ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

General Robert E. Cushman, Jr.
U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)

Benis M. Frank
Interviewer

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
Washington, D.C.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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FOREWORD

This typescript, the transcribed memoir of General Robert E. Cushman, Jr., USMC (Retired) results from a series of tape-recorded interviews conducted with him at the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, DC on 1, 3, 4, and 5 November and 9 December 1982 for the Marine Corps Oral History Program.

Oral History is essentially spoken history, the oral recall of eyewitness impressions and observations recorded accurately on tape in the course of an interview conducted by a historian or an individual employing historical methodology and, possibly, the techniques of a journalist. The final product is a verbatim transcript containing historically valuable personal narratives relating to noteworthy professional experiences and observations from active duty, reserve, and retired distinguished Marines.

General Cushman began editing his transcript but unfortunately he died before he could finish. The reader is asked to bear in mind that he is reading a transcript of the spoken rather than the written word. General Cushman had placed a restriction of OPEN on the use of his memoirs before his death. This means that a potential user may read the transcript or audit the recording upon presentation of appropriate credentials.

Copies of this memoir are deposited in the Marine Corps Oral History Collection, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC and Breckinridge Library, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia.

E. H. SIMMONS
Brigadier General
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired
Director of Marine Corps
History and Museums

GENERAL ROBERT E. CUSHMAN, JR., USMC (RETIRED)

25th Commandant of the Marine Corps

Robert Everton Cushman, Jr. was born 24 December 1914 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He attended Central High School there and at age 16, before graduating, was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy. Graduating 10th in his class of 442, he was commissioned a Marine second lieutenant on 6 June 1935.

Upon completing Basic School, Lieutenant Cushman served briefly at the Marine Corps Base, San Diego. In February 1936, he arrived in Shanghai, China and served as a platoon commander with the 4th Marines, and later the 2d Marine Brigade. He earned his first campaign ribbon during Sino-Japanese hostilities in 1937. On his return to the United States in March 1938, he served at naval shipyards in Brooklyn, New York and Portsmouth, Virginia. He was promoted to first lieutenant in August 1938.

In April, Lieutenant Cushman was assigned to the Marine Detachment at the New York World's Fair, and was subsequently stationed at the Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia. He was promoted to captain in March 1941. In June 1941, Captain Cushman reported aboard the USS Pennsylvania at San Diego, en route to Pearl Harbor, as commanding officer of the ship's Marine Detachment. He was serving in this capacity when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Upon his transfer from the Pennsylvania, he joined the 9th Marines at San Diego as a battalion executive officer in May 1942, and that same month was promoted to major.

Major Cushman hiked from San Diego to Camp Pendleton with his unit in September 1942, and embarked for the Pacific area in January 1943. That month, Major Cushman was appointed commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, and in May 1943 was promoted to lieutenant colonel at the age of 29.

During the two years he held that post, he led his battalion repeatedly into combat, earning the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V" on Bougainville, the Navy Cross during the recapture of Guam, and the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" during the Iwo Jima campaign.

Upon his return to the United States in May 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Cushman was stationed at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virgina for three years. During that period he completed the Senior School, served as an instructor in the Command and Staff School, and during the latter two years was Supervisory Instructor, Amphibious Warfare School. In June 1948, he was named head of the Amphibious Warfare Branch, Office of Naval Research, Navy Department, Washington, DC. From October 1949 until May 1951, he served on the staff of the Central Intelligence Agency. While there, he was promoted to colonel in May 1950.

In June 1951, Colonel Cushman joined the staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleet, in London, serving as Amphibious Plans Officer until June 1953. Following his return to the United States, he was transferred to Norfolk, Virginia, where he served as a member of the faculty of the Armed Forces Staff College, and in July 1954 became Director of Plans and Operations Division there.

In July 1956, he assumed command of the 2d Marine Regiment, at Camp Pendleton, North Carolina.

Assigned to Washington, DC in February 1957, he served four years on the staff of then Vice President Richard Nixon as Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs. While serving in this capacity, he was promoted to brigadier general in July 1958.

Following his departure from Washington, Brigadier General Cushman became Assistant Division Commander, 3d Marine Division, on Okinawa, in March 1961. He was promoted to major general in August 1961, and in September assumed command of the division.

In July 1962, he reported to Headquarters Marine Corps in Washington, DC where he was assigned as both Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence) and Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 (Plans, Operations and Training), in which capacities he served until 1 January 1964. From that date until June 1964, he served as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, only.

From June 1964 until March 1967, Major General Cushman served in the dual capacity of Commanding General, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, California and Commanding General, 4th Marine Division Headquarters Nucleus. In June 1966, he formed the 5th Marine Division and he additionally served as its Commanding General at Camp Pendleton until November 1966.

Major General Cushman was ordered to the Republic of Vietnam in April 1967 and was assigned as the Deputy Commander, III Marine Amphibious Force. He was promoted to lieutenant general in June 1967, upon assuming duty as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious

Force--the largest combined combat unit ever led by a Marine.

For his service as Deputy Commander, from April to May 1967, and subsequently as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force, from June to December 1967, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. A Gold Star in lieu of a second Distinguished Service Medal was awarded for his service as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force; senior advisor, I Corps Tactical Zone, and I Corps Coordinator for United States/Free World Military Assistance Forces, from January 1968 to March 1969.

On 6 March 1969, while serving in Vietnam, General Cushman was nominated by President Richard M. Nixon to be the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; his nomination was confirmed by the Senate, 12 April 1969. Lieutenant General Cushman was awarded the Distinguished Intelligence Medal for serving as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency from April 1969 through December 1971.

While serving as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, General Cushman was nominated for the post of Commandant of the Marine Corps, a position he assumed on 1 January 1972. For his service during this assignment, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and the Joint Service Commendation Medal upon his retirement on 1 July 1975.

General Cushman died on 2 January 1985 and was interred in Arlington National Cememtary on 7 January. He is survived by his widow, Audrey; a son, Robert E., III; and a daughter, Roberta Lind.

A complete list of the General's medals and decorations include: Navy Cross; Distinguished Service Medal with two Gold Stars in lieu of a second and third award; Legion of Merit with Combat "V"; Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V"; Navy Commendation Medal; Presidential Unit Citation with one Bronze Star; Navy Unit Commendation Medal with Bronze Star; Distinguished Intelligence Medal; China Service Medal; American Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star (Fleet Clasp); American Campaign Medal; Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with one Silver Star; Victory Medal, World War II; National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star; Vietnam SErvice Medal with one Silver Star and two Bronze Stars; Order of the May to the Naval Merit, in the Degree of Commander (Government of Argentina); National Order of Vietnam, Commander or 3d Class, Republic of Vietnam; National Order of Vietnam, Officer or 4th Class, Republic of Vietnam; Army Distinguished Service Order 1st Class, Republic of Vietnam; Navy Distinguished Service Order 1st Class, Republic of Vietnam; Cross of Gallantry with 2 Palms, Republic of Vietnam; Order of Military Merit, 2d Class (Ulchi), Republic of Korea; National Security Merit, 2d Class (Bookuk), Republic of Korea; Order of Military Merit, 3d Class (Chungmu), Republic of Korea; Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation (Gallantry Cross Color); Vietnam Campaign Medal; and Vietnamese Rural Revolutionary Development Medal, Republic of Vietnam.

Gen Robert Cushman, 25th Commandant, Succumbs at Age 70

Retired Gen Robert E. Cushman, Jr., 25th Commandant of the Marine Corps, suffered a fatal heart attack at his home in Fort Washington, Maryland, on 2 January, nine days after his 70th birthday. A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, Gen Cushman graduated 10th in his class of 442 from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1935. He was commissioned a Marine second lieutenant at the age of 20.

In a recent interview, he gave the reasons he opted for a Marine Corps career. One was that he thought he would rather be a Marine than a sailor, for he had read the *Landing Party Manual* assiduously and "I just felt I'd be happier and able to do better the technical things that you had to do to be a Marine officer than you did to be a naval officer." A second reason for becoming a Marine was that while at the Naval Academy, he had overstayed his leave in town one night. He was climbing over the barbed-wire-topped wall behind the Academy chapel when the Marine guard on duty separated the barbed wire with his rifle butt and held it apart so "I could get through. And I decided that's my kind of outfit. Any guy that'll do that for me, he's alright!"

Lt Cushman joined The Basic School Class of 1935, which, like the famous West Point Class of 1915, was called "the class the stars fell on," for the fact that out of its ranks came two Commandants—Gens Cushman and Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.—and 14 others who served on active duty as general officers. About 1947, several members of this class, now lieutenant colonels, were serving at Quantico. One night at Waller Hall they were discussing the progression of the Commandancy, and determined that at a certain time in the future, a new Commandant would be chosen from their Basic School class. They each wrote down their best guess as to who it would be. Then-LtCols Chapman and Cushman, and a third officer, were unanimous choices.

Following graduation from Basic School, Lt Cushman was ordered to duty in Shanghai, where he served as a platoon leader in the 4th Marines. Upon his return to the United States in 1938, he served at the naval shipyards in Brooklyn, New York, and Portsmouth, Virginia, and the following year was assigned to the Marine detachment at the New York World's Fair. Just last fall in Washington, Gen and Mrs. Cushman hosted the 45th anniversary of former members of the detachment. At the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Capt Cushman commanded the Marine detachment on the *Pennsylvania*, then based at Pearl Harbor. With his ship out of action, he was transferred to the West Coast to the new 9th Marines as a battalion executive officer. When his regiment embarked for the Pacific in January 1943, Maj Cushman was given command of the 2d Battalion. He held this command for two years, leading it in the campaigns on Bougainville, where he earned the Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V"; on Guam, where he was decorated with the Navy Cross; and on Iwo Jima, where he received the Legion of Merit with Combat "V." LtCol Cushman was decorated with the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism dur the period 21 July to 20 August when a 29-year-old battalion commander Guam, he:

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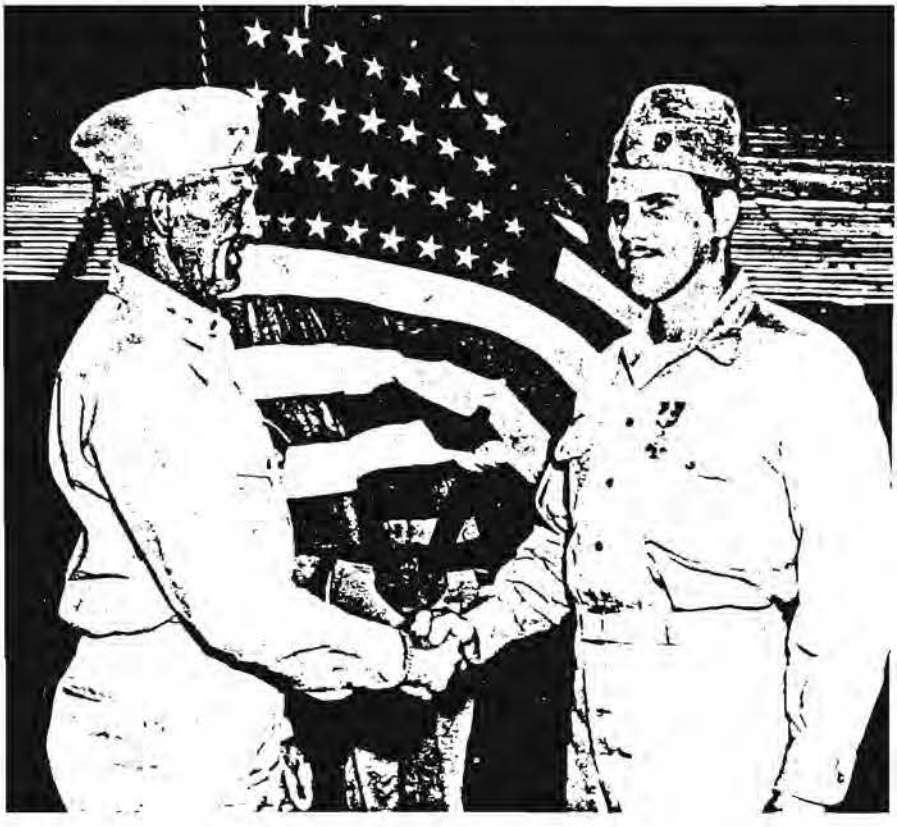
MajGen Graves B. Erskine, left, congratulates then-LtCol Cushman on receivi the Navy Cross in February 1945 for action as a battalion commander on Gua



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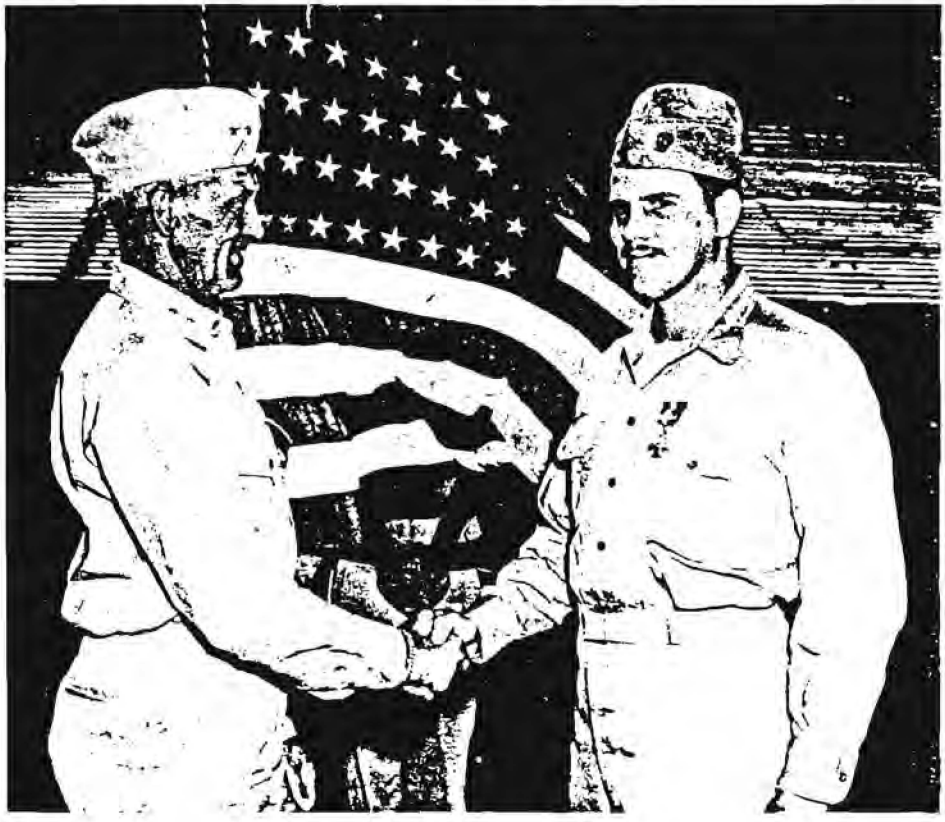
Following the end of the war, LtCol Cushman returned to the United States where he held a number of staff and instructional positions. He attended Senior School and then was assigned as a supervisory instructor in the Junior School. LtCol Cushman was a prolific

MajGen Graves B. Erskine, left, congratulates then-LtCol Cushman on receiving the Navy Cross in February 1945 for action as a battalion commander on Guam.



writer of articles dealing with his profession, writing 17 in the 1940s and 1950s. As a captain in 1941, he was awarded first prize in the *Marine Corps Gazette* essay contest, and he was to win it three more times for his essays in 1945, 1953, and 1957. A serious student of amphibious warfare, he understood the uses of applied military history and used the knowledge in writing articles for *Marine Corps Gazette*, *Naval Institute Proceedings*, *Infantry Journal*, and other professional publications.

Successive assignments in the interwar period led him to the Office of Naval Research, where he headed the Amphibious Warfare Branch; to a staff position with the newly formed Central Intelligence Agency; and to the staff of CinCNELM, in London, where he was an amphibious planning officer. In 1954, Col Cushman was transferred to the faculty of the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, and two years later was given command of the 2d Marines at Camp Lejeune. In 1957, Col Cushman was assigned to the staff of Vice President Nixon as the Marine Assistant for National Security Affairs. Following this four-year tour, BGen Cushman became Assistant Division Commander of the 3d Marine Division on Okinawa, and with his promotion to major general, assumed command of the division in September 1961. He returned to Washington and Headquarters Marine Corps the next year, where he was Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2/G-3 until January 1964, and G-3 alone for the next six months. From June 1964 to March 1967, Gen Cushman served in the dual capacity as commander of Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, as well as CG of the 4th Marine Division.

In June 1966, he formed the 5th Marine Division, and commanded it also until November 1966. He went to Vietnam in April 1967 as Deputy Commander, III Marine Amphibious Force, assuming command in June, when he received his third star and promotion to lieutenant general. When he took command of III MAF, it had some 163,000 soldiers and Marines, the largest combined combat unit ever led by a Marine. For his service first as Deputy Commander and then Commanding General of III MAF (and as Senior Advisor, I Corps Tactical Zone and I Corps Coordinator for United States/Free World Military Assistance Forces from January 1968 to his departure from Vietnam in March 1969), he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and a Gold Star in lieu of a second medal.

A close relationship grew with Mr. Nixon during his four-year assignment as military advisor to the vice president. President Nixon nominated him to become Deputy Director of the CIA in March 1969, and Commandant in late 1971. It was during his Commandancy that Gen Cushman's appreciation of history in general and Marine Corps History in particular became especially evident. In 1976, the Commandant's House was designated a National Historic Landmark. Four years earlier, it had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places, the first step in the hierarchy of historical preservation. At that time, with Gen Cushman's encouragement, a private group was formed to seek contributions for and to assist in the refurbishment of the house. As Commandant, Gen Cushman fully supported the move to obtain Building 58 in the Washington Navy Yard as the Marine Corps Historical Center following its abandonment as a Marine barracks. Despite the demands on the Marine Corps' military construction budget, Gen Cushman was steadfast in his support of the renovation of the barracks into a combined museum/research center.

Most importantly, Gen Cushman's Commandancy was marked by the Corps' return to normalcy after its long involvement in the Vietnam War. His most severe problem concerned Marine Corps personnel, that is, recruiting and retaining quality Marines without sacrificing the end strength of the Corps. As it transpired, he handed the reins of the Commandancy to one of his former company commanders in the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines—Gen Louis H. Wilson—whom Gen Cushman had personally recommended for the Medal of Honor in the wake of the desperate fight for Fonte Hill on Guam.

