is the most obvious target. And I think the nature of the opposition--tales that I said were peddled to Mr. Franke were such that almost at the last minute Franke was dissuaded, and Gates--of course--as Secretary of Defense took the Franke recommendation. I also think that it must have been a very late decision, because I was told that

Twining had been sent--which was normal--had been told to get his checkout physically from Bethesda as a preliminary to the final act of confirmation.

Q: Hmmm. He was that close.

Hittle: It was about that close.

And then the last minute . . . and of course there were those not only who were regulars--I mean active--but there was a significant anti-Twining group within the Reserves, also. So that is how I reconstruct it. And it was a surprise to many, of course, that Twining was not made, and Shoup was. Although as the thing came down to the wire, I became more and more convinced that it was not going to be Twining because certain things were happening although I was not privy to them, that somehow created an atmosphere of direction.

Q: You were also at Headquarters there during the Carey Randall affair when his two promotions were pushed through. Were you involved with this?

Hittle: No. I have no specific recollections with respect to that.

Q: Okay. Now to go on to your new job.

Hittle: Well the way that this transpired was that the first inkling I got of it was that I was over at the old House Office Building, and there was some testimony about which I

don't recall right now. I think it was basic defense posture hearings at the time, and Mr. Gates was testifying as the new Secretary of Defense.

Q: Were you a colonel or BG now?

Hittle: I was at that time a brigadier general.

Q: Okay. We didn't go into this matter of your retirement and being brought back on active duty.

Hittle: Well, we'll get into that in just a minute. I want to get into this: In the break in the hearings or right after the hearings, as usual there's always some conversation in the hallway and so forth. And just as we were leaving the old Armed Services Committee room with Mr. Vinson presiding, Mr. Gates saw me and he said, "Don, I want to see you a minute." We went over in the corner of the corridor at the end and he said, "I'm making some changes," he said, "in my staff over there. What's your reaction?" He said, "How do you feel about coming up and being the assistant to the Secretary of Defense for legislative affairs?"

I said, "Have you made a conclusion on it or are you simply asking my opinion?"

"Well," he says, "if you'll come, I want you." He said, "If you'd like it."

And I said, "Well, I certainly would be honored," I says, "and professionally glad to come up and work for you in view of our long relationship."

He said, "Okay, I'll put it into the mill."

Well I'd been around Washington long enough to know that certain things have to be fait accomplis because that was the top job in congressional legislative affairs for the entire Department of Defense. Today, the position that I held, the terminology has been changed and it is now Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, but the function remains the same. It was in charge of all legislative function^{ing}, coordination, and direction within the Department of Defense for all the military departments and the services. So my reaction to Mr. Gates was, I said, "If you've made up your decision and you want me over there, I have just one request," I said, "that I hope you will adhere to it."

He said, "What's that?"

I said, "As soon as you go back to the office," I said, "since we've had this discussion," I said, "as soon as you go back to the office I would request that you issue the instruction for me to come up immediately." I said, "No discussion, alternate proposals, or anything else." I said, "If you want me, fine! If you've got any doubts at this time or if you're considering anybody else," I said, "please don't bring my name into it."

He thought that was fair enough.

Q: Why did you do that?

Hittle: Well, in the first place there were a number of people in other departments that would not be particularly

enthused about having a Marine officer in view of all that had transpired in interservice matters, take over that critically important, or I should say key position with respect to all legislation and contacts with Congress. And so within a short time . . . why it was that afternoon, I was sitting at my desk over in the second wing here and the buzzer rang; it was the Commandant's buzzer and he said, "Come down here a moment, please." So I did as I usually did, I trotted right down. And I got the impression that he was somewhat surprised by the situation. He hadn't said anything to me yet, and I said, "Yes, sir."

And he said words to the effect: "I've just received a rather unusual telephone call"--words to this effect--he said, "Secretary of the Navy has called and said for you to report to the office of the Secretary of Defense to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Congressional Affairs."

And I said, "What is the timing on it?"

He said, "Immediately!"

I said, "Thank you." And turned around and left.

Q: No comment on his part or anything.

Hittle: Not that I recall; no.

And it was a very, very brief conversation. And I went up, put my cap on, pulled up a couple of my files on the desk, I'd come back and get them later, and went over and reported in to the Secretary of Defense. Then I moved in immediately into the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for

Legislative Affairs. That began a whole new phase of Washington experiences.

Q: Let's go back to this business of your retirement and recall to active duty and retired status as a BG.

Hittle: It started, really . . . my timing on this would be shortly after General . . . I know it was just after we completed the General Order 5 fight. And without dwelling on it, one night I had a massive hemorrhages from what turned out to be a hemorrhaging duodenal ulcer. I went out to Bethesda; they didn't even send an ambulance for me. They told me to get out there quick, not even bother to get a toothbrush when I called and told them what was happening. I went into shock; they told me three times. One morning they called my wife told her--it was about quarter to six--told her I wasn't going to make it 'til noon. But I mean I just give that to you as background. And it was purely through the medical skill of Bethesda that I didn't turn in my chips. After they got the bleeding stopped, why, the chief of surgery came around and told me that they'd never take another risk on me; that not only had I had a massive hemorrhage that I couldn't take a chance on again, but I had a rare type blood, a relatively rare type blood, that apparently I'd gone through the war with a different type on my dog tags. Whether they were fractioning them and analyzing them differently and more sophisticated, the manner after the war, I don't know. But anyway they said, "Don't take another chance on it."

And I said, "What do you recommend?"

He said, "Well, you only have one chance." He said, "We'll give you the subtotal gastrectomy and a new hook-up from your stomach through your intestines and so forth." So that just generally gives it to you. And everybody comes out of one of these surgeries, I had an 80 percent subtotal gastrectomy. And obviously my diet was limited and necessarily so, and other restrictions. Consequently I was put on restricted, limited duty; I couldn't have field duty. And I served in that capacity.

At a time that I had a opportunity to go into civilian life and make my break, why events converged that it was decided they wanted to keep me--it was desirable to keep me on active duty. I couldn't stay in a colonel's rank blocking, complicating transfers and so forth, and limited duty at that time. So I was placed on the retired list and brought back to extended active duty as brigadier general. And that was the capacity in which I served a large portion of the latter time under General Pate as assistant to the Commandant and then moved up to the Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Q: Had you been up for selection for BG?

Hittle: I never had. No.

Q: Never had. There wasn't a question of beating out the selection board, was there?

Hittle: Of reversing the selection board or anything like that. I was a considerable period away from it. If I had gone out, why I'd have been years short of it probably. And in view of the opportunity that I had on the outside, plus the fact that this gave me an opportunity to serve and continue service in a responsible and interesting job in the Marine Corps and have the privilege of serving as a brigadier general, why I welcomed the opportunity.

Q: Well, what was your first assignment--the first in many crises, I suppose--in your new job?

Hittle: There were a series of them over there. The first one I ran into when I went into that position was: that the political crossfires had started between the Democratic congress and the Republican administration of Eisenhower.

Q: Missile gap?

Hittle: And it was building up in the initial stages of the missile gap. And the first ranging shots legislatively by the partisan, Democratic partisans were against the new Secretary of Defense who was Tom Gates.

And you may recall that in one of his periods of testimony he used, in testifying about the Russian capability, he used the term that he did not believe, it was his assessment it was not the Russian intention of going a certain route with respect to missiles. Well, that was seized upon immediately by all of the partisans as a focal point, a target,

what they tried to do was to shoot Gates down and undermine him, and consequently the defense policies of the administration. The attack was on the effect that Gates was not professionally competent, that they were going on guesswork which was intentions instead of knowing what the facts were or at least going the proper intelligence route of capabilities, alternate courses. All of this stuff, of course, didn't generate within the congressional groups themselves, that there was obviously feed-in of a professional nature and so forth from partisans in the military, in uniform, were shooting Gates down or had reasons to support an anti-administration position. It was building up to that very bitter, bitter missile gap controversy that dominated the entire period and which was basically a phoney issue. But anyway, whether it's a phoney issue or not, if it's an issue in Washington, it's an issue that must be dealt with.

So one of my first jobs was to cool the fires of the opposition targeting in on the Secretary of Defense and also on the Defense Department and my loyalty to the organization, as well as the individuals, because it wasn't good for national security, in my feelings. So the first thing that had to be done was to show that this was not a solid phalanx of opposition, that there was an element of partisanship in it, of course, and all of that weakened it as well as put into perspective, that in terms of intelligence, he was not being irresponsible; that in other country intelligence thinking and evaluations, intentions are a perfectly usable word. And

anybody that had even read widely in intelligence matters would see and be acquainted with the term intentions and the manner in which it was specifically used. In other words, our evaluation ran the route of enemy capabilities and then most probably course of action. And although I had spent a long time in intelligence and lectured on it at the schools and taught it at one time at Marine Corps Schools, I always recognize that we were really engaged in some kind of semantics. But this was what they were beating Mr. Gates with, and that was the matter of using the term intentions, and associating that with guesswork and wishful thinking in their attacks on him. So this was an issue I'd work on and talk with members, both the Democrat and Republican side of the hill to try to: (1) keep the fires from getting any hotter, and (2) to try to put them out.

And it was always be to me a demonstration of the really solid statesmanship of a good congressman or senator, of when they will see an issue and take a side that is contrary to really their political associates, because they think that the matter must be handled in a different way than their political side is doing.

And the two people at that time who made the key remarks in the Congressional Record and came to the rescue, or I should say the defense, of Mr. Gates, were two who had been my friends for a long time, who I had always had the highest respect for and still do--although I differed in the details with them like you do with everybody. One was then-Senator

Humphrey, and the other was Senator Mansfield. Both of them made remarks in the Congressional Record explaining that, briefly but nevertheless pointedly, that there really wasn't this issue there, that Mr. Gates was following proper procedures and was not irresponsible. And that was the beginning of the cooling-off of the attack on him over that particular issue.

Q: Now well of course, I don't know what Mansfield's position was, but to put this in context: the people who made, who raised the issue, of course, were the Kennedyites--the Kennedy partisans, since Kennedy was running for office. Humphrey was running against Kennedy, so it wouldn't have been to his advantage. . . .

Hittle: I don't see any of a relationship here. I think this was simply a direct comment, aside from other considerations such as that, with respect to honestly stating that the attack on Gates in their words or however they phrased it . . .

Q: A phoney issue.

Hittle: . . . was not justified. And the effect of it was: It showed that he had a broad base of important support among even the liberal members of the Senate. And that was the major step in putting out the personal attack against Gates over the intentions' controversy. But the missile gap controversy continued to fester and to build.

Q: Until 196__

Hittle: Until the Kennedys came in. Yes, until the election.

Q: And there was nothing much you could do to counter that.

Hittle: It was a long and bitter fight to keep the record straight. You couldn't kill the issue, but you had to meet it. And the basic part of the controversy there, and focal point of it was in the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Investigations, which was then the Preparedness Subcommittee-- that's what it was technically. . . . (cross talk)

Q: Senator Stennis had it, didn't he?

Hittle: The senior member of it at that time, the chairman of it, was Lyndon Johnson.

Q: Oh, that's right! That's right!

Hittle: Lyndon Johnson was the chairman of it. And the staff director of it was Kenneth BeLieu. I hadn't known BeLieu--Ken--before. But in the course of our adversary status, my representation of the Pentagon and the administration in the controversy, and his position as staff director under Lyndon Johnson, I came to have a high respect and we have been personal, close friends ever since.

Q: Had Sam Shaw joined that preparedness sub-committee yet?

Hittle: He wasn't on the sub-committee at that time as I recall. No.

While I'm speaking of Lyndon Johnson here, I think there's a couple things that are significant. He was being pressed tremendously as chairman to make as bitter a political issue as he could out of the missile gap. And yet with his military background and his experience on the Armed Services Committee of the House under the tutelage of Mr. Vinson, and also in the Senate. As I say, I'm not a Lyndon Johnson partisan or anything, but I think everybody deserves credit as well as criticism. And although he was the one who was in charge of the difficulties, nevertheless there was not one incident during that entire period in which I, being in an adversary status and on the receiving end of his committee's activities, felt that he was taking undue advantage or going a unfair route or striking a low blow with respect to his handling of the matter vis-à-vis the administration.

And one event comes back that is rather interesting just as a sidelight. I got a telephone--during this, and it's kind of separated from it, but it was in the context of the political atmosphere which was very highly charged--I got a telephone call one day and it was Ken Belieu. As the staff director, he said, "The chairman just,"--meaning Lyndon Johnson--he said, "asked me to get in touch with you and have you come over as soon as you can. When would it be convenient?"

I says, "Whether it's convenient or not," I said, "it's right now!" So went down, got the car, and went over. Ken saw me privately.

He said, "The chairman told me to get in touch with you." He said, "He personally said to tell you to deliver this message to Mr. Gates; that there's something wrong over there, he knows what it is, it's something that he wants Mr. Gates to clean his own house on--put it in order--and if he doesn't, tell Mr. Gates that Lyndon Johnson will do it."

Q: It's all cryptic, very cryptic.

Hittle: Then he explained to me what it was. He said, "You've got a Marine," he says, "who's been picked up by police from time to time demonstrating in Marine Corps uniform or in civilian clothes," he said, "but he's a Marine, as part of Rockwell's Nazis." He said, "There's no place in the Marine Corps for a person like that." And of course both Ken and I knew immediately what a hot political issue that would be as well as just the immorality of it to permit a person adhering to these beliefs to be a Marine, and actively showing the swastika. It would have been a hot one and it would have been an indefensible position for the Secretary of Defense.

So I came back, told Mr. Gates that Lyndon Johnson sent that message, "You put your house in order, get rid of this guy because it's immoral and it's not proper," or else he would put it in order. And I said, "You can't oppose his reasoning on it."

He said, "Well, let me talk with the Secretary." Then he called me back. He said, "I've talked to Bill Franke,"

he says, "he's talked to the Commandant of the Marine Corps; and the Commandant says that as far as he's concerned he hasn't violated any orders, so he's not going to do anything about it." He said, "How will that fit?" or words to that effect in replying to Ken BeLieu and Lyndon Johnson.

I said, "It won't go at all." I said, "The message was for you to put the house in order." I said, "And if you don't, you're going to be in a position of defending the swastika at a time when you're the custodian of the traditions and the memories of all the people that died fighting it." I said, "That has no place in the Marine Corps," I said, "plus the fact it's going to muddy not only you but it will muddy the Department of Defense and the Marine Corps," I said, "and it will even cause the President problems."

Tom Gates kind of tossed his head like he did when he was faced with (chuckles) getting caught in the middle, and he got that kind of a sly light in his eyes. Although not saying what he was going to do or anything, he'd made his decision right then. He asked me though, he said, "What do you think should be done?"

I says, "The Secretary of the Navy should be directed to take whatever steps necessary to separate that Marine immediately," I said, "regardless of what the Commandant says." And apparently he'd reached that decision anyway.

He said, "Okay. I'm going to talk to Bill." Well the upshot of it was that very shortly thereafter he told me, he

says, "You can tell Lyndon Johnson that that Marine was separated."

Q: Was he enlisted or an officer?

Hittle: Enlisted.

And so I went back. Ken told Lyndon Johnson; he said words to the effect, "Tell Tom Gates, 'You did the right thing.'" Now here was an example where Lyndon Johnson, if he had been going the purely political route, could have taken a promotional issue like this and it would have hurt the Marine Corps, it would have hurt everybody concerned, and it would have an indefensible position on the part of the Department of Defense and the administration. To me this was a very decent thing for a political antagonist to do.

But anyway there's an interesting vignette that follows on this. This man's name that was kicked out, who was separated from the Marine Corps, was named Pattler. He was the one who later, as I recall, shot Rockwell.

Q: That's right. That's right!

We have more famous Marines as snipers.

John Pattler.

Hittle: Yes, I think that was his name.

But anyway, it was a curious sequence of events.

But there were a number of occasions during testimony and so forth that on one occasion during the missile gap controversy we had a statement that Cates was going to make.

And Lyndon Johnson was under tremendous pressure to restrict the format of the hearings, to limit it to questions and answers rather than statements, because once a statement was made there was no way of . . . and on this one occasion we were told that there would be no statement, but that he could file it. This obviously wasn't satisfactory. The tensions were very, very high and the stakes were high, too, because the record was being made for a powerful attack--I should say--upon the administration. Well, an attempt was being made to make a record; and that was the attempt we had in the interest of national security to thwart as well as the interests of the administration. And it was finally worked out between Ken Belieu and I, and he working with Lyndon Johnson and me with Mr. Gates, and also with Mr. Harlow at the White House who was in charge of congressional affairs; and I might say as an aside, one of the most able, hardworking, and trusted people in our era in Washington: Brice Harlow. The arrangement was made that if Mr. Gates, ahead of the meeting, submitted the statement to Lyndon Johnson, that it would then be entered into the record. That was a considerable compromise from the standpoint of the Preparedness Committee because it meant that there could be in existence a recognized statement which prior to that was ruled out. The committee hearing was called at such an early time that the sequence of this was a rapid preparation of a statement before a hearing was ever anticipated at that early a time. And the timing was so close, it had had to be in Lyndon Johnson's hands before

the gavel came down for the meeting, or else the old ground rules obviously prevailed--it would be question and answer; there would be no statement in existence for even reference to.

And I had a car waiting down at the river entrance of the Pentagon⁷. I stood beside the mimeograph machine as the first four copies came off. I had a call made to BeLieu to tell him that the message was on the way, so that they could never say they didn't know it--which he wouldn't anyway--but it was only fair to tell him. And I got in the car, we broke some speed records, I got over to the Senate Office Building with four copies in my hand, I came skidding around the corner into the . . .

End Side 2, Tape 1

Begin Side 1, Tape 2, Session XIII

Hittle: I came skidding around the corner of the hall into the Preparedness Subcommittee entrance room, and talking just as the committee was going up to their seats and they were assembling, Lyndon Johnson was just getting ready to go up and take the chair, Mr. Gates and he were conferring like principals and the chairman frequently do. Mr. Gates turned up to me, saw me though he didn't see the fluster coming in; but he was stalling anyway, hopefully. He said very quietly, he says, "Do you have a copy of the statement for the chairman?"

I said, "Yes. We brought it right over for you. We want it here." And as far as the general appearances to any

of the other people other than Mr. Gates or me or Ken Belieu, it appeared that it had been there available to him at any time. So Mr. Gates quietly took a copy and said, "Lyndon, here's a copy of my statement that we talked about."

He said, "Well, we'll put it in the record." Words to that effect.

Then, of course, many a plan doesn't work out as scenarioed. So the committee came to order, and the chairman, to the effect--without recollecting the words, said, "Mr. Gates is appearing" and so forth. "He has a statement which will be entered into the record." At that point--for good reason because she had been alerted and she was one of the most astute members of the Senate for a long time, and I have deep respect for her--Margaret Chase Smith said, "Mr. Chairman," she said, "I request that the statement be read." Well that wasn't in the scenario. And there was a colloquy there to the effect of: Well, it hadn't been planned or anything like that, and so forth. And obviously the effort was being made to stick by the arrangements that had been compromised out with the firecrackers on the committee that there would be no reading of the statement at that time; that the press would have to get it after the testimony and all of that--and after the questions. When Senator Margaret Smith went on an issue, there was just no deflecting of her; that was one of the strengths of her character and the strengths of her effectiveness as a Senator. After the chairman, Lyndon Johnson, got through explaining, she said, "But Mr. Chairman," she said--

words to that effect--"as a member of this committee, I feel it is absolutely necessary that we have this statement before we go to any questions,"--words to that effect--and she argued. Finally Lyndon Johnson--as I saw it from the audience there, sitting out there--you could just see that he said to himself: You can't whip a woman in a public controversy (laughs) or _____ a great realist. So he abided by the wishes of Senator Smith. And what we wanted transpired, the statement setting all of the facts before they got into the questioning and the loaded questions by the opposition of the missile controversy was read by Mr. Gates.

Q: Well, who was calling the shots on the conduct of this hearing?

Hittle: Lyndon Johnson was; and of course, Kenneth BeLieu. And Senator Symington was one of the opposition, one of the strong opposition because of his knowledge of the subject matter and also because of his political opposition.

Q: Now were they playing politics with the defense policy or were they being, was it a matter of principle with them?

Hittle: I'm always hesitant to say that a person is knowingly and deliberately playing politics or toying--I should say--with matters of national interest. Until it's ever proven to the contrary, I take the position with a public official and an experienced member of the Senate that although I can deplore what they're doing, I ascribe to them no [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ulterior or evil motives. And I certainly wouldn't under these circumstances as much as I didn't like what the hell was going on, and as damaging as I knew it. But from their standpoint, the mixture of politics, the mixture of national security, and the convictions--which they said were their convictions--I certainly wouldn't do any more than say I felt the effort was damaging but I hesitate--and even at this point can't say--that it was deliberate and crude politics.

Q: You're perhaps less cynical than I am.

Hittle: Well, let me say something: I spent 7½ years or so as assistant to the Commandant dealing with Congress--members of both sides and all political spectrums--and then over 2 years with the Secretary of Defense through this bitter controversy, through this bitter controversy. In all of that time and in view of the many occasions in which in order to properly handle the matter, in fairness to the Marine Corps, Department of Defense, and the administration as it later developed, and to the congressmen, you had to level with them. And on numerous occasions the only way you could level was tell them something that was closely held or of a classified nature, and depend upon their discretion. And in all of those occasions there was only one time when anybody publicly and I felt knowingly broke security on me. And I think that's a better record than you would get in almost any public sphere of life.

Q: Of course criticisms have also been made that the fact that the business of Congress is so complex in many areas that there are only a few people who really did their homework. Senator Russell or Congressman Vinson really knew, really read the budget, really read all the legislation, and were cognizant, could discuss these matters.