Gen Cushman was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on 7 January with full military honors tendered a former Commandant. He is survived by his wife, the former Audrey Boyce; a daughter, Roberta Lind Cauley of Charlottesville, Virginia, and a son, Robert E. Cushman III, of Arlington.—BMF

Then-LtGen Cushman takes part in a ceremony at Da Nang, South Vietnam, in September 1968, as Commanding General, III Marine Amphibious Force.

OBITUARIES

R.E. Cushman, Retired Marine General, Dies

By Richard Pearson
Washington Post Staff Writer

Robert E. Cushman Jr., 70, a retired Marine Corps general who was one of the most highly decorated combat veterans of World War II and was a deputy director of the CIA before serving as Marine Corps commandant from 1972 to 1975, died Jan. 2 at his home in Fort Washington after a heart attack.

Gen. Cushman spent 40 years on active duty. Decorations he won during World War II included the Navy Cross, the Corps' highest award for valor except for the Medal of Honor, which he received as a battalion commander on Guam.

Serving in Vietnam from 1967 to 1969, he rose to the post of commanding general of the III Marine Amphibious Force. Comprising some 163,000 soldiers and marines, it was the largest combined combat unit ever led by a marine.

From 1957 to 1960, he was assistant for national security affairs to Vice President Richard M. Nixon.

When Pearl Harbor was bombed on Dec. 7, 1941, Gen. Cushman held the rank of captain and was commmander of the Marine detachment aboard the battleship Pennsylvania at Pearl. With his ship out of action as a result of the Japanese attack, Gen. Cushman returned to the mainland, then in January 1943 embarked for the Pacific, where he commanded the 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, and became a lieutenant colonel.

During the next two years, he led his battalion through some of the roughest fighting of the Pacific war. Gen. Cushman earned the Bronze Star with combat "V" device at Bougainville, the Legion of Merit with combat "V" at Iwo Jima, and the Navy Cross during the recapture of Guam.

At Guam, his battalion was ordered to seize and hold a strongly defended enemy strongpoint, which had held up the Marine advance for three days.

The citation for his award described how Gen. Cushman "directed the attacks of his battalion and the repulse of numerous Japanese counterattacks, fearlessly exposing himself to heavy hostile rifle, machine gun and mortar fire in order to remain in the front lines and obtain firsthand knowledge of the enemy situation. Following three days of bitter fighting culminating in a heavy Japanese counterattack, which pushed back the flank of his battalion, he personally led a platoon into the gap and, placing it for defense, repelled the hostile force. He contributed to the annihilation of one enemy battalion and the rout of another."

After the war, he held a variety of staff and training posts, including instructor of the command and staff school and head of the amphibious warfare branch of the Navy Department's Naval Research Office. During the 1950s, his assignments included a stint as an instructor at the Armed Forces Staff College.

From 1962 to 1964, he served as assistant chief of staff for intelligence and for plans, operations, and training. From 1964 to 1967, he was stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif., as base commander and head of the 5th Division.

He then went to Vietnam, where he earned two Distinguished Service medals and gained a reputation for independence and tactical innovation. Commanding in South Vietnam's northernmost provinces, he privately took issue with his commanders' instructions from Saigon, especially about the defense of the American bastion at Khesanh, which was besieged by the enemy for months. Gen. Cushman was believed to have said that Americans were sacrificing their greatest asset: the ability to fight mobile warfare, to strike rapidly with mobile artillery, helicopters and specially organized troops.

He returned to the United States in 1969 to become deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, number two post, which he held until 1972 when he became the 25th commandant of the Marine Corps. He was awarded the CIA's Distinguished Intelligence Medal, and upon retiring from the Corps in 1975 was awarded a third Distinguished Service Medal.

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na.

Survivors include his wife, t
former Audrey Boyce of Fort Was
ington; a son, Robert E. III, of A
lington; a daughter, Roberta Li
Cauley of Charlottesville, and a s
ter, Helen Cushman of California.

ROBERT E. CUSHMAN JR.

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MARINE CORPS ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interviewee: Gen Robert E. Cushman, Jr., USMC, Retired

Interviewers: Benis M. Frank, Head, Oral History Section, and Vietnam writers as noted

Date and Place of Interview: November 1, 1982, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, DC.

Begin Session I, Tape 1, Side 1

Frank: We are going to start right out with these Vietnam related questions and there may be a couple of others that we'll ask or anything that comes up tangentially to be asked by the people who are working in this area.

Cushman: Sure, fire away.

Frank: Okay, the first one, General, what was the general situation confronting III MAF and I Corps when you arrived at Deputy CG, III MAF and what did you regard as the most significant problems?

Cushman: Well, I would say that the situation was fairly fluid. There was still a considerable number of Viet Cong. When I left Vietnam, there were hardly any Viet Cong still operating; but when I arrived they were still a factor. The North Vietnamese regular Army units were coming into the picture, but they were denying that they were there, and they were elusive.

The situation was one of intermittent combat with the

regular units and continual contact and fighting with the guerrillas, the Viet Cong. General Walt had gotten the Pacification Program going along with several other programs designed to further the separation of the guerrillas from the people in the villages. These were developing and were showing success, I thought. And that's about the way it was.

As I recall, they had just begun to use rockets. Just before I got there, I think they had some rockets come in on some of the airfields. So that was beginning to be a factor. They also had artillery up in the DMZ and north of it because I recall going up to Gio Linh. I was still snapping in, and got shelled up there. So, they did have some artillery. It got much heavier later.

Frank: You went out as General Walt's relief?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Okay. How did he use you as a deputy CG?

Cushman: Actually, let's see, I got out there in March and took over on 1 June. I got there the end of March and I had April and May to snap in. I spent a week or so in the Saigon and II Corps area. I visited several Army units and had briefings at the headquarters of COMUSMACV, then returned to I Corps and spent a week or so with each Marine division, the 1st and the 3d, and then at III MAF headquarters. I lived with the 1st Division most of the time I was snapping

in, which was not too far from the III MAF Headquarters. I functioned simply as the assistant commander and with no special projects assigned. If General Walt went to see one unit, he might tell me to go to another unit to see how the fighting was going. So, it wasn't anything really out of the ordinary in being the deputy. I had no special projects assigned; mainly I was snapping in for the two month period.

Frank: When you went down to the MACV Headquarters, I assume that you met Westmoreland and the staff. Did General Westmoreland give you his thoughts on how the war up north should be fought or what his expectations were of you?

Cushman: Yes, General Westmoreland followed the field manuals. He believed in a war of movement and aggressiveness; stay on the offensive and pursue the enemy until you destroy him. That was the way he was conducting the war.

As soon as I took over, he had me lay out a complete plan as to how I was going to operate and I took my guidance from him and we operated the way he wanted to as far as we could. Having only two Marine divisions in that very large area plus Army Task Force Oregon, we were stretched pretty thin. We couldn't give up entirely some of our defensive positions. We had to be mobile with only a part of the force. But, I tried to stay as mobile as possible and, of course, on the offensive just as much as possible.

Frank: Did General Westmoreland indicate any unhappiness or any reservations about the way III MAF had been operating prior to your arrival?

Cushman: No, not to me. I don't know whether he and Lew Walt agreed on tactics or had differences.

Frank: Do you think that the assignments you received as Deputy CG of III MAF were different from what another deputy would have received--actually, you went out there as his relief.... And whereas the deputies that you had were not going to be your relief. Their assigned duties were as deputy CG.

Cushman: I operated by having the deputy do things that I couldn't do because of lack of time. At one point, we had some logistics problems that I put General Van Ryzin to work on as a specific project. Other than that, I don't recall operating in any special way with any of the deputies that I had. See, I had....

Frank: Ray Murray there for awhile.

Cushman: ...Ray Murray.

Frank: Tommy Tompkins.

Cushman: Yes, Tommy Tompkins; Van Ryzin, who then went back to be Marine Corps chief of staff; then Wickerson who did come out to relieve me.

Batha: Sir, do you recall what the specific logistics problems were?

Cushman: We had a lot of ammunition blow up and we had problems caused by weather. I'm trying to think if there were internal technical problems. There may have been some in simply keeping track of what was going on.

One thing that should be mentioned was that after Tet 1968, I got an over the beach supply line established up near Quang Tri in which Army units were used. The Army was difficult to persuade, they weren't used to thinking amphibiously. But, the Hai Van Pass was a very vulnerable spot and dangerous bottleneck between Da Nang and troops to the North. To get around it, particularly in bad weather, was a job, and Van Ryzin did help with that. The Army provided the people who manned the beach, and the Navy provided the craft. The Army had a dredge and various units that actually set up this over the beach supply. We ran a pipeline across the swamps from the beach to the MSR and, all in all, it worked very well. Van Ryzin had a part in it checking that out as it was established.

Shulimson: General Tompkins as CG III MAF mentioned in his interview....

Frank: 3d MARDIV.

Cushman: 3d MARDIV.

Shulimson: I'm sorry, 3d MARDIV--indicated that he once had a problem that he was asking for ammunition and food and he was getting cement up there.

Cushman: That would be an internal supply management problem under the Force Logistics Command. They did a good job, I thought. They had a tremendous job to do, particularly, when the weather turned bad every winter.

Shulimson: I just wanted to go back a little bit. Where there any major differences between the way you and General Walt employed III MAF Forces once you relieved him? And, specifically, was there any difference in the way you viewed pacification as did General Walt?

Cushman: No. It's hard to say whether I did differently than Walt. We both were offensive minded and aggressive, but I fairly soon was reinforced by several Army units; and I also found more enemy. At the time of Tet 1968, there were ten North Vietnamese divisions in I Corps. So, I had a much bigger formal enemy. They had a lot of artillery. We had the set piece battle at Khe Sanh. It was an entirely different situation. The Viet Cong was pretty much out of the picture by that time. I never considered them much of anything by the time I left.

As for the pacification, I believed in it. I continued the discussions with Saigon over it. They simply didn't believe it was the military's job to do it and didn't want to

invest the infantry that the program required. Before I got the Army reinforcements, it was difficult to keep the Marines out there in the villages because you had to take them out of the battalions, the tactical units. But I felt it was worth it. And, by the time I left, I thought pacification had taken great leaps and bounds. We had an election for the presidency in which they had a tremendous percentage of people who voted, 80-90 percent, I think it was in spite of all kinds of threats. The villages held together, they were safe enough so that the election could be held. I told the press, "A bigger percentage of the Vietnamese voted while in danger of their lives than Americans ever vote at home with nobody shooting at them."

Frank: What were your relationships with the South Vietnamese authorities including General Lam and the division commanders?

Cushman: Well, I enjoyed working with General Lam. He was a fine gentleman and he was a good general given his resources of men and materiel. I thought he was also an excellent administrative and political leader. He had a considerable political job.

The northern division commander, General Troung, was the one that stood out. His headquarters were in Hue. General Thon, who was in the South, Quang Ngai, was not as able a general, but was adequate. His talents were more political,

useful in running the province.

My relationships with all of them were very good, as far as I knew. I didn't speak Vietnamese, consequently, to get inside their head was not possible for me. But as far as our relationships went in fighting the battles, everything was fine. General Lam and I got along well both personally and socially. And we went through some battles together and that made for mutual respect.

The Army division commanders got along with their counterparts, as far as I knew. The relationships between General Truong and the Army division commanders and then eventually XXIV Corps commander was outstanding. No question about it.

Batha: Sir, did you have an American or a Marine interpreter for you? I know this is a problem fairly endemic in Marine operations overseas in non-English speaking countries, and I just wondered if you had some interpreters to assist you.

Cushman: No, not specifically assigned, but I could always get one. General Lam spoke French-accented English and so did Generals Truong and Dien. They all spoke enough English, so we could get along, and they all spoke French also. In addition, I had a Vietnamese lieutenant as an aide who could So many of the people I dealt with spoke English that there wasn't any problem. If you go to the enlisted ranks or village level, of course, then you do need interpreters.

The people that worked on the Pacification Program had to get along somehow. I don't know exactly how, but they did. There weren't enough interpreters to go around to every village, so they learned enough words to get by.

Frank: What was your opinion of the South Vietnamese formations in I Corps? Who were the good Vietnamese commanders and what information do you have on their personality or the personalities of the....

Cushman: I mentioned General Troung, who was a real fighting man. He was an airborne trooper, as he started as a young officer. They all knew their business. General Lam was okay. I got along with him fine and for the force he had and the things he had to do, I thought he was first rate. He didn't know as much as his rank would indicate about warfare with large units including several divisions and aircraft. He did alright in Tet 1968, when I was there. He had his problems. The troops fell out and went home when it was time to harvest the rice, for example. We didn't have any such problems, of course, in the Marine Corps.

Frank: What was your opinion of the Korean Marines and their effectiveness?

Cushman: The individual Korean Marine was courageous and able, however, I'm convinced that the leadership was under instructions from Seoul to fight and have no casualties,

which is pretty hard to do. As a consequence, on offensive operations, they weren't all that great, on defense they were tigers and showed their fighting ability. But their officers wouldn't push them out on offense. They were continual bargainers and negotiators for the tanks and artillery fire which we supplied. At one point, we moved them from where they were down south up closer to Da Nang.

Shulimson: Was that at the beginning of '66?

Cushman: I think it was, yes, after Tet. We had many arguments and every one had to go back to Seoul for decision. They refused to take one square inch extra over what they had in the previous area of responsibility. Furthermore, the leader had gone to Marine Corps Schools and all the zones of responsibility that he saw or TAOR's were big semi-circles, characteristic of a beach head. Therefore, he demanded that that's what he have, a semi-circle just like we taught in Marine Corps Schools. Well, of course, he wasn't on a beach, but eventually we got that ironed out. They could be a considerable problem in terms of just getting along day to day, and in my opinion, they did not make a real offensive contribution while I was there. The phrase which defined our relationship was, "operational guidance" which meant absolutely nothing, of course. They didn't do a thing unless they felt like it.

Frank: Were there any constraints placed on your employment of them?

Cushman: I had no operational control of them. All I could do was say, "How about joining in," you know, "Here's a good objective, how about taking that." And they might and they might not. I had no authority over them whatsoever. However, I was required to supply them out of the Marine Corps logistics system. We had to negotiate the precise number of tanks they'd have and this went on every month. So, to me, they were a much bigger problem than was justified by their contribution.

Frank: How did you view the enemy in the Northern two provinces when you became CG and how serious was the threat to Khe Sanh? Do you recall any strong differences of opinion between you and MACV and the division commanders about the threat?

Cushman: No. When I took over, the recent threat was over at Khe Sanh. General Walt had fought several battles up there for some of the hilltops surrounding Khe Sanh. Our biggest problems when I took over in the north were artillery fire against Gio Linh and Con Thien, and enemy infiltration into and through the DMZ.

Another big problem soon arose. We had cut a field of fire along the DMZ just before Lew Walt left, and it was doing alright. We had a couple of strong points in there

that afforded some observation and fields of fire. However, then, we were ordered by Washington to build a fence in the DMZ to keep out the enemy. It was completely impractical, but the orders were there and we were told to do it. As we got along with this, several months went by and the artillery fire increased tremendously. Instead of a few infiltrators, we had enemy divisions up in the DMZ. Well, a fence isn't going to stop a division, but we continued building it as the casualties mounted. I never said anything to anybody, we just didn't build the damned fence anymore. I really got in a fit with some of the engineer colonels that would come roaring up from Saigon to see how the fence was doing and, you know, I'd say, "Well, it's doing fine, go up and take a look," which they did. Always had a few people around, but we just weren't going out a getting everybody killed building that stupid fence. And so, that eventually just died out, Tet came along and people had something else to think about.

Frank: What were....

Shulimson: Yes. General Metzger, who was ADC at the time, indicated that interest in the carrier fluctuated at different times, depending on the political situation, but he also implied....

Cushman: Depended on how much pressure that got put on, really, because I'm convinced that there wasn't anybody in Vietnam that thought the idea was anything but idiotic.

Frank: Westmoreland and Abrams too?

Cushman: Oh, I'm sure. They never dared to say a word to me because they didn't know whether I'd say something about it or not. And they're good soldiers, maybe they never said anything to anybody. I could just sense it. And it was so idiotic on the face of it, that no soldier could possibly have bought the idea. Back in Washington, Wally Greene fought against it.

Shulimson: Metzger had the feeling from his perception that you weren't as opposed to it as General Walt had been.

Cushman: Well, General Walt cleared out the original field of fire and it wasn't at any great cost. So, I don't know how Walt felt later. We all felt at first that a few strong points there would do some good.

Shulimson: Well, no, he was very adament against the whole concept and Metzger felt....

Cushman: Oh, well, that's what he left me, anyway, was this fire break.

Shulimson: You were as strongly opposed to it as he was then?

Cushman: Probably. But, if you're going to be a leader, you can't go around poor mouthing the project you've been ordered to do, so Metzger wouldn't know my feeling because I wouldn't be talking to him about, "Let's not do it." When

we slacked off, I never really said anything. I just quit putting the pressure on and people just sort of didn't go out there and start working under the artillery fire.

Frank: General Tompkins has stated that by 13 December 1967 he viewed the situation in northeastern Quang Tri as more serious than at Khe Sanh, that he only reinforced Khe Sanh at the direction of your headquarters at MACV. Can you comment on this?

Cushman: Yes, we had a disagreement as to the threat to Khe Sanh, and I had--I don't know if I had any extra intelligence over what he had, but I'd been there longer by then and I had a feeling. In fact, I got quite intuitive during my two years in Vietnam. There was sort of a rhythm to the enemy combat that just gave you the feeling. Khe Sanh--Lew Walt had had those battles up there, then it had sort of gone into a lull but then things started to pick up, and I just felt it was time to put a battalion out there. We had just a very small force there, so I ordered a battalion out there. Then as the thing really heated up, of course, Westmoreland and I had to get together and decide whether we were going to defend it or we weren't. We both decided the thing to do was to defend it. And it turned out to be right. We tied up about three divisions which otherwise would have been down in the lowlands giving us even more trouble.

Frank: Talking about the intelligence situation, Tommy

Tompkins has been quite critical of Kenny Houghton as your G-2. Do you know what the root of this is?

Cushman: No, I don't. I thought we had pretty good intelligence. Considering the extreme difficulty for Americans of infiltrating the enemy, I thought we could depend upon the the South Vietnamese, but they were a disappointment. They had the language, the appearance, and the skin color. I thought they should have done a little better, but, they didn't. As far as our intelligence at III MAF level was concerned, it was mostly technical and communications analysis from aircraft. Battlefield intelligence relied upon patrols, of course, but the bigger view was largely reconnaissance by aircraft and electron intelligence. And it wasn't all that bad. I used to sit by the hour with Kenny Houghton and work out the avenues by which they smuggled in rockets and we found them by using infra-red and one thing and another. With the aircraft we had we found exactly how they were bringing them in, the campfires where they stopped every night, and so on. I took a great personal interest in the intelligence, so I don't know what Tommy's specific complaint was. Of course, no leader ever gets as much intelligence as he'd like.

Frank: General "Nick" [Nickerson] was quite critical about intelligence in his interview. He said despite all the sophisticated methods of collection and the tremendous amount

of intelligence information that was being spewed out that the American forces were not really sensitive to on-the-scene types of things. They didn't have the antenna, the feeling for what should have been apparent to someone who was a, say an old hand in the area, just was not used. And that by the time all the sophisticated stuff came down it was long after the fact. Did you have that same perception?

Cushman: No, I didn't. As I say, I was disappointed in the intelligence provided by the Vietnamese, but the intelligence provided by Saigon gave a pretty good feel for the higher level movements of the enemy. Battlefield intelligence was a tougher problem because the enemy was ellusive and patrols were about the only thing you could use. We had Tet 1968 all figured out except for the fact that they would put themselves inside each provincial capital. But we knew there was a big attack coming. In fact, Lam and I both agreed that we cancel the leaves and vacations that were usually given over Tet. We were 100% ready. The enemy's skill at infiltration got them into Hue and every other capital, but only in Hue was it difficult to get them out.

Shulimson: How do you account for the fact that they were able to get that division into the city of Hue?

Cushman: Well, a lot of them just walked in in civilian clothes. There's one fact, they did it, and the nights are dark and the swamps are deep, you know. They were very good

at that infiltration. We were widely scattered in various areas of responsibility throughout the countryside. We had no perimeters around the towns or anything like that. So, we had to quickly get into the cities involved and get the enemy out, which we did.

Shulimson: About how long did it take III MAF to realize the strength of the force that was in Hue?

Cushman: I don't know. We just knew that they were there in force. The weather was just absolutely horrible, the "crachin" (a dense fog the consistency of milk) was in full force, so that you could not use air support which would have given us an idea of how many enemy were in there and where they were. The fighting soon located them--you move out and you start running into them everywhere in every building, so right away we knew we had a job on our hands.

There was considerable discussion concerning artillery support for the South Vietnamese who were in the walled area which enclosed the old palaces and all the historical buildings. I told Lam he was going to have to give the order to give it, not I. The U.S. Marines were fighting along the south bank which was not enclosed, just plain old buildings, nothing historical. So, that's the way it went until finally the battles became concentrated in the old walled city, and U.S. Marines had to join the South Vietnamese Marines and the Army and dig the enemy out one by one. They enemy had

dug holes in the great big earthern wall that enclosed the the historical portion of Hue. We just about had to take the bank down to get them out.

Frank: You mentioned the "crachin," I just wondered, to what degree where operations restricted by the various aspects of weather in Vietnam?

Cushman: Air operations were severely restricted when that condition existed which was fairly frequently during the monsoon season. Northern I Corps was probably as bad a place in for weather as any in Vietnam, much worse than in Saigon, with bad flooding everywhere. Infantry had a difficult time, as did trucks, artillery, and everything else. It was really difficult.

I remember making a trip to Okinawa, and when I returned my rugs were floating and I had a foot of water in my quarters. The river had gone up that much and I lived on the river bank.

The "crachin" was peculiar fog which was milk white. When I would fly in my helicopter we would look down and use the surf as a guide because it was the only thing we could see. Going north from Da Nang, the mountains would be on the left and the sea on the right of the surf. We'd fly the surf until we got to the bay just south of Phu Bai and there they had fish traps which were V shaped. By following the fish traps we'd finally get to the helicopter pad at Phu Bai. The weather really did inhibit operations.

Frank: Do you think that the MACV headquarters understood and appreciated the weather, the problems of weather vis a vis operations?

Cushman: Yes. General Westmoreland came up every week and later General Abrams did also. The deputy would also come up, so usually you had two visits a week from somebody with four stars on and they had to buck the weather just as we did.

Shulimson: Getting back to Khe Sanh, when General Westmoreland first established the base in '66, the Marines were opposed to establishing a base there. General English, I think, made the statement, "When you're at Khe Sanh, you're nowhere."

Cushman: Very much.

Shulimson: Westmoreland, however, implies in his book very strongly that he saw Khe Sanh as a jump off point for possible operations in Laos. Did he share that with you?

Cushman: Well, not particularly because we did not have permission to invade Laos. We spoke more in terms of its contribution to the overall operations in northern I Corps, such as defense against attack from North Vietnam and counter-attack against such forays. It was a good spot for that because we didn't have enough troops to cover the ground and had to have bases from which we could be mobile. You could see the river that was the border between Laos and Vietnam

from Khe Sanh. It could have been a very good jumping off point for operations in Laos, but I think Westy had pretty much exhausted his pleas to operate in Laos and had been turned down every time he asked. Therefore, the questions of going into Laos did not arise.

Shulimson: Did you agree with positioning a Marine force at Khe Sanh?

Cushman: Yes.

Shulimson: As a defensive measure?

Cushman: Right. Yes, I thought we ought to hold it. It really was the left flank of the whole mobile defense line up there. Since the enemy had about ten divisions, there was, in effect, a front and we needed several bases in order to conduct mobile defensive operations. And we did have them not only at Khe Sanh, but Camp Carroll, the Rock Pile, Con Thien, Gio Linh, and then on to the sea.

We ceased to occupy Khe Sanh after we had beaten the enemy in Tet 1968. This released a lot of troops for mobile operations and we could do without it. We didn't have to have that base any more because we could operate almost anywhere, and we did. We went into the A Shau Valley which had been untouched a long, and through which ran the so-called "Ho Chi Minh Trail." Then we went throughout the DMZ and cleaned it out. We really were able to stretch out and operate at will.

Shulimson: I've got another question, Ben. In early 1968, General Chaisson had stated that General Westmoreland had a fixation about the A Shau Valley and that in early '68 before Tet planned to have an operation there. Was III MAF involved in planning for this operation and would Marine forces have participated?

Cushman: I don't know about any fixation. It simply was their main supply route, so reason enough to be worrying about it. Yes, he told me he wanted to go in there, and we discussed the situation including why Marines were not in the A Shau Valley already. I pointed out that I didn't have enough forces at the time (this was in '67). But it was an obvious target and I started studying how to get in there. I also studied how to stop the flow of supplies without having people in there. We set up a base camp from which the big Army 175mm artillery pieces could reach the A Shau Valley. To this we added a lot of air strikes in the A Shau. Just at that time, a chemical was developed in conjunction with rain that was supposed to turn dirt into impassable mud. It actually worked to some extent and we really plastered the A Shau Valley with that. We had pictures of water stretching all the way across that valley. So, it slowed down the enemy and they had a difficult time with it.

We later went into the A Shau after we got additional forces into I Corps. The Army's Air Cavalry Division went

into A Shau by helicopter assault and cleaned the valley out. We captured all kinds of weapons, ammunition, and supplies in large quantities, but it wasn't a good place to stay, so we didn't. The weather would have made it a real hazard. It very difficult to get in there in good weather with anything except helicopters and if the weather turned bad, problems, would become critical.

Frank: In getting back to Tet for a minute, General, in what manner, if any, did Tet '68 make you reevaluate Marine plans, organization, and strategy? Did it have any effect on these?

Cushman: No, none at all. We were doing fine. We whipped them badly. So, I didn't change a thing. For example, we just about annihilated a division south of Da Nang during the Tet '68 battle. The 1st Marine Division was able to block the division we discovered moving on Da Nang from the south and as they got chewed up in the front, we helicoptered people in behind them. We closed the trap and...

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

Cushman: ...they suffered a terrible defeat.

Frank: You say about 40,000 were killed?

Cushman: I think so. That sticks in my mind, I could be wrong. But, we killed an awful lot of them, and as I say,

they suffered a terrible defeat.

I told the press, which they never appreciated at all, that in my opinion, Giap was a first class communist politician and a lousy general. This was heresy with the U.S. press, they thought Giap was the greatest hero that ever lived and probably should be named Bonaparte.

Frank: What about your press relations?

Shulimson: I was going to--just to follow up on that. What do you think Giap's objectives were in the Tet offensive?

Cushman: Just what happened, I guess, a psychological victory back in Washington. That's the way he beat the French, except he had a military victory to do it with. In Tet he had a military defeat yet the North Vietnames managed to turn the tide back in Washington.

Shulimson: Do you believe that he actually had a military objective besides the psychological objective?

Cushman: Yes. I think he thought he was going to win. He thought the South Vietnamese people would rise up and support him. He thought that he'd hold a number of these provincial capital cities long enough so that there would be a lot of desertions and defections from the South Vietnamese Army and that the people in the villages would rise up and rebel.

Shulimson: Why do you think he was putting the pressure on

Khe Sanh at the same time he was--same time as the Tet offensive?

Cushman: I think because it had assumed in the eyes of the media the importance of Dien Bien Phu and they tried to paint an analogy which was in no way the same. I believe Giap thought if he took Khe Sanh there would be a tremendous reaction in the States. And apparently, he had pretty good intelligence out of Washington because when President Johnson came to Vietnam, he had Walt Rostow with him. No sooner did the plane land, than Rostow cornered me, asked about Khe Sanh. I said, "What is so important about Khe Sanh? It's just a spot on the map, but we're going to hold it." It was soon evident from our ensuing discussion that this was Dien Bien Phu to Washington.

Shulimson: This was when?

Cushman: This was before Tet '68. Yes, the pressure was on; the siege was on before Tet '68. After Tet, I decided simply to take the Marines that were available up north and send them to Khe Sanh to relieve the situation. As it turned out, General Westmoreland approved a wider plan and off they went--the Air Cavalry Division by helicopter and Marines overland along Route 9--Operation Pegasus, which succeeded in short order.

Shulimson: There's been a new book published on Khe Sanh

called End of the Line by Robert Pisor. I was wondering, have you read it?

Cushman: No, I read a review of it, which indicated that it wasn't very well done in terms of strategic analysis. However, sometimes reviewers have their own bias.

Shulimson: There was an implication that the Marine command did not view Khe Sanh seriously enough. Number two; that Giap might have been using Khe Sanh as bait in order to set up Tet. And three...

Cushman: No way. Tet was Vietnam wide. We had our battles up in I Corps, but they came into Saigon and got into the embassy and also got into every provincial capital in Tet. This was a country wide offensive and was supposed to win the war. Khe Sanh was just a part of the picture.

Shulimson: One of the more serious charges in the book is the fact that the Marines did not reveal all the casualties that they suffered at Khe Sanh.

Cushman: I never heard of such a thing.

Shulimson: There was no attempt to hide any kind of casualty?

Cushman: Not that I know of. It wasn't hidden in my headquarters and I can't imagine why it would be. The casualties were not tremendous. There was a bigger flap over Mel Zais's division taking a hill and getting a number of soldiers

killed. I remember a newspaper article about it after I went home. No, I categorically deny that there was any hiding of casualties. How can you? A Marine either comes home in his uniform or comes home in a box, and he has got to be accounted for. There's some missing in action, true, but I just don't know how you can conceal casualties in any significant amount.

Frank: You were talking about the press a minute ago, General. Just how were your relations with the press, the media?

Cushman: Bad, I would say, in that I tried to get along with them, but they refused. At press conferences they'd just stand up and call the military damn liars. It was bad. They were against the war to the extent that I thought they were against the United States of America. They were absolutely terrible.

Frank: Was Karl Faser your PAO at the time? I understand he had some problem, had to be relieved. According to Barry Zorthian, I think Tom Fields too. He mispoke at a bar to....

Cushman: Yes. He finally lost control of his temper and said what he thought of media coverage of the war. However, he wasn't on duty at press conferences or on the job. I don't know how he held off so long, frankly, but we did have to relieve him.

Frank: I know, well, he apparently voiced an attitude that

a PRO or PAO shouldn't have.

Cushman: But I might say here, it wasn't his fault that the press was hostile. They were hostile everywhere, not just at Da Nang. They were also hostile down at MACV Headquarters in Saigon. I blame the media to some extent for losing the war. For example, to take a TV camera and focus on some poor pfc leaning up against a tree after a big fight and asking, "Now how do you like the war?" What kind of answer would you expect? Then in a couple of nights it is shown in everyone's living room. I think it was a big mistake to permit them the media to wander the battlefields. I think there should have been restrictions. What I really disliked was that so many were left-wing and against the war just as a matter of principle, consequently, you couldn't get much of anything done fairly. A few were fair, but some of them showed me what they sent home, and what came out in print bore little relationship to what they'd written. So even the good guys in the press were unable to overcome the built-in bias.

Another thing got me mad. When Major General Bruno Hochmuth died in a helicopter crash, I called up Saigon and said that Hochmuth had about an 85 year old father sitting by himself in a home in Texas and looking at TV and I asked that the reporter withhold the news til I could get word to his father. And he refused.

Cushman: General Hochmuth's father got his news over the TV that his son was dead. Luckily he didn't die of a heart attack or anything, but what a way to operate. I just lost my respect for the reporters right there.

Frank: Was this one particular person or the....

Cushman: Yes.

Batna: Just as a follow up on the press, do you feel that your III MAF briefs tried to give the concepts, the strategic concepts to the newspapers reporters to make sense of what you were trying to do up there?

Cushman: Yes, and usually they called me a liar. For example, we had artillery at Gio Linh and I instructed them to change their position every night. So, a reporter says, "Tell me about your defeat at Gio Linh?" I said, "What defeat?" He said, "Well, you moved all your artillery out." I said, "That's why they have wheels. We change position every night." He replies, "Oh, you're just lying, covering up like all you guys do." So, you try to be helpful, you try to explain what you're doing and that's the result.

Frank: I'd like to go on here and talk about relationships with General Westmoreland. There is some indication that in late 1967 and early 1968, that General Westmoreland had serious doubts about the capabilities of III MAF staff and certain Marine commanders. Concerning the situation in I Corps

following the Tet offensive, General Westmoreland wrote in his book, and I quote, "General Cushman and his staff appear complacent, seemingly reluctant to use Army forces I have put at their disposal." He further remarked that, "Marines were too base bound," he ended up "giving orders himself to [your] subordinate units and that the Marines failed to provide adequate air support to 1st CAV Division units in I Corps." Would you please comment on these statements and on the relationships as you recall them between the MACV and the III MAF staffs.

Cushman: Well, I don't agree with General Westmoreland on that. We weren't complacent, we were getting some of the Army troops into place. We provided air support for the Air Cav, but they didn't know how to use it. And when General Westmoreland and I went up their headquarters they complained, "We're not getting air support." The fact was, they did not know how to ask for it and did not know how to use it. We immediately got that straightened out.

General Westmoreland and I together agreed on what orders should be given. In the Army units in other Corps areas, they could hardly move a battalion without General Westmoreland's okay and he wouldn't let me move his Army divisions without there being a plan that he'd okayed. Saying that I was complacent and didn't use the Army units he'd provided is not accurate. We did use them normally after he and I got together and agreed upon a plan.

Shulimson: He wrote this specifically relating to Lang Vei, to the overrunning of Lang Vei. I think he put the date as of 7 February '68 when he came up. And the implication is that you failed to use the Army units to relieve Lang Vei.

Cushman: We didn't relieve Lang Vei because we didn't want to loose a lot of men unnecessarily. The camp was overrun and the garrison killed or on the run. We could no longer save anyone.

(Outside noise.)

Cushman: ...what Army unit is he referring to?

Shulimson: I think he's referring to the 1stCav and the 101st that he just sent up.

Cushman: Well, they were miles away. Lang Vei is half way between Khe Sanh and Laos. The base was overrun in the middle of the night, in a matter of a couple of hours. The question was, do I send somebody from Khe Sanh and, if so, what could they accomplish? The garrison had already been defeated. There was nothing one could do really to salvage the situation. And, it would have been a grave risk to send Marines from Khe Sanh to Lan Vei in the hours of darkness. Furthermore, a number of the garrison at Lang Vei did make it back through the night to Khe Sanh. There wasn't any way in the middle of the night to put Army troops from

15 miles away or Marines from Khe Sanh in Lang Vei without completely unacceptable risk for no perceptible gain. So, I don't understand his criticism and think it was unwarranted.

I was criticized because I didn't send the whole outfit from Khe Sanh down there, but I decided for the above reasons that it wasn't the thing to do.

Frank: Hadn't the troops at Khe Sanh, hadn't Dave Lownds worked on exercises, rescue teams, they in fact did send out teams to Lang Vei. There were contingency plans to set up snatch teams, snatch groups.

Cushman: Yes, but the fight was over.

Frank: Invested too quickly to....

Shulimson: Well, actually, Tompkins states that it'd have taken about 15 hours to have moved from Khe Sanh to Lang Vei.

Cushman: Oh, yes. It's rough country. There was a track that went to Lang Vei from Khe Sanh and in daylight you could get down there in a jeep, but it would have been almost impossible, prohibitively risky and all for nothing.

Shulimson: There was some furor about keeping the refugees from Lang Vei out of the Khe Sanh camp.

Cushman: Refugees were always a problem, and I don't remember that particular one. We had many more, as I recall, from

Khe Sanh village which was outside of the base when the pressure got put on Khe Sanh--we had a lot more refugees to worry about then. I don't remember now what we did with them. I think we may have gotten them out by helicopter, but I'm not sure.

Shulimson: Going back to Lang Vei, Tompkins stated that he had recommended that the Special Forces pull back from Lang Vei long before that. Did this come up to you and had you recommended this to Westmoreland?

Cushman: It would have been useless even though such camps were stuck way out in nowhere because it was MACV policy. Lang Vei was just the northernmost one of I don't know how many throughout South Vietnam. In fact, much later we had another attack on one down in the southern part of I Corps and I at that time I did talk General Abrams into pulling them back. I never did believe in my time that they were effective, but I think when first estalished, they made good outposts and showed U.S. presence. But, then as regular NVA units got into I Corps, I questioned what those outposts were able to accomplish way out there. Each one was only a handfull of people, really. So, anytime the enemy wanted to destroy one, they could if they wanted to commit sufficient troops.

Frank: Along this line of relationship with Westy and MACV Headquarters, would you discuss the establishment of MACV

(Forward) and the rationale for it. Did the new command channels that resulted pose a problem? And as an addition, I remember in talking to John Chaisson, he mentioned the fact that when they set this XXIV Corps up or MACV (Forward) up, that he warned Westy that if he tried to superimpose that command over III MAF that, based on Marine memories, they'd never trust the Army again.