Hittle: Well, I can relate basically that when I was in these positions, and in that part that's pertinent to this interview, I wouldn't restrict the knowing element of Congress as narrowly as you have here. My observation, and it is still my belief and conviction, that the average congressman was a hard-working and basically honest person; that your average congressman, and that includes the Senators, in their profession--aside from being a congressman--were a good whack above the average of their profession nationwide; that a reason is very evident in the system, and that is--at least it's my theory--that there is a continuing selection process of 6 years for the senators, every 2 years for a congressman. And while there are many effects of whether or not a person survives an election, the basic observation that I can make is that a few phonies get by forever. But by and large the weak sisters, the phonies, the charlatans get winnowed out along with the chaff of the election; and that the average congressman, particularly anybody who's a senior member on the minority or the chairman of a sub-committee, works far longer and

far harder than practically any counterparts in industry or any phase of business.

Q: That's a very interesting comment. Of course Congress, as usual, is under great fire today.

Hittle: It is. Well Congress is going through a transition here. And I'm apprehensive about it as a lot of people are, because authority is being fragmented.

And at the time I held these jobs for the Marine Corps legislative and the defense--assistant to the secretary--this fragmentation really hadn't started taking place yet. There were people like Senator Russell, Senator Styles Bridges, Saltonstall; some of the senators who were junior at that time like the very highly respected Senator Stennis now. And on the House side you go down the list, Mr. Vinson and Dewey Short, Les Arends, Mr. Kilday said: That's what the committee did. There was authoritativeness. And we still have to see where the trend that is in effect now is going to lead before we make a judgement, but I think there's reason for apprehension on the standpoint that the defense authority committee-wise in Congress is being redistributed to other than the Appropriation and the Armed Services Committees.

Q: During the Strom Thurmond attack on the Marine Corps--if you recall it was late '60, early '61--on all the armed services, as a matter of fact, whether they were teaching the dangers of Communism to the armed forces; the chiefs of

services were doing this probably. Were you involved with that at all?

Hittle: As you bring up the subject, I don't have a recollection of any direct involvement in it. As a matter of fact, only most hazily since you mentioned it. I'd have to reflect on that and see if I have anything in my notes, in my jottings on it.

Q: If you remember, he came over here to Headquarters Marine Corps and wanted to know whether or not Marines were being tested. Then his aide accused the Commandant's aide of rifling through his briefcase and stealing some papers. It was a big. . . . I think General Shoup acquitted himself quite well at that time. But it's of minor consequence in respect to. . . .

Hittle: I was very probably up in the other position at that time.

Q: Yes.

To go down the list of notes: the camps on Okinawa, SecDef meeting with the JCS. . . .

Hittle: That's one we have not. . . .

Q: No, no. Those two we haven't talked about.

Hittle: We talk^{ed} about the camps on Okinawa.

Q: Yes we did.

Hittle: That's right. First. . . .

Q: That was the first. That's right.

A military foreign assistance bill under Eisenhower.

Hittle: We'll get into that. But I think that the (cross talk) the JCS one there.

One of the first steps that was taken by Mr. Gates in the matter organizationally within the Defense Department took place very soon after he had appointed me to the position on OSD. And having been associated with the JCS evolution and through the National Security Act and having been close to it, I always felt that there had been a organizational gap. And if this gap was not closed, there could be a development or a trend toward a single chief of staff in a much simpler way than was intended; or I should say, there could be a trend toward a chief of staff in spite of the fact that the Security Act never intended the chairman to be one. There had to be some type of a juncture between civilian authority within the JCS structure and the civilian authority of the government. And it obviously at that juncture could only take place at the level of the Secretary of Defense.

I went in one day and I talked to the secretary, to Mr. Gates soon after he took over. And I said, "I got one recommendation for you." I said, "I'm a great believer." The discussion went along that if a person can make one or two basic contributions to organization or betterment during their tenure, they shot the course in far better than par.

I said, "Regardless of how efficient the day-to-day activity is handled administratively as what isn't," I said, "the thing that needs to be done in my opinion is for the Secretary of Defense to meet on a programmed basis with the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to sit with them on those occasions and discuss matters." Well, we discussed this back and forward.

And he said, "Well, give me a short memo or something," he said, "so I can reflect on this."

So I jotted one off and sent it in to him. And the essence of it being that the thing that was wrong with the Joint Chiefs . . . the thing that needed to be improved was to bring the Secretary of Defense into the discussions and decision-making of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before differences within the JCS froze into split papers; and that it would be a two-way benefit: (1) to the Secretary of Defense knowing what the issues were if they froze, and having an intimate knowledge of feelings, background, and the finer points of an issue and the genesis; and from the standpoint of the JCS--knowing what the thinking of the civilian responsible for the Defense Department was, in other words, the man in whom, under the President, civilian authority under the Constitution is vested. Not that the Constitution says the Secretary of Defense, but I mean it was that sequence of designation of authority below the President by statute. And my basic theory at the time was that as a starter on this, that the Secretary should be notified by the chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff at any time that it appeared that there was going to be a important difference of opinion within the JCS on an issue that could result in split paper being submitted to the Secretary.

A few days later I got a very short note, it was on a little memo pad. It said to me and it said, "I'm instituting your recommendation with respect to the Secretary meeting with the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." And it was signed: Tom Gates. This was the beginning of the regular meeting, because it later evolved that he considered it such a useful device organizationally within the department from the standpoint of the Secretary and ~~the~~ the members of the JCS that it was institutionalized into a weekly or a regular meeting with the JCS--the Secretary would meet with them on a periodic, regularized basis.

And quite interestingly, this received the acclaim of people who were most knowledgeable in Congress with respect to defense organization. Mr. Vinson wrote a letter, or he put it in the record--as my recollection comes back--to the effect that Mr. Gates has placed the capstone on the organization on the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a system; that it has eliminated or it has materially reduced the possibility of the emergence of a single chief of staff because it brings together and so forth the civilian and the military planning at the seat of government in a proper manner. And it was also reflected in comments on Senate side. But Mr. Vinson was extremely complimentary to Gates about taking this position.

Q: Of course it lasted until McNamara.

Hittle: No! That is not correct!

Q: Oh, it didn't?

Hittle: No!

One of the interesting things was that in Mr. McNamara's confirmation--as I recall--Senator Russell asked him if he intended to continue the program of meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the procedure rather of meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which had proven so beneficial in all respects. And Mr. McNamara gave him his commitment in that testimony that he would; and it has so continued.

Q: There were some lapses, though, during the McNamara regime. I know General Greene said he was very unhappy that there were times when he didn't come down; Roswell Gilpatrick would come down, but that. . . .

Hittle: Well, that's the procedure. . . .

Q: The procedure may have been kept. But as to whether or not he, personally. . . .

Hittle: That's right. In other words it's the same thing as whether the Commandant or the Assistant Commandant or Chief of Staff goes to the JCS in their absence. I'm not saying that McNamara didn't backslide a little during it; but as a matter of procedure, it was continued. And if the Deputy

Secretary of Defense went, it was the alter ego of the Secretary under the circumstances. The important thing that I'm trying to emphasize here is that Senator Russell took--with his deep knowledge, profound knowledge of national security and organization--he took a specific step in the course of the hearings in getting the commitment from Mr. McNamara he would continue it.

Q: Very good.

End of Session XIII

Session XIV - 16 September 1976

Side 1, Tape 1

Q: I guess in chronological order--and we're still talking about your time as legislative assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

Hittle: That's right.

Q: Okay.

Hittle: Actually for the transcriber, here again, so that there's no confusion with previous terminology, the precise title was--the one previously referred to: Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Legislative Affairs; because that was the job that today is the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Legislative.

Q: You did not have to go up to the Hill for confirmation then.

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Q: You did not have to go up to the Hill for confirmation then.

Hittle: No. This was an appointed job. The function was the same except that it obviously didn't have the official perks to it and they didn't require a confirmation. But like in any of these jobs, it might be observed that your confirmation was an unofficial continuing process; that when you didn't get results why it was just the same as not being confirmed by the legislative. You were out!

Q: Well, in this position you had, you had plenty of crunch, didn't you? You had leverage?

Hittle: Oh, yes. You had just as much authority as an assistant secretary has. The only difference was that you didn't have an assigned car and driver; a few things like that. But as far as access to the Secretary of Defense, the Under-Secretary of Defense--the Deputy Secretary rather--at least when I had it under Tom Gates, it was full plenary authority delegated direct from the Secretary of Defense to run the legislative program for the department. If anybody didn't like it why they could come to me; and if they didn't like what I said, they could go to Gates--and on some occasions they did.

Q: Any effect?

Hittle: Gates never reversed me.

Q: We talked about General Twining there. There must have been quite a contretemps: Twining didn't like Gates, and

vice versa. Was there a confrontation at any time that you know of?

Hittle: None that I know of.

And I was a personal friend of both of them and had worked for both of them. And at no time did it ever in any way impinge upon my functions or my relationships in either direction.

Q: So apparently it had no effect.

Hittle: It had no effect as far as I was concerned.

Q: Okay. Well why don't we go into these other matters that you. . . .

Hittle: I'm glad that you mentioned that, to clear up a speculative matter.

Q: Very good.

All right. Chronologically, which came first: the silo slippage or the foreign aid program? Which one did you want to discuss first?

Hittle: Oh, I don't know which ones they were, but they were all within that period of the last half, 3 years of the last Eisenhower administration and while Tom Gates was the Secretary of Defense.

I guess that probably foreign aid program, because the missile matter intensified all the way through because it was

being picked up and utilized as a political issue; and it never ended until the election. So I guess probably the foreign aid.

Q: "Engine Charlie" Wilson, Charles Wilson was Secretary of Defense before Gates.

Hittle: Yes.

Q: It was he who made the comments--suppose, allegedly--about. . . .

Hittle: It was McElroy before him, Gates.

Q: Before Gates. And then Wilson before.

Hittle: That's right.

Q: But some of the background--and probably you weren't involved with the. . . . But you recall the statement that Wilson thought Sputnik was just a toy. (cross talk)

Hittle: I had other problems. I was over in the Marine Corps as the legislative assistant at that time; and the humorous remarks of the Secretary of Defense were the least of my worries at that time.

Q: (Laughs) I thought that the attitude might have carried over.

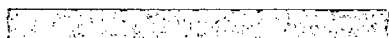
Hittle: No, no. No. Gates was a deadly serious man and an extremely capable man.

Matter of fact, I may have mentioned it before but it won't do any harm to mention it again: that having been on the Washington national security scene in one form or another, and having had a fairly good view from sometimes a close vantage point of different secretaries before and after I was at the Pentagon, I consider that Tom Gates is an under-appreciated Secretary of Defense; and that a good objective evaluation, study of his tenure would disclose that he was really one of the best secretaries of defense that we've had up to this point of which we're speaking now.

Q: He was a lawyer, wasn't he?

Hittle: I don't know if Tom Gates was one or not. He was a banker.


Well the matter that I was speaking about and which you brought up, was a matter of the big foreign aid fight during the Eisenhower administration. And the whole essence of this program was that Eisenhower with his knowledge of the European, the international scene, was intent on carrying out the executive commitments on foreign assistance. And with a presidential election looming ahead, this was seized upon as a political issue. And the Democrats in Congress by and large were opposing him. Of course, this became the primary chore of Brice Harlow who was then the counselor to the President for legislative, congressional matters; I guess the best one they ever had--I'd make a categorical statement on that. And of course, all of the military assistance which was a major



feature of the Eisenhower foreign aid program, because this was still in the period of delivering on our alliance system and establishing United States credibility at that time. All of the military part of it, of course, came through the Department of Defense. And the defense of it on the Hill came through my office; and I had to run, of course, the Department of Defense.

Brice Harlow was the only one in the chain of really of the legislative effort who was above me; and I can say that although we had a longstanding, warm, and good friendship based upon trust and confidence, that when it came to ramrodding a major program through, why Brice Harlow was one of the best people I know to hold your feet to the fire and keep you going. And his direction was knowledgeable, intelligent, and I can say it was persistent.

One of the episodes I remember was that with the issue taken on political overtones, undertones in increasing significance. . . .

 Q: With relation to the aid to a specific country?

Hittle: No, to the program.

Q: Overall.

Hittle: Yes, the whole program. In other words they were out to torpedo the President's program and rack up a political victory. I mean, not criticizing or anything--it was simply the modus operandi of our political system.

Q: Army was executive agent for the military assistance program overall?

Hittle: I forget if they were executive agent or not, but I simply can't remember who had it. The chore evolved upon the Secretary of Defense, and that meant me as far as the Department of Defense was concerned.

And of course there were some political implications that the individual services--some of them--couldn't overlook. In other words there were favors, influences, and opportunities to be gained by shoring up their relationships with the Democrats; and that meant giving some lip service and sometimes much less than that to the administration's position.

Q: You don't mean to say the services play that kind of game, do you?

Hittle: They sure did at that time.

I was well aware of it because I walked the Hill corridors, done enough lobbying myself to know an operation like that when I saw one. And there was really no purpose, really, to bring it out in the open because it would simply complicate the issue further and divert the attention away from the main effort of the foreign aid program of the Eisenhower administration. If one of the services became a cause celebre, those are the possibilities in which a much larger issue could be the victim. So it was a studied policy on my part through Gates, of course, Brice Harlow, not to

exacerbate the issue but simply know what was going on and to operate as best we could with that knowledge.

Q: * You had it all G-2d--you knew exactly who was involved?

Hittle: Didn't know exactly but I knew what was going on. I had enough friends on the Hill among the congressmen, the senators, that kept me informed of who was around doing the rug pulling. And when you know that, lots of times it's better to let it go on with the knowledge than it is to try to wipe it out; because if it's a well dug in operation it's very much like espionage: a new system will spring up and you got to go through all of the operation of trying to find it out again. But for many reasons, one of the services--and no use of getting into that now--was much more vigorous than the other in trying to torpedo the President's program in order to make political hay for other issues that were vital to them--they considered.

And I'll give you one illustration: As this thing was peaking toward legislative decision and yet it was still in the committee, I wrote a memorandum--I seldom wrote memorandums of this nature but I felt it was necessary on this occasion--I wrote a memorandum in which I requested a daily report, directed a daily report from each of the legislative assistants, which meant each of the directors of legislation for each of the military services, on this particular issue. And their comments on where the problems lie on the Hill with respect to who was opposing it most vigorously in their

opinion, where they were having difficulties in presenting the case, and who were the supporters. Well that was a perfectly straightforward approach to it and yet it was a document that I realized at the time that if twisted, could indicate intense executive effort; but everybody knew it was on anyway. The only thing anybody could do was weep crocodile tears over such a executive procedure as this reflected.

This went out one afternoon to each of the military services, and the next morning's Congressional Record had it printed in toto with a denunciating speech.

Q: By whom?

Hitte: As I recall, I think it was Otto Passman.

Of course, each of the services got carbons of the original. So it wasn't until I had the next conference a day or so later with each of the directors of the military services or their representatives there that we went over this and then referred to it, and I said, "I know you all got carbons," I said. "For your information," I said, "each carbon was typed all from a different original." And I said, "Also for your information, each original differed only in the placement of about three commas." I said, "And consequently the placement of the commas in the bootlegged letter to the Congressional Record," I says, "is a very interesting thing to observe." So they knew damn well who knew who was doing it. And that's all we did. But interestingly it toned them down from there on in.

Q: What; did you in fact do it that way?

Hittle: Ummm, hmmm.

Q: Purposely.

Hittle: Yes, I purposely did it because I had every intuitive response of suspicion that there would be some kind of an operation like that, the moment anything got into writing in that kind of a heated thing. But anyway, fortunately I think for the policy of the country, the essence of the Eisenhower foreign aid program was successfully carried through, and particularly the important parts--the military part of it.

Q: Did you . . . before we talk about the silos. . . . I guess if I asked you, for instance, what this particular service's objectives were, that would identify the service.

Hittle: Well, I could say what it was. It was heavy procurement requests and some procurement far in excess of what the anticipated budget was going to ask for.

Q: Again, the fight for the greater slice of the defense budget. (cross talk)

Hittle: That's it, yes. And with it the slug, the clout, the influence that went with the lion's share of the pot.

Q: I have a note here because this was during the Eisenhower/Nixon regime: I've been told that the reason for the close relationship of General Cushman to President Nixon was

the fact that he was Mr. Nixon's aide as a vice president and that the Marine Corps, as usual, when it sends people to do topnotch jobs, sends its topnotch people; that when Mr. Nixon wanted an aide, military aide, the people up around Eisenhower and so on, well (chuckles) "We'll give him a Marine." Had you heard this story, the idea, well, Marines are not that great, give me. . . .

Hittle: I hadn't heard that part of it at all. No, I hadn't heard that. I don't know what really . . . at least I have no recollection at this point of what the origin of the Cushman appointment as Nixon's military executive was. But I do know that where I was able to observe as the assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Legislative Affairs, that anything that I heard was very favorable and I heard no criticism within the department as to how Cushman was doing the job. His reputation was extremely good. And it wasn't based upon an obvious effort to create such a reputation.

Q: He was just a topnotch person.

Hittle: That's right.

Q: Okay. The next subject that we were going to discuss was the slippage of the momentum vis-à-vis establishment of the missile silos.

Hittle: Well this is really what's known as the missile gap controversy, and this was the one that was picked up by the

Democratic opposition also as a foundation for the campaign that was coming along. This was probably the toughest single issue that arose, I think, during the Gates administration.

Q: Why?

Hittle: Because it was pressed so vigorously by various elements within the Democratic congressional hierarchy and also within the press. It required the establishment of a separate office for the secretary and advisor. Well, he had an advisor. As I recall, his name was Oliver Gale, who was there as a special assistant. And this evolved upon him on a daily basis to track it.

Q: How did it start? And was there any validity to it?

Hittle: I don't think there was any validity to it. I think that in the way it was portrayed it was a phoney issue. And yet every little thing, you see--I won't say little--but every significant difficulty that transpired with respect to the missile program became in turn a major issue as far as Congress was concerned, and the criticism, and also in the press criticism of the administration of ineptness, poor planning, all of the fluff that goes along with a steaming up of the issue. And we referred to this before when we discussed the fact that Gates went over and on simply a matter of innocent terminology, when he said he didn't think it was the Russian intention to do something on that word intention, obviously with the backing of some technically knowledgeable

word mechanics within the Pentagon. They were tying intentions to wishful thinking, see, and trying to guess what the Russians were doing. But as I pointed out back in there as I recall, that was the first fire that I really had to help in putting out. And significantly, two of the Democrats who emerged as leaders and statesmen--Mike Mansfield and Senator Humphrey--were the two who, with a few well-chosen and timely observations, helped turn that one off. But nevertheless the fight continued.

And the one that you referred to here--the incident--was the one involving the construction of the Minute Man missiles. That was a massive program. And the Senate Investigating Sub-committee was watching it very closely because Lyndon Johnson was the chairman. We discussed there, though, the fact they pressed us nevertheless between the chief counsel, who was then Ken BeLieu, and the chairman, then Senator Johnson--Lyndon Johnson. That the effort was made to keep it on the track. But there were others within Congress and the press who would seize on anything. And one of the things that then-Secretary Gates was so insistent on was asking the services connected with the missile program--the silos and everything--to give him information as to anything that was coming up that was going to create difficulty. He wanted to know where the bugs and the problems and the future issues were, so that (1) they could solve them as they came up as best as possible; and (2) at least be aware of them and not have to waste their time beating off their detractors.

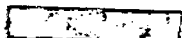
Right after one occasion--as my recollection--Gates had made a statement, and informed one of his congressional questioners that basically the missile program as far as the very complicated and massive silo operation was concerned, was generally on schedule. My recollection is that within a few days after that, Gates rang for me and called me in. He says, "How's the missile program going as far as the silos are concerned?"

I said, "All I know is," I said, "the latest that I know is that you said it's basically on schedule."

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session XIV

Hittle: He had a kind of a smile. I could see he was upset. "Well," he said, "that's not necessarily the case,"--or words to that effect. He said, "I've just received the information from the Air Force that we're 6 months behind." Well he knew and I knew, and anybody who had any knowledge of the implications politically of that situation, that was a bombshell as far as Congress was concerned because they had been given to understand, and I so informed them on the basis of all the information we'd received, that such was the case: that it was on schedule. And then to find out that it wasn't beginning to slip, but while you were telling this, you were wrong and you were 6 months behind a problem. And this was the key issue.



So I told Brice Harlow about it. He said, "What are you going to do?" I told Gates. I told them both about the same.

I said, "Well, there's only one thing to do." I said, "No cover-up." I said, "In the first place you never get away with a cover-up, second place it's wrong," I said, "and in the third place, to be open about it is going to be the way to meet it and to tell them why it's behind."

So the other part of this episode that I think is important is: where the trust was placed in a very volatile political situation. And I think this is a creditable example of the manner in which the congressional/executive relationship can work when it's based upon trust and confidence, and no cover-up. What I did, I got Gates and Harlow's approval on it--there were some real questions within the secretariat of the DOD whether this was the right thing to do or not, but sometimes you got to do what you believe in on the basis of your experience.

So what I did, immediately set up for the next day or so--I forget the time interval--invited over the staff directors, senior staff members concerned, and administrative assistants of every congressional staff--Armed Services, Appropriations, the rest of them--and the administrative AA's of those concerned with the missile: Democrat and Republican. I arranged to have the chief military engineer in charge of the missile operation come in a couple days at four. As I recall, he later--I think his name was Wellings; I have a thought of it--I think he later became the chief or the

commissioner or whatever they call it for the District of Columbia, before home rule; one of them, anyway.

Q: District Commissioner.

Hittle: District Commissioner, yes.

Q: Wellings?

Hittle: I think so. But this will have to be corrected. And if that is not the case, corrected in the transcript.