Cushman: The press immediately jumped on it, and the Army and I both said the same things; that MACV (Forward) was out there as an extension of MACV's authority and I had no problem with that anymore than if a regimental commander would set up a regimental forward to better command his forward elements. In any event, MACV (Forward) was soon redesignated XXIV Corps and placed under III MAF command. The corps commanded the three Army divisions.

Shulimson: What was your relationship with Abrams while he was there as MACV (Forward)?

Cushman: Fine. My relationship with General Westmoreland was always good as far as I knew. In fact, when he retired here in Washington, he paid me compliments in his speech after dinner. I also got along with General Abrams. He was tough, but we got along. And I got along just fine with Bill Rosson and the other Army commanders that were there. No problem.

Shulimson: General Harold K. Johnson said, "If you go back

and compare the casualties of the Marines in Vietnam versus the Army in Vietnam, I think that you will find that the Marines have suffered proportionately in the substantially more than the Army. It is not because the fighting was more intense. I think it's because of the difference in tactics." Do you think this kind of thinking dominated many Army generals?

Cushman: I don't know. It's pretty ridiculous because we study the same Army field manuals. On ground warfare, I think it's a matter of aggressive leadership. You get casualties, but the battle is over quicker. So, in effect, you get less casualties than if it were drawn out. And yet, I don't like to compare ledership with the Army because they had to have aggressive leadership in their battles. The Army leaders I had under me were certainly aggressive. All I can say is that while I was there we had more regular North Vietnamese enemy, complete with artillery, otherwise, of course, General Westmoreland wouldn't have sent three Army divisions to I Corps. I think the enemy had something to do with the casualty figures.

Frank: We talked about the relationship of Army forces in I Corp. How about individuals, the relationship with Major General Cochran?

Cushman: He was Chief of Staff for quite awhile, and we had a good relationship. Dick Stilwell I had known for years.

He could be abrasive, but we got along alright. He was a fine combat man. So, I had no problems with any of the Army generals.

Frank: Mel Zais?

Cushman: He was an old friend of mine and I got along fine with him. General Barsanti I never knew very well. He had the 101st Airborne just before Mel Zais.

Frank: Gettys.

Cushman: I'd know Rosson for a long time. Koster I only knew after he to Vietnam. Later, in the U.S., I spoke in his defense at his court martial for My Lai.

Frank: My Lai. You had a question about Bruce Palmer there and My Lai.

Shulimson: Well, the question on My Lai was, how could an incident such as My Lai occur and be covered up so successfully at the division level. General Bruce Palmer in an oral history conducted by the Army mentions Koster and states, "Again Koster didn't take the proper actions, nor did the advisory chain. I think that General Cushman, the III MAF commander, must have had some share in it, but this could not be verified because it was Koster's word against Cushman as to whether Koster had told him."

Cushman: No, he never told me.

Now, what Palmer fails to mention is that the administrative chain to which these reports had to be made, in no way went through III MAF. It went from Koster to Palmer, the Army component commander in Saigon. It was an Army chain, and I had nothing to do with it. I heard nothing about My Lai til I was back in the U.S. on duty with CIA and one day I got a call from a friend on a Congressional staff saying, "What do you know about My Lai?" My reply was, "I don't know anything about My Lai." And my informant said, "Well, it's about to blow." That's the first I ever heard of it years later.

We had a few atrocities in which Marines were included and we tried them by court martial. There were usually only a few Vietnames involved and perhaps one Marine. And, we really came down on them with disciplinary action.

Shulimson: I have a question really on your command relations with the Army units, the Army divisions under your command. How did you treat them differently than you would a Marine division under your command? Was there a formal or an informal relationship?

Cushman: I was on a first name basis with all of them and treated them no differently whatsoever. What they would say, I don't know, but I tried to treat them just as I did Marine leaders.

Shulimson: I was just wondering, were you as specific with

your directions to an Army division commander as you would be to a Marine commander, or would you give him a broader type of....

Cushman: No, the same. We went by the book, III MAF orders went to XXIV Corps which corps then translated into detailed instructions for their three divisions; to the Marine wing; to the Marine Division in the Da Nang area; and to the Americal Division. The issuance of III MAF orders was normal.

Shulimson: But, you mentioned before when you were speaking or when you were dealing with the Americal Division further south that Westy didn't give you that kind of freedom to deal with--to move these Army units around, that you had to go through him.

Cushman: We didn't need to move divisions around except very occasionally. Each division had a huge area and had plenty to do within that area for day to day operations. But, to move them their areas, for example, to send them into the A Shau Valley would require MACV approval. In any event, General Westmoreland was up in Da Nang every week at which time he was completely briefed, on current operations, as well as what was planned. So, such matters could be settled then.

Frank: Conversely, was there any "dog in the manger" attitude on the part of any Army commanders indicating a resentment about operating under Marines?

Cushman: Not to me, no. There was a genuine desire to get on with the war and win it on the part of all hands.

Frank: Well, I thinking of the relationship, for instance, that General Krulak had with the Marine commanders, a lot of back channel traffic. I suppose there was a lot of back channel traffic on the part of the Army going to Saigon to....

Cushman: Probably. I didn't do much back channel to General Krulak or General Buse. Logistics and personnel replacements were pretty well in place, so I really didn't need to use much back channel. And, of course, General Krulak would come out to Vietnam every so often, and General Buse, too, when he succeeded him, and we'd thoroughly discuss logistics and personnel replacements and all the things that related to the Marine administrative chain.

Frank: Well, when you went out to take over as Deputy CG, I assume that you stopped in Honolulu and were briefed by the FMFPac.

Cushman: Oh, yes.

Frank: Did you get any specific instructions from the Brute? Marines watching themselves or being specially careful, keeping, and keeping doctrine in order, sort of things like that?

Cushman: No, no, he knew me well enough by then, we'd been together for many years. I didn't have to have any warnings

like that. And the biggest problem, of course, was air support, really.

Frank: Well we have some questions about that coming down the line.

Cushman: Yes. And, that was the biggest problem. He knew I knew about those kind of problems, so. Well, no, he gave me a little bit, I think, on General Westmoreland's personality and whatnot because I didn't know General Westmoreland except from reading about him. But I soon figured out how General Westmoreland liked to operate and tried to operate the same way, and get on with the war and not cause a lot of friction for no good reason. We had enough arguments, Westy and I, over substantive things without a bunch of personal crap. He never could understand why the Marine Corps' helicopters were not attached to the divisions and all this kind of Army doctrine, and I kept explaining why but I never convinced him.

Frank: He had, I imagine, continuing on with that, lack of recognition or understanding about the way Marines operate. He must have had some heartburn about the SLF.

Cushman: I don't know. He never gave it to me. I think the heartburn was on a higher level. As I recall, eventually, the SLF had a couple of unproductive adventures down in the swamps around Saigon in the Mekong River delta. But, those

were exceptions and practically all the operations were up in I Corps where we could supply them and coordinate our operations. Some of their operations were excellent; some had no results because the enemy moved out of the objective area. We also had a couple where the casualties were about equal on both sides which wasn't good. But ordinarily, the SLF really contributed to a significant degree. We were able to effect outstanding coordination of supporting fires and of tactical maneuver.

Shulimson: Was there a deliberate design to keep the SLF in I Corps so that these problems of coordination wouldn't arise after '67?

Cushman: I think there may have been. As I recall, I simply had to ask for them. There wasn't any competition as no one else was asking for them. I regarded this as a great opportunity and I asked for them all the time because it was just like having another couple of battalions.

Shulimson: Go back just a little bit further, you mentioned that you had designed a plan to use the SLF for an amphibious operation north of the DMZ. How far does that go and when did you propose it?

Cushman: It never went anywhere. I was told to make it up.

Shulimson: Who told you, Westy?

Cushman: Saigon, yes. But, it was just another contingency type plan. They wanted to have one up to date, just in case there was a change of heart in Washington and we got the go ahead.

Frank: Did the Marines suffer from a lack of helicopter support during your tour in Vietnam?

Cushman: We we had problems with the CH-46 and had to lose them for a few months in order to get their tail assemblies strengthened. Of course, any Marine commander might well s y he never have enough helicopters. Yes, I wished we had more, no question about it because lack of numbers sometimes restricted the movement of forces. However, by careful scheduling we were able to get the job done. We could place all of our helicopters in support of any one division which the Army, of course, didn't do. We had complete flexibility and could shift them freely. We centralized the maintenance. So we overcame the difficulty of fewer numbers than the Army.

I used to get criticism from Westy on numbers of Marine helicopters and I'd explain that the numbers were restricted by stowage space aboard ship. The Army never really understood this, nor why we did not attach helos to each division. I said aviation worked better if you could exploit its flexibility and also if you could centralize its maintenance. This never seemed to convince Westy and he continued to prefer the Army system.

Frank: Were there problems in coordination between the divisions and the wing over helicopter support of Marine ground forces, the ground operations?

Cushman: There may have been, but I don't recall any. It never interfered with operations that I wanted to do. Now, you talk to a wing commander and a division commander you might find different answers where they had problems getting the helos on time or something like that. I don't know.

Frank: Did you find that there was a lack of perception on the part of the air commanders and the ground commanders on the employment of helicopters? For instance, the helicopter commanders felt that the ground commanders really didn't understand and appreciate the capabilities and limitations of helicopters, and the ground commanders felt that the helicopter commanders didn't appreciate the immediate needs in many cases for helicopter support of ground operations. I think that finally resulted in the Youngdale Board, did it not?

Cushman: Yes, we had some gripes about these matters, but the details escape my memory. I don't know of any serious problems.

But, I will say this: every now and then I'd get a complaint from a division commander that the helos' arrival in support must be speeded up and be more responsive. That gripes you get. That didn't change our philosophy, it just meant we had to execute better.

Frank: Why was ProvMAG 39 established in northern I Corps in mid 1968?

Cushman: I Corps was divided so in half by the Hai Van Mountains. It was an advantage if the force on the northern side could be self sustaining. I mention again the over-the-beach supply that we established up there, in addition to Cua Viet, about half way between Hue and Cua Viet.

Similarly, one couldn't depend on the timely arrival of helos operating from way down at Marble Mountain placed in support of the division up at the DMZ at Dong Ha.

Batha: I might add, I think this is one of the things that was worked out between the wing and the division was to get quicker support to the division, they had to have forward basing up there.

Cushman: Yes. We had to split up the helicopters to some extent, but we could still, with enough notice, get them all concentrated north or south. But you're right, we had to move them up there so they'd have them quickly when needed.

Frank: General, what was the focus of Marine operations during the latter half of '68 as contrasted to the first half of the year?

Cushman: After we relieved Khe Sanh, then our concept was to clean out the A Shau Valley, which we did. The next goal was to clean out the DMZ again which was a never-ending task, of

course, because we never could go beyond the DMZ. We were forbidden to pursue and destroy, however, by the end of the year, we had them well beaten down. The idea then was to concentrate on pacificiation and rural development.
I left in March '69 and I don't recall any tough fighting at that particular time.

Shulimson: Just to put the barrier to bed, whatever happened to the barrier, when did it...did you ever receive official orders to stop working on the barrier?

Cushman: I don't remember ever getting any word at all. There were strong points which were still in use when I left. There were several of them starting near Cua Viet north of the river and placed to the westward at intervals. I think there were about half a dozen, and I recall them being used as bases for patrolling.

The fence itself was never completed, although, we got some wire out there, but between the strong points, it wasn't layer on layer like it should have been for an effective barbed wire obstacle.

Frank: I think General Simpson made the comment during his interview that there came a point where they start using--the 1st Division started using the materials for their own purposes, the barb wire, the explosives, and so on.

Cushman: Yes, I think so. It was lying around up there so

they used it to wire themselves in.

Shulimson: I was just wondering, if you didn't have--if you hadn't had the barrier concept on you, how would you have defended the DMZ? How would you have deployed your troops, would you have deployed them differently?

Cushman: When I first arrived, division-sized enemy units were just appearing in the DMZ. Before that, it was mostly individual infiltrators that a barbed wire fence might have stopped. Any any event, the way to defend the DMZ was the way we did, by sweeps, mobile offensive action using our base at Dong Ha. We had Con Thien and Gio Linh as patrol and attack bases. So, I believed that a mobile defense was the answer.

Shulimson: Why was General Davis able to use more mobile offensive operations than General Tompkins?

Cushman: There was more back up after Tet and with the Army in that area, we had more troops. Marines could jump around without being tied to the defense of Dong Ha which had to be defended as it was a critical logistics base. The ProvMAG 39 airfield also had to be defended.

Therefore, Davis had enough forces so he could go ahead and move out offensively. When Hochmuth was there, the 3d Marine Division stretched out and tied down from Dong Ha all the way down to Phu Bai.

Frank: General, how would you evaluate the CAC program? How important a role did the CAC's play in the overall mission of III MAF?

Cushman: That was our Marine invention and principal contribution to pacification. It was going strong when I arrived. Lew Walt had established the program and I thought it was a great idea, so we kept on with it. We expanded it as we were able to. As the Army kept pointing out, you had to contribute quite a bit of infantry that might have been otherwise employed. But, they did a good job, and I think it was worth it. Although we had a basic philosophical difference with the Army on it, we kept on with it.

Frank: Didn't the Army toward the end develop their own CAC program?

Cushman: Yes, at least in I Corps where the American Division joined up with us in the program.

Frank: Were their CAC's Marine trained or did they just take the concept and employ it?

Cushman: I don't recall.

End Side 2, Tape 1

Begin Tape 2, Side 1

Frank: We had a couple of questions here. Frank.

Batha: Right. I'd like to follow up on this. It sounds like maybe even the Army had some differences of opinion. We heard General Ewell a year or so ago, and he seemed to be highly enthusiastic about this concept of pacification, so I wonder if this--what--where the problem was. Did it just come from Saigon as far as using your infantry to run these kinds of programs as opposed to an Army concept in general?

Cushman: I would guess that there was a reluctance to commit infantry to this job. The Army conceived that their main job was fighting the North Vietnamese. Second, there was a philosophical difference. I think the Army didn't believe that was part of the battle. Somebody else was supposed to do that, Vietnamese militia perhaps, but not Army combat troops. Individual Army generals may well have thought differently, but at that time, weren't going to speak up against the high command.

Shulimson: I was just wondering if you could tell us how you thought the CACs should be organized or how were they organized, how were they employed in the hamlets, and what use did you make of them?

Cushman: As I recall, we had a squad of Marines assigned to live in a village. A village had several hamlets and they would take over and protect the hamlets in that village so that the villagers could go about their life in peace and do their farming. I think it got more sophisticated later on

when Combined Action Groups were formed which provided headquarters, supervision, and supply.

The Mainres in the village were pretty much on their own and some of them had some terrific fights. Occasionally, we had a disaster, but generally they fought off the Viet Cong that attacked them. The Viet Cong goal was to disrupt the village life, dragoon recruits, and rice, and collect taxes. I think the Marines did a great job in preventing this and that it was a worthwhile investment.

Shulimson: What was the relationship with the Marine units in the TOAR?

Cushman: They had to keep liaison by radio so that the unit in the field could come to the rescue if required and avalable. Sometimes, if the radio didn't work they might have some problems. They kept the nearest unit in the field informed as to where they were, and then if they needed help, why they could usually get it.

Frank: Sir, what was your relationship with the CORDs organization in I Corps?

Cushman: Well, to make a pun, cordial. Koren, former ambassador to Guinea, was the CORDs representative in I Corps. At first we had a liaison only, and then later he became my advisor on CORDs. We got along just fine. He lived on the other side of the river, but he was always at briefings every morning and worked right in with us. No problems. I thought he was an able man.

Frank: What was the function of CORDs in I Corps?

Cushman: They provided the civilian liason from Saigon to I Corps on civilian and governmental matters. This invovled statistics and supplies that had to be handled. Under Koren was an advisor in each province who worked with the province chief in promoting revolutionary development. It involved logistics and policy and meshed with our CAC program. I thought it worked out pretty well.

Frank: Is this one of your questions? How much did the threat in the north drain resources from the Marine Pacification Program in the South?

Cushman: Well, considerably because you just couldn't do everything. The threat was very difficult to meet when there were just the two Marine divisions there. Then as we got the Army forces as replacements we had enough forces to

push on with our pacification as well as conduct offensive operations. But you're perfectly right that the threat in the North, particularly in the beginning, drained our resources and prevented us from doing additional pacification. We'd already put Marines in the pacification program; I don't remember pulling anybody out.

Frank: How would you differentiate the war in the North in the 3d Division TAOR as opposed to the war in the South in the 1st Division TOAR?

Cushman: That's a very good question because the 3d Marine Division received more publicity. They had a lot of spectacular terrain and a lot number of spectacular operations. The 1st Marine Division had a lot of slogging to do, a lot of patrolling to do, a lot of swamps to walk through. Their casualties from mines were considerable as a result.

Now, the 1st Marine Division did conduct highly successful cordon operations. They were extremely complex and involved a four sided ring using ARVN, the 1st Marine Division, and occasionally, the Korean marines. On a gigantic scale, it was like a County Fair Operation. We surrounded a large area, then went in and got all the civilians out and safely away, then just squeezed the ring and got every North Vietnamese and Viet Cong that was in the circle. This meant that the ring was practically shoulder to shoulder. It hadn't been tried much before. Of course, if the ring was

too loose, the enemy would escape. But, we had a couple of these operations that were just first rate successes and on a large scale.

In addition, the 1st Marine Division had valleys and ridge lines to clear. They had, one NVA division always in their area. When defeated, it would retreat into Laos and then come back again. In short, they had a lot of combat, not as spectacular, but a lot tougher than it looked--a lot of patrolling; and a lot of casualties from mines; a lot of rice paddies. The combat in their area was a lot different.

Frank: Someone made the comment that the 3d Division, any Vietnamese that they saw in the 3d Division TAOR could be expected to have been an enemy as opposed to the large civilian population in the 1st Division TAOR.

Cushman: Yes. All the civilians were cleared out of the DMZ. Back in the mountains most of the civilians had left there. The ones that remained were Montagnard tribes who were mountaineers and you never caught up with them unless they wanted you to.

So, the comment is more or less correct except that down in the coastal plain there were still villages with rice farming and fishing. But the plain was quite narrow in the 3d Marine Division TAOR, so in a lot of that area, the mountainous part primarily, they could shoot anybody that moved.

Shulimson: How pervasive was the Viet Cong, let's say, in the Da Nang TAOR area as opposed to the NVA?

Cushman: Well, there were quite a few when I arrived in Vietnam. One of Leu Walt's biggest problems was fighting them. About that time, however, the divisions of the North Vietnamese Army had started to move because the Viet Cong was not winning and they needed help. Soon thereafter, the Viet Cong was no threat in I Corps. The North Vietnamese Army with its artillery constituted the threat.

One amusing thing, I always used to go to the barber shop in the III MAF compound, and very nice little fellow there always cut my hair including a neck shave. I went over there one morning and he wasn't there. It turned out he had been arrested as a Viet Cong by the ARVN the night before. To which my comment was, "Well, he's a lousy communist but a very good barber. I hate to lose him." But, when I thought about that razor, I wondered!

Frank: The question again, General, in 1969, after the 1968 election, you briefed President-elect Nixon on the Vietnam situation and the question is can you give us any details on this briefing and on Mr. Nixon's view of the Vietnam war?

Cushman: Well, first I'll say that I didn't really give him an elaborate a briefing. I called on him and since we had been old friends, I simply gave him a picture of the Vietnam

war as it was, nothing new or different that he didn't know. Principally, we talked about my next job which would be Presidential appointment as Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I had been called back in '68 while Johnson was still President, after I had been in Vietnam a year. I went on leave and briefed the Joint Chiefs and President Johnson on how the war was going. Mainly, the President asked questions based on what his son-in-law had written from Vietnam; why is this patrol going here, for example, similar detailed items.

Frank: This is sort of jumping ahead, but while this question came up, I heard it said that you were selected, that President, that Mr. Nixon wanted you as Deputy CIA because you were a long time friend of his and that you, like other people who are detailed to become Deputy Director of the Agency, were appointed to keep things straight there. He wanted his own man in there because he never could trust who the Director was and....

Cushman: The President said that to me. As it turned out, the Director, Dick Helms was a very strong personality whose loyalty was to the country and to the administration. So, it never came up that anything like that had to be done. I was a conduit for some very strong criticism of intelligence estimates, and simply tried to straighten out the things that were criticized.

Frank: It has been stated that MACV under General Abrams turned from General Westmoreland's search and destroy strategy to the one war concept aimed at breaking the connection between the guerrillas, the enemy political infra-structure, and the enemy main forces. How did this affect Marine operations, if at all?

Cushman: I don't recall any great change with Abrams taking over. He had a much different style, but he also was aggressive. He also wanted offensive operations and there weren't any changes in the philosophy, as I recall. We never got into calling our operations "search and destroy" very much, as I recall, up in I Corps. We went after the enemy where we could find him. We always did try to break the connection between the guerrillas, the infra-structure, and the enemy main forces; that was the whole purpose of the CAC program. Therefore, I don't the change of command affected Marine operations very much.

When Abrams took over, we already had the huge force of both Army and Marine divisions and we kept rolling right along. We didn't change any operation plans that we already had going.

Frank: Since you mentioned the character of General Westmoreland or since we brought it up here, how would you personalize, how would you characterize Westmoreland? What was his modus operandi?

Cushman: Well, he was extremely decisive, always business like and a thorough professional who was extremely well versed on doctrine, tactics, and strategy.

Frank: Would you call him a soldier's general?

Cushman: In the sense he was concerned about the welfare of his men but he, correctly, did not try to be "one of they boys."

Frank: Westmoreland doesn't seem to me the kind of guy that would go down and sort of mix in with the soldiers and....

Cushman: No, it's just not his nature. He was dignified at all times.

Frank: Wasn't his nature.

Cushman: No, no. He knew what a general was supposed to do to be a good troop leader and he did it to the best of his ability.

Frank: I think Abrams perhaps was more that....

Cushman: Yes, he's more of a cigar chomping popular figure. He's more of a Patton type battlefied hero. In fact, he was one of Patton's tank unit commanders.

Westmoreland, never has a crack ever in his composure, his bearing as a general.

him standing at attention on the tennis court.

Frank: Well, you almost think of him in a sort of paper doll mode, here he is in his paper doll wearing his Army fatigues in Vietnam, you take that off and you put on his Eagle Scout uniform and he'd look the same.

Cushman: I got along with him and I liked him.

Frank: Yes, yes. How about the other, how about Rossen?

Cushman: General Rossen was down to earth and a pretty tough guy. He was a good soldier and a fine, good officer. I always liked him very much.

Frank: We've touch on this briefly, sir, what was your relationship with FMFPac and Headquarters, Marine Corps and was there an informal chain of command that was in conflict with your relationship to MACV? Now, the perception is, and I think it's pretty valid especially when the Brute was FMFPac, he wanted his finger on everything. He recognized what the chain of command was and yet he liked to keep a rein on his Marines out there, he wanted to know everything that was going on. Is this a real or an imagined perception?

Cushman: He called me up every now and then, and of course, he came out frequently. So, he kept his hand in and he was fully informed, but always, in my time out there as commander, with respect to things which were in his area; such as logistics,

personnel, and the like. He never tried to get me to do something operational or counter to my orders from MACV.

Frank: Counter to what your....

Cushman: He just wanted to make sure that Marines were performing properly. We had good relationships and did not resort to back channel covert personal messages.

Frank: The other thing....

Cushman: And with Headquarters, about the only relationship I had there was when Governor Romney came out, I happened to be sick in bed, but the press wouldn't believe it and said I was snubbing a presidential candidate.

Frank: Governor Romney.

Cushman: I got a real hot call from the Commandant on that, but I simply told him, "I was sick in bed, no matter what you may have read in the papers."

Frank: General Krulak has been--he was involved, if you recall, after World War II with the Chowder operation, the fight to save the Marine Corps. He was down at Quantico, you know, with General Twining and that group.

Cushman: Yes, right.

Frank: And he's always been, this apparently based is on his involvment with that--always concerned with keeping up

the Marine Corps doctrine of amphibious warfare and some people have said that the continuation, the continued existence of the SLF was his, under his.... Urging or pressure.

Cushman: I don't know. He had a very close relationship with Admiral Ollie Sharp who the overal commander and may well have pressed this point.

Frank: But, he never pressed it with you?

Cushman: Well, no. He didn't have to because it was there and I was using it all the time. He never had to urge me!

Frank: Going back to General Westmoreland's book, he stated that "Perhaps General Cushman would have accepted the (single management of air) decision graciously had it not been for the close supervision Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington exercised over anything involving the III Marine Amphibious Force." Could you comment on that statement.

Cushman: Oh, I don't think I'd have been any happier if Headquarters hadn't had the same feeling that I did. It's just ingrained in any Marine with my experience that Marine air-ground team is to be preserved. However, I also recognized my responsibility to provide air support to everybody in I Corps and to release whatever air support was not required in I Corps to help win the war elsewhere. That was the situation when I got there, but about the time just before Tet 1968, there was concern at MACV about this arrangement.

Westmoreland believed that as the commander, he ought to manage all the air effort. He would exercise this control through General Momyer, his air deputy.

Frank: Had the air deputy take care of it.

Cushman: General Momyer came up to III MAF Headquarters for a final go around to seek control over Marine Air. I put a tape recorder in the middle of the table and said, "This is all going to be on the record." So, off we went, hour after hour; Major General Norm Anderson, my Marine wing commander, and myself on one side; Momyer on the other. Finally, we ironed out what came to be a pretty good arrangement, which was that we turned over a fixed number of sorti's to Momyer who automatically sent them right back without any extra paper work or requests. So, we ended up with the same sorties we always had. We'd always give him sorties, too, of course, because we could plan ahead and know that you're we were not going to need but so many. So, it ended up that everybody's face was saved and yet we got all the same air support for Marines that we had had and we got all the air support that we needed for the Army troops who were up in I Corps, so it worked out.

Shulimson: When did that conference with General Momyer and General Anderson take place? Was it '67 as opposed to '68?

Cushman: I think it was '68 because this whole thing came

up when it became obvious that we were going to have to provide air support of a complicated nature up around Khe Sanh and because General Tolson, 1st Air Cav Division, had complained to Westmoreland in my presence at his command post that he wasn't getting air support. It was because he didn't know how to ask for Marine air support because he had just arrived in I Corps. So, that was '68, as I recall.

Shulimson: Okay. So that would have been, probably, after that conference with Westmoreland on the 7th of February?

Cushman: Yes, I guess so. Tet was in February, wasn't it?

Shulimson: Yes.

Cushan: Then it could have been in December. Things were already becoming threatening around Khe Sanh and this was what brought it up into focus.

Shulimson: I have one other question. One officer who was doing our volume on air power or on air operations in Vietnam found that the directive was still 95-4--MACV 95-4 dated in '66 which had nothing about Marines providing air power to Army units in I Corps. Of course, at that time there were no Army units, and that as far as he could find out, if you read the directive, that it was the Seventh Air Force that should have been providing air support to the 1st Cav. Is that the way you read it?

Cushman: I don't recall that directive. In any event, I suddenly was in command of Army divisions who needed air support. I considered myself responsible to supply Marine air support and iron out the problems later. I made it available, but they didn't know how to ask for it or didn't have the tools to do so, yet. So, immediately upon arrival in I Corps, they weren't getting what they needed, a situation we quickly remedied. The Air Force doesn't operate like we do. They had a complicated procedure to get air support. Therefore, the Army divisions were not happy with the system they had and much preferred Marine Corps air support. But, far as me saying, "No, I won't give you any air support because there is a directive that says Seventh Air Force is supposed to give it," I would not have so abrogated my responsibility. I might have asked Saigon to straighten it out, but I'm not going to deprive some infantryman of air support because some argument over a piece of paper.

As it turned out, the Army divisions weren't able to use Marine air support as efficiently and smoothly as we did until we held school on the system and put Marine liaison personnel into their headquarters.

Batha: Now, I think, my understanding is according to General Norman Anderson that the basic problem was lack of radios which should have been an Air Force function to provide those air control parties to the Army units even if the air craft....

Cushman: They provided only one to a division headquarters and didn't have forward air controllers like we do, either ground or airborne. They did provide a few personnel to the division headquarters including an air officer who gave some advice. They don't really coordinate air support with infantry movement or other supporting fires.

Batha: But did the Air Force ever follow along with supporting forces and radios, if not the actual air craft sortis, in support of the Army?

Cushman: I don't know.

Frank: I think we covered some of this, but to reiterate, General Westmoreland has said that the Army was not getting adequate air support from the Marines in I Corps. Because of this he opted for single management of air. Although I can't believe that was his...this is question 30, General.

Cushman: Well, it entered in, yes, but primarily, I think it was the very complicated system that was being established around Khe Sanh. The air support there was a combination of B-52's, naval air, Seventh Air Force air, and Marine air. All delivering support of Khe Sanh over in concentric circles starting right around the base where the Marines provided it because Marines relied on Marines for support that close, and then the Navy and Air Force a little farther out and finally the B-52's way out. This required a lot of coordi-

nation and a lot of ground control and convinced General Westmoreland to go for single management.

Frank: Well, of course, and we discussed about....

Cushman: This was given as one of the reasons, yes.

Frank: ...as one excuse. Were you familiar with Admiral Sharp's position on the single management issue, and why do you think he finally went along with the idea after....?

Cushman: I can only say I heard that he okayed it, but I couldn't understand it.

Frank: He'd been against it for so long?

Cushman: I think so, yes. However, he was far removed from me and I was not privy to his thinking on this matter.

Frank: General Westmoreland, once General Westmoreland agreed to single management air, I guess Admiral Sharp had to go along with his senior field commander.

Shulimson: I was just wondering if we could get back to that second half of the question which was, and I think you addressed part of it, that General Westmoreland was persuaded by General Momyer to go into single management.

Cushman: I'm guessing that, inferring it.

Shulimson: Would you discuss the origins of the idea and

What brought it about?

Cushman: What, single management?

Shulimson: Yes.

Cushman: Well, I can only say that I inferred General Momyer wanted this because it's Air Force doctrine that there should be only one air commander and everything that flies in the air is supposed to come under him including, Peter Pan!

Frank: Who was the air commander before Momyer.

Shulimson: Moore, Joseph Moore.

Frank: Yes, he was an easier guy to get along with, I understand, than Momyer.

Cushman: I guess so, yes.

Shulimson: Well, they had their problems with him, too, but Sharp had always....

Cushman: Kept the lid on, yes.

Shulimson: ...kept the lid on and, apparently, his tour was ended and he wasn't willing to fight Westmoreland on this.

Cushman: I think that may have had something to do with it.

Frank: General Westmoreland also said that General Chapman made an doctrinal issue out of single management and carried

it to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Cushman: That's what I heard, yes.

Frank: Did you feel--did you view single management as a serious threat to the Corps?

Cushman: Yes, in terms of getting us back to where we were in Korea, the wing under an Air Force commander and the ground under somebody else.

Frank: Fifth Air Force.

Cushman: Yes, we survived that, but how many times can we survive with an arrangement like that becoming a precedent again and again. So, yes, I considered it a very serious threat to the air-ground team.

Frank: Was there anything the Marine Corps might have done to prevent it?

Cushman: No way that I can think of, no.

Frank: Actually, as it turned out it wasn't everything that the Marine Corps feared though, was it? Except for setting a precedent.

Cushman: Yes, that's right. The agreement as finally worked out, as I said, was simply a way for the Air Force to save face, but the Marine Corps got the same sorties and no extra paperwork. It didn't make any practical difference--only

philosophical and ideological.

Frank: In this case, the Air Force won the battle, but the Marine Corps won the war, in a sense.

Cushman: Yes, right.

Frank: Approximately how much of your time was spent on the single management issue when it initially arose? Or in fact, did you in fact get involved with it and did you try to fight it or revamp it? Did you have to report to CMC and FMFPac on this whole business?

Cushman: Well, I already mentioned I had a number of discussions with Westmoreland on it and always protested against it. Then when finally push came to shove, he sent Momyer up to straighten me out and we ended up with this agreement which we discussed above.

I can't say how much time I devoted to it. That one conference with Momyer lasted three or four hours. I used to have talks with Westmoreland every week as we flew up and down I Corps, when he would come up to inspect. We'd discuss all kinds of policy, such as helicopters being attached to divisions, and single management. It didn't take too much time away from fighting the war.

Frank: Talking about the helicopters attached to the divisions, how do you feel about the Marine Corps, or would you think it was feasible for the Marine Corps ever to operate

like the 1st AirCav Division did?

Cushman: No, we'll never have that many helicopters because our numbers are limited by other factors such as the size of our divisions and the availability of deck space and shipping space aboard ships. Afterall, we are amphibious, the Army is not. So, we'll never have that many and we have to make do as best we can. And if they're attached to a division, you lose flexibility and the ability to quickly and easily shift them somewhere else. So, I'm sold on our system for the Marine Corps.

Batha: Ben, I think we've been sort of talking around it. One of the reasons, I guess, that the single management issue came up was because, basically, the Marines were being used as Army forces, they were in extended operations ashore. And I just, I wondered....

Cushman: Well, we had our aircraft ashore, so it was a temptation. I am sure they wanted to control Navy aircraft, but the Navy refused and simply steamed out to sea and out of the argument.

Frank: Can you explain the differences between the single management system of 7 March '68 and the modified one of 21 May and what was the 30/70 Program?

Cushman: Gad, I don't know. I think that was an attempt to allocate 70 Marine sorties of every hundred to I Corps.

Frank: Make 30 available?

Cushman: ...yes, 30 available.

Frank: Okay. Next question. Did you ask this question, Jack?

Shulimson: No.

Frank: I guess maybe Lavelle.

Batha: I think that's basically it. The original implementtation of the program didn't establish any sort of proportional share of Marine assets that would be used to support Marine forces as opposed to those used throughout the battlefield. And so the second revision which occurred almost immediately after some initial problems were spotted basically said that Marines get 70% and 30% will go back to the Air Force.

Cushman: I don't recall we adhering to anything like that rigidly. That probably was a guide line.

Frank: The Army fixed wing reconnaissance aircraft were not included under the single management agreement, Marine aircraft were. Do you have any idea why and what fixed wing reconnaissance aircraft did the Army have?

Cushman: They had something like our Bronco, I think. I am not sure what they had.

Frank: Caribou.

Batha: They had the OV-2.

Frank: OV-2.

Cushman: The Caribou carried people and things.

Batha: They didn't even have it by '68. That was an Air Force_____.

Frank: Okay, well, alright, well.

Cushman: I had forgotten that Army recon planes escaped single management. We had high performance fixed wing reconnaissance aircraft. The Army didn't have any of those. So, the high performance aircraft had to be worked in with the attack aircraft for control and assignment. So I don't see that there's any real comparison there.

I don't believe that our low performance aircraft were under single management.

Frank: Yes, I don't know. Were they?

Batha: Helicopters were not, OV-10's were.

Cushman: Yes, those planes were used to take infra-red pictures slow, among other missions.

Frank: I think we may have answered the next one, but I'll repeat it. Did the single management of Marine air hamper Marine Corps operations?

Cushman: No, it was never more difficult to get air cover afterwards than it was before, because of the nature of the agreement; we had no problems that I can remembered.

Frank: Alright. Was it more difficult to get air cover for helicopter escort?

Cushman: No. I'm talking about air support for everything helicopters included.

Frank: Was the single management system less responsive than the one it replaced? Apparently not.

Cushman: No, no. But, I again have to stress that single management in the way it ended up really wasn't single management as Westmoreland and Momyer had envisioned, wherein they would simply command all the aircraft.

Frank: It was too big a battle, I think, more than they wanted to bite off and chew.

Cushman: I guess so.

Frank: The original directive of General Westmoreland concerning single management stated that the operational control of Marine air by the Air Force was for a limited time, yet it was allowed to continue by Westmoreland and CinCPac. Why and what were the reasons given? Do you have any idea on that, General?

Cushman: The same reasons they gave when they started the policy. General Westmoreland felt this was the only efficient way to handle it and he had to do it that way. I put in a letter pointing up the temporary status and the fact that it still went on. The answer was essentially, "Sorry, but we're going to keep doing it."

Frank: General McCutcheon seemed to think that the final arrangement between the Air Force and the Marine Corps was the best the Marine Corps could hope for and that in the future we should settle for nothing less. In your opinion do you think the final agreement was satisfactory and will it hold up for future wars?

Cushman: I agree with Keith McCutcheon, and I think the final agreement was satisfactory in Vietnam at that time and place. Whether it will hold up in future wars or whether we want it to, I don't know. It was sort of a verbal agreement when it finally ended up and as opposed to what was in writing, it was somewhat different in operation.

Frank: And who says future war is going to be the same as Vietnam.

Cushman: Yes, that's right. And, no one knows what kind of agreements can be worked out. You know, they may try to go back to Korea again.

Frank: We talked about your relationship with the press,

so we won't belabor that again. What was the basis for your statement that the 3d Marine Division did not get enough good press coverage for Operation Dewey Canyon?