However, this officer came in, and he was in charge--very capable guy. It was obvious he knew that he was on a difficult mission there. So naturally I wanted to know what the problem was before we met with people. So I got together with him privately, and one of my assistants, who incidentally was an Air Force officer, General Roderick; very capable, loyal person. He explained it, and it made sense: that they'd run into--it's really a mining operation--they'd run into unexpected geological problems including water, as I recall, and there was a slippage. But it was something that the Secretary should at least have known about, but the main thing was to tell him what the problem was. And it had a national security aspect; I mean, if it was batted around, why it wouldn't be good for the country.

So I told him; he said, "Now what do you want?"--words to this effect. "How do you want me to present this?" which I interpreted to say: And what do you want me to say?

I said, "Just tell it as it is." I said, "Answer every question that you get. We're going to open it up to questions." I said, "I'm speaking for the Secretary." Although I've never done this in detail, I knew I had the blanket authority, I said, "I'm speaking for the Secretary." I said, "You are authorized and I'm informing you that that is the policy," I said. "So you are completely covered. And if there is any question, you've got an Air Force general here," I said, "who will be a witness to what the policy is if there's any difficulty or any problem or any explosion coming out of this meeting we got tomorrow."

As I recall there were about forty staff members there, and some of them representing the real critics. And I closed the door and all sat down. We had the chief engineer there. So I told them I was calling them over. I said, "There's only one way to apprise you of basic problems in which you're interested." And I said, "It's an understatement to say you're interested in this one. And this is," I says, "I'll tell you what it is. I'll tell you right now." I said, "We just received information that this silo program, the engineering installation, is about 6 months behind." (groans) There was a groan of surprise go up, and I could see on some faces what I saw as a smirk of satisfaction that there was literally pay-dirt politically. And I said, "I'm bringing you in here," I said, "to tell you what this delicate issue is and why it's happened." I said, "I don't need to tell you and I won't insult your intelligence by belaboring the point

of how important it is to national security." And I said, "My evaluation is that the slippage is nobody's fault and it's not the result of any mistake." I said, "But don't take my word for it." Then I introduced the general who was there who had come in. I said, "He is going to talk to you and tell you exactly what it is," I said, "so you get it first hand." I said, "You don't have to go on the basis of any rumors."

And one of the opposition, if you want to so label them, in the audience said, "Well what's the classification of this meeting?"

And I said, "There is no classification," I said, "except your good common sense. We're not bringing you over here to tell you something that is so serious and ⁱⁿ which you and your superiors are interested," I said, "and then throw a blanket of security and restrictions on him." I said, "The Secretary of Defense is depending entirely upon your common sense and sense of responsibility how you handle this."

Well, he laid it on the table for them, so to speak, he explained it, had questions; he answered every question that was put to him. Everybody went out. You know, the result of that thing was a virtual zero exploitation of the difficulty politically and in Congress.

Q: Interesting.

Hittle: In other words, the mechanism and the relationship of a trust and confidence episode such as that, I think was a

demonstration of how the executive and legislative branch can work under difficult circumstances, not that it will always do that or you could have done it twice in a row. But nevertheless this was an example, and I have no comparable one to compare it to. But it was one that, to me, having worked closely with the legislative branch so long, such a large chunk of my career both in and out of the service, was a reaffirmation of a feeling, that I had developed, of respect for the legislative part of government.

Q: The problem of 6 months' slippage; it was a slippage which occurred over a period of time, or an awareness because of the problem which arose, that it would take 6 months to correct.

Hittle: That's a good question, and I'm not quite sure if it was clearly one or the other. I know they were behind because that was the thing Gates was so upset about and didn't know. I think that it also meant that there was going to be a additional slippage; in other words, delay in the program.

Q: Well, I'm wondering, you know, if there was fear on the part of the operators of the program to bring the bad news up; a reluctance. . . .

Hittle: My recollection is this: that the reaction of the Secretary was--as I clearly recollect it--that he should have been told about it sooner. So that meant that there was a slippage already in existence. Now I'm not saying that it

didn't mean that the total period of a 6 months' slippage--some of it was still ahead of us--but there had been an awareness of the program as it was told to me by the Secretary before he was so informed, which meant that there was already a slippage of significance in there.

Q: I guess that's inherent in any bureaucratic process.

Hittle: Yes. Well, it was. . . . No, it's not inherent; not when the . . . (cross talk)

Q: The reluctance of the bureaucrats. . . .

Hittle: . . . senior people have direct and clear instructions or orders to inform the Secretary or their superior at any time they are aware of a problem existing or going to exist. And that was the thing that was, I think, the basic error that Gates was upset about. In other words, he wasn't told as soon as other people knew it.

Q: Did you find that to be, you know, both to be the case both when you were at Headquarters as legislative assistant and other times, that this sort of reluctance?

Hittle: Well, I guess it's the old story that there's a certain percentage, and I wouldn't venture to say what the percentage is; it's better to say there is a certain type of characteristic that is inherent in human nature and regardless of status or job, this type does not^{want} to be the bearer of unpleasant news.

Q: Or unwillingness to admit mistakes.

Hittle: Well, that too.

I guess it can be wrapped up; unwillingness to admit mistakes is also not the bearer of unpleasant news, because some of these attitudes such as that are based upon a very realistic understanding of human nature, that if they are never the bearer of bad news, they're never associated with failure and something unpleasant. And if they can get somebody else to carry that load into a front office and dump it, why that's to their advantage. By the same token, if they're always associated with bringing in something pleasant for the boss as far as information, at least subconsciously they're associated with the good news and success. But fortunately there's always also a percentage of people can see through that.

And I must say that one of them, one of the most astute--just to digress here--of seeing through such a technique, was Graves B. Erskine. And I remember one episode that will just illustrate this, and that was on Iwo when the going was tough, awful tough, and Erskine required a frequent report of progress, of where their lines were. We had one troop commander--no use saying who he is now, he's dead and gone--one troop commander, that he figured that . . . he was really afraid of Erskine, and he had some reasons to be because in some ways he wasn't up to Erskine's requirements, but he still held his command. But he was also a very cagey individual in some respects. The result was that every time Erskine would call

him, or the G-3 would call him, he'd say, "We're 50 yards ahead of where we were," "we're 25 yards further at such and such a point; going's tough," and 50, 25 yards you could never show on a map. So this went on for a couple days, and I was in there talking to Erskine on a logistics problem and unloading problem, and Erskine was talking to different people by telephone and radio. And talking to this individual he said, "Well where are you now?"

He got another report something to the effect, "It's another 50 yards."

"Is that right?"

"Yes, sir."

Well Erskine says, "Congratulations! I want to congratulate you and I want to come up and congratulate your staff and your subordinates."

You could almost hear the wonderment at the other end, and apprehension. And his stammering, I guess, "Well why is that?"

Erskine says, "Well I've been keeping track," he said, "and I just added this up; and you are now on your objective." Of course the guy wasn't. Erskine says, "Now listen!"--words to the effect. "You stop this stuff." He said, "You think you've been kidding me, and you haven't." He said, "You be on your objective in the morning or you'll be on your way out." And he said in 24 hours, if I recall. In the meantime, just to show he wasn't kidding and to apply the ultimate in psychological pressure, he sent up the prospective relief to

acquaint himself with the situation so he could take over on momentary notice.

Q: They made it?

Hittle: They made it!

Well that's an aside. But along with the type that is always the bearer of good news and consciously never bearing bad news, fortunately there are people within government both military and civilian who can sense it. But unfortunately not enough of them.

Q: To digress even further because you bring up a good point, and you've been around government long enough and you've been in positions of prominence or in a position to observe. What are the qualities, what are the facets of individuals who fill positions such as Secretary of Defense or policy-making positions which make them different from other people? They've got to be men of principle, they've got to have backbone. . . .

Hittle: Now you are saying what are or what should be?

Q: Well, what are, based on your observations, and what should be??

Hittle: There have been very capable Secretaries of Defense, very admirable ones, and there have been those to the contrary.

Q: Seems to me that for instance a man who is President, such as Kennedy, exudes this youth and this "Peppermint Lounge" atmosphere in a whole, but he still had a backbone of steel.

Hittle: Well, I don't know if I mentioned it before, my relationships with then-Senator Kennedy. I was never a close acquaintance. I was never any more than an acquaintance with an official relationship, and the relationship was being that I was the one that was responsible for the legislative activity of the Pentagon--congressional relations in all of its forms. My recollection--it's a clear one of then-Senator Kennedy, was--that he was one of the most reasonable, straightforward members of the Senate or of Congress when it came to knowing where he stood and what his position was with respect to requests.

There are a couple of occasions that come to mind. I'd get a telephone call and it wouldn't be a secretary or anything. He would say, "This is Jack Kennedy."

I'd say, "Yes, sir."

And he'd very nicely. . . . And it wasn't a belabored effort to be considered. He said, "When you get a chance, at your early convenience," he said, "this is kind of pressing on me," he said on one occasion. "Will you come over and see me?"

I said, "I'll come over right now." So I went over, went into the office. Of course it was crowded like Kennedy's offices always were. The secretary told him I was in.

He came out and he says, "Come on in here with me, will you please." We went into a little cubby hole corner office. He told me what his request was, why he was making it, and just what it meant to him politically. And asked, "Will you do anything about it?" Well, when a person levels with you like that, why you know what the issues are and you're not exploring things and trying to find out what's involved. As a result, most of the time we were able to do these things that he asked; and he never overdid it--I guess maybe three, four times in the relationship. And consequently you knew when he did ask personally for something that it was genuine.

Q: I was thinking . . . my question was in terms of people having to make the hard decision; they could have gone around or under the obstacle, but facing up to facts, to realities. This calls for--it seems to me--calls for a certain type of individual.

Little: It does, it does. Not only as a decision, a matter of responsibility, but there are many ways at which decisions are arrived at. One is on the basis of information and balancing the pros and cons of the alternatives and coming up with a decision that is not a rubber stamp. Another way of doing it from the other side, and unfortunately there is too little of the one I have just mentioned and too much of the other which is: letting the system throw up the decision. And the decision-making process then becomes one not of

decision-making per se, but really one of official affirmation. And there's too much of that.

Q: So the people in the decision-making, policy-making positions and their assistants, their advisors, are a different breed--have to have a different stamp about them.

Hittle: Not necessarily. At any chain of responsibility there is always an element of decision-making. But the nature of bureaucracy is that the one who pushes the initial pencil is the one who generally makes a policy unless it is countermanded someplace at a decision-making level. And too often the basic recommendation with respect to a bureaucratic or a big agency in which bureaucracy with its good points and its disadvantages, is the inherent mechanism; very often it's something of a mechanical--it isn't the word for it--an organizational generating of a position. And when it reaches the person who has to put the imprimatur on it, it's a difficult matter many times to have the kind of person who'll say, "No, this isn't it." And the characteristics and the requirements for a person capable of being his own decision maker in the face of a continuing series of proposed positions is a difficult one to find enough of. Does that answer your question?

Q: Yes.

Hittle: I mean at least I tried to explain. And it gets down to one other thing: At the level of a presidential

appointee in an executive agency of government, that individual can be as effective and work as hard, or have as easy and pleasant a job as he wants to as long as the ladder doesn't go over into gross malfeasance. And the example is, look how long they are sometimes without. . . . Well, they just filled what's been empty for months, an undersecretary in the Navy. And yet if that job is done properly. . . . And I know from personal observation working with probably one of the most capable undersecretaries in recent years, who was John Warner, he worked many a day, and I would say pretty close to his average day was 12 hours plus Saturdays--half Saturdays--on major issues and coordination and decision-making. And he was one of those who made his own decisions.

The point I'm making here is--before I digressed on Warner as an example--the nature of the system is such that the vacancies that have existed for a long period of time at the Presidential appointee levels in government agencies--or executive departments I should say--demonstrate how the system will operate without the person who's suppose to run it. And it's a bad thing and I think a mistake to permit an executive appointee position to remain vacant for any period of time; a few days maybe, yes. But if there are things that are supposed--and this is particularly true within the military, I'll get to it later on, but it can also happen in the type of position we're talking about here when I was legislative assistant to the Secretary of Defense--if there are functions that evolve upon particularly a Presidential

appointee, say an assistant undersecretary or something like that--assistant secretary, undersecretary--and that which should be performed by him, in his absence they're going to be performed usually by somebody else who takes it on as a side job; another secretary who if he does a job right hasn't got time to do two jobs. And of course it will never have the attention and the expertise and the knowledge that the person occupying that job should have; so consequently the same thing happens as if the system itself--in other words the bureaucracy--does the work of the Presidential appointee who's suppose to be running it. And there's one thing you can be sure of within the . . . particularly the military departments. And this will apply in a sense of bureaus and subunits within the civilian executive departments, that when a position of responsibility is not filled and it is vacant, somebody else will perform that function; and you can be sure that there is somebody below the assistant secretary or the undersecretary level who will make those decisions within the military apparatus, basically because they have to be made. But the system immediately begins to engulf that type of decision-making at that level. The result is that the civilian appointee will probably never get it back within his term.

Q: Well what you're saying is that the . . .

Hittle: That the gravity of power and decision-making will flow to the bureaucracy, military or civilian, in the absence

of a knowledgeable and decisive Presidential appointee level.
And unfortunately there are too many who ^{are} engulfed by the system.

Q: This comment in effect, though, reflects upon the strength of a civil service no matter whether it's in the United States government or any other government, the fact that the government will go on regardless of whether there's a government in effect or a political appointee. . . .

Hittle: Oh, sure it will run! But does it run like it's suppose to; and particularly within the Department of Defense you have a problem where you have the constitutional principle of the superiority of the civilians of those functions devolving to the military. And whether it's the right decision that is made in each instance or not, the fact is it's made at the wrong place in the absence of one who will make the proper decisions or the absence of a person to make them. That, in a sense, is an erosion of the principle of civilian control, because civilian control does not mean Civil Service control; it is not a two-track system. Civilian control really is at the Presidential appointee level.

Q: As it applies to the services.

Hittle: Yes.

And you have a corollary that, of course, is different in nature, but nevertheless much correlation of principle within the other agencies as they break down into bureaus or departments.

Q: Now you stayed in this position 'til about 1960 before the. . . .

Hittle: Yes. Right at the end of '60; I guess I ended up the last day of '60, something like that. (cross talk)

Q: November. It was after the election.

Hittle: Actually, I knew I was going to leave, because I mentioned I was on a limited duty, and you can't go forever on that and take up a billet. And I figured I had done that job. I was pretty sure that--in my own mind, although I had never forced the issue with Gates, pointedly at least--I was confident that regardless of how the election went, that Gates after his many, many years of government service would probably not stay on a long time even if there was a Republican victory. So I decided that in order not to be a political refugee regardless of how it went, and since I was going to leave anyway with the departure of Gates, that I'd so informed him before the election just so there was no question about whether I stayed with another Republican, didn't like him if a Republican was elected, and then left under circumstances that might be misinterpreted or something like that, or whether there was a Democratic, and the tenure would be questionable or quickly terminated. Since I was going to go, why I left at the end of the year.

Q: Then you went over with the VFW.

Hittle: I became Director of National Security and Foreign Affairs with the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Q: How long were you there?

Hittle: I guess I was there about 5, 6 years, something like that.

I continued in many ways an unbroken interest and effort with respect to national security. And the VFW was strongly behind national security programs. It was strongly in support of the U.S. position in Southeast Asia. And I had satisfaction in working with the VFW at that time when there was a series--not that there haven't been since--but it was an unusually able series or a series of unusually able national commanders in the VFW, men of high professional ability, grasp of big issues, understanding, willing to delegate, and had an interest in supporting the U.S. government to a pre-eminent degree.

Q: How would you compare the political clout of the VFW as opposed to the American Legion?

Hittle: Well, I'm a member of both, so that's a difficult question.

Let me say at this time, at the time we were talking about it, it was my feeling that the VFW was moving out as a result of the mandates at its conventions and so forth out of its national security and foreign affairs committee, and taking the initiative in fields that established a leadership

for the VFW. For instance, while I was there, VFW played a major role in saving the Junior ROTC. These are just some of the examples of things that went on. Because one of the things that's forgotten is that the Junior ROTC--that's the high school ROTC system--which year it was, but it was while I was at the VFW while McNamara was Secretary of Defense, overcame the federal budget to the Congress and it had the elimination of Junior ROTCs in it. And the reason for it was that Junior ROTC at the high school level was judged not to be cost effective and it wasn't the job, so the statement was made by some people of the Department of Defense, to train citizens, for citizenship training.

Q: Oh?

Hittle: Well, I got hold of this. The National Commander of the VFW at the time gave a full endorsement. And my longtime friend, Eddie Hebert, had the Reserve Affairs Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee at the time. And the country is indebted, again, to Edward Hebert for making a fight on something that was necessary. We marshalled--the VFW--we marshalled veteran support and the public support, and worked industriously to support Hebert's efforts. It was a tough fight; it got so tough that they convened some board at the Pentagon, I remember, under McNamara's direction, to look into the alternatives and so forth. And one of the people they had appear before it was me representing the VFW. And they said . . . this was after Hebert had put in his bill,

and Hebert never did anything in a small way. If he believed it was right, he did it big! And so instead of wiping out, I think it was 169 Junior ROTCs, he just didn't put in a bill to restore those and keeping it from being wiped out. He put in the Junior ROTC bill that called for the establishment, on a phased period, I think of 1200 Junior ROTCs through the country. And the Pentagon then established, as they usually do, a committee. The committee asked me, as the representative of VFW, to come over. I remember this very clearly.

And of course the question they asked was the one that this committee, which of course wouldn't have existed if it wasn't doing what McNamara wanted at the time in supporting him, said, "Well, our estimate is, as we cost this out, that the Hebert bill will cost at least a billion dollars. What is your opinion with respect to this tremendous outlet?"

I said, "Considering what the benefits would be to national security and to the country and all of its implications," I said, "I think it's one of the biggest bargains in national security that you can find."

There wasn't any more discussions as far as my appearance was concerned on that occasion. But the end result was that the Hebert Bill was passed, the VFW was one of the organizations that was the organization that really was responsible. And just as an aside: When Hebert received a congressional award at a big banquet here last winter from the VFW-- and I'm no longer an official of it, I'm simply a loyal member--and I wasn't at that banquet because I was out of town

[REDACTED]

on business. Mr. Hebert was reflecting on some of the things that have taken place with the assistance of the VFW. And I was told that he pointedly referred to that struggle and made some complimentary remarks about the contribution that I personally had made to the effort. I simply make that as an aside because you asked what different things I was mixed up in or involved in at that time.

But to digress a little more: The Junior ROTC with all services having a part of it, was the means by which we now have a goodly number of Marine Corps Junior ROTCs or Navy Junior. And the interesting point--and I'll get into this further, when I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy--was that at the peak of the Vietnam War and the peak of the protest in which the ROTC system was under fire on the campuses by the liberal elements and everything, throughout the country as a concerted effort--I'm convinced. It may not have had a central organization, but there was a unofficial, I'm convinced, relationship between all of these efforts. Because you couldn't have it nationwide spontaneously on specific issues if it hadn't of been at least an alertness to what was going on elsewhere, and a coordination--at least locally--of the effort. Throughout all of this intense fire on the college ROTC system, the protest, the demonstrations, the faculty meetings that took the ball away from and the responsibility for . . . contradicted and opposed in many cases the position of the university in all of that, and the closing out of some of the ROTCs, which I'll get into at a different time.

The most successful education program in the United States was the Junior ROTC system at the high school level. And the only way I can explain that is that were two things: (1) the grassroots opinion of the American people was not anti-ROTC, or there would not have been such an expansion, by request of the local communities, of the Junior ROTC system during that period. It wouldn't have received such local support by the communities. And the other reason was that there wasn't a grassroots support of the college protesting, and attempt at dismemberment and elimination of the college level ROTC was that whoever was doing that, either locally or coordinating it unofficially nationally if there was such a thing--of which I have no evidence except just observation of results--they never realized what was going on at the high school level.

Q: Well weren't most of the Junior ROTCs at the high schools in parochial schools and private schools?

Hittle: Oh, no.

Q: They were in public high schools.

Hittle: Public high schools.

Sometimes we had ten, twenty requests for each one that we could place when I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the peak of the ROTC protests. Communities were standing in line asking for them.

Q: This was a good program and, of course, it devolved upon the necessity for establishing national security at the grass-roots level as you pointed out. Why, or what was the position of the VFW with respect to UMT?

Hittle: My recollection was: that was an issue that was resolved before I went to VFW. If there was any carryover from the period in which it was resolved, you know, by the congressional vote, the VFW, my recollection is, was basically in favor of UMT.

Q: UMT seems the way to go; the only way to go. It's been an issue before. . . .

Hittle: It is for many reasons. But the pragmatic problem of UMT is the magnitude of the cost of the thing.

Q: Because I recall it was a matter that came before Congress immediately after World War II.

Hittle: It was defeated by one vote, remember? UMT was.

Q: Really? I didn't think it was.

Hittle: Yes. That's my recollection of it.

Q: And then given the recent arguments about the racial complexion of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam war, the reenlistments and the necessity for establishing quota systems or looking into it, and the fact that so many--the whole social structure of the Armed Forces--that so many people were

exempted from the draft that this would be the natural, most popular solution; but apparently it isn't that way.

Hittle: Well, as I say, as a concept I believe in universal military service, having been in personnel. . . .

End Side 2, Tape 1

Begin Side 1, Tape 2, Session XIV

Q: You were with the VFW for about 5 or 6 years, which brings you up to the mid-sixties.

Hittle: Yes.