Cushman: I don't remember. Dewey Canyon was a spectacular operation and maybe I was just giving my opinion that the press didn't give it enough good coverage. I don't remember what the coverage was, whether it was lousy, inaccurate, or nonexistent. I just don't remember.

Frank: Do you remember, Jack?

Shulimson: That's your period Rich, but I was just wondering; in Dewey Canyon, the Marines did go into Laos. Was that part of the pre-plan for the operation?

Cushman: It was not part of any plan of mine because we were not allowed to go into Laos by higher authority. However, the boundary line is non-existent. The terrain is terrible, the boundary line unknown. I am sure it was not deliberate, but I think they were chasing the enemy and seeking to get commanding terrain they needed tactically. Nobody knew where they were, until later it was alleged they were in Laos.

Frank: Next question we've already answered about the press. Did you view the SLF as a vital capability in I....

End Side 1, Tape 2

Begin Side 2, Tape 2

Cushman: Yes, definitely. Not only did they conduct many very effective amphibious operations, but they also provided additional strength in country and in I Corps. They were always nice to have.

Frank: What are the reasons for the SLF not being employed in other corps areas after '67?

Cushman: I don't know unless it was that I kept asking for them all the time. They had a couple of adventures down in the Mekong Delta which I don't think went very well. And perhaps it was because we could better coordinate amphibious operations and we understood naval gunfire and coordinating it with air support.

I might say that coordination was something else unknown to the Seventh Air Force. Their coordination policy was that if they had an airplane in the air, everybody stopped shooting. Of course, we don't operate that way. We continue to conduct naval gunfire and artillery fire at the same time as air support. So, I think that was probably another reason.

Frank: I think there was a problem with Plans Victor and Negat with the SLF up in the I Corps area, if I recall. This is just off the top of my head.

Cushman: Yes, there might well have been. But at least we had the doctrine and the rudiments were used.

Frank: Right. Well at least those plans were in effect and could be used.

Cushman: Yes. We had some problems. Some Marines either weren't getting educated or had forgotten how to coordinate air support, naval gunfire, and artillery, and had to set up a fire support coordination center and get it operating properly. We had trouble with that.

Frank: Oh, really? What period and what areas?

Cushman: About the time battle got rough, up in the DMZ area, particularly, up at Dong Ha. I noticed it. Westmoreland noticed it and gave me hell about Marines not knowing their business. We had to really shape up the fire support coordination center; had to put a general in charge and hold school.

Frank: Who was that you put in charge?

Cushman: It was General Drake. But, I was angry and astounded. We pioneered this in World War II and, again, we used it in Korea.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: And now in Vietnam everybody has forgotten the art. What were they doing at Marine Corps Schools? I unloaded on Jimmy Masters, CG at Marine Corps Schools, when he came out to Vietnam.

Frank: Yes, I was just about to ask you.

Cushman: Yes. And I also unloaded on him about teaching lieutenants how to be lieutenants under battlefield conditions.

Frank: Were you having problems with the young lieutenants coming out there?

Cushman: The problem I was having was not lack of courage or lack of technical and tactical knowledge, but lack of knowledge of leadership principles. They just couldn't be tough when it was required, but they were tired and the men were tired. For example, one of the troubles we had with the M-16 rifle was that it had to be kept clean and it was unforgiving. However, the lieutenants felt so sorry for the troops that they wouldn't make them clean those weapons when everybody was pooped out and the battle was over. They weren't tough enough when they had to be. They were just too kind hearted, which never works out.

Frank: Lost lives.

Cushman: Yes, that's right. So, I unloaded on Jimmy Masters about that, too, and things got better.

Frank: Did the Marines have any role in the Phoenix program that you know of?

Cushman: That was the controversial program leading to the elimination of the infrastructure. Yes, we tried to get the

enemy supporting personnel and headquarters, and we were successful in getting a lot of them. We kept a chart and as we were able to discover who the individuals, we put them in an organization chart that we were able to construct. Then, we'd scratch one off the chart whenever we killed or caught him.

All the controversy seemed to be directed at the Saigon level. I think Ambassador Bill Colby caught a lot of flak over it from the media and all the peacenik do-gooders back in the U.S. screaming and hollering about it. Of course, if we could capture them we would, if not, we'd shoot them as they were resisting, which ordinarily the did. They usually had a weapon even though they were not in uniform. They were Viet Cong village chiefs, for instance, and important to the enemy. If he put up any resistance, he was going to become a casualty. It never bothered me ethically or morally, and I don't know why it bothered anyone. But we never received any criticism over it.

It was not a big thing. We'd try to round up everybody within a big circle and squeeze; those causght were mostly armed Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. But, some would be infrastructure. We'd capture them and turn them over to the ARVN. If they wouldn't surrender, if they resisted, why, they'd get shot.

Frank: Talking about Phoenix.... Talking about the Phoenix program, I understand that when the agency personnel left

Da Nang, they left the Phoenix files in tack.

Cushman: I don't know, that was years after I was transferred.

Frank: What was III MAF's working relationship with Colonel Cavanaugh, the chief of SOG?

Cushman: None. SOG was super secret and I still don't know what they did. I don't think we had any Marines in it; if we did, they were separate and didn't belong to me.

Frank: Well, that was the next question.

Shulimson: No, they didn't belong to you.

Cushman: They didn't run the camps, did they, like Lang Vei?

Shulimson: No.

Frank: That was Special Forces.

Cushman: Special Forces. I had good relationship with their commander.

Frank: What is your opinion, if you have any, of SOG operations as far as you know?

Cushman: I was never briefed as to their mission or composition. I believe they conducted long range patrol operations.

Shulimson: Didn't they go into Laos and North Vietnam?

Cushman: I guess they did and that' why they were a secret

organization. They may have gone into places forbidden to other troops. I suppose their function was reconnaissance.

Frank: And probably disrupt the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Batha: I had a Marine sergeant major who was head of a SOG--well, he was the only Marine out there and he used Nung tribesmen in Laos and they went on raids and things like that.

Cushman: Yes.

Shulimson: The relationship with Special Forces, they would use the Special Forces camp as a base.

Batha: Yes, he was directed by Saigon, but he was administratively under the hat of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Cushman: I believe SOG was supposed to make long range patrols into places where we weren't supposed to be. That's why it was so secret. But as to Marine involvment, I don't recall any, certainly not any problems. I don't recall providing any Marines. But, I may have had to give them support similar to the support for the Special Forces.

Frank: To what extent did III MAF use Prairie Fire operations to obtain intelligence for future operations?

Cushman: Let me refresh my mind on Prairie Fire.

Frank: Prairie Fire, Rich?

Smith: That was North Vietnamese reconnaissance, flights over North Vietnam.

Cushman: I remember the air as Rolling Thunder. I don't recall Prairie Fire, although it sounds familiar. I just can't put it with what the operation was.

Frank: Appartently, the person who asked the question is not in this room. Well, we'll try to get some background on that.

What, if any, personnel problems faced you during your tour and how did you solve them?

Cushman: I don't really recall any. The divisions dealt directly with FMFPac. We monitored the situation at III MAF headquarters. I don't recall any significant problems. If there were any training problems, I could only blame myself because I set up all the camps, schools, and training centers in Pendleton. Then I had to go out to Vietnam and receive my product. However, by the time I got out there, there were well trained replacement groups coming out and we got them in sufficient number.

Frank: I think you're right, though, that FMFPac by that time had asked for and received authority to control the dispatch of personnel and so on out to WestPac.

Cushman: Yes, FMFPac always had the logistics and personnel function. The divisions dealt with them directly as to the

requirement for replacements on a monthly basis.

Frank: Oh, really? I see.

Cushman: Yes. Going through my headquarters would have delayed the process and its execution.

Shulimson: After Tet '68, did you ask for the 27th Marines or did that come in from other....

Cushman: It came in, I think, in response to overall requirements set by Westmoreland. I didn't ask for them, in fact, I didn't even know they were available.

Frank: What are your impressions of the U.S. advisory effort? I imagine that includes Marines as well as Army.

Cushman: Yes, we had Marines who advised Vietnamese Marines and the Army had an advisory group that advised the ARVN. I think the program was good. It had a number of very brave advisors. Sometimes, if the Vietnamese didn't stand with them during a tough battle, it cost them their lives. Generally speaking, I think the advisors were able to inspire the Vietnamese, and stiffen their spine. They were very valuable. Also, I think they were able to arrange certain supporting fires, particularly, if U.S. forces provided them. So, I would say it was a good and worthwhile effort.

Shulimson: I was wondering if you would go into detail on the advisory organization in I Corps? You were the chief advisor?

Cushman: Yes. I personally worked closely on a day to day basis with General Lam, the Vietnamese I Corps commander. Then under my command I had an Army advisory group organization which went down through the units of the ARVN. An Army colonel headed it up and they had a headquarters there in Da Nang, and answered to me. But, their functions were pretty well taken care of without any day to day work by me. My day to day work was with Lam.

Things went smoothly. The Army officers in it were competent and did their work in a way satisfactory to me. They stretched out, organizationally, through the ARVN units with some people at division and others at each regiment, and so forth.

Shulimson: There were Marines attached, also, to the advisory group, weren't there?

Cushman: Vietnamese Marines had U.S. Marine advisors. I think we also had some Marines with the advisory group and I know we had some U.S. Marines with the Korean Marines.

Frank: During the Dewey Canyon operation in February-March '69, 2d Battalion, 9th Marines crossed into Laos and, of course, we answered this already whether or not you gave them permission.

Cushman: No, nobody asked for permission. I'm glad they didn't, I'd had to say no.

Frank: What, if any, restrictions were placed on the press for Dewey Canyon and more specifically the Laotian part of the operation, the last part of the question?

Cushman: I don't know. Actually, I was transferred when - Dewey Canyon was still going on, so I don't recall what restrictions were placed on the press.

Frank: Unless they walked.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Well, the last question of this special Vietnam section, General, how would you contrast or compare the situations confronting you at the beginning of your tour with those which you faced at the end of the tour?

Cushman: I thought when I left that in spite of the constraints--political constraints--that we had, that we'd won the war. The railroad was running, Highway 1 was open all the way from the southern part of I Corps to the northern part, the villagers could walk around and do their farming, those with jeeps or cars could drive around without being a casualty. If we continued the bombing and other operations of that sort, I thought we could win it even though I knew time was getting short because of the demonstrations at home. It was evident that the American people were getting sick

tired of having casualties and not winning all these years and that they were going to quit supporting the war. Of course, that is what happened later. Congress eventually just cut off the money for the war, reflecting the views of the people.

So, although I had high hopes, when I left, it didn't turn out.

Shulimson: What would be your definition of winning that war?

Cushman: I think there could have been a political solution forced by military action, but it would have to have come soon after I left because at that time four years had dragged on. To win would have required, in my opinion, a big amphibious operation into the North and the blocking of the Laotian supply line. When President Nixon mined the harbor at Haiphong and really turned the Air Force loose on the enemy, I thought we had them. But, the mistake was made of not keeping the bombing up until the peace treaty papers were signed. The minute they North Vietnamese said sit down and talk peace in Paris, they quit the bombing, although we had them down to practically their last anti-aircraft missile. We really had them in bad shape. I was surprised when we let up because Nixon knows all about communists and how to handle them, but he didn't keep the heat on.

He went into Cambodia and cleaned that out fairly well. There was a good chance of following those things up, I

thought, with a negotiated peace. Now, the peace they we got didn't mean anything because the enemy violated it immediately and we did nothing about it.

Of course, there were arguments on whether it was possible to win that war by any kind of military action. I just happen to think that a combination of military and political action could have done it.

Frank: I'd like to get back to Khe Sanh for just one second here, General. Was there ever really a siege of Khe Sanh? Do you think it was besieged?

Cushman: Yes, they had three divisions around the base and one could not move freely in and out on the ground. They had artillery in Laos as well as in other places within Vietnam which was pounding the base. It was a scary deal to go in there by air. General Tommy Tompkins used to go in there every day, and I'd go in about once a week. Every visit was a hairy experience.

It was a siege, in fact, somewhat of a classic siege in that the North Vietnames dug parallel trenches and zigzag trenches as they tried to get close to our perimeter. We replied with heavy air attack. They never really managed to do much in the way of infantry attacks against the installation. They tried one or two, but they were repulsed. We had forbidden our troops to sortie in any strength. We stuck to patrolling because we knew that there were three enemy divisions out there

and we did not want any of our battalions to venture forth, and get chopped up, or else get pinned down and be able to come back. Therefore, we restricted offensive action until the Pegasus operation finally got fairly close to the base.

Frank: Well, could the Marines, could they move out of Khe Sanh at any time they wanted?

Cushman: Only by air.

Frank: Only by air.

Cushman: Yes. Highway 9 was interdicted, at least to the extent of bridges being blown out and some enemy infantry there. Primarily, they were in the hills north, west, and south of Khe Sanh.

Shulimson: The Marines got some criticism for not digging in at Khe Sanh.

Cushman: That was the completely wrong and unwarranted. I never knew where that came from. When either Tommy Tompkins or myself would visit the base, we'd say, " Dig in, put in more wire, keep digging." Always we dug in. If you don't believe in digging in, all you need is the first shell and you'll be digging in with your teeth, so I don't know how this absolutely incorrect idea arose.

Frank: I think it was an Army perception.

Cushman: It may have been. The situation was such that we couldn't have elaborately prepared emplacements of concrete and steel, but we had ample sandbags and timbers and other fortification materials. The emplacements were deep and had overhead cover.

Frank: Bunkers and so on?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Do you recall the fighting around Dai Do?

Shulimson: Dai Do.

Cushman: No.

Shulimson: The battle for Dong Ha about the end of April, the beginning of May, I believe.

Cushman: Was this the time the enemy blew up the Dong Ha ammunition dump and the fuel dump? I remember that.

Shulimson: Yes, right. It was an attempt to interdict the Cua Viet River.

Cushman: Yes, I flew up there to look at it, but ther was no infantry battle at Dong Ha at that time.

Shulimson: No. There was a battle though at Dai Do which 2/4 was involved in, Lieutenant Colonel, now General Weise, was wounded and I believe there were two Medals of Honor out

of that operation.

Cushman: Well, I remember it, but only as another battle that we eventually won. A tough one, but there were lots of those.

Shulimson: I was just wondering, did you perceive this as an attempt by the North Vietnamese to take Dong Ha?

Cushman: Yes, I think I did. There were so many battles in the DMZ area that it was hard to tell if they had some long range objective. They may have been trying to take Dong Ha. However, I may have thought they were just trying to do what they did which was, destroy our ammunition and fuel dumps. I don't know. I suppose that capture of Dong Ha could have been their objective, but I don't remember any captured maps or documents that would prove it.

Shulimson: With the blowing up of our fuel dumps, how much of a strain did this put on our logistics in '68?

Cushman: Well, as I recall, we had to do a lot of shifting. I guess we called up another fuel ship and things of that kind, but I don't recall that it ever hampered us a bit. It was a problem that was solved in a week or something like that. Same thing happened in Da Nang when they blew up the ammunition dump there, they also blew up a number of planes which inspired a phone call from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force saying, "What are you doing with our planes? Your

job in Vietnam is to protect our airplanes." This was a new statement of my mission, to put it mildly!

Shulimson: I have two more questions. One is on Khe Sanh, did you ever have any concern once you had 6,000 Marines at Khe Sanh of Khe Sanh falling to the North Vietnamese?

Cushman: No, I didn't. I had complete confidence in my Marines. Of course they were outnumbered, but we had beautiful air and artillery support. The weather permitted it and the weather was not going to get worse, it was forecast to get better. So, I was not worried, but, of course, a commander is always concerned. You're never complacent when a battle is going on or when you're in that kind of a situation. But, at the same time, you don't panick like a chicken with his head cut off. I was concerned but not worried about the battle.

Shulimson: The other is on the intelligence on Tet. There's been a great deal, as you probably know, between CBS and Westmoreland on what was in the order of battle.

Cushman: I hope Westy wins every damn nickel of his suit.

Shulimson: I was wondering, was there any difference in the Marine order of battle of what you held on the North Vietnamese forces than what MACV had?

Cushman: No. We got a lot of our figures from Saigon and

then, of course, we provided what we could from what we would obtain and discover. Of course, the big fight over these figures is just ridiculous. Do you call teenage couriers carrying rice bags and papers, you call them Viet Cong and count them with the guys with rifles or don't you? That's what they whole argument was about. It started as simply an argument between intelligence specialists over how you count them and what you do with them in the paper work. And for CBS to claim there is a conspiracy is just ridiculous. In any event, we never had any problems with Saigon over the intelligence.

We spotted the main divisions, I don't recall there ever being any argument about them. They were difficult to follow because they had the same number and sometime different letters like 325B and 325A. But we could follow them and keep track of them and we did. We were not in any argument over it with Saigon. Viet Cong sympathizers, recruiters, and rice carriers we reported as best we could. They were very difficult to determine as to numbers because one minute they were farmers and the next they were carrying rice to the Viet Cong. So, what were they? Certainly not trained infantry.

Shulimson: When you spoke of three divisions at Khe Sanh, three enemy divisions, do you believe they were three full enemey divisions or were they components?

Cushman: Oh, yes. I think three full divsions. They would have been right down in the flatlands, the coastal plain, if we hadn't held them at Khe Sanh.

Frank: Any other questions? Well, we thank you for the session, General. We'll have to set some time up for our own session. Thank you.

End of interview

Session II, 3 November 1982, Tape Side 1, Tape 1,

Frank: As a carry-over from our session Monday, Mr. Shulimson would like to get a handle, get an idea, what was your day-today schedule, what was your schedule for a day?

Cushman: Normally, I would get up fairly early, six o'clock or so, do exercises in my quarters, usually running in place. Then, I would have some breakfast. The Marine stewards, as they were called then--I'd brought two with me when I left Camp Pendleton--and they'd fix up the breakfast. Then I'd walk over to the office, do whatever had to be done there--paperwork, decisions, seeing people. Then about midmorning I would take off in my helicopter. If there was a battle going on, I'd go there; if there wasn't, I would just drop in and see the division commanders. Often times, I'd have lunch in the field with somebody and then I'd come back, maybe mid-afternoon, for more work in the office. At dinnertime I'd either eat by myself or sometimes have a dinner. I would often have some visitor to entertain and I would usually include General Lam, my chief of staff, and maybe a couple of other staff officers as guests. After dinner, I usually did some homework and called it a day.

For quite a long while after Tet, just after dinner time, I had to go over to the command center and call Westy on the scrambler phone. And that was an irritating, frustrating operation because of technical difficulities. It just was

hard to do; sometimes it would take me an hour to get through and see what he wanted--mainly a report on how things were going in the aftermath of the Tet battle.