I can mention a couple other things that were significant during that VFW period as it affected national security. One of the things that I was able to lend a hand in, and it really originated with a trip to Vietnam by the national commander at the time, Mr. Jenkins from Alabama, and myself--one of my early trips to Vietnam. We were up in Ban Me Thuot, and that was a pretty far out outpost at the time as far as the Americans were concerned. And we were at the main building which was old Bao Dai's former hunting lodge, which was then a U.S. military and South Vietnam headquarters. And it was interesting . . . out of one of the trails coming out of the bush came a couple of U.S. Army youngsters that went up to a broken down, old mail-orderly window . . . and I guess there's a rule of thumb that the disreputable physical condition of a mail-orderly's hut is almost in direct ratio to its distance from Washington. I guess some kind of a principle could be

evolved from that. But anyway this thing was being held together by its few rusty nails and so forth, and there was a part-time mail orderly in there. These fellows bought a couple dollars' worth of stamps, put them into their wet pockets, and headed back to their position.

And I said to Buck, I said, "You know, why don't these people have free mailing?" Well that was the origin of the successful effort to get a congressional legislation for free mailing, franked mailing for all the troops in Vietnam. We came back and that was the result of it which the VFW did.

There were other major activities of the VFW, but we can skip over that since that is not the primary purpose of this tape.

But just to give some kind of continuity while I was with the VFW after a few years, I additionally worked as a military commentator for Mutual Broadcasting System. Also I began writing a syndicated column for the Copley News Service out at San Diego--went to about 40 papers eventually.

And the upshot of the whole thing was that my outside activities, including being a director of the District of Columbia National Bank and a real estate corporation, were eating into my time so much that I couldn't really in good conscience I felt, continue, except as part time, and I knew that they had to have a full time, so I resigned from the VFW. And for a period of about 3 years there I was in the news business in addition to being consultant to the House Armed Services Committee for a year. I was also special counsel to the Senate Armed Services Committee in '68 and '69.

Q: On these broadcasts scripts and your newspaper columns, I hope you have good copies so we can include them in as appendices to this transcript.

Hittle: I think I can find them, you know, most of them. Yes.

Q: I think they ought to be put in.

Now we've got to talk later. I've got a note here about that sealed package. You mentioned that it should be part of the transcript.

Hittle: Yes.

Q: But we can talk about that later.

Hittle: Before we move into the next military aspect or the next phase of what you're primarily interested in with respect to my activities, which would be when I went back to the Department of the Navy, I guess the significant thing that you might want to have--and I'll leave it up to you here--is when I was special counsel for the Senate Armed Services Committee and conducted the investigation of absenteeism of the armed services in '68 (cross talk) and '69.

Q: I didn't know about that. Yes, that should be put on.

Hittle: That was just before Senator . . . while Senator Russell was still chairman, I was called over. As a matter of fact, he had contacted me, oh I guess a matter of some

months before, and asked me if I could come over and see him. I merely mention this because of my relationship with the Armed Services Committee, which was a follow-up of, I guess, the relationships that were established in my years with the Marine Corps and then DOD as the legislative assistant.

Q: I think you ought to note here--and I may be wrong--but despite all your legislative experience, you are not a graduate lawyer are you?

Hittle: No, I'm not a lawyer and I never felt that it--without any reflection on the law, because I intended to be one when I went to college, but I went into the Marine Corps instead after I finished four years of pre-law and I was already ready to go to law school--I never felt it was a drawback. Others might have. But I never felt it to be such, because the issues in which you deal are not technical ones. If you need technical legal language, there's competent legal service in almost any government department. And I think when you deal with the basic issues in their non-technical aspects, at least the kind which I was associated, there's probably an advantage. I'm not saying it's a disadvantage to be a lawyer, but if one became immersed in legalism, let me say, it would I think fuzz the problem.

As I was mentioning, Senator Russell called me over--I guess this was in early '68, late '67--asked me to come over. And nobody ever--at least I never had long conversations with the chairman--I don't think anybody did except his chief

[REDACTED]

counsel, Bill Darden, and a few of his Senate friends. He was a man who never wasted words. And he was one of the most able people I have ever known in the United States government. And incidentally, from your standpoint you'd be interested: He was an extremely broad, knowledgeable historian of every period. He knew history amazingly! But anyway, he called me over on one occasion--just to show how his intuitiveness foresaw some of the difficulties that were happening, that are happening today to the intelligence community--called me over and he--I can disclose this now, I guess, because he's long past and it's of no particular interest or particular intelligence interest--he said that, he said, "You know, I've been concerned for some time," he said, "about one of our intelligence agencies. Not that I know there's anything wrong, but I just don't know enough to be sure that it's right." He said, "I want to make sure they're on the right track." He said, "I would like you to conduct, if you will," he said, "take over the job of conducting a one-man investigation of the Senate Armed Services Committee," he said, "into the NSA." He said, "Every bit of it!"

I said, "Well, I need to think about that. Not that I'm not interested." Well I came back the next day and I told him very frankly, I said, "I'm basically making my living on news business, radio, and writing." I said, "And the kind of a thing that I would be engaged in would be something that I simply could not, even regardless of how I insulated my activities," I said, "even the appearance of a connection or an

accidental inadvertent disclosure," I said, "would damage the entire operation." I said, "The two can't go together. It would mean that I would have to sever my business connections," I said, "and burn my bridges."

He looked at me, he said, "You really shouldn't be required to do that," he said, "and I completely understand." He said, "We'll just let that go." And so they never conducted it. But it was interesting that he had his eye on that at that time. He just had a feeling that something needed to be done.

It was some months later that he again called me over and he said, "I have something that I wish you would consider." He said, "You know, this whole matter of AWOL, desertion, so forth in the armed services--absenteeism," he said, "is something we should know what the facts are." He said, "I think it's bad but I don't know." He said, "I'd like you to--if you will," and he was very decent about it, he said, "I don't think that there's any conflict here with what you're doing." He said, "It doesn't have to be full time. You can work it in as the chief. . . ." he said. And then he had Bill Darden handle it from there on. He wanted me, in effect . . . well, to continue what he said, "To conduct an investigation for the Armed Services Committee into absenteeism." And Bill Darden, who was his confidante and one of the most able staff people on the Hill, he was chief counsel then for the Armed Services Committee of the Senate. He had made the arrangements with me as follow-up to conduct the investigation, and

that was of absenteeism in the armed services. And that was, let's see, it would be the latter part of '68, the armed services, I guess, '69. And that's when they were going over the hill in droves.

So I took on that job as special counsel to the Senate Armed Services Committee on a per diem basis, and conducted it.

And after a career in the Marine Corps and the military services, I thought that I had a pretty good working knowledge of all of the various devices of going over the hill. (chuckles) But I got a post-graduate education out of that one.

Q: How so?

Hittle: Well, the bizzare manners in which people would leave: some of these desertions in Europe, and some of the astounding actions--to me at the time when we got into them--of some of the military departments in the discrepancy in covering up of their . . .

Q: Covering up?

Hittle: . . . of their policies with respect to handling them. I almost came to the conclusion that sometimes that the most sensitive a person's departure was as far as publicity and so forth, the easier it was on the individual. But I was interested. . . . Just a few months ago I was over at armed services, and one of the staff members told me that they're still getting some requests from colleges and so

forth--researchers--for that investigation both the investigation and the report. We had three very able people in the Senate at that time; they're still in the Senate, who were the members of the subcommittee for which I directly worked.

The chairman of it was Senator Inouye. I immediately found him to be one of the most incisive minds and strong minds I'd run into in a long time. And I guess the same general characteristics applied to the others: one was Senator John Tower who was the Republican, and Senator McIntyre. All of them have emerged as senate leaders in the years past, through their abilities.

But I would think that that might be something worthwhile for me to ask the legislative office to get you a copy of both the investigation and the report on absenteeism in the armed services--if they have any copies left over at the Senate Armed Services Committee. I'd be interested in knowing.

Q: Okay.

Hittle: It was either '68 or '69 as I recall.

And of course the different services were keeping an eye on me as to how I handled the absenteeism in the Marine Corps. I had to call it as I saw it! And we had too much of it, too. We had more than we should, let me say, by far.

Q: Did the services cooperate with you fully?

Hittle: After prying. In other words, having been on the other side of the street helped me in conducting the

investigation of where I--in other words--the uniformed services.

Q: There was a real great problem to all the armed services.

Hittle: Yes. All the armed services had their problems, and some of it was not handled properly, either, in the opinion of the sub-committee. And this was adopted by the committee, and it was a report adopted by the full Senate.

Q: Were there any legislation or any measures taken after that?

Hittle: There were administrative measures that were taken after it, and I would have to reflect on it and refresh my memory on that.

But the recommendations that emerged from it were the basis for some corrections. And some procedures that were changed and attitudes that were stiffened with respect to it, because there were some really amazing individual cases that shouldn't have been handled as they were.

Q: Of course you had defections and everything else involved.

Hittle: Well, we didn't get into the draft dodgers.

Q: Desertions.

Hittle: Desertions and AWOL. In other words, the extent of it.

And some of it was very sensitive from the intelligence standpoint, too, that really didn't appear but was simply used as background because we didn't want the report to be classified. Some of this came to us from sources overseas--some military.

Q: Considerable amount of coverage? (pause)

Hittle: Well, let me put it this way: That I think in a couple of cases there was no desire to make a public disclosure.

Q: Had you been. . . .

Hittle: However, there's a couple things you can always do that I learned early, and that is, when you have somebody come over to appear before you as all of a sudden simply put them under oath, that has a very salutary effect on the whole investigation.

Q: A chilling effect. (laughter)

You'd been working with Congress, you'd been working with people on both sides of the aisle; had you maintained any relationship with the Republican party all during this time? Had you been political at all?

Hittle: I would say that I was not politically active, no. My relationship with trust and confidence were on both sides of the aisle, and both sides knew it--from the other side.

And they stretched across the--and it was some satisfaction to me--they extended across the spectrum of political philosophy.

Q: The reason I ask. . . .

Hittle: All the way from Senator Russell, who no one would ever accuse of being a liberal, to then--at one time a young senator by the name of Hubert Humphrey.

Q: The reason I ask this is because I'm trying to establish the basis for your appointment to assistant secretary, which is nominally a political appointment.

Hittle: It is a Presidential appointment, sure.

Well, if you want to shift into that now, why I'll. . . . It was soon after this that I. . . . The only thing that I can mention here just to fill out the activities was that while I was special--not special counsel--but consultant to the House Armed Services Committee at the same time . . . it overlapped with the one on the Senate side, but they both knew it, so there was no conflict. I was an advisor--I think it was in '68--to the House Armed Services contingent of the U.S. delegation to the Interparliamentary Conference in Brussels.

Q: Oh, really!

Hittle: I served as an advisor to the House Armed Services group that went over.

Q: Did you go to Brussels with the group?

Hittle: Yes, yes.

Q: That was strictly non-military.

Hittle: Well, it's the NATO Interparliamentary Conference of the NATO nations. And it was a very interesting insight, because it was in '68 and so forth that the United States was becoming more intensely energetic in urging some of the European NATO nations to carry their share of the load. And it was a very interesting conference.

Q: Were you involved with the officials of the other countries?

Hittle: Well, I knew them and so forth, yes, and was in the meetings with them. At the plenary sessions I was seated behind but with the American delegation, and I assisted some of the members of the House delegation of the Armed Services people with position statements; matters such as that.

That about takes care of that interim period, and I guess now you can shift into Assistant Secretaryship.

Q: Secretary of the Navy.

This might be a good place to stop unless you. . . . I think perhaps we ought to start fresh.

Hittle: Yes. Let's start fresh.

Q: Okay, fine! Well, we'll end it right here and keep it. . . .

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Tape 1, Side 1

Q: We had a couple items that we were going to continue from last time before going into your SecNav assignment. So, first one was. . . .

Hittle: You were mentioning to me what role I played in helping get the battleship New Jersey out of mothballs, updated with here electronics, wiring and so forth, communications.

Q: This is when you were. . . .

Hittle: This is while I was a private citizen writing the news column.

The person who was deeply into it then and was really the one who required, through his authority in Congress both on the Armed Services Committee as chairman and as a member of the Appropriations Committee of the Senate, required the Secretary of Defense to take the battleship out of mothballs and

Q: Who was that?

Hittle: and put her in Vietnam waters for gunfire support and that was Senator Russell, Senator Richard Russell.

I talked with him just informally a couple times about the need for really powerful long-range precision gunfire support in Vietnam after having been there. And the thing

that impressed me was that the Marines and those in the Army who were on the beach, who had never had any experience with naval gunfire cover, were unanimous in their opinion that what they really needed was a battleship with the 16-inch guns; that they proved their guns were great, they were good, they were helpful; but nothing packed the clout of a 16-inch one ton bombardment shell going over and doing its job on deep bombardment. Senator Russell understood this thing; you didn't have to explain it to him, draw a picture, anything else. And he was one of those decisive people that, when he came to a conclusion it was a definite conclusion--a decision--and he followed through on it.

Q: Who was the legislative aide at this time, Bud Masters, wasn't it?

Hittle: I simply don't remember who had the job at that time.

But my principal activity at that time was doing a syndicated news column in which I thoroughly ventilated the subject of battleship support for Vietnam, having had the opportunity of being there on relatively numerous occasions.

Q: Wasn't Heinl planking for it, too, at the same time?

Hittle: Bob was a good supporter on it, yes. Bob was a good supporter.

And the main effort on all of it was really a supporting effort to back up Senator Russell's congressional activity on it. And like most things, when he put his mind in a thing he

had the power, the stature, and got results. The result was that they took the New Jersey out of mothballs, they put her in the yard, redid all of the electronics on it that needed updating--wiring and so forth, cables, some command communications--and then put her in action.

Q: Also one of the items which overshadowed the refurbishing of the New Jersey was the relief of its proposed commander for supporting Marcus Arnheiter, lieutenant commander. . . .

Hittle: I recall that now and I'd forgotten it, yes.

Q: He really went down the tubes. He was supposed to have been an outstanding naval officer, and supporting Arnheiter he just blew his own career away. (pause)

Hittle: I guess that the payoff on the New Jersey was that those big guns being able to stand off (phone rings) (interruption) pay off on the expenditure which was about 29 million, which today is a minor line item in a defense appropriation. Twenty-nine million was expended for putting her back and recommissioning her, was well paid for in the lives that the New Jersey obviously saved by being on station off of Vietnam.

I remember one time when I was over there--as I say I was over there two or three times a year in one capacity or another--I was talking to an Army colonel up in I Corps, and I asked him what he thought about the naval gunfire. He said, "There's just one thing wrong with it," he said, "there's not enough of them over here." And his explanation was, he said,

"You know, we need that big gun support so badly," he says, "I guess we're really standing in line to get a fire support mission."

Q: Well it didn't stay over there too long.

Hittle: No, it didn't. And that's another story I'll get into another place.

One of the things that I can bring down that you can have a photostat made of: I got some satisfaction, personally, out of it, was that the Navy League gave me a special citation for efforts in helping bring back the battleship for gunfire support in Vietnam.

But, of course, life is full of paradoxes and turnabouts. Before I became Assistant Secretary of the Navy--which we're going to dwell on in a moment--I was instrumental in helping Senator Russell to get the New Jersey into commission.

One of the things that transpired relatively early after I became Assistant Secretary of the Navy was the decision--and it was an unfortunate one--to take the New Jersey out of commission, and I had to, in a real sense, preside over the dissolution of the crew that had been so carefully assembled, selected, and so forth and put aboard the New Jersey.

Q: Yes. There couldn't have been too many men still on active duty that ever served on a battleship.

Hittle: And particularly 16-inch gunners.

But I will say one thing, although I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy down a few tiers from SecDef, Mel Laird, Secretary of Defense, he was the kind of person that you could say your piece to, and I at least had the satisfaction of giving him chapter and verse why he shouldn't make that decision. And as I look back on it I'm inclined to believe that it was a money decision made by OMB, and that he really didn't have much choice other than to take it out of something else. It was an unfortunate decision and it was a bad blow to morale in the sense of the Navy, because once you got that big ship with all her guns banging away, people knew that it was needed--whoever was over there. It was an unfortunate effect up on morale from the standpoint of taking it out of action while the combat was still on.

Q: It was an OMB-White House inspired. . . .

Hittle: I can't say that, with documentation, but as I reconstruct conversations and reflect on some of the passing remarks and so forth, I don't think that Mel Laird really had a heck of a lot of options in the matter other than: if he decided to leave that in, to take it out of some other place in the budget.

Q: How did Joint Chiefs feel about it?

Hittle: I know the Navy was not keen on taking it out by any means. And I didn't really talk to any of the members of the

Chiefs. I know the Marine Corps didn't. Certainly the Marines who were up in I Corps didn't want her taken out. But she was, and it was unfortunate.

And of course the other interesting aspect of it as a follow-on if you just read yesterday's Washington Star, the Navy is having another real difficult problem in developing a new bombardment gun. You saw that in yesterday's Star. And GAO says that it's not accurate enough to justify its cost, it's at 8 inches. And while they're going through that entire exercise, they've got a ready-to-go, relatively so, ready-to-go battle wagon New Jersey that recently has been upgraded, modernized, put in commissioning shape to go to Vietnam, only a few years ago; and that 16-inch gun still remains--in my opinion--probably the most precise, all-weather, ship-to-shore bombardment system there is.

Q: But the New Jersey sitting out there was a sitting target for a ground-to-surface missile.

Hittle: What wasn't? So was a cruiser. They took them into within closer ranges than you had to take the New Jersey. And they had nowhere near the armor plating of battlewagon. When you start talking about 3 to 4 inches of carbon steel decks, 16 inches of armor belt, it's a far cry from a destroyer sent in for a 5-inch gun fire support mission or a cruiser with that light armor going in with an 8-inch or a 6. Everything's vulnerable, except that it would have to be one heck of a missile to put the New Jersey actually out of commission.

Q: Of course it's a very interesting strategic argument.

Hittle: Oh, it always will be. But the whole point is that a good big gun is better than a good small gun.

Q: Or no gun at all.

Hittle: Or no gun at all. And that's almost where the--it's an overstatement--that almost where American seapower is finding itself right today. In the understandable quest for modernization and missile rate, which the present and future generation of seagoing weaponry, we're gun short. And that's the language that the Marine understands and anybody who has to go ashore and hold a position. But anyway, I mention that because it was kind of a turnaround in that having labored and, in a sense successfully, to help get the New Jersey out of mothballs and into Vietnam waters, one of the things that happens relatively soon after I became Assistant Secretary of the Navy was to be part of the administration of the Pentagon that took her out of action.

Q: Well it was interesting--the lobbying that was done; I recall it. And of course being at Headquarters here I was aware of it, I knew that General Greene was very much for it. But I also understood there was some reluctance on the part of the Navy because of this intraservice, you know, submarines versus carriers versus this versus that.

Hittle: You're right on that because the understanding of naval gunfire support has never been a universal appreciation

within the Navy officer corps. And I guess again, one of the reasons is that you really understand naval gunfire only when you've participated in it and particularly been the beneficiary of it. With good reason, an enthusiastic, well-trained, competent naval aviator who's flown close air support could come to the professional conclusion in his own mind, it is understandable, that you don't need naval gunfire because you got that airplane. But of course, his view is challenged merely by any surface naval officer who is an experienced person with respect to the delivery of naval gunfire support under combat conditions. It's the old story of the person in the military I guess like law or medicine or architecture or anything else, is the product of their experiences.

Q: Yes. Well, of course the old Navy concept of crossing the "T" obviated or obliterated any rational response to naval gunfire before World War II on the part of naval officers.

Hittle: The Marine Corps was forced to have some real experts in naval gunfire like Don Weller, who was really the architect of naval gunfire in World War II. And of course Bob Heinl, who was one of its greatest exponents and one of our best experts on naval gunfire, the actual conduct of it.

But if you had to put your finger on one of the reasons for the disaster at Gallipoli, not only was it logistics but it was complete absence of the naval gunfire doctrine-- ship-to-shore gunfire doctrine. And here again, you go back

to Gallipoli, and how different groups read a story of a great battle. European military thought took Gallipoli as an object lesson that you could not conduct a major ship-to-shore amphibious operation in the face of modern artillery and quick firing weapons. The Marine Corps, fortunately, wasn't glued to European thought; and there's a real reason for it. And the reason basically, I believe is that the Marine Corps had that peculiar organizational status, that it was really-- in a sense--its own tactical doctrine master, and it could think beyond the parameters and the horizons of accepted doctrine at the time.

Q; Out of necessity.

Hittle: Out of necessity; and not only out of necessity but out of vision. And that's the reason that that post-war group of leading officers: Lejeune--post-World War I, of course--Erskine, Cates; you could go on down the list--Noble, took Gallipoli as an object lesson to dissect and learn from and to evolve a doctrine that was necessary in view of the fact that Gallipoli was a disaster without that doctrine. So with the post-mortem of Gallipoli, the Marine Corps was able to shape an amphibious doctrine on the basis of each of the major errors and omissions of British naval thought at Gallipoli in the conduct of Gallipoli. It was naval gunfire, ship-to-shore communications, and logistics--that was basically the triad of missions of disaster under the British.

Q: This period of thought, development of doctrine at Quantico but (phone rings) (interruption) we were discussing at the end after we turned off the tape last session--which believe it or not was in September; time flies. . . .

Hittle: What happened to the 4th of July?

Q: I don't know. We were going pretty good there for a while.

Before you left--in off-tape--you told me about how you learned of your appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and I think it ought to go on the record.

Hittle: Well, I was--as I say at that time--a military commentator for Mutual Broadcasting System and also doing a syndicated column for Copley News Service--basically in the news business at the time. And, in addition to it, I was special counsel for the Senate Armed Services Committee, as I mentioned, conducting the investigation for the Senate Armed Services on absenteeism in the Armed Forces which was becoming a critical issue.