That was my usual day. Sometimes it varied when Westy or Abrams would come up to inspect and see how things were going. They made such a command visit every week. We'd also have people in from the States occasionally, such as, Congressmen and other VIP's who had something to do with the war. For example, the President came to one of the Southern corps areas and I had to be down there. We also had the Vice-President, Hubert Humphrey, and of course, we had the Secretary of Defense several times. Then we had the Commandant and Brute Krulak and other commanders who would take up a whole block of maybe three days during which I did nothing except attend to them, briefing and escorting them. When they were there, I just had to stay up a little later to catch up with the paper work. So, in general, that was the routine.

Frank: When did you have your briefings, in the morning?

Cushman: Yes, every morning right after breakfast we had a briefing with nearby commanders, my principal staff officers, including CORDS. The briefing was put on principally by my staff, with occasionally a guest spot for somebody pertinent. Everything was well covered in the briefing, both air and ground, Army and Navy.

Frank: How did your staff function?

Cushman: In the normal manner; we had the regular general and special staffs--Marine Corps Schools doctrine and the Army field manuals governing our functioning. For my chief of staff, I had always had a Marine aviator. Bob Owens was the first.

Frank: Oh, sure.

Cushman: He later made general officer. He was my first chief of staff. E.E. Anderson, was my second chief of staff, and the third was George Dooley.

They were all strong chiefs of staff, and kept the paper work going and the staff functioning coordinated. As far as I know, we kept our superiors happy enough with the staff work and our planning. Generally speaking, we got the work done, and there was a lot of paper work, particularly connected logistic and administrative matters going back to FMFPac.

I didn't have too many complaints. Here and there were individuals that weren't outstanding, but I had to take my share of people coming out. It wasn't like the Army, where all the hot shots went to Vietnam, everybody else went to Europe or maybe an advisory group or something like that. Therefore, we Marines were competing with very sharp able and professional officers as far as the Army went. The Navy, as usual, didn't have much of a staff system, so there wasn't much competition there. I had to take a cross-section of the Marines that were available. I did get some who were mediocre, but since a tour was only 13 months, we managed usually to put somebody beside them or over them or under them who could support the wink link. Our staff work, I would say, was eminently satisfactory,

and kept us winning. Of course, there were some outstanding officers, as you might expect. We had a cross section of the Marine Corps officers of any particular rank.

Frank: What I'd like to do now is begin your interview about your career.

You are a native of Minnesota, is that correct?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: And was your father a professional man?

Cushman: Yes, my father was a banker, but when he was very young, about 16, he enlisted in the Navy for the Spanish-American War. He didn't stay long because in those days, you could buy your enlistment out and leave, and his father did that just as soon as the war was over. My father then went to work and to night school at the same time and finally ended up as a banker. He died very young, he was 49, and I was a midshipman at the time. His having been in the Navy intrigued me and got me thinking about it when I was young. With that in mind, I decided to try for the Naval Academy for which I took a competitive exam, after a cram course of some three months, and won the Congressional appointment from my district. Then, since I had not graduated from high school, I had to take a comphrehensive entrance exam of some six or seven subjects. If you had graduated from high school with sufficently high marks, as most of the appointees had, you only took exams

in two subjects. The cram course provided me with a lot of what I needed to know and I passed all my exams.

In those days, you went down to Annapolis not knowing whether you would be admitted because you had to pass a physical exam given at the academy. I passed that and was sworn in with my classmates and did four years as a midshipman. I was blessed with the ability to do well in academics and never had any trouble with them. I enjoyed the whole four years, really loved it. I was not an athlete, although I always went out for athletics however, but I was never good enough to make the varsity. Since I was only 16, I wasn't physically developed and as there were a lot of midshipmen with a year or so of college who were already athletes, I didn't have much chance. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the athletic part of the four years, too.

Frank: Who were some of your classmates? Of course, you were the class of '35.

Cushman: Yes. The only other one who got four stars was Noel Gaylor, G-A-Y-L-O-R. His last duty was CincPac.

Frank: CinCPac, right, yes.

Cushman: And we were very short on admirals and characters in our class. I mean, there were some midshipman type characters and so on, but not well known outside the Navy. And I think we had a few three star admirals and a hand full--only a hand full

of three star admirals, and a much less than normal bag of two star admirals. I don't know why, we lost quite a few in the war. And we had some Medal of Honor winners, some posthumous. One that stands out in my mind was Gene Fluckey who had a submarine off the coast of Japan and landed a storming party ashore and created some havoc--I think he blew up a railroad track and a few things like that on the Japanese mainland and got back in his submarine and managed to take off. Anyway, he got a Medal of Honor. And then, we had some football heroes, we had All American Borries--in fact he was All American in about three sports. Tremendous athlete, but as far as I know, didn't come to anything as a naval officer. Almost the whole class made captain because of the war. If it hadn't been for the war, there'd been a large number that didn't, I suppose. But anyway, they practically all made captain, he made captain. Then there was the guy that won the Army/Navy game for the first time in about 12 or 13 years, my first class year--Slade Cutter.

Frank: Oh, sure.

Cushman: Yes, and he kicked the field goal,-------also was a heavyweight champion in boxing, quite an athlete. He's still around. He retired as a captain, he got in a little bit of trouble, I understand, when he was Director of Athletics....

Frank: Oh, yes. I was just going to say....

Cushman: ...the Academy was his last duty. I don't know what happened. I've heard he just had an argument with the management, and you can't win those kind of arguments. Anyway, he had about three Navy Crosses, or something like that.

Frank: Oh, did he have that many?

Cushman: Yes--submariner.

Frank: Now, off the tape--at lunch Monday, you recited the facts leading to your opting for the Marine Corps. Perhaps you'd like to put it on tape.

Cushman: Yes, I had--the reasons I gave at the table--which were, you might say, rational reasons, well thought out, that I would be much happier in my work being a Marine even though it was difficult to find out what they did. I had read enough about it, and there were subjects pertaining to land warfare in the Landing Force Manual. I read all those assiduously. I just felt I'd be happier and able to do better the technical things that you had to do to be a Marine officer than you did to be a naval officer. And as it turned out, I think I was right. The reason I don't often tell, which sort of nailed it down, was that I overstayed my leave out in town one night, and came in--should have been in at night or something like that--I came in at ten. And the only way I could get back in was to climb over the wall which was surmounted with barbedwire. And I threw over my uniform and started up the wall and as I got to

the top--this is right behind the chapel--and the Marine who walks around the chapel endlessly protecting John Paul Jones' bones took his rifle butt and held the wire apart so I could get through. And I decided that's my kind of outfit. Any guy that'll do that for me, he's alright. So, that just put the final nail in it.

Frank: You never had a Marine officer as a role model who....

Cushman: No, they were pretty scarce. We had a couple on duty as ordnance instructors, and then I went on a cruise--on a battleship--and there was a Marine officer aboard there. But, they're all busy and harrassed and didn't, I guess, see themselves as being in the recruitment business. The Marine Corps was very small and didn't look like it was going to get big. There just wasn't much exposure. First class year, they brought in a colonel who, I think, was I & I from Baltimore or somewhere-because I don't think there was any billet for a colonel with the Marine detachment on the place--so he gave a talk and answered questions and that was about it. That was the total exposure. And I think he was kind of under wraps--the Navy in no way gave a damn about the Marine Corps in those days. It's much different now, there's been negotiated a proper percentage of all rankings in the class and it's done fairly now. In those days, it was just 25 and that's it. And for the first time, class standing enabled you to get a spot. That was the first of the 25, which was myself, had the highest

class standing and I was able to select without any damn shilly-shally or luck or anything involved. Previously, there'd been a lot of luck involved in who got what. So, that--I went into the Marine Corps for those reasons and have been very happy ever since.

Frank: Did, as happened in other cases, did the instructors and so on, tac officers give you a hard time for choosing the Marine Corps?

Cushman: Yes. A number of them did, several, you know, in front of the class and everything--gave me hell for picking the Marine Corps and I usually answered them respectfully but tartly. It didn't shake my convictions whatsoever.

Well, I don't know. The Navy was, of course, somewhat different before World War II, and I just couldn't get up any great enthusiasm for being a member of the officer corps of the U.S. Navy. Had some good naval officers, no question about it, but their attitudes were really out of another century.

Frank: Well, The Basic School class you went to, the class of '35, was the largest.

Cushman: Yes, it was the first time that anyone other than these hand full of Naval Academy graduates plus a little hand full of enlisted men had ever gone to Basic School for the whole duration of the Depression. And we really had some fine officers because they took in the honor graduates and the ROTC

commanders and people like that--the athletes and class leaders into the Marine Corps. A lot of them had, also, opportunities to go into the Army, commissioned through ROTC, but they turned those down and came into the Marine Corps. So, we had a real high group.

Frank: I think that group--that one of the reasons that the Marine Corps got so many honor graduates was because if they went into the Army, they couldn't be assured of a regular career.

Cushman: That's right. There was some law that required....

Frank: Thomson.

Cushman: ...yes, competition of sorts, Thompson Act. Yes, only a few of them could end up, I guess, with a regular commission.

Frank: That's exactly right.

Cushman: The Marine Corps, they had to do a two year probationary tour as I did also, but then they had to take an exam at the end of two years, which I didn't have to do. They examined us on our record. And so, almost everyone, as far as I know, you know, withstood the probationary period and then they took an exam for class standing purposes and there they were, all set. And I guess they all got regular commissions--there may have been one or two that didn't.

Frank: The other thing unusual about the class of '35, was that it was the class which provided two Commandants and more general officers than any other class in Marine Corps history.

Cushman: Yes, true. Partly because it was large, of course, but I think primarily because so many able men came in that year. In fact, there were too many able men and there were those who easily could compete and surpass general officers of other years that I know. There just wasn't enough room to promote those who were qualified to be general officers, in my opinion.

Frank: The class of '35 was a viable crew. Quite a few of them are still living.

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes.

Frank: I remember, I went out to the reunion out in San Francisco in, what was it, '75? No, it can't be that long.

Cushman: Yes, they had one in '75. I couldn't go, but they had one.

Frank: That's right, I guess it must have been....

Cushman: Yes, yes. I went to the one, my 45th, which was 1980.

Frank: Where was that, out in Frisco, too?

Cushman: Yes, there was a lot of them left. We didn't lose

so many during the war for some reason or other. We were--we had a number wounded and some killed. We were battalion commander and division staff officer level, primarily--lieutenant colonels. So, we lost some that were battalion commanders and some got wounded and so on, but not a lot got killed. I don't think any way comparable to my classmates in the Navy who were aboard destroyers and submarines in the war and really got clobbered in those early battles out in the Solomons. I lost a lot of classmates out there in the Navy.

I think '35 was good for the Marine Corps, they really provided new blood and not only new blood, but blood from outside, you might say, the services--coming in from colleges and lot of them had good independent thinking and they were all gung-ho for the Marine Corps. It was a great crew.

Frank: At that time had you made up your mind that you wanted a career in the Marine Corps?

Cushman: Yes, yes. Yes, I used to say when I was a midshipman--you know, people going out when they had 30 years in, and I just said, "Well, we don't have to go out til we're 64. So, in my case, it all counts on 48 because I came in when I was 16, which is the way sort of the law went, I guess, in those days. But anyhow, yes, I wanted to make the Marine Corps a career and I always wanted to get as far as I could. Didn't want to sit on 30 or anything, I wanted to go as high as I possibly could.

Frank: I recall, at that time the head of Basic School was

Allen Hal Turnage.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: And both he and Mrs. Turnage were very good to the young lieutenants.

Cushman: Yes, they were very nice people. In fact, Turnage later became my division commander in 3d Marine Division. He was always--well, he could be tough, but he was pretty much of a Virginia gentleman, a nice guy all the way.

Frank: Mrs. Turnage was more or less adopted as a mother figure.

Cushman: Yes, I never really got to know her very well, but Wilson had been the aide--the recent Commandant, Lou Wilson--had been Turnage's aide when he, I guess his final tour out in Hawaii, and he got to know Mrs. Turnage very well, and some of our other classmates did, particularly those, I guess, who stayed on longer in Basic School. And they all kind of adopted her and took care of her. And as I recall, we had her over to the Commandant's house and that sort of thing. She was a nice lady. But, I only really knew her when she was quite old, and kind of hard to get to know.

Frank: Yes, she died this this year.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Who were some of the outstanding members of your class, Basic School class?

Cushman: Marine Corps we're talking about?

Frank: Yes, sir, Basic School.

Cushman: Well, Chapman made Commandant. Well, we had a lot of people that made general.

Frank: Jeff Fields, of course made three star.

Cushman: Yes. I was going to say, there's Jeff Fields, who came up from the ranks. Then you had from college, Nickerson and Youngdale...I get confused sometimes over who's in my class and who isn't because we had three segments. I was in the first segment and left after the summer. Then the second segment was there, I think, came in a month later. I knew them. Chappy, for example, was in there, Toots Henderson, whom I think is an outstanding guy. And then a third group came in and I never met them at school, and in some cases, I would run into them later, and in some cases never. There are some in that group I've never met.

Frank: Oh, really?

Cushman: Yes, that's true. Or if I have, only very fleeting, never served with them. But, gee, you just have to go down the list of generals--lets see, Youngdale I think was in the....

Frank: No, he's next year, he was '36.

Cushman: '36, yes. I always thought he was outstanding. Simpson.

Frank: Orm Simpson?

Cushman: He's either in '36 or that last part of...he went out after World War II, came back in. Anyway, he's an outstanding guy. I was going to say Henderson, who didn't make general, who I always thought should have as a shoo-in. I don't know what in the world...who he ran across gave him a bad deal. Another man I thought was extremely able, was Shelbourne and he got into the supply corps after World War II, in which he earned a Navy Cross in the the infantry, got into the supply business. I think he was in it before the war, got out so he could get into the infantry and back into supply, and he got so disgusted with the selection process in the supply corps in which the most incompetent characters one at a time would come up for brigadier and make it, he quit on 20. I told him he was a damned fool, and sure enough, the very next time up, they changed the system and picked the guy out of '36, one way down--for quartermaster general. In any event, he made a big success in business in Texas. And he was a very sharp guy and easily could have handled quartermaster general with his left hand.

Well, there are all kinds of guys that made colonel that are personal friends that I like. You probably have a handle on some of the general officers I'm trying to think of. I get

confused over whether in my class of '35 or whether in '36.

Frank: Well, '36 was a large class, too.

Cushman: Yes, they had a lot of generals, it seems to me.

Frank: How about the instructors, which of the instructors remain in your memory from Basic School?

Cushman: Oh, we had pretty fair instructors. I don't know if any of them made general or not.

Frank: Was Puller one of your instructors?

Cushman: Who?

Frank: Puller.

Cushman: No. I think he came later. Some of my other classmates may...no. We had Purple, Luther, we did have Twining on the rifle range who, of course, made general later on. But he was just running the pistol marksmanship...see, I just spent the summer, and all that was was weapons shooting. So I don't know who the instructors really were that took hold of the other guys and had to give them all the intellectual stuff. None of them really stand out except General Turnage, who was a fine commander, I thought, and ran the School very well.

Frank: Now, your first assignment was to China. Had you put in for it?

Cushman: Oh, I sure did, yes.

Frank: What was the reputation that China duty had at that time?

Cushman: Oh, just far away and different and appealing from a venturesome standpoint--and I enjoyed it. It turned out to be not so good for soldiering as far as in the field because you're in the middle of a big city, but we had marksmanship, hiking, all kinds of sports. I had one of my most interesting tours of duty there when I was ordered down to what was the sacred island of Putu to build a camp along with First Lieutenant Harland Cooper, who was the boss and I was the second, and then we had a sergeant--gunnery sergeant, I think it was--and a bunch of guys to do the work--Marines. And we set sail on an old steamer and it was about something like a five hour trip, I guess. And all of the boards and everything were on the deck. We got to this island and we had nobody who could speak Chinese, none of them could speak English. It was a sacred island owned by monks. The only way we could unload was to throw everything into the damn ocean and hope it washed ashore at the proper place. And we got off and finally hiked over to where we had thrown everything over and got it squared away and started building. And we finally, after a couple of weeks, got it built and this is the place where Headquarters, 4th Marines was going to send a platoon every couple of weeks just to get out of Shanghai and get a little different

experience, and go fishing, you know, this kind of stuff.

Frank: Fresh air.

Cushman: Fresh air, yes, it didn't stink quite so bad. But as soon as we got it built, the damned war started in 1937 between the Japanese and the Chinese, so we went back post-haste and that was the end. I guess it just rotted away. But, it was a very interesting little few weeks to spend.

Frank: Yes, all by yourself.

Cushman: Yes, in a world so different, it was just unimaginable. I enjoyed the duty there, as I say, there was a lot of athletics, a lot things to do--you had the race course, we used to go bowling at the Columbia Country Club, every young lieutenant had to coach a sport. Mine was B Squad basketball and swimming, plus qualifying all the Marines that sank like rocks--had to qualify them to be a swimmer third class, or something like that. Of course, as a bachelor, girls by the hundreds and places to go, things to do. I think I mentioned the horse races, Jai-Alai, and all this sort of thing. We kept busy from early in the morning, 7:30, until about 1:30, as I recall. And then the lieutenants--other people would go home--lieutenants had to take over all the athletics, of which there were a lot, and do the coaching and playing and so on. And along about 4:30, everything was finished. We did have, of course, a very exciting, to me anyway, campaign starting,

gee, I think it was August 7, 1937 when the Japanese attacked the Chinese along in the Shanghai area and we had to man positions along Soochow Creek and stayed there for several months. All the fighting raged back and forth and we'd get the overs and the shorts from Japanese naval gunfire, and the city behind us would catch all the air-strikes that went wrong. So, it was rather an exciting time, a lot of bullets flying around, but Marines didn't get hurt. I don't think a single Marine got wounded.

Frank: That's lucky.

Cushman: Yes, yes, we were lucky.

Frank: It was a good life, good social life.

Cushman: Yes, yes. And I guess for the married people, too. They seemed to enjoy it. And as I say, bachelors just had a ball. We were members of the French Club, Columbia Country Club. There were American Navy juniors and Marine juniors, and then there were Russian girls and international community girls--English girls. Not too many French girls that I recall. Anyway, no lack of dates for bachelor lieutenants.

Frank: Were you able to live on your salary?