With respect to my knowledge that there was a possibility I might become Assistant Secretary of the Navy: I was up in the Copley office banging out a column when the telephone rang and I answered it, why it was a very identifiable voice, and the voice said, "Would you please come up to my office as soon as you can." And it was Senator Dirksen, who was the minority leader in the Senate. And having known him for

quite some time and great admiration for him, and also the fact he wouldn't say come up unless he had a reason; why, I went down and got in a taxi and went up. I didn't have the slightest idea what he wanted, whether it was some news development, whether he wanted to talk to me about a mutual friend or something, I didn't have the slightest idea what he wanted me for. I went in. Then in the back office there, and a couple members of the Senate were just leaving, and so I sat down. He said, "Well, we just made a decision."

I said, "What's that, Senator?"

He said, "You should go back to the Pentagon."

I said, "Well, that's very complimentary," I said, "but I've spent a lot of time in that place."

And he said, "What as?" "Well," he said, "you should go back as Assistant Secretary of the Navy."

"Well," I said, "there are a couple of slots as assistant secretary I wouldn't be too enthusiastic about." I said, "Which one are you and your associates thinking about?" Of course, that had all followed not only consultation, obviously, as I found out later, with some of the key members of the Republicans in the Senate but also, obviously, with the White House.

Q: Had you been active with the party at all?

Hittle: No, I hadn't because at the time I was the special counsel for a Democrat, a Democratic Committee in a Democratic majority Senate.

He said, "Well, the one we've been thinking about is Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower." He didn't say reserve, but that's what he meant.

And I said, "Well, curiously," I said, "that's the only one I'd really be interested in." And although he had one of the world's greatest vocabularies, when he was doing business, Everett Dirksen never wasted many words.

And he said, "If that's satisfactory to you," he said, "you should make plans now to go back." At that time I hadn't been contacted by the White House appointment official, anything else. But he was a person of sufficient stature when he made a statement like that that there was no reason to doubt the substance of it.

Q: Financially, did that mean a loss in pay, did dual compensation come into it at all?

Hittle: Yes. I guess I lost around thirty, thirty-five percent of my retired pay.

And I was in a pretty good earning bracket in the news and in radio work I was doing, plus the fact that I was on a per diem with the Senate Armed Services Committee as a special counsel. But as a matter of fact, that really never entered my mind with respect to how I was going to come out. I knew I was going to come out less, but it was a very adequate salary, Assistant Secretary of the Navy. And I guess if I had come out even much worse, I would have. . . .

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session XV

Hittle: Of course then the follow-up was that the normal routine, Chaffee who had been appointed Secretary, had me over and talked with me. My name was sent to the Senate confirmation hearing. And if you like it for the book here, why I'll bring you down a copy of the confirmation hearing report as a matter of filling out the record.

Q: Who in the assistant secretariat level had primary cognizance, primary relationship with the Marine Corps; Assistant Secretary for Manpower? Who has cognizance over the Marine Corps?

Hittle: No one.

Q: No one particular.

Hittle: No one person does.

Manpower, of course, is a major consideration. Logistics, money, finance. And then the immediate contract that I had as soon as my name was sent up was the Under Secretary of the Navy, John Warner, who later became Secretary, and who couldn't have been more helpful and gracious in getting me squared away and launched over there.

Q: Yes, he's a former Marine, of course, too. He was a captain in Korea.

Hittle: And so was Chaffee.

Q: Oh, that's right. Chaffee, too.

Interesting, of course, there was no problem as far as clearance or anything because you had the background; the decision was made based on knowledge of your background.

What happens if a President-elect doesn't get a (chuckles) security clearance--something like that--or a high official who is elected?

Hittle: Well, you use a background check, of course. I guess if you had a shakey background check for an appointive office you probably wouldn't get it.

Q: You wouldn't get it. And it's happened--conflict of interest and so on.

Hittle: And there are others that may have happened that you never know about, either.

Q: Yes, yes. But I was thinking primarily in case of an elected official.

Hittle: That's a very difficult thing. Take a member of Congress: Congress itself has . . . you can see what they've gone through with the Shore hearings--the David Shore hearings, yes.

Q: Dan Shore.

Hittle: Dan Shore, yes.

But I guess that's a problem that's met each time it comes up on its own issues.

Q: Yes, well, okay. Strictly conjectural.

What was the first thing you got into? You mentioned that, I think also, that as soon as you got into office a hot potato was laid on your desk..

Hittle: Yes. I'd been in, I guess, a couple days. You hardly know where your desk drawer is by that time you keep moving so fast. But anyway. . . .

Q: Did you assemble your own staff or did you bring anyone else? Now Mrs. Brown, is it, your personal secretary, the Japanese woman, Davis is it? I don't remember. She was the woman I used to contact. She evidently has been there a long time.

Hittle: I'll get her full name for you here.

Q: And your aides. . . .

Hittle: Captain Toole was the senior aide there then.

Q: Navy captain.

Hittle: Navy captain. He's now a rear admiral out in command of 4th Naval District. Very able guy.

But talking about the problems laid on your desk and how things follow you through: Some few weeks before, before I ever had the slightest idea I was going to be assistant

secretary of the Navy, as one of the concluding follow-ups of the investigation, I prepared for the chairman's signature a letter to the Secretary of Defense making a request for such certain information and asking for comments on proposals with respect to the committee's report, and sent it over to the Department of Defense. Some of it was . . . it reflected a criticism of the manner in which some elements of Department of Defense were dealing with or not adequately dealing with the absentee problem in the opinion of the sub-committee and the committee. And incidentally, that committee report was not only accepted by the full committee, but it was voted on and accepted as a Senate report.

Q: And that you wrote it.

Hittle: Conducted the investigation and I wrote it, yes.

The thing that landed on my desk was a sheaf of papers, and it was the papers that had been sent over to the Secretary of Defense by the chairman of the Armed Services Committee. On top of it was a note and it said, "Don, you deserve to get this." And it was signed, "Mel Laird." (laughs) So in a real administrative sense I had thrown myself a boomerang. But I guess it made some sense having conducted the investigation, why Mr. Laird decided that I was the one to continue the liaison with the Senate committee in all matters pertaining to this, and I was the funnel through which, rather than the Assistant Secretary of Defense--it was no reflection on

him--but they just bucked it down to me. I was the action official on all matters going over with respect to desertion, absenteeism, and so forth. That's how you make work for yourself.

Q: How, as a practical matter and I'm thinking back to what was envisioned originally, that the Department of Defense and the amount of staff which would be which, of course, was way underestimated. I forget who was Forrestal, someone who. . . .

Hittle: Forrestal said a small coordinating staff and perhaps--as I recall--a hundred people, something like that.

Q: And you as assistant secretary had how many people working for you?

Hittle: Well, I would say probably (pause) about ten.

Q: That was your personal staff.

Hittle: No. That was the administrative staff, my office staff. That included the office I established to look after the Reserve Policy Board. They never had it under the assistant secretary before, and I had a reserve officer assigned to that, for that specific purpose--to be the executive officer for the board under the reserve chairman, to give it continuity with a permanent officer there.

I've always felt both jobs I had were policy making, that the easiest thing you can do in the Pentagon--it really is easy from the very nature of the conglomerate operation,

is to expand the staff. It's an easy thing. And I guess it was Marine Corps upbringing; I resisted it.

For instance, just to give you an example, not one of virtue but an example of numbers was when I was assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs: on a couple of occasions at least, the Pentagon administrative personnel officials came in and asked me when I wanted to start filling in those jobs. I may be off a few numbers here but I'm in the ballpark figure, my recollection is I had a T/O of authorization of around 32, 33 people in the legislative section. I never let it get over 17, 18.

Aside from putting in a extra officer to look after the reserves for the continuity and administration of the Reserve Policy Board, because it had never really been looked after, it was a board floating around the administrative structure of the Department of the Navy. Aside from that, I have no recollection of increasing the office.

Q: But in any case as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, you essentially had the whole Navy and whole Marine Corps at your. . . .

Hittle: That's the whole thing: There's no need to build up a separate establishment, because all you're doing really is overlaying those who have to originate the work; and you're duplicating work. And to me the sensible thing is to lay the job on the guy and on the section that's responsible within the department. And there's no reason in the world as long

as their boss knows what they're doing and so forth, and they go through their boss, why they shouldn't be the ones that are in on not only the planning but all the way through to the approval of the papers, and presentation and the briefing on them.

Q: Which I think is a sensible way. You get too many levels and it gets . . . the meaning. . . .

Hittle: One of the things is to pass on now. I'm not in the position to pass on motivation or anything else of it or the reasons of it, but I think it's a waste of money just from the knowledge I have. At the time I was over there you had an assistant secretary for manpower and reserve. And that was the peak of the Vietnam war. With all the problems of discipline, all the problems of extreme manpower. And I guess the highest civilian employment within the Navy which came under that same office and directly under it and wasn't farmed out to the military staff, you did that job. Today you got a deputy, assistant secretary for reserve, and you got a deputy assistant secretary for manpower.

Q: Well that may be political.

Hittle: It's not political! It's organizational!

Q: It's not a question of someone in the White House saying, "We've got to find a spot; now where can we expand?"

Hittle: I don't know. But they've all got titles and they got offices.

And I'd like to know how you start up an office with all the indirect cost as well as the direct cost to go into a staffing and a equipping and maintenance and expenses less than a very, very substantial figure. To me it's an utter paradox again. And I can't answer the question of why the upper administrative staff is expanded as the number of people for whom it's responsible decreases.

Q: Decreases. Both civilians and military. I think the latest story came out: the navy's going to decrease the number of active duty admirals.

Hittle: There's some room for that but at the same time but I'm not as concerned about general officers and admirals because there is--of course--there is a relationship besides. But at the same time time, responsible positions have probably a closer relationship to organizational structure than they have the numbers. In other words, if you're going to have a fleet, whether it's a big one or a small one, you need a flag officer for it. If you're going to have a Navy district, you need a flag officer. By the same token if you've got a command or an area that a Marine general officer's required, the numbers really don't make a heck of a lot of difference. It's a organizational relationship rather than a number one.

Q: Well, but they use the number one as the basis for. . . .

Hittle: Well there is at some point a relationship.

Q: For instance two four-star generals in the Marine Corps is based on numbers.

Hittle: Well, you can analyze that a different way, too. You can simply say: The Commandant of the Marine Corps, whether there's twenty thousand or whether there's six hundred thousand, should be a four-star general.

Q: Yes; but I'm talking about the Assistant Commandant.

Hittle: And the Assistant Commandant, if you're going to be an independent military service or a separate military service, and have the stature of one, the numbers don't go with the VCNO or deputy chief of staff for the Air Force or deputy chief of staff for the Army. It's the position.

Q: Well, using that same rationale, justification, there is no reason, for instance, why the fleet commanders--FMFPac, FMFLant--shouldn't have been four-star generals if you're using the Navy as a parallel.

Hittle: Very good case could be made on that, too. Very good case.

Q: That's right.

What was the reaction to the appointment of you, a retired brigadier general of the Marine Corps, as assistant secretary of the Navy? I mean, was there any fear that you

were going to be less than objective, that the Marine Corps was finally getting its nose. . . .

Hittle: Well it was an interesting setup: You had a Secretary of the Navy who had been a Marine officer, you had an under secretary of the Navy who had been a Marine officer, and you had an assistant secretary of the Navy who had been a career officer.

There was, I sensed--without trying to plumb it and document or ascertain it precisely--I sensed a little more standoffishness and wait-and-see among some of them.

Q: CNO was who at this time?

Hittle: CNO was

Q: MacDonald. No, no, no. MacDonald was long gone.

Hittle: . . . Tommy Moorer. Then he moved up. (cross talk)

Q: Moorer. Then he moved up under Zumwalt, yes.

Hittle: He moved up to chairman.

Q: And Moorer always had good relationship with the Marine Corps as I understand.

Hittle: Yes. And I'd known Tom for years before I'd come in. And I'd known Chick Cleary.

Those--this is just my personal reaction since you asked me the question--my feeling is that those who had known me,

knew what my track record was in fighting the Navy's causes, for the cause of seapower, because when I was on active duty here all through the fight, you could really--except for one issue of the General Order 5 controversy which we discussed--except for that, you really couldn't sort out on the major defense issue the Navy from the Marine Corps. And I probably did more writing on Navy issues of seapower, the philosophy of seapower, and the history of it as evolved by the United States than there's probably most people who wrote.

I hit the sawdust trail, so to speak, over a period of years with Jack McCain, talking the cause of seapower. He and I often said we were on kind of a Pentagon's talking circuit because wherever we could get an audience why we'd be out there talking seapower.

And as I say, those who knew what my feelings were, knew that I was not a separatist as far as the Marine Corps was concerned; that my record of action and talk, writing, was one of belief that the place of the Marine Corps was within the seapower family. And the only dispute within the seapower family was where your precedents, your stature, and your role is. And the defense of seapower was the defense of both the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Q: Of course, if you recall as I'm sure you do, your military history of the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century, tremendous anonymous pamphleteering went on whenever someone was in a position for high appointment, both pro and con. Some of it was quite scurrilous, too, if you recall.

Hittle: Of course, just in passing, I always told some of my Navy friends over there that one of the reasons that it was always a joke that I could never get them really close to me when I went aboard ship was they'd never forgotten the fact that when I was on the Washington we lost Commander, Battleships, Atlantic over the side. And it was always a question of: Where were the Marines when he went over the side? But that's another story.

Q: Probably pusing.


Hittle: But by and large I had no complaint under (background noise) I had some very, very warm working relationships with Chick Clary, Admiral Duncan who was personnel. And if there was anybody who had a professional and organizational reason to wonder what he was heading for, were the Marine coming in to be personnel, it was Charlie Duncan. Yet I consider him one of the good friends, one of the finest gentlemen I've ever run into, and one of the most professional people. And that doesn't mean that we agreed on everything; because there were some real basic issues that he believed deeply on, and his organization BuPers believed in, that I had no room on.

Q: Is he a Navy junior?

Hittle: I don't know.

Q: There was an admiral. . . .

Hittle: Wu Duncan.



Q: Wu Duncan.

Hittle: I don't think he was any relationship.

Q: Yes, that's the one I was thinking of.

Hittle: I doubt it, because he was too old to be, I guess, the son _____.

Q: What about this McGee case you were mentioning. What was that?

Hittle: Well, that was one of the first real substantial problems that faced me when I went in as assistant Secretary of the Navy.

And it's strange, you know: whenever you go into a policy/decision job, it's inevitable you're going to pick up some real difficult ones that people have been saving for you. And this was one that either through the coincidence of time or saving for me was waiting for me when I got there.

Now McGee was a civilian employee of the Navy. He was in fuel distribution, basically aircraft fuel distribution. The issue arose in Southeast Asia--you may recall that--in which he as, I guess a kind of a firebrand started writing letters and putting his superiors on report for carelessness and malfeasance or omissions of proper performance of duty in the loss of fuel and everything associated with it. That it was a tremendous loss, badly managed, they weren't doing their job properly and so forth. He was then returned to the

United States. He had a hearing before the civilian board who was in the Department of the Navy. This was looked upon by some of the high ranking naval officers as a case in which there could be no compromise that once this employee transgressed lines of command, went beyond superiors, that he had to be properly disciplined and severely so.

Q: Regardless of whether he was right or wrong.

Hittle: Or regardless of what he had done or they had done. As I recall . . .

Q: Right or wrong in his accusations.

Hittle: . . . as I recall, the recommendation and finding of the hearing board--disciplinary board--within the Navy Office of Civilian Management recommended that he be disciplined, that he not be given his step in grade, and that he be given a reprimand and dismissed. That was the recommendation that was laying on my desk for approval when I got there because it came under me with the pro forma approval by Secretary of the Navy; but it was my responsibility to make the finding and recommendation. This was a real hot subject.

Q: It had gotten a lot of publicity.

Hittle: It got a lot of publicity, and it was right on the heels of the highly publicized Fitzgerald case over C5A in the Air Force. I must say, I think they bumbled it and they put an anchor or an albatross around their neck for years to

come. Then they finally got licked with him being reinstated. But here again, the system of the Fitzgerald case as I saw it sitting over in the Navy and I didn't know the details, but on the obvious aspects of it: the system had got a hold of the Fitzgerald case in the same manner that it had that the system of the Navy had a hold of the McGee case; and it went right down the disciplinary line, it was as certain as a Greek tragedy what was going to happen at the end of the so-called course of justice.

Well, I got into this thing. Before I got into it I started getting some couples of gratuitous phone calls from some high ranking officers: Hold the line now, we're depending on you. This case has to be followed up as an example-- words to that effect. I got a couple handwritten notes hand delivery, to the effect that I know you didn't ask for this but here's my advice for whatever it's worth in this matter. And you could see that these were the outward manifestations of a deep, churning turmoil and apprehension that somebody was going to come in and perhaps not carry through on what had been recommended or at least have some questions about it. And I make no criticism here now; I mean I'm not reflecting on the people who handled it, except that I would have handled it differently.

Q: The establishment was threatened.

Hitte: Yes. You put your finger on something that to me --s a phenomenon of bureaucracy whether it's military or civilian.

The establishment almost, with a living type of response, resents intrusion or danger.

Q: In politics, too.

Hittle: And by the same token, when it makes a mistake--on the other side of the coin--the standard or usual follow-up reaction is shouldering up to protect the system by not admitting a mistake. It goes either way, see. But whatever it is, it moves with a almost collective living organism response.

Q: Well there's an aphorism: you can't fight city hall. Nohow.

Hittle: Well, that's very much it.

But this is a little different than the deliberateness of a vendetta within the city hall or something. This is a response fo a vast, almost a amorphous entity, but it's a characteristic phenomena of it.

Q: Also the criticism coming from someone within the system.

Hittle: That's right! That's another part of it.

Q: And that's another aspect.

Hittle: In other words, it throws out the festering affliction.

Q: Well you don't throw garbage in your own front yard.

Hittle: In other words you expell it, yes. In other words that's why that was perhaps a philosophical explanation of the decay.

And on the basis of what McGee did per se, they had reason to prefer charges on him, I think. But at this point I decided that I was going to know as much about that case as anyone else--or more. So I got one of the two records--there was only one full record--and I got it, and I locked it in my desk and I read every page of the complete record and file of that thing. It must have been 6 inches, 8 inches thick. Made my notes, reviewed them. I had, fortunately, the advantage of the good advice of Bob Willy, who was the Director of Civilian Manpower Management, civilian employment of the Navy; probably one of the most able public servants this country has had in modern times. A man of great discretion, calmness, a complete knowledge. During his career within civilian employment and management, he had worked, I think, he said for sixteen Presidential appointees: Army, Defense, Department, Navy. And he was not a vindictive man; he was very objective. Yet his organization was the one that had made the recommendation from civilian management, you see.

Just as I was getting about ready to come to some kind of conclusion, I started getting barraged by telephone calls. McGee wanted a personal hearing with me. I decided I wasn't going to cloud the case, because it was a quasi-judicial proceeding by a star chamber session that had no place in it. On each occasion I had my aide tell him, "No," that I was

reviewing the case and that whether he liked it or not, he had to depend upon what my findings were. Of course I guess he was upset by that.

At the same time the secretary, as I recall, got a letter--I could be wrong, but either a letter or a telephone call; my recollection is a letter--from Senator Proxmire who had been following it. And, you remember, he picked up the cudgels for McGee.

Q: For Fitzgerald.

Hittle: Yes, for Fitzgerald.

And he was picking them up now for McGee. And he wanted from the Secretary of the Navy a complete file and record on the McGee case. So I went in and saw John Warner, and I saw Secretary Chafee; I told them that we shouldn't send it to him, we couldn't give it to him. There was some discussion as to, "Well, how do you do it?" I said, "Okay. It's my pigeon," I said, "I'll go see Proxmire."

Q: You knew him.

Hittle: I'd known him but not intimately. And he had at that time some real firecrackers around him as assistants that were very aggressive and bright on these types of things because look what he did in the Fitzgerald case. And he was after me, the press had it, and he was making speeches on the floor about the McGee case. So I made appointment and went over to see him. Had a couple of his young chaps in there

with him. Came in, he said, "Are you going to produce a file?"

I said, "No, sir, I'm not." And I said, "I'd like to tell you why."

He said, "Why?"

I said, "There is only one master file on this right now--original. I have it." I said, "There are people within the Department of Defense who could make a good case of deserving to see this at this time." I said, "I have determined that I am going to handle this as judiciously as I can, and I'm going to take the responsibility to make any recommendations to the Secretary as to what should be done in this case." I said, "I haven't come to the conclusion what I'm going to do yet; I'm just finishing my careful examination of it." I said, "But I will tell you this: If I give you this file, I can't refuse it to other people who have a reason for wanting to see it." I said, "And the moment that is done, all of the protection of the review procedure in which I am engaged, all the protection for McGee is shattered." I said, "I'll tell you what I will do. Prior to the announcement of what is going to be done," I explained to him it wouldn't be well in advance but he would have advance notice, I said, "I will let you know what the recommendation of the Secretary is going to be." I said, "Because I will already have made it then, and it will be signed, but before it's announced," I said, "as a matter of courtesy and in view of your interest and your position as a chairman, " I said, "and I will bring

over to you at that time the complete file along with my recommendations and a copy of what the Secretary has signed for public notification." Jeez! As I looked around, these guys were sitting around there, were shaking their heads. No, don't take it or anything, don't agree to that--his assistants.

Proxmire thought a moment, he said, "Will that be the complete file?"

I said, "When I told you, Senator, that I would bring you the file, the file per se, the entire file that I worked with, the only one I know about," I said, "I assure you there will be no stripping."

He thought a moment. He said, "That sounds fair."

And here's a person, as I say . . . I don't agree with an awful lot that Senator Proxmire has done and does now. But so many times the executive branch of government gets itself in an adversary status and a feud between key members of Congress and the executive departments, not only defense, simply because they don't carry on a reasonable man-to-man communication and conversation.

I came back on the McGee case and I stayed late two nights dictating. I came to the conclusion that I had to reverse the recommendation.

Q: On what basis?

Hittle: When you do something like that, you couldn't reverse it on the facts. You had to reverse it on the philosophy of then existing. And the essence of the reversal

was that for better or for worse, this was no longer a distinct, identifiable, specific case of whether or not certain words of accusations, certain actions that were taken through the field were correct or permissible; that for better or for worse, this had now been lofted to a much higher issue. And that issue was, in the eyes of the public and particularly government employees: whether or not a well-meaning public servant, right or wrong, if he believed he was right, that injury was being done to government could go outside of normal command channels to make his views known.

Q: Having exhausted the command channels.

Hittle: Words to that effect, yes.

And I said, "That takes precedence far above the immediate issues on which this case was originated."

Q: Which, of course, was directly opposite of what the Air Force did in the case of Fitzgerald.

Hittle: Exactly the opposite!

And I said, "In order to assure any interested public servants, in order to remove the slightest iota of doubt that such action by a well-meaning public servant could and should be taken, that I was reversing the case.

Q: You weren't giving a license for whistleblowing, now.

Hittle: Oh, no, no, no! I said, "Responsible." It had to be responsible and so forth.

And I said, "This had a special aspect because it had become a test case on this issue, perhaps erroneously, but nevertheless that's what it was." And I also pointed out that the Navy in its handling of the case had not made it a easy issue to keep as a strictly disciplinary matter on specific issues; and that in a couple instances of mishandling, they had really fouled the record. Of course they didn't like that.

Q: No. Slap in the face all the way down the line.

Hittle: That's right! Because they had some occasion--just to digress on this as I'm recalling--there was occasion in the record, as I recall, where as this thing began to fester in Southeast Asia within the small command and the headquarters there--or the headquarters rather--it appeared from the record that in a heated exchange, McGee had made some statement to the effect that he was going to physically assault his superior, something like that. I don't want to be too specific. But nevertheless it was an aggressive statement and at least an implied threat.

My reaction was that this man McGee had been in such a dire status as far as performance of duty and breaking the regulations, that the mere fact that on this occasion of a heated exchanged and an implied threat, he had not at that time been immediately disciplined and the procedure set in motion. That it showed a hesitency and an ineptness on the part of the entire handling. But anyway I changed the terms

of reference from what he did or what he didn't do to the broad issue of judging it on the basis of the philosophy of a public servant seeing injury done, and in a responsible, well-meaning manner having not only the right but responsibly the duty, after exhausting the normal chain of command, to make the situation known. And then one, two, three: I said the reprimand is disapproved, the dismissal is disapproved, and he is now given his grade status. So there'd be no question about it. In other words, if you're going to do something like that, you do it across the board; you don't do it piecemeal and then have, "Well, it was a rap on the wrist instead of a boot in the pants"--or something like that.

So it came out, I got together with personnel people, transferred him out of where he was--he was in the Washington area as I recall, on leave or something--transferred him to Corpus Christi in charge of--I think a GS-13; 12 or 13--transferred him to Corpus Christi in charge of fuel distribution. There was an opening there and so we moved him in. And in accordance with my commitment to Senator Proxmire, picked up the whole file and making sure that we had a complete photostat of it, and as soon as the secretary signed it--and I'll say Chaffee and Warner backed me completely; didn't change a word in it although we had more than a pro-forma discussion--and went over and saw Senator Proxmire. I said, "Here's the record. It's unstripped." I said, "Here's a copy of the recommendation and here's the approving letter

of the secretary." I said, "This is going to be announced later today." Actually within a few hours.

He asked me what I did. I told him. He said, "Well, did you give him a letter of commendation for his courage?"

I said, "Senator, I sure didn't!" I said, "I'll tell you what I said. 'In utter frankness, this man is a very lucky man to have come out of this as he has, simply because of the fact that the nature of the case has changed.'" I said, "And that's the reason; not that he didn't deserve something on the basis specifically of what he did."

He said, "Well, I think you should give him one," or words to that effect.

"Senator," I said, "I wouldn't give him a letter of commendation under any circumstances as a reviewing official on this case."

He said, "Well, I want to thank you," he says, "for your frankness and for your cooperation on this."

So I went back and people asked me what Proxmire's response was, because, of course, they were watching him like a magnifying glass. And I told them. They said, "Boy," the observation was made by a rather senior person, quite senior, "Well, we're in trouble now! He's going to take off after us and never let us out."

I said, "No." I said, "If I read that man correctly from my conversations--I could be wrong as I have been in the past--my guess is that he's going to make one speech in the

Congressional Record and it's the last we'll hear of it from Proxmire." And that's exactly what he did.

Q: That's a very interesting story and it's a very interesting view of the situation. Of course I think the case of Fitzgerald and the C5A matter, there were a lot of politics involved much more so than this case.

Hittle: As I say, people who do what Fitzgerald and McGee did, aside from the issues here--the specific things--it's been my observation that there is something of a martyr complex.

Q: Well you've got to be a jerk to fight city hall like that. You know you're in for it.

Hittle: It's some type of a martyr complex. And of course, the greatest favor you can do a martyr is do him in.

Q: Well how would you do that?

Hittle: No. I say the greatest favor you can do him is do him in, because that's really what a martyr is striving for--knowing what they're doing and really seeking martyrdom.

But what they did to Fitzgerald in the Air Force, they made him a martyr before the country and they made him a hero. And what the Navy did with respect to McGee . . .

Q: Same thing.

Hittle: . . . he went down and kept on doing his job of checking gasoline pumps.

Q: Defused them.

Hittle: Exactly! Yes, yes.

Q: Well how about the problems that he reported on. Were they valid?

Hittle: There was probably some validity, not as bad. . . .

End Session XV

Tape 1, Side 1, Session XVI, dated 17 February 1977

Q: A lot of the things that we were...off tape you were looking at Sessions VIII through XI that we had together, some five years ago, as a matter of fact, and what you wanted to do was to add to the information you gave about the National Security Act of 1947, the hearings, the involvements, the personalities.

Hittle: As I went through the transcript there, I noted inadvertently, and a mistake that should be corrected, there was not a proper recognition and notation, as far as I'm concerned, of the activities and contributions of Colonel Lyford Hutchens, Marine Corps Reserve.

Hutch came to active duty largely through the request and recognition of his ability by General Twining, that's my recollection. He had been a very successful businessman in New England with his own company, a manufacturing company, prior to the war. During the war he was a specialist in close air support and I guess the best way to explain his enthusiastic involvement was that he got bitten by the Marine Corps bug real bad.

Q: He was a lawyer?

Hittle: He was a successful practicing attorney but he also had a small manufacturing, and a money-making one, company in New England.

Q: New Hampshire or Vermont?

Hittle: I think it was in New Hampshire, as I recall.
No, it wasn't. It was Vermont. That's right.

Q: Yes, and he was also very active in Republican politics and very close to Styles Bridges. Understand.

Hittle: I cannot vouch for his...I don't have much knowledge of his pre-Marine Corps activities as far as his politics are concerned. He had a good working relationship with the people in Styles Bridges' office. What the actual closeness between he and Bridges himself were, I can't say.

I do want to say, though, that few people have made such a useful and lasting contribution and with such personal financial and personal and professional sacrifice as Hutch did. He really sacrificed his business in his service to the Corps, because it was one of these types of manufacturing businesses in New England that has to be run by the owner and the boss, and it went downhill while he was in his early stages of active duty, and, of course, if you're in a law practice, if you don't get back to it real quick after being away, why, unless it's a big firm, which his wasn't--it was an individual practice, as I recall--understandably your clients had to have other attachments when you do get back to it. But Hutch stayed on active duty.

He had a unique ability to reduce the issues of the unification fight to understandable language and simple explanation. He was extremely helpful in his work with

respect to preparation of questions that were used in both the House and the Senate, and his analysis and position papers were, I know in my case, were useful to me, and while I cannot put words in anybody else's mouth, it was my impression, and it's still my conviction that General Twining thought very highly of him.

Hutch developed some very good working relationships with staff personnel on the Hill, and he had some personal and very useful contacts and relationships with some members of the House and Senate that we would not otherwise have had a contact with, and on the issues which began on the unification act and stretched out to the Marine Corps Bill, they became increasingly valuable.

Hutch stayed on active duty--I can't recall whether or not he took any long period of time back in his business world, but I think that the record will show that he was on active duty and participated in a major way, not only in the unification fight, but also in the Marine Corps Bill, and while I can digress on this for a moment, for most of the activity in connection with the Marine Corps Bill, I was at the University of Utah, although I did come back from time to time for specific purposes, with respect to contacts on the Hill and assistance with the effort. Hutch was really the key man in that bill, and from my own personal knowledge, and it is an intimate knowledge, of what went on, not only from my own observation but from what I was told by members of Congress and key

staff personnel, Hutch was indispensable to the complete action and the successful action by Congress with respect to the Marine Corps Bill.

Others, of course, participated in very important ways, and I wouldn't judge between them. But, it is my conviction and it was the conviction of others that I talked to that the Marine Corps probably would not have had the Marine Corps Bill, which would have meant that we would not have had the statutory strength structure and the Commandant, for all practical purposes, a member of the JCS, if it hadn't have been for Lyford Hutchens.

And, as the years went by, unfortunately, memories of organizations, like people, are too frequently short and while I wouldn't want to comment on Hutch's personal financial relationships, or anything, I think that it is a accurate observation that financially, he lost most of his basic financial holdings and he lost the income that would have made his life more comfortable at an age when it should have been more relaxed, and the reason is a very simple one. He put the Marine Corps before his own self-interest and in a very large sense, without getting into any details, he even put it before his family. And the efforts and the enthusiasm and the total mental and physical effort with which he participated, and he drove himself more than he really should have at his age and in his health status, I'm convinced that it also materially impaired his health in later years.

I haven't seen him in some several years, but from

time to time I hear from people who have seen him and although he is back in civilian life now, I know that he would probably appreciate from time to time a note from those who know what he did. At least, it should be made a matter of record that the Marine Corps today has a status that it wouldn't have had without Lieutenant Colonel Lyford Hutchens. By the same token, I'm convinced that there wouldn't be a Commandant of the Marine Corps sitting in the tank with the Joint Chiefs of Staff if it wasn't for him.

Q: General Twining told me that Hutchens would appear at night, almost out of nowhere, coming down from Washington. He was sort of a liaison between the Chowder group at Quantico and the Hill and that certain papers, he was almost a gray eminence, he was a surreptitious type behind the scenes. Is this overdramatic?

Hittle: Oh, I guess...no, I wouldn't guess. I would say that it is a fair evaluation of it. Everybody has his eccentricities, except, I guess, you and me, and one of the characteristics, individual characteristics of Hutch, now that you remind me, was that he had a, I guess a person might call it a CIA-atmosphere about him.

Q: A conspiratorial...

Hittle: Not a conspiratorial, but a very much sought and worked on low profile, and that was one of his values, of course. Sometimes you can overdue the low profile to the

point where it emphasizes you, but that never became a difficult as far as Hutch was concerned, and his modus operandi and the individual actions he took, well, they may in detail be subject to some criticism, None of it in the large and total picture in my opinion contradicts the evaluation in my own mind I have made of him.

Q: Before we get on to the things that werewere going to discuss today, one other question that I have, that comes to mind in reading what I did transcribe concerning the unification bill.

This was not a, people that were working from the Marine Corps side on the National Security Act, this was not an unstructured group of individuals. You had a focal point, someone who was controlling this operation. At one time it was the Edson Board; when the Edson Board dissolved and he retired, I assume it became Jerry Thomas. Is that correct?

Hittle: Yes. He was really the one who was in official and, in many ways, unofficial charge of it. Of course, he had many other things to do, but he had a full grasp of the issues and of the effort, too.

But the real sparkplug and the fulltime leader-- and I use that term in all its applications--of this effort
was Merrill B. Twining.

Q: He was the "poppa."

Hittle: He was the man who gave it direction, guidance,

purpose, and conviction. You'd never had had the National Security Act roles and missions of the Marine Corps and of the Navy in statute if it hadn't have been for Merrill B. Twining. He was indispensable to this whole era.

Q: Would say that its fair to conclude that of all the Marines in this program, he had the earliest feeling, perspective of what was going to happen, what was going on?

Hittle: He not only had the earliest he had the most thorough understanding, and he had the most indispensable and constant contributing participation, and I should stress not only for the National Security Act effort but through this whole era what for a better title could be called "The Era of the Struggle for Survival," because it was one series of genuine threats to the Corps that, if they had not been turned back and if the defensive actions had not been successfully consummated--like the roles and missions in law for the National Security Act effort--if it had not been for the General Order 5 fight being resolved on the positive side for the Marine Corps, if the reorganization authority, which is another issue we should talk about, had not been modified so that it was more difficult to put through a reorganization effort by Executive Memorandum, and that had to be done in Congress, too, and if, for instance, all of this had not culminated, in a sense, in the Marine Corps Bill, which was really a capstone on the effort of over this long period of years, any one of the things that were issues and which were won, could have

been lost, and it would have undermined the Corps in a fundamental manner. In other words, we had to win them all.

Q: And he was involved with all of them.

Hittle: Every one of them, every one. I don't think that there was over a small handful of people, and they were the ones that learned from Twining, the threat of the reorganization authority. When I speak of the authority, the reorganization of the Executive Branch, legal authority that was placed in the hands of the Bureau of the Budget, and, of course, the President, per se.

And its worthwhile, I guess, digressing on that because this came up some time in, probably in the middle '50s, and the issue in this was after the Rockefeller Commission on National Security had made its report, and the President, this happened under Eisenhower, the President wanted the extension of the reorganization authority and under the authority that existed, in order for a proposal from the Executive Branch--and this meant Department of Defense, there were no exceptions in this thing, and this was a sword hanging over the head of the Marine Corps, which was subject at that time to the question that continued as a result of the unification controversy.

The Executive reorganization proposal of the President could only be disapproved by a vote of either

house, and the vote had to be a majority of the actual membership. Nowe when you get that "actual membership," that really made it, for all practical purposes, impossible for a reorganization proposal from a strong president, such as Eisenhower was, reversed.

So, when the reorganization authority was to be extended--it came over in an almost routine manner to the House of Representatives--and as I recall his position at the time, and I am talking about Representative Jack Brooks, who had been a rather junior congressman, but he was on the Government Operations /Committee/ and he had the Reorganization Authority Subcommittee, or the subcommittee which handled the reorganization authority, and Jack Brooks had, as the years have demonstrated, come along since then, has an intuitive sense of basic issues, and Jack had always been a loyal supporter of the Corps during the controversies that we went through on the Hill...

Q: Well, he was a Marine Reserve officer...

Hittle: A reserve officer and a very able one, and I had the legislative job, it was while I had the legislative job at Headquarters Marine Corps at the time, and my task was really, from the standpoint of the Marine Corps, to at least partially defuse the danger of the reorganization authority and that was a very popular proposal of the President's, because anytime you make a proposal that is based upon the potential of at least alleged increased efficiency in government, who could be against it, and its

hard for a congressman or Congress to be against it, but what really transpired was that I worked with Congressman Brooks on it, and he came up with a very interesting minor revision. And without fanfare, without^{any} public issue, or anything, when the reorganization authority went through the full committee out of his subcommittee, when it went through the House, and the same thing finally emerged from Congress, a very small change was made, and that was that the disapproval of a reorganization proposal by the President could be effected not as before by a majority of the full membership, but by a majority of those present and voting, and this was, of course, was a major protection as far as the Marine Corps was concerned, because, while it would have been extremely difficult to have rallied Marine Corps support on a reorganization authority if you had to get half of the membership, whether they were in town, out, on the floor, not on the floor, those interested normally would be those who would be there, and consequently, this relieved some of the pressure as far as the threat of the reorganization authority to the Marine Corps was concerned. It would be much tougher to ram through a bill that injured the Corps, from the Corps' standpoint, from the standpoint of its supporters under the voting formula that Congressman Jack Brooks had put through.

And consequently, there is another person that the Marine Corps owes a long-term sense of gratitude to, because it wasn't only for the interests of the Corps

which were important for the country, but it was--and I can state this from personal knowledge--it was the firm conviction at that time of Congressman Jack Brooks that the reorganization authority unduly tipped power from Congress to the Executive Branch and by easing the manner in which the Legislative could disapprove an act of the Executive it was to some degree, then, restoring the balance that should exist in our constitutional process between the Executive and Legislative Branches.

Very few people realize that the reorganization authority was, and to the extent that it exists at any time, a factual as well as a philosophical reversal of the Legislative-Executive function because, under the reorganization authority and its vast implications to the structure and functions of government, the initiative for change rests with the Executive and the veto rests with the Legislative. That was really the fundamentals that were involved in the reorganization authority.

To sum it up, the action that was taken by Congress as a result of Jack Brooks' efforts, interest, and understanding was not only a protection to the Marine Corps, but in a broader sense it was a move toward a more sound application of the constitutional process. And there's one additional point that's rather interesting on this effort.

This was a major legislative effort by the White House to get the reorganization authority extended for President Eisenhower. The bill was sent over and, as I said, there was no fanfare, there was no great debate, there was very little

said. It came out with this small and, one might say, almost imperceptible change, and I guess that it wasn't until a week or 10 days later that somebody over in the White House was tracking the new authority and going through it and did a double take, I'm told, and there were some explosive comments, so I got through the reports, around the White House with respect to what had gone on, how had it got out of hand, why it wasn't known, because they ever even knew, so I'm told by sources that were very close to the situation at the White House, that the change had been made at any stage of it until the act had taken effect, was completed, and in effect, and then the White House had found the change in the wording. I was also told that some anger had been expressed with respect to my role.

Q: Oh, really?

Hittle: Yes, but no action was taken at that time.

Q: Of course, we're going through the throes of pretty much the same thing now with President Carter.

Hittle: And the interesting thing is that the key man today...

Q: Jack Brooks.

Hittle: ...was chairman of the full Government Operations Committee which the reorganization authority is being considered is Jack Brooks.

Q: But going back to the one under Eisenhower, as you say,

it was a popular bill, the President wanted to reorganize the government, economies were involved, etc., but/^{is}there any threat implicit in the bill to the Marine Corps, is there any indication or evidence to show that the old cabal, the Army General Staff, everything we talked about occurring during the unification fight have a hand in this?

Hittle: At that time?

Q: Yes.

Hittle: I guess the best evaluation I can make of it at that time was that there was genuine interest in some elements of the Department of Defense in that authority in what could be done under the President on the recommendations, of course, of the reorganization authority, and you will remember that, at that time, without getting into the exact provisions of the Rockefeller recommendations, there were some pretty serious proposals that were made with respect to consolidations within the Department of Defense and within the Department of the Navy, and one of the things that was at least considered and discussed at the time was the matter of doing away, eliminating the statutory positions of the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and making them Assistant Secretaries of Defense; in other words, that constant pyramiding. And the more the thing gets pyramided within the Department of Defense, the less room there is for something that doesn't fit neatly into that pyramid of power, and that's the Marine Corps.

• And by the same token, it would be wrong to say that a reorganization authority today that gives sweeping and continual authority to the Executive Branch doesn't hold a potential danger for the Marine Corps and the Navy.

Q: Its always there.

Hittle: Its there...if you can propose a reorganization of the Department of Defense that, for instance, would consolidate naval air and Air Force strategicair, and tactical air, or any of these combinations, if there were consolidation of the amphibious functions contrary to the specific requirements of the roles and missions, the whole concept of balanced fleet and the whole of the Marine Corps would, could be drastically altered and vitiated. It all depends on where the emphasis, the interests, and the attitudes of the Executive Branch are.

There's one thing that's in the Marine Corps' favor, I mean an element of protection, although its a nebulous one, but a real one, nevertheless, and that is that it would take somebody of considerable determination coupled with political naivete to raise an overt issue of the continuance of the Marine Corps in its important role. By the same token, though, there are subtle things that can be done that are extremely difficult to stimulate public pressure concerning...

Q: And the Marine Corps is in a very sensitive position right today--the publication of the Brookings Institute

study...

Hittle: That's right.

Q: ...all of the contretemps the Marine Corps is faced with in regards to recruiting, and the boot camp excesses,
Marine Corps
the expense of/aviation, all of these things, it seems to me, can contribute to a diminishing role for the Marine Corps.

Hittle: The more you reflect on it, I think, the more a person has to come to a conclusion that the Marine Corps is potentially faced with a major survival factor in the long range right now if a full and unrestricted reorganization authority goes through for the Executive Branch.

Q: The Marine Corps is in the position of becoming an anachronism.

Hittle: It always has been in the eyes of its critics. That's one of the great issues that we've always had to face, that genuinely the people who have made a crusade out of getting rid of the Marine Corps, or reducing it to coal-pile guards or ceremonial and secondary roles, really never understood it.

Q: But there seems to be a clear and present danger. For instance, during the unification fight, we were in the afterglow of World War II, Korea came along, which further enhanced the prestige, the reputation of the Marine Corps, and Lebanon...

Hittle: Yes, but just remember that just before Korea, that the Marine Corps was being organized on the basis of battalions and under Louis Johnson, the proposal, as I recall, was to go to either 9 or 6 battalions...

Q: Total Marine Corps?

Hittle: Yes.

Q: The point that I was trying to make, though, was that there were partisans, the danger did not come so much from the public sector...

Hittle: That's right.

Q: ...as it did from...

Hittle: ...the expert sector of partisanship.

Q: Right, but it also had its protectors in Congress, and it had its protectors in the public sector, but it has changed in recent years--Schlesinger, the threat when he was Secretary of Defense, whether it was real or imagined, but there have been subtle chipping away, as there has been of all of the services, but I think that perhaps the Marine Corps, because, again, of its anachronistic posture or situation is much more vulnerable.

Hittle: The Marine Corps is more vulnerable and, while this is a digression on this whole subject matter as far as sequence is concerned, I can't help but feel that the Marine Corps is more vulnerable today probably in a major contest for survival

or continuance in its basic role as now constituted and required under statute than at any other time. There is a real possibility that the strength that has been generated and sustained in Congress in the past might not be there now. The Marine Corps has had no real test of strength on an issue vis a vis the Executive Branch as far as Congress is concerned for a long time.

You have to take a look at what were the pillars of strength and this doesn't in any way diminish the role that could be played by congressional leaders today, but just look for a moment at what the passage of time has done. Dewey Short and Carl Vinson have left; Mendel Rivers is dead. Eddie Hebert has retired. Then you look over at the other side. One of the great protectors of the Corps, not because he was impartial or anything else, but simply because he understood why the nation needed a Marine Corps for many reasons, was Senator Russell, and there was never a time when the Marine Corps was in trouble that Senator Russell didn't take the side of the Corps. He's dead. The structure of the Senate Armed Services Committee is much more fragmented now than it was before. Styles Bridges, who was a protector of the Corps and probably the most vocal and constant--and I use vocal in a constructive sense--opponent and student, along with these other manifestations, of ^{the dangers of} a Prussian general staff and a supporter, consequently, of the JCS system, is dead.

When you look at it, where are the key people today that

have at least manifested the understanding of the issues on which the fate of the Marine Corps depends, and its not simply Marine Corps issues per se.

Take the trend that some people think is in motion right now. A shift in emphasis of the role of the Navy from a projection force to a sea control. Now, this isn't all semantics. When you start talking to those terms, there are certain things that start falling into place. A sea control force is in its ultimate concept an application, a force that controls water per se. A projection Navy, a force projection Navy is one that depends upon a truly balanced fleet, including a Marine Corps, because the projection of force from the sea to the shore and inland has been the unique quality, really, of the development of the U.S. naval power since Guantanamo Bay.

Q: These are nuances which are not easily perceived or understood. They may be very simple, but to many they are just terms.

Hittle: There are an awful lot of people found in government today who really don't comprehend the implications and the almost limitless changes that would take place in the shift of emphasis from a projection force, which the Navy really is today, and should be, to a sea control force.

Q: Well, I think that the Navy has done itself a considerable amount of harm largely because of its leadership

has it not, in the constant change. There has been considerable criticism of the Zumwalt era, for instance.

Hittle: I want to put something on the record here. I was the Assistant Secretary, since you mentioned this and this did come up later, but we might just as well take some of this subject matter as its mentioned, I was Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Personnel, Manpower and Reserves, rather, the whole personnel job, at a time when Admiral Moorer was CNO and then when it overlapped, some considerable time after he left, my tenure did with Admiral Zumwalt's tenure as CNO, and while I reserve comment at this time on some of the things that may be more appropriate when we discuss in more detail my recollections as Assistant Secretary, since Admiral Zumwalt's name has come up, and not commenting on all of the things that took place, particularly those after I left, I can say that my relationship with Admiral Zumwalt--and I had only really casually known him before, there was no reason for me to consider a friendship, I mean a personal friendship relationship, it was a...I am speaking of the actual official relationship, it was a satisfactory...

End Side 1, Tape 1, Session XVI.

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session XVI.

Hittle: I was giving you my evaluation and recollection, in principal, of my relationship with Admiral Zumwalt while he was CNO and I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower

and Reserves. It was a cooperative relationship, I believe, from both standpoints, certainly from mine. During that period the things that he did with respect to personnel matters were basically in accord with what I thought should be done. There were a number of things that needed doing that CNO could do. They were basic and in large measure they were constructive.

The ones that generated the criticism, I believe, came along later and I think that there is a very simple reason for it, that a person, regardless of the position that he holds in anything, cannot continue at a high peak of constructive, fundamental performance as a reformer because pretty soon you start running out of the big issues and I cannot help but feel, as I reflect upon it, that the task, the small personal task force group that he had for ideas on reform and so forth finally, or gradually reached the point, after some big things had been done, that they had to keep up the tempo and they didn't have the substance, and that's one of the reasons I think that some of the later actions by Admiral Zumwalt were subject to so much criticism.

I wasn't there at the time. I'm not saying that it didn't happen on my watch. All I'm saying is that my recollection of my relationship with him while I was still Assistant Secretary of the Navy was a worthwhile working relationship. I felt that it was a constructive period.

Q: To get back to something you said before when you

were giving your Pantheon of legislative heroes in the Marine Corps Valhalla, Paul Douglas' name wasn't mentioned.

Hittle: Well, its so obvious that it should be there, and obviously so should be Mike Mansfield's. Mike Mansfield was fighter for the Marine Corps and was always in the forefront, and I don't think that we would ever have had the Marine Corps Bill if it had not been on the Legislative side, from among others, Mike Mansfield.

A lot of the people, because of the years that have worn on, and so forth, since then and the fact that as the Majority Leader of the Senate, many criticize Mansfield for not being, in their opinion, aggressive enough, which wasn't his manner in the later years. Nevertheless, there was never a time when the Marine Corps needed support and a boost that he didn't do it, and the story was told me by one who should know what he was talking about that Truman didn't like the Marine Corps Bill at all, because it was really an indirect Congressional needle to the President, because, over a long period of time, Truman, with his strong, direct methods had antagonized a large number of Congressmen and Senators, but they weren't prepared to fight him on the issues on which they were antagonized. And when Truman made his most helpful remark about the Marine Corps, which was immediately taken as an unjustified slur, which it was, regardless of how it was intended, this was the reason that we had the broad-based support for the Marine Corps Bill, because they could...many members could

give, who were, in some degree, antagonized or sore at the President over something, could give him a rebuff for which they would never be criticized, because they were protecting the Corps, and there was a significant amount--and I know this from personal knowledge--a significant amount of Congressional support that rallied to our cause on the Marine Corps Bill simply because it was the indirect method of then giving a needle to the President, and would never get into public trouble by standing with the Corps.

Q: Not on the merits of the bill itself.

Hittle: No. Some of them didn't care about the merits. The mere fact that the President didn't like it and we would... I'm thoroughly convinced that we would not have had the Marine Corps Bill if the President had not made that statement and this was the quick Congressional reaction on that.

Q: OK, well let me ask you another question, then. This being the case and knowing the background to the National Security Act and all the involvement, was Congressman McDonough's letter to the President a put-up job, or was it just a natural reaction or rather a natural curiosity on his part?

Hittle: I'd have to refresh my memory on the contents of that thing.

Q: Well, you recall, this is what his letter to President

Truman resulted in Truman's reaction in calling the Marine Corps the Navy's police force and having a better propaganda machine than Stalin's and this whole business, and I'm just wondering whether or not Congressman McDonough's letter wasn't in fact a put-up job, knowing what Truman's reaction would be.

Hittle: I have no knowledge that it was a contrived job. I have no knowledge. I don't put it beyond the possibility that in the sharpness and acuteness of the political atmosphere of the time that it might have been, but I have no knowledge of it being a put-up job, at least I have no recollection of it as you bring it up here now.

Q: It could have very well have been.

Hittle: It could have been, at least in the way it turned out. If it had been contrived, it was a masterful stroke. But, of course, some of these things in the political world are like things in battery, which are called "targets of opportunity," and this immediately became a target of opportunity and it laid the emotional foundation for the Marine Corps Bill, and that Marine Corps Bill was an awful lot of emotion as far as a lot of Congressmen were concerned, and a lot voted for it, I'm convinced, simply because they had a means of venting their resentment without having to do it on the issues that they disagreed with the President on, and he could probably have beat them on those specific issues.

Q: Its a helluva way to run a country, though.

Hittle: No, it really isn't, when you get right down to it. Its a very practical thing, because there are many, many issues, and this is just one of them, in the government, and out of government, too, that are not settled on the merits of the immediate issues, but on, for want of a better term I call, the ancillary issue.

You can go through a whole list of items that were settled on the basis of an ancillary issue. Go back to the National Security Act. The National Security Act had a major issue involved, and that was whether or not the roles and missions--in other words, the purposes for which all of the military services were brought into being and existed--should be controlled and specified and changed through Executive Order or through legislative prescription, which was in the law, whether the Army went into it, whether the Air Force went into it, and whether the Navy went into it, in other words, the bulk of the armed forces of the United States went into the National Security Act with roles and missions wasn't decided on the basis of the Army, Navy, and the Air Force--it was decided on an ancillary issue which was really whether or not the U.S. Marine Corps had its roles and missions in. Once that was decided, that then made it legislatively necessary for legislative symmetry, I guess that you could almost call it, for the Navy, which needed it to go in, but the Navy would never have gotten it if the Marine Corps had not gotten the first vote to put those roles and missions in in the subcommittee in the House Expenditures Committee that Clare Hoffman had.

But once that was in, you had to write in the rest of them. The Navy's went in because the Marine Corps had the clout and backing to get it's in, and then the Air Force and the Army. And so it wasn't a matter of whether or not the Air Force and the Army should be in the National Security Act or whether they should be in an Executive Order; it went in as the direct result of the Marine Corps getting it's in.

Q: Of course, in this fight regarding where the roles and missions would be, either in the act or as a matter of fiat in an Executive Order, regarding the Army and Air Force, they were taking a lot for granted that they would always be in a position of having favor with the Executive Branch, because, it seems to me, that it could turn the other way, too.

Hittle: I think that, in the long haul, the Army and the Air Force were absolutely right, that their interests vis a vis the rest of the military establishment would be safe and probably more expansive under Executive Order than if it was frozen in statute, not their roles, particularly, but it raised the legislative fence against poaching on the Navy and Marine Corps for at least as long as other authority did not exist to do it and as long as ^{what} the law said was abided by.

Q: Hmm, very interesting to conjecture on this potential.

Well, we were going to talk about the subjects we discussed on the phone, but I think what we've discussed in this inter-

view session so far is very valuable. I wanted...

Hittle: There is just one point I do want to make. Since we've said that we didn't mention some in the Pantheon of Marine Corps supporters, its just impossible at this point and in the give and take of conversation to do justice or even mention all who were so vitally important to the Marine Corps. It would have to take the analysis of going back to the whole story and sequence of events to do justice to people whose names have been forgotten. And, as I say, if you ask anybody today who is a student of even Marine Corps history who was Carter Monasco and Senator George Bender, the chances are that somebody might remember that they were in Congress at some time, but their votes were absolutely vital to the Marine Corps.

Q: I know Bender was from Ohio...

Hittle: ...and later became senator, and Carter Monasco ^{never} had never really/had any connection with the military except right from the beginning he decided that he was going to stick with Hoffman, although he was a Democrat and Hoffman was a Republican, on that Government Expenditures Committee, in which the National Security Act was written.

Q: Let's see. The title of the committee was Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments.

Hittle: That's right, and its now basically today the Government Operations Committee. But that was, as we said

before--I think that you alluded to it--that the decision to send the National Security Act to Clare Hoffman in the Government Expenditures Subcommittee was a gross miscalculation, as it turned out, to those who thought that they had the slickest trick of the century legislatively.

Q: They came a cropper on that.

Hittle: They sure came a cropper, yes, and just in passing here, its going to be interesting to see if anybody even touches on that very interesting and critical aspect of defense organization history when that conference takes place down in Lynchburg in the middle of March.

Q: I have a feeling that they are all going to be too polite.

Hittle: Well, as I say, I don't know if I'm going to be there or not because I may be out of the country at that time, but if I am, I am going to be particularly interested in Norstad's presentation because he was the one who was charged with the Air Force responsibility and in many ways the White House effort to get through the National Security Act and while he was talking with Mr. Wadsworth, former Senator Wadsworth, who was the champion of the unification act and the Norstad and White House position, those were the parallel times that I was usually up with the Chairman, and I will say that Norstad was a very effective person, and I think that it wouldn't have changed many changes in personalities for him to have been successful as far as his

efforts were concerned.

Q: Very interesting. No one has ever...

Hittle: The fortunate thing was that personality-wise and individually, we by a fortunate set of circumstances had the votes in the subcommittee and we held all the way through. But the critical vote...if we had lost that subcommittee vote, we would never have won it anywhere else. That was the critical vote.

Q: To get 180 degrees away, the last few interview sessions that we have had concerned the period of your appointment as Assistant Secretary, and you've given me some notes, or rather these things have appeared/^{in the}several times we've discussed the subjects.

One of them, Nevius tract, I don't know whether we've spoken about this subject.

Hittle: That wasn't when I was Assistant Secretary. That was when I was Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Nevius tract...

Q: I think that we did discuss this, because I've got it on an earlier thing which also has Quantico dependents' school, berets vis a vis General Pate, and so on, but one of the things I don't think we've discussed, and this appears several times on the various notes I have here from you from...

Hittle: Well, we can check that in the transcript and if it

isn't, we can insert it, because its really a short observation with respect to the good fortune we had in having the right members of Congress support us in getting the ground on which the Marine Corps Memorial is now located.

Q: Well, let me check it, because we've had some gaps in...

Hittle: We sure have, and we've digressed to some degree.

Q: Black ROTCs as a topic, Junior ROTC, the NROTC, and the Black ROTCs.

Hittle: This comes in the sequence of my period as Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

Have we entered into that period now?

Q: Yes, we have, because...

Hittle: We got into my appointment...

Q: Got into your appointment and swearing in on a Gaelic bible. Now, I've got that twice and I don't think....Last time we talked about how you found out about the appointment, Senator Dirksen calling you up, etc...

Hittle: He told me to get up there, and said that that's what they decided, but, with respect to the bible, just in passing there, I took some satisfaction that, in may in some people's opinion have been a dubious distinction, but nevertheless I was sworn in on a Gaelic bible, because on my mother's side, that family was all Highland

Scottish and that was the bible that my predecessors had brought over from Scotland when they emigrated to Canada and then to the United States later, and had been in the family ever since...

Q: And you still had it?

Hittle: Yes, and as Mel Laird observed when he swore me in, he was Secretary of Defense, he said, "You've been sworn in on a Gaelic bible. I trust that you're not going to be wasting any money."

Q: Alright, the first chore that you were sent by, or given by Secretary Laird.

Hittle: That was another one of these interesting sidelights on the functioning of government. At the time I was appointed, I had been functioning in a status as Special Counsel to the Senate Armed Services Committee and conducted, my principal activity there was conducting the investigation of AWOL and desertion or absenteeism in its overall effect in the armed services.

Q: And I think that we've discussed that.

Hittle: We've discussed that. And as a result of that, certain actions were taken by the Senate Armed Services Committee calling for reports and continuing information to be provided over a period of time to the Senate Armed Services Committee on this whole subject, and associated subjects involved in absenteeism, not only numbers, and

so forth, but causes and effect, and one of the first papers that lit on my desk after I became Assistant Secretary of the Navy was ^{the} correspondence that I had prepared and had been sent over to the Secretary of Defense for action. It had a note on it from the Secretary of Defense, who sent it up to me, to be the responsive official in the Department of Defense for all of the information required, and he said, "You asked for this information; you deserve to respond to it," so it was really a boomerang that I threw.

Q: Yes, we have discussed that. Closing out of the Quantico school for dependents...

Hittle: Yes, we've talked about that.

Q: We've talked about that. Berets, we've talked about. We talked about your news activities, the people you interviewed, what your columns were like, and your free mail for Vietnam. The rescue of space available by government air.

Hittle: I don't know that it was the rescue of it, it was the restoration of it. Under the McNamara regime, space available transportation for retired personnel and, I think active duty personnel, also, was eliminated. There was no savings in it, or anything else, but it became a matter immediately and understandably of consternation and disappointment and anger within the military community, but nothing was done to remedy it.

One of the first things that demonstrated to me the

favorable pro-people atmosphere in which I was going to be able to operate under the Laird regime was that I proposed to Secretary of Defense Laird that he restore what was available in space available--it might not have been much, but it was simply the idea of restoring it--and there was no argument, no long study, or anything else. Mel Laird said, "Yes," and he restored it, and it immediately set a tone, I think, of understanding/as far as people problems were concerned, and it was a reassurance, at that time, that the people aspects were going to get the proper attention under that Secretary of Defense.

Q: What year was that?

Hittle: That was early '69, right at the beginning of the Nixon administration, and I must say that this atmosphere existed also right in the White House staff, and it couldn't have taken place unless it was a reflection of Mr. Nixon's views and Secretary Laird was the one who really made them effective, and a lot of followup actions of a pro-people nature took place, and that had been a desert for a long place.

Q: Along with this, of course, was the question of ID cards.

Hittle: This was another small thing, but if there is anything that I think that you learn the more you deal with people, it is that sometimes the small things are the most important. Its what people think are involved and its not a matter of money, and its not a matter of

magnitude of issues sometimes, but simply how people feel about certain things, and, if I might digress for a moment, that's why the so-called personnel managers so often deal in what they think are management issues and they are really to the detriment of what makes people tick and how people think, but this is an example.

Somebody sometime during the McNamara regime, in order to plug was a hole, and there are other ways of doing it, and there were, required that all purchases at post exchanges and commissaries had to be accompanied by show of an ID card, and this was even for the person in uniform, the serviceman. The argument, of course, was, well there are people in the reserves and not entitled to purchase on those days that might do it, there were people that had uniforms that might steal them or buy them, even, and use the post exchanges and commissaries. But, I was a great believer...I'll never forget what one of my early battalion commanders told me and it stuck with me, it has stuck with me through my life, and that was Alfred Noble, who one time made the observation, he said, "You know, you never know what's going on until you get out of your command post and you never stop being amazed," and it was the kind of observation that you always remember and I always tried to abide by it through life and I certainly never stopped being amazed.

As a result, when I was Assistant Secretary I did a large amount of travelling and I was criticized for some of it, but I don't know how you get out and know what

people are thinking unless you get out and talk to them. You are not going to get it through a report from a think tank outfit. So I was down in Camp Lejeune. I got together with a group of enlisted personnel, just picked at random for me, and discussed their problems. Some things you can help them with, some you couldn't. At least it gave them a chance to tell what was bothering them in service, and it gave me a chance to tap into the real communication network of human problems. It wasn't very long before I began to know that one of the things that was bothering the enlisted personnel and the officers the most, but a couple of the sergeants were irate,^{almost}/red in the face. Here they were, they'd shipped over, they were career Marines, and everybody told them--this was generally what their comment was--what a great honor it was to wear a uniform, particularly the Marine Corps uniform, and yet when they went by some GS-3 or -4 at the check-out stand in a post exchange they had to show that young high school girl their ID card in order to make a purchase, and it was demeaning to them, and they were really sore. This is something that is real.

I got the same response from some Navy stations that I visited from some of the older petty officers. They were just plain sore about it and insulted, and sometimes you got some pretty earthy language.

So, I came back and I made the proposal, and I'll say that John Chaffee, who was Secretary of the Navy, he understood this thing real well, too, and he didn't hold it up one bit. He told me to handle it directly with

Laird, and so when it went up there--he ran into me, I think it was in the corridor or we were at some meeting. He said, "I just saw that memorandum, I want to talk to you about it. Now, give me the background." So I gave it to him, and he said, "Of course we're going to stop that. Right now."

And another person I want to pay tribute to in that personnel business under that, in that era was Roger Kelly. He had been Vice President for Personnel for Caterpillar. He came over as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, and Roger Kelly was a human person, he was a decisive person. There was no monkey business about him, but he always would listen to an opposing opinion, and on a number of issues that I knew that the decision had been made in DOD, I was able to go up and talk to Roger Kelly and give him, for what it was worth, my opinion in the most brief and yet persuasive manner I could, and in a couple of issues, Roger Kelly simply reversed the decision. He was that kind of a person. And everybody in the service who was in it under him and continues in the service today, as long as they are in it, they owe a debt of gratitude to Roger Kelly, too, because he did an awful lot for the U.S. serviceman, because one of the things he did--he was not a management man, he was a human being man.

Q: Of course, this was the criticism of the McNamara regime, this management, computerized...

Hittle: The cult of the personnel managers is something that has struck a damaging blow, deep and wide, to personnel in the armed services and all the retired personnel, because, there is a role for a computer, but as an assistance tool and not as a guide, or as an answer to all problems of the human spirit. And the emphasis upon so-called management of personnel is in my opinion, and that's one of the things, I might say, while I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy--I don't know if I've mentioned it or not--I had a chance to do something about it, and I did it, at least while I was there. I put out a memorandum or directive that there would be no ^{further} reference in any publication of the Department of the Navy to personnel management unless it was an exceptional case and approved by me, personally, that the emphasis would be on leadership and not on personnel management.

Well, that, I guess, in part, stuck until the moment I walked down the steps for the last time and left the office because personnel management today is another one of these cult and fad terms. And its spread throughout the military to the point today where I was ^{utterly} astounded, I was talking to a very capable officer a couple of months ago and we were discussing this point, he was a general officer, and he said, "You know, I was just down to a service school and I looked down the curriculum and there was a course in squad management." Whatever happened to the word "leadership?"

Q: That's a good question. Another note, officer conscientious

objectors.

Hittle: Well, to put this in context of the time, the period in which it was my privilege to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Navy was really the peak of the Vietnam War and the beginning of the winddown, although the war was in its highpoint of intensity, and one of the most persistent and fundamental problems that reached my desk, because, in the first place, anything that gets to an Assistant Secretary through the system at that level is usually a can of worms, anyway, or something that is required by his action by law, that his action be exercised by law.

This matter of conscientious objectors--I'm not talking about those who qualified under the terms of the Selective Service Act, and so forth, in other words, I may have disagreed with people such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the genuine Quakers, and so forth, but I respected them because they had the record and the qualifications under the statutes, and that's all you needed to have. If they qualified under the law, fine. And most of those people weren't evading combat. They were evading the actual weaponry and killing people, and many of them performed, even in World War II, as you get back into the real conscientious objectors, acts away and beyond what you would expect of a person in the service, volunteering for experimental medicine and things such as that.

But anyway, I'm not talking about that kind of conscientious objector. I'm talking about the acquired conscientious objection, and that was...and I came to a

real early conclusion on this in going over these cases that came to me that there was a pattern of acquired conscientiousness as far as being a war objector, and that pattern included basically upper class, financial, white, with a very good education. I say this because, by and large, the proportion of blacks in the service were not in the higher officer grades and so forth at that time. They were not educated by and large in the degree of education that they had to the point where they could write a dissertation of about 50 pages and submit it as to how they became a genuine conscientious objector and write it in fine prose of a college graduate in literature and evoke, as some of them did, everything from the writings of Clarence Darrow to the speeches of Mohatma Gandhi.

This was the kind of stuff that came over your desk to justify their claim as conscientious objector. But the other thing that was a constant pattern in this was their degree of intensity of being conscientious objectors was in direct ratio, I concluded, to their nearness to orders to Vietnam, and I should say here that one of the things that a Presidential appointee in one of those slots over in the Pentagon--and I guess/^{probably} in every other department, also--but at least in those slots, sooner or later and you can never prophesy when it is going to take place or on what issue, you're going to get an issue relatively early where the decision is going to be made as to whether you run the system or the system runs you. And one of the people I admired, and still admire, as an outstanding person, a real sincere advocate of the people aspect of

service and did services of tremendous magnitude for the serviceman was Charles Duncan, who was Vice Admiral and Vice Chief of Naval Operations for Personnel, and of course, he was my principal Navy uniformed associate. And I say this with no criticism of Charlie Duncan, but simply as an example of the problems that come to you as an Assistant Secretary and where decisions had been made, it had been the policy of the Department of the Navy on officers, particularly, who put up a determined effort to establish themselves as conscientious objectors to give them their discharge. And Charlie Duncan brought this case to me and recommended that a discharge be given. It was by a junior officer who held a very, very interesting and noncombat billet in an administrative capacity in the United Nations. He was getting pretty close to orders to Vietnam, and up came this bundle of prose staking out in a very, very well written document, which was required, by himself, why he had reached the point of being a conscientious objector. He had also reached the point of getting orders to Vietnam, they were on the way. It was Charlie's recommendation, and strong recommendation of the Bureau of Personnel that he be given it, and the reason was from their standpoint an understandable one. "We don't want this kind in the officer corps," and my reaction to this was, and I told Charlie--we had a long talk on it and discussed this whole problem because this was the test case on my approval or disapproval of the policy that then existed--"What you are saying is absolutely correct except for one thing, if there wasn't a war going on. In peacetime

give them the heave-ho. But this person had taken all the goodies. The government has given him the large part of his education through NROTC."

Q: He was a regular?

Hittle: I don't recall if he had regular or reserve status.

Q: Did that figure in your thinking?

Hittle: It didn't make any difference to me.

Q: Yes, but you laid out a pattern--white, higher education...

Hittle: That's right, in other words, regardless of whether they came in through OCS or NROTC or whatever the route was, and this also applied to enlisted personnel, too, because there were highly educated enlisted personnel, too, that had come in through the various routes, either enlistment, or part-reserve, part-active duty enlistment, or any combination of those.

So I said that as long as anybody was getting shot at, the people who were in the service and it was their turn to get exposed to combat and do their chore, they were going to be required to do it. I was just going to disapproved the acquired conscientious objections as a principle. There might be exceptions, as there always are, but I hadn't found any yet. This had nothing to do with those who fell within the legal criteria of conscientious objector. It so developed that this

particular individual on whom the test case was made was from a very prominent family, also, with considerable influence. But that wasn't the reason that Charlie Duncan was doing this. It was basically to cleanse the officer corps. I could respect his position on that, but I felt that I was going a little further, that there were guys that weren't smart enough and didn't like getting shot at, but nevertheless they hadn't had all the education and the privilege to be a conscientious objector. So I said, "OK, tell him to carry out his orders."

The next question that came up was, "Well, what if he doesn't?" I said, "You tell him," whomever is dealing with him or whatever manner of contact you have with this individual, I said, "Or maybe you don't even have to tell him, but as far as the policy is concerned that I am going to follow, they carry out their orders or the Uniform Code of Military Justice takes its course. They've got their choice." That was the last that was ever heard of this case. The guy took his orders, he went to Vietnam and did his duty, and he went out. And that was very much the pattern of most of these cases. I can't remember any of them that got rejected, refused to carry out their orders.

There was another one that was aboard a ship, which was practically shore duty, the nature of it, down in Norfolk. He became a conscientious objector, but he was getting orders to Vietnam, too. Once this policy was laid down, and they were sent to me, and I simply disapproved them, and the word got back, "disapproved," he went to Vietnam and

I think that this one got decorated.

End, Side 2, Tape 1, Session XVI

Begin, Side 1, Tape 2, Session XVI

Hittle: One of the most interesting--and this is the other example I'll give you--on the enlisted side--was a young chap who had, I think it was, two years of NROTC at government expense. He had deliberately busted out, flunked a course, and got discharged, but he had the obligation, having had that much, to take two years' of enlisted duty, being a regular NROTC. It was because he disbelieved in the war, that was really it, so that was his contention.

I got a personal call from a very, very influential U.S. senator. He said, "I'm not saying that I'm sympathetic. Please understand that, but I have this request from a very good friend, who is the boy's father. The mother is having a nervous breakdown because her son is possibly being subject to being sent to Vietnam. The boy has deliberately busted out of school, and I don't think he'll be worth anything in the service. They have asked to have a meeting with you." I said, "Who?" and he said, "Well, the father. He wants to bring his son down to talk with you personally and they have their attorney."

I said, "I don't know what they need their attorney for, but I'm not going to keep any attorney from getting a fee, but he can come if he wants to."

The senator said, "I'd appreciate it if you'd talk with them. They're a fine family. I can tell you they've been

my supporters for years, but I wouldn't tell you what to do in a thing like this or suggest it, but please give them a sympathetic ear."

So they came in, a fine looking kid, and we talked for about an hour. Finally the attorney got in and said, "You know that there's something in this whole thing I think is unfair." I said, "What's that?" He said, "It's the punitive nature of requiring this well-educated, brilliant young man, who is conscientiously opposed to war to serving as an enlisted man."

I said, "Well, you can have your opinions on that," and I must say aside that at this my senior Navy aide, a captain who was sitting there, who was always with me so there would be no question as to the nature of the conversation, I could see out of the corner of my eye that he was alert as to what I was going to say. I said, "You can have your opinion on that, but you know, I feel that serving in uniform, regardless of what it is, what rank, from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs down to the newest recruit, is a privilege, and that's what I've always tried to convey, and my son believes it, because he is a corporal in Vietnam now."

Well, I just give you that as an aside, because that stopped that conversation. But the upshot of it was, the father said, "You know, aside from my son, his mother is having a nervous breakdown and is under doctor's care right now. From that standpoint, can you make an exception and release my son from his obligation?" I said, "I feel sorry for your wife. But you know who I feel sorrier for? I feel

gorrier for the mothers of some of these boys who are coming back in plastic bags, and in fairness to them, if you were me, would you let your son go?" He didn't respond to that question, so finally he said, "Well, young man, what's your reaction to all of this? We've got to wind up this conversation here at some point!" I'd given them about an hour. My schedule was full, but when you've got a personal problem, you give it attention or not at all. So I asked him, "What's your reaction to all of this as far as your serving?"

He said, "What if I don't carry out my orders?" "Well," I said, "I don't know specifically what will happen to you, but as far as I'm concerned, the Uniform Code of Military Justice--in other words, let the law take its course. You'll face court martial, and without prejudging it, I'd be surprised if you weren't convicted and sentenced."

Then he said, or words to this effect, "Well, maybe I'd prefer that than fighting." I said, "All I can do is to tell you that it's your decision." The interesting thing was that on further reflection, this young man carried out his orders and about a year later I got a call from the senator.

He said, "Do you remember this young chap, father, and attorney who came over?" I said, "I sure do. Do we have a problem again?" He said, "You don't have a problem again, I just wanted to tell you what I have just heard from the father. The youngster has been through electronics school. He is a rated radar repairman on one of the big carriers in the western Pacific. He is so enthusiastic about his service in the Navy that he wants his father

consider letting him reenlist!" My only conclusion was that its a rare time when the service doesn't turn out a better person that goes into it.

Q: Of course, if you get the bad ones going in...

Hittle: Well, if you've got a bad apple, its a bad one from the beginning. You can't reverse the rot in the apple.

Q: Which is one of the problems that we've had in the armed forces. Certainly this Project 100,000, which I'm sure that you, in your position as Assistant Secretary, felt the fall-out on.

Hittle: That was the bottom of the mental score group, wasn't it?

Q: These were the underprivileged. The McNamara regime was going to make the armed forces into a social reform organization. It was going to take the juvenile delinquents off of the streets...that's right. That's where we had the problem with the Grade IV mental group.

Hittle: The Marine Corps had to take them and the Navy also. On that particular issue it was an unending struggle as far as I was concerned to get it reversed, and I simply could not understand...well, I could understand them, but I never agreed with the social-minded people outside the Department of Defense as well as some of them inside who kept contending that you really had to take these deficient and low-standard mental people whether they qualified or

not.

Q: Group IV.

Hittle: The Group IVs, yes. And my argument was to one of these social groups, a delegation that came to see me. I asked how many had sons. About half of them raised their hands. I said, "Alright, you know that anybody who gets into combat, his life depends on the person who is besides him in the fire team. And whether that person survives besides him and can protect him is a large element of mental reaction and acuity. Do you want your son to go into combat in a fire team with a person besides him who is a slow reactor, because the other guy coming at him from the Communist side in Vietnam is ^{probably} a very, very alert, intelligent person, or he would not be that far down the peninsula." They listened, but it never changed them any. But I will say that we began to get under Roger Kelly a relaxation of the Group IV.

Q: I think that one ~~other~~ ^{this} thing that goes in with/conscientious objector problem, and we might discuss this now as the last item on today's session, return of the deserters from Europe.

Hittle: That's another thing that comes on to an official as a surprise, some of these issues, and you have to be able, I think, to sense what the implications are on almost routine circumstances, and of course some you miss and some you catch. Having been through the mill in the Marine Corps and also having conducted the investigation for the Senate

on deserters who had taken off and gone to a foreign country, I think that I was probably sensitized to it.

This all began one day when I got a call from one of the desk officers in Personnel in Navy, and he said, "I just wanted to let you know that there's a deserter that came in today by commercial air from Denmark. There's another one coming in shortly and another one following him. We got a message from the embassy." And I said, "Where is this chap?" "Oh," he said, "we've got him in a hospital in Philadelphia. He's on his way to Philadelphia; he just got in a little while ago." I asked, "Why?" and he said, "Well, we take the attitude, it has been the policy that they wouldn't be deserters and they wouldn't have taken this kind of action if there possibly something wrong, and so we send them in for a complete examination."

I asked, "Who met him when he arrived?" I was beginning to get more and more interested in this thing. "Oh," he said, "we had some ONI agents there in civilian clothes to meet him," and then I asked, "Why civilian clothes?" "Well, it has been the policy to keep all of this in low key." I said, "Fine. You say that you have another one coming in?" He said, "Yes, this afternoon on a different flight."

I said, "OK, we've got a new policy." He said, "What's that, sir?" I said, "You send up instructions right now and follow this in the future that on all deserters coming back, they are to be met at the gangway of the plane, at the bottom of the steps, by, if its a Marine, by an MP with his brassard and weapon, and if its Navy, by a Shore Patrol

with his brassard and weapon. They are to be placed under arrest, and that is to be their welcome back into the family of the Department of the Navy after their desertion. Now, if they weren't coming in from overseas, where would they go if you arrested them on the street?"

"Oh," he said, "if we took them into custody anywhere else, they'd go into, New York, they'd go into the Brooklyn brig." I said, "OK, that's where all of these are going. Treat them like any other deserters." He said, "What about the physical examination at the hospital, and so on." I said, "Make this part of your written instructions, too. Immediately after being taken into custody and prior to confinement they will be given a thorough examination with a written report by a Navy medical officer. If they require hospitalization or medical treatment of any kind, they get exactly what they require without any restrictions. If they don't need it in the opinion of the medical officer, into the brig they go, and then let the Uniform Code start taking its course."

He said, "Well, this is a pretty big change." I said, "Apparently it is, but that is the way it is going to be," and about a half an hour later I got a call, and my secretary said, "Its the admiral of the naval district," and so I took it. I forget this flag officer's name. He said, "This is Admiral 'so and so,' I'm in command of the naval district up here," and I said, "Yessir, Admiral," and I was waiting for a protest. He said, "I just wanted to call you, Mr. Secretary, and tell you how goddammed glad I am that you have issued the instructions that you have!

I have been sick and tired of seeing these deserters pampered when they get back!" (laughs)

Q: Whose policy had that been? Or had it just been SOP?

Hittle: It's one of those things that had been adopted without thinking through, or else they thought they had the right answer since they had it scenarioed in low key. So I think that the only significance of that vignette is the fact that in a Presidential-appointee job as Assistant Secretary, you never know what problems are coming up, and many of them are not recognized as problems until you really look into what it means. In other words, this had been going on indefinitely since the deserters had begun trickling back. I don't know what they're doing to them now, but at least for two and a quarter years that's what they did.

Q: Well, if they were draft evaders...

Hittle: This didn't apply to them.

Q: They were actual deserters.

Hittle: These were actual deserters who had gone over the hill in Vietnam and had come back through the Soviet Union and Scandanavia.

Q: Of course, you also indicated another item which follows on to this, and that was your brig visits and problems with the brigs. Was that a major area?

Hittle: That was a major area. You well remember the problems that we had at Pendleton during the peak of the war, at least incipient riots and troubles. I had a basic reaction that I tried to follow as a matter of principle, and that was, when you set your priorities of what you visited and where you went. You went where the trouble was, not that you didn't appreciate the places that were run right and you didn't have problems, but the place where you should show is where there was difficulty and on the priority list.

So, everywhere we had brig trouble, I went. One of my routine procedures was, in making visitations, too, was although it was never scheduled, regardless of where I went, at some point in the schedule I would simply tell the driver to take me to the brig, because you have to be on a surprise visit to a brig, because there is nothing in the world that will shape up faster than a brig if they got that you're coming. Of course, some of them had G-2d my procedure; I could tell that. They were ready. But a lot of them hadn't, because of turnover in people and so forth, and I guess that the reason for going to a brig is that these are people at the bottom of the totem pole, but as long as they are in your brig, they are still your people, and you are responsible for them. And it gives you an understanding, too, of how kids get into the soup when you talk with them.

One of the things that I always did was go through the solitary confinements and I tried to talk with each

person in there, at least ask them what they were in for, if they had any complaints, if they were real fine; if they weren't, I didn't pay any attention to them. If they had any medical requirements, if there was--if it was imaginary, or anything--why, once they said it, I had a doctor check them.

Of course, you run into some real nasty ones, too, because they wouldn't be in solitary, some of them, if they weren't. I remember one time at Pendleton, I was going through this solitary, and I went up to one door--and when I did this, why, I always simply told who was with me, I said, "I want to do this privately; wait for me out there, so I could speak with these people privately," because you owed that to them. Even in a brig, why, if there's any complaints, you've got to be naive to think that there isn't going to be some kind of a reaction of some kind, psychological or otherwise. I went up to this door. I had no sooner introduced myself to this one chap and asked him what he was in for, he hocked up a great big wad of spit and let me have it right in the face! Fortunately nobody saw it. I didn't like it, but wiped it off and went off about it, and asked him, "Do you feel better?" (laughs) I laughed, but that's all.

But that's what you have to expect and accept if you do your job right. Those are the perils of the profession if you talk to those people, and if I had put him on report for that, from that day on, the word would have been through the grapevine that you couldn't talk to me in privacy by the time got garbled about five times in transmission.

As a matter of fact, Navy Times was very kind to me. They had an article after I had been in for a year or so and said that I had seen the inside of more Navy hospitals and brigs than anybody that had ever been in the secretarial position in the Navy.

I also made a point of, every place I went in any of my travels to make a side trip or include it in my actual visitation, visiting the hospital and particularly the casualty wards from Vietnam. And while you can't discourse long with everybody, you can at least chat a moment with each person, and I figured that I owed it to them. And let me tell you, if anybody wonders why I've got a stiff and basically uncompromising view on draft evaders and deserters, I guess its probably because I visited so many casualty wards, because you don't know--it came to me real early, the realization--you just don't know how many of those people who were badly crippled and wounded, their lives blighted, were in that condition because they were in a place out of turn that one of those draft evaders wasn't in, and they had to move up and take his place and catch the shot that he would have caught.

And the remarkable thing of it was that never once did I hear a gripe on the war--and I talked at length with the more seriously hurt ones, and I'm talking about the double and even triple amputees. Never once did I hear a gripe from the casualties as to the wrong war in the wrong place or that they shouldn't have been over there. Most of them had a conviction, whether it was a psychological self-protection device or what, I don't know, but at least an

expression and believing it themselves that what they had done was the right thing and being where they were and in getting shot at.

I remember one kid at the Great Lakes Naval Hospital, and this is part of all of this post-Vietnam syndrome today that is forgotten. I went into a hospital ward, with Vietnam casualties there, and the veterans' groups in the Great Lakes area had provided an American flag which was hanging up over everyone of those bunks, and you didn't see one of them taking them down, either. Every bunk, every hospital bed for a Vietnam casualty had an American flag hanging on the wall over it.

And one chap in there, just to digress for a moment, just a young kid--he couldn't have been over 19, 20, if he was that, curly red haired, triple amputee. I was talking to him, asking him where he got it, and so forth, and he talked straight. There was no self-pity in this thing, no resentment. "Well," I said, "you know, Corporal, I guess you've had a right as much as anybody to express an opinion of whether you think you should have been fighting over there or not, with all these protests and everything going on. What's your reaction? You've earned the right to say anything you want to."

He said, "Well, I'll tell you. I got a very basic attitude toward it. I'd rather have fought and caught it in Vietnam than in Kalamazoo." What a simple analysis of opposing Communist aggression!

Q: How were you able to make all of these tours in hospitals and casualty wards and maintain a balance, and maintain some

sanity and not...

Hittle: Well, I guess when you get right down to it, it gives you a better appreciation of the good people in life, and that's the positive aspect of it. If anybody thought that they had problems, or they thought that some of the people who were coming to them with problems were the most serious things that could confront them, it gave them a balance to put other things in perspective by seeing the ones who had really done their all. That was my reaction to it.

I guess the ones you remember the most were those who were probably maimed the worst. I remember one Kid I went into see...you know, in some of these hospitals where they took them in on the west coast before they filtered them out, there were a lot in there that weren't going to make it, or there were some, I should say, because most of them that got to a major hospital, made it.

When I went into this one place, I asked if they had any others there, it was out in San Diego, I think it was, or the Los Angeles hospital, and the doctor said, "Yes, I've got one lad in here that I've got in a private room. But you've got to be prepared. He's been badly hit." The kid had had his legs taken off above the crotch, and how he was alive they really couldn't explain. He was alive, conscious, and I chatted with him two or three minutes, not enough purposely to tire him out, but he spoke clear and, as I say, there was no self-pity in him at all. He just re-

counted how he'd got caught in artillery fire over there, or mortar fire, I guess it was. He caught it, he said, and when I left, the nurse said, "You know, I don't think he'll make it to morning." I went in to another ward, I think this was down in Memphis in the hospital--he'd been moved on nearer to his home hospital, and one of them was laying there in a bunk and his eyes were covered, and before I got there I asked who he was, and the doctor taking me through said, "He's a CPO; he's blinded for life. Near as we can find out, he caught a grenade right in the face."

So I went over and introduced myself to him and we chatted about five or ten minutes about him, his family, and so forth, and I said, "How will you be able to adjust to your future? I understand that you've got a very realistic attitude." He said, "Well, you've got to take it as it comes. I've seen a lot and it will help me when I'm blind." And I said to him, "Is there anything you need that you're not getting?" He said, "No, all I can tell you is that I'm lucky to have such good hospital care."

So, that's the kind of people you saw, and they left an impression on you, and I guess some of these people today that are out lobbying and stirring up public support as they can get it to know let the deserters loose with a pardon, and upgrade discharges of the worst kind have never seen the things that would have given them balance in their effort.

Q: Of course, there's a philosophical position on that. I'm not in a position to...having assumed that we were, that this

was national policy and that we were in a war, then you have got to go forward--there is nothing else you can say about it. Everything else fell into place pro forma. Then when you go backwards and start ruminating--if that's the appropriate term--whether we should have gotten involved...

Hittle: Has there ever been a right war?

Q: Yes, I think there has. Sure there has...

Hittle: No, I say that rhetorically, because has there ever been a war in which the claim hasn't been made that there shouldn't have been war.

Q: Another question you might ask rhetorically is has there even been a war in which there hasn't been some injustice.

Hittle: There never has.

Q: There never has. There's always someone who is going to get hurt, but with the march of "civilization," war has been more and more a less popular way of settling things, and when you come to the Vietnam era...

Hittle: You can really turn that thing around, to the other side of the coin and simply say that with the so-called march of civilization, instead of wars being less and less popular, there have been more and bigger wars with more people increasingly involved.

Q: You are absolutely right on that. Of course, the Civil War wasn't a popular war.

Hittle: No. There are very few wars that are popular with the guys that are fighting them, and there's very seldom that I can recall been any military action but what somebody says that is the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time. That's what they said about Korea, but where would Japan and what's left of the strategic integrity of the Western Pacific be today if we hadn't dug our heels in in Korea. Of course, we haven't seen the end of Vietnam yet.

Q: No, and this is a good place to stop, I think.

End of Session XVI