Cushman: Oh, sure. We made lots of money (laughter). The exchange rate was something like six to one. And I recall that I got over $600 a month Mex, as they called it, Chinese dollars,

and most dollars would go about as far as an American dollar. So, we were getting way over our second lieutenant's salary in terms of buying power than if we'd been in the States. And then, lieutenants usually lived together. Shelburne and myself shared had apartment with a roof garden and we had a car, we had servants, no problem. And all the other bachelor lieutenants sort of paired-off--Nickerson and I think Funk and Totman and he had a roommate--they'd all get an apartment and chip in on the rent, the food, and the cook.

Frank: Glen Funk was in your....

Cushman: Yes, he was there in Shanghai. Eventually they sent, during the expedition I was talking about, sent the 6th Marines out and a whole host of other young officers came out with that--Lew Walt, I think Bruno Hochmuth. He was a classmate that was a fine officer. I always liked him. He had met an untimely death in Vietnam.

Frank: Yes, he did.

Cushman: And Ray Murray and Tommy Tompkins, a lot of them came out with the 6th Marines as I now recall.

Frank: I thought I saw a picture of Lew Walt or it may have been Ray Murray.

Cushman: And they got up football games and rugby games and everything else. So, we had a very vigorous time, both

athletically and to a certain extent professionally. A lot of shooting, marksmanship and so on.

Frank: You went out to the Japanese, to the....

Cushman: Yes, Chinese rifle range in Japanese territory, as I recall. We had Chinese work on the butts with Marine supervision and we'd go out and do our marksmanship and then they had a rifle team. I used to be working trying to get on that. Not that I had an illusions I was going to be a big winner, but it was one way to get to Peking. If you got on the local Shanghai team, then you went up to Peking and got in the matches up there and then the winners would go to the west coast matches.

Frank: You didn't get up to Peking at all during your stay?

Cushman: No, my next try was the B Squad basketball team was going to go up there and I was the coach, but the war broke out between the Japanese, Chinese. You couldn't go anywhere.

But, as I say, professionally it left something to be desired in the fact there was no field training particularly, but there was a lot of hiking, a lot of school, weapons training, all that kind of stuff. And so I thought it was pretty good, particularly, since then we had this incursion by the Japanese and we had to write five-paragraph orders and get out and construct field fortifications and all kinds of stuff, and actually with a few bullets flying around. So, it was professionally rewarding, it wasn't just all a picnic, and I enjoyed

it. In fact, I put in to go up to Tientsin when the Marines were supposed to relieve the Army up there, but the adjutant threw me out and said I was Asiatic enough the way I was.

Frank: Did you have anything to do with the SVC, Shanghai Volunteer Corps? Did you know any of the officers?

Cushman: Oh, well I can't remember them. Yes, they used to furnish a basketball team, it seems to me, that would raise hell with us. Also, there were I think the same people, young Americans that worked in the banks, the tobacco companies and so on out there--young businessmen, Americans--who were just recently out of college and full of vinegar and pep, and they would play basketball against us and they did a lot of athletic stuff like that. In their role in the Shanghai Volunteer Corps, no, I didn't know them. There were Marines on right and left of me, so I never got to get out on the flank. I think the Welsh Fusiliers were on our right and up on the left were the Italians or somebody like that. Anyway, I never got to know any of them.

Frank: Didn't socialize with any of them?

Cushman: Not particularly, no. I'd run into them here and there. Some of the fellows did socialize with them, particularly, the ones that were in the same athletic league got to know each other fairly well.

Frank: Did you get transferred to the 6th Marines while they were still out there?

Cushman: Yes, well, yes, everybody whose tour was up did because the 6th Marines went on home and I went on home with them. I'd been there, yes, two years with the tour. I'd been there two years so I was due to go home and they just shoveled everybody into the 6th Marines. And we went on home and had a landing operation in the Hawaiian Islands on route.

Frank: Oh, really?

Cushman: Yes. Boy, that was one of the old timers in these damned motor launches, you know, with a prow and everything--never made for a landing. So you just go, you grounded out somewhere 50 yards from the beach and jump in. Sometimes your hat floated and sometimes you made it.

Frank: Shades of Tarawa.

Cushman: Yes, it was something else, but we went through it. And I'll never forget, I had to land, with the company I was in, and nothing but thorn bushes all over the doggone beaches. You couldn't get anywhere without just tearing yourself to pieces.

Frank: Where was the landing held at?

Cushman: I think Maui. I know we anchored in Lahaina Road. Yes, I think it was Maui.

Frank: Yes, you left China on the Chaumont and then you left Hawaii on the Utah which is out of Lahaina Roads.

Cushman: Yes, but the island we landed on, I think, was Maui. Probably doesn't show on that.

Frank: No, it doesn't.

Cushman: Oh, another thing we had to do in China was correspondence courses. All of people that graduated from Basic School after only ten weeks had to take a tremendous amount of correspondence courses. And, you know, always fighting the last war, we had to take Spanish because of the experience in Central America by the Marines. So, we had to take Spanish by correspondence and then all kinds of strategy, tactics, military law, and I don't know what all. So that was a burden, but I guess it was worthwhile. I can't say I have any command of Spanish.

Frank: Of course, you had to take PX accounting, too.

Cushman: Yes, yes, right.

Frank: Now, the experience in China was good for a young officer wasn't it....

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: ...in the sense that you might have had independent command or....

Cushman: No, it was regular regimental organization. Yes, boy,

I was a platoon leader and I had another platoon leader senior to me, first lieutenant. And the third platoon leader was an old-time gunnery sergeant who knew more than the rest of us put together--about his fourth China tour--and he'd been in all the campaigns in Haiti and Nicaragua. I'm going back to about 1912. And the company commander was a fairly old-timer. They were all Nicaraguan veterans. And we still had some World War I veterans. The adjutant was a captain who was World War I--and number of them were battlefield commissions. The battalion commander was Ross Winans, who was a Medal of Honor winner at....

Frank: Haiti? [Dominican Republic]

Cushman: ...when he was a first sergeant, I think it was. But anyway, it was just a regular regimental organization. So, there wasn't any independent command, really.

Frank: Well, what I meant, okay, except for the platoon exercises. But, I was thinking for a young lieutenant just out of Basic School, the temptations that he could have fallen prey to in China were great.

Cushman: Well, that's part of the game. Either you overcome that or you don't, and I would say it's a good preparation for independent command in that you do have a lot of temptations, extracurricular type and you just had to learn to handle them or not participate--one or the other. Most of them out there participated on a moderate scale, you know. Some didn't, but

most of them did. After all, if you are only 21 or 22, there is a lot of forgiveness in your biological system the next morning that you don't have later on.

Frank: Yes, yes. Who commanded the 4th Marines out there at this time?

Cushman: Charles F.B. Price.

Frank: Oh, sure, yes.

Cushman: And then later coming along with he 6th was Brigadier General Johnny Beaumont.

End Side 1, Tape 1, Session II

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session II

Cushman: ...and I was running into my first campaign and got a campaign ribbon for it. That really stands out, I think. When I was out there, the Panay was sunk and there was a great hew and cry in the States which we hoped would not cause a war to start since there were 15,000 of us and about 150,000 Japanese within hand grenade range.

But, I learned a lot, you know, handling men and seeing what it was like not to be under fire, but even if it's accidental, it can kill you just as easily as if they're aiming at you. So, there was that, being under fire, seeing--well, the area we were in underwent air raids, not against us as troops but against the whole damned area. So, there was a lot

of experience that I gained there. And I found it did me in good stead when I became a young battalion commander during World War II and had all kinds of troops and I was trying to get ready to go into battle and they had never been and never heard a shot fired in anger, and I was able to give a little education and step out as the experienced man who had heard a few shots fired in anger and this sort of thing. So, it helped me to that extent.

Frank: Was there any perception when you were out in China that the United States would have to go to war with Japan?

Cushman: Oh, well, it didn't look very good. Much more perception when I was aboard ship....

Frank: Later.

Cushman: ...yes, in 1941 in Pearl Harbor. But, the Japanese were arrogant, they knocked off the Panay and in effect, told us to go to hell. It would get so you'd walk down the street and they'd push you off with a bayonet, off the sidewalk, women, anybody white. It was pretty evident that they were going to have to be dealt with, but whether, you know, whether we were going to go to war or not, it wasn't all that clear why we would. Here we were 8,000 miles away and it was almost impossible to get along with them, but we really didn't belong there anymore than they did. So, to that extent it wasn't self-evident we were going to have a war until later when they

started to really push--but just pushing on the streets of Shanghai and fighting the Chinese, you know, you just couldn't tell how the politics of it would interact.

Frank: There is an apocryphal story told that after World War II when you and most of your class were lieutenant colonels sitting around in Waller Hall, Quantico and they--you were not involved, I don't believe--estimated that the period of time that the Commandant served was such that one would be picked out of your class. And they came up with three names, yours, Chappy's, and Paul Henderson's. Had you ever heard anything like this?

Cushman: No, no, never had. At the time, of course, I wasn't really in contact with any classmates. I was on duty for a short time in San Diego when we got back, just long enough to take promotion exams. I think I'm the only modern character that has had to take two promotion exams, anyway, promotion exam to first lieutenant, and the studying that went with it. And then off I went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Frank: Right, August of '38.

Cushman: Yes, and from there--I didn't do much duty there, a few months as I recall--and was ordered down to the Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia. So, there just weren't any classmates around and I wasn't hanging around Quantico, obviously, so I never heard that. And if they said it, it never leaked

around very much I don't think or I probably would have heard it second hand.

Frank: It was an interesting conjecture.

Cushman: Yes. Two out of three isn't bad.

Frank: No, two out of three is not bad.

Cushman: It shows you what people thought of Toots Henderson. And as I say, why he didn't make brigadier I will never know, never. He doesn't know either. I guess it really hurt him.

Frank: Well, I think he has a pretty good idea.

Cushman: Oh, well, maybe he did something that, you know.

Frank: No, nothing he did, it was just the friends and enemies that he had, this type of thing.

Cushman: Oh, oh. Well, he's kind of outspoken, but his ability was so evident.

Frank: One other question while I think about it. Were you the youngest battalion commander in World War II or was Donn Robertson?

Cushman: Well, I don't know Donn's age. Of course, I was the youngest guy in the class because I got commissioned when I was 20 and they weren't allowed to commission from colleges unless they were 21. The Naval Academy was different. Now it's in

line, 21 at the Naval Academy. I was also the senior 2d lieutenant in Basic School, and had to march these guys around every now and then, which was fun. Anyhow, I was 27, I think, when I got to be a battalion commander. It was in New Zealand, I was exec, the battalion commander was named Hankins, a reservist on active duty.

Frank: Was that Joe Hankins?

Cushman: Yes, rifle shot.

Frank: Rifle shot, right.

Cushman: And he got promoted and sent over to the 1st Division where he later got killed by sniper.

Frank: Peleliu.

Cushman: And lets see, I took over while we were still in New Zealand, that was '43. So, I was 28, I guess it was. I was 27 when I made lieutenant colonel, I think it was. My birthday is the day before Christmas, so I had a birthday while I was on Bougainville, which I think was almost the end of '43.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: Yes, and my birthday then was 29. I'll never forget they had a damned earthquake that day.

Frank: Oh, really, on Bougainville?

Cushman: Oh, God, it was awful, the huge trees just going like this (gestures with hand). If there had been any habitation anywhere, you know....

Frank: I didn't hear that.

Cushman: Yes, tremendous thing.

Frank: Well, when you got back to the States, you came back with 2/6, you came back on the east coast, 2d Battalion, 6th Marines.

Cushman: Yes, right.

Frank: Then you were assigned to the Marine Barracks in Brooklyn. What was that, to pick up a detachment?

Cushman: No, I was just one of the officers in the detachment. They had a colonel who was the CO, old time colonel. God, I can't even remember his name now. And they had a wild man there, a first lieutenant, and he was second in command, they had an old timer as the quartermaster, Paul Watson, I think his name was. Anyway, this guy that had the post exchange--and I relieved him--he later was killed, I think, on Bougainville. Oh, he was a wild Irishman, when I opened up the damned post exchange cash register it was stuffed with all these no good checks and bouncing paper lying around. Oh, God, anyway, I got that thing straightened out. Somehow or another, he didn't get a court martial, all he got was under hack or something like that. And

I wasn't there very long when I guess they needed another lieutenant down at....

Frank: Portsmouth, or Norfolk.

Cushman: ...Portsmouth. Yes, well, it's in Portsmouth and they called it the Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth, Virginia, very confusing. So, I ended up there. In fact, that's where I met my wife. And stayed there until I went up to the New York World's Fair for two years.

Frank: Yes, I want to hear about that.

Cushman: Yes, the Navy Yard duty, except for meeting my wife, is strictly like all Navy Yard duty--honor guard, stand the duty, parade, and survey boards, endlessly, and you know, all that administrative stuff. So, Navy Yard duty is not much fun. Duty came up about every third night or something like that, you know.

Frank: Norfolk, what was Norfolk like in those days? I understand they used to have signs, "Dogs and sailors, keep off the grass," or things like that.

Cushman: Well, I don't know. You hear that about San Diego. I'd never really seen any of those signs, but it's true as it was in San Diego before the war, military were not highly regarded by parents of nubile daughters. So, the same was true in Porstmouth in Norfolk. But, as an officer, didn't have too

much trouble, little bit different.

Frank: Where did you meet Audrey?

Cushman: Well, one of my roommates in the BOQ was named George Britt, who is now a retired colonel over in Vienna and he was going with Audrey's sister, and I made some silly remark like, "Are there anymore at home like you?" And there was, and I got introduced and we started dating and I guess about two years later we got married.

Frank: You had your probation time in, of course.

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes, that was over in two years. Yes, by the time I got married, I had five years in. I was about 25.

Frank: Now, you went up to New York to set up Camp Washington.

Cushman: Yes. First went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and one platoon of troops reported in there and a couple of officers. As I recall, I operated out of the yard for the dedication of the Fair, the opening of the Fair.

Frank: Were you CO of the detachment?

Cushman: At that time. And then they got the camp built, it was going up all the time, but as soon as it was completed--I think it was only a few weeks after I'd been there--then the whole outfit formed up. It was a composite battalion of Army,

Navy and Marines. And the overall commander was an Army guy, full colonel who later made BG. And the CO of the Marine detachment, I guess they called it--it was actually a battalion of two companies--was Campbell, who never did anything in the war and retired and is now dead.

Frank: Wasn't an aviator, Harold Campbell?

Cushman: No, no, no. He just had a most unremarkable Marine career. World War I was spent in the Virgin Islands, and I never heard of him til he was in the battalion--he was a very fine looking gentleman. He was not overburdened with zealousness for work, but he got along with the people there that he had to get along with and then World War II came along and he made full colonel--he was a lieutenant colonel with us--and he sort of had some terrible limp and he couldn't go to combat or some damned thing. So, I don't know.

Frank: Who were some of the other officers in the Marine detachment?

Cushman: Irving Jordon, pronounced the same way Carter's character pronounced his name--spelled Jordon. Irving Jordon, he was a southerner from, I believe, Virginia--Tidewater. He was the exec. I was there--it somewhat changed in between the two years. Shelburne was the quartermaster to begin with. Let see, Joe Tschirgi was--I guess, yes, that was the first year, I was the company commander the second year. I can't remember who

the--oh, oh, Lyman, E.L. Lyman was there.

Frank: Was that General Lyman's son?

Cushman: No, no relation to him, no relation. Rough as a cob, retired as a colonel, courtesy BG, I think, tombstone. A lot of young officers, we had Stonebanks, who just died about a week ago--two weeks ago. We had Jean Moreau who lost his leg later at Okinawa. And we had Taul, T-A-U-L.

Frank: Oh, Jim Taul.

Cushman: Yes, he was there. Mason, Spike Mason and about four of five others all about a year or two junior to me as I recall, make it three years junior to me.

Frank: Were the enlisted Marines hand-picked?

Cushman: What?

Frank: Were the enlisted Marines hand-picked?

Cushman: Yes, yes, and they were fine, fine guys. We just had a reunion this summer.

Frank: Oh, did you?

Cushman: Yes, yes, and they're still around, quite a few of them. And most of them went out after World War II, so some of them are pretty well-to-do businessmen, others are not well to do but happy--was a good group.

Frank: What was the nature of your duties?

Cushman: Parade, parade, parade. If you weren't parading, you were practicing and if you weren't doing that, you were shining gear. So, it was not rewarding militarily, but it sure was rewarding as a real plum duty job, you know. So many things to do at the fair. It was fun as a bachelor, second year I was married, it was fun as a married--young married couple.

Frank: Did you live in the Fair grounds?

Cushman: As a bachelor, yes. We had tents and we finally got them declared unsuitable quarters, so we got paid quarters allowance and lived free in the tent. There was some hardship involved, it got awfully cold in October, and we had gas heaters and this kind of stuff. We had white pants furnished by the government and laundered by the government to go with our blues. Good food in the mess hall, as I say, we lived right in the Fair grounds...we went back this summer and visited the site which is a park right back on the shore of the lake.

Frank: Lake Success.

Cushman: Yes, it was great. Oh, gee, the troops, they'd wear their blues and nobody could pay for a drink anywhere in the whole damned camp, I mean in the whole Fair ground. After they'd seen the parade, why the customers would buy every Marine they saw a beer at the bar.

Frank: Well, I remember seeing it when I went to the Fair as a kid. They're quite spectatcular.

Cushman: Yes, fancy silent drill, well, I was there, first lieutenant.

Frank: That was another reason for my joining the Marine Corps.

Cushman: We figured it would be good recruiting.

Frank: It was, it was.

Cushman: That was a very interesting tour, but of course, as I say, all you did was parade, shine, parade, drill, practice.

Frank: Well, it was almost two years, a year and a half. Next, you went to the Marine Barracks in October of '40.

Cushman: Yes, yes, Marine Barracks, Quantico.

Frank: Did you leave your wife--did you have quarters down there?

Cushman: I'm trying to think. Yes, yes we did. This was a short term tour, really. From the end of the Fair war clouds--well, there was already war in Europe and so war clouds being around, Marine Corps ordered all reservists to be trained and get ready to go in case the United States got into the war. So, we set up in Quantico under Colonel Campbell, the Reserve Training Center. There were all these people just getting out of the Fair, so they had a block of good talent to work with.

And I think I was the assistant S-3 under Red Holtscomb.

Frank: Holtscomb?

Cushman: Yes, a guy from--an old-timer from Minnesota, Holtscomb. Wait, wait, wait, Holdahl, Red Holdahl.

Frank: H-O-L-D-A-H-L.

Cushman: Yes, yes. Holdahl, "hold all mail for Holdahl" was his famous message in Nicaragua. And other than that, I guess no claim to fame, except as a linguist. I think he knew all the Scandahuvian languages, came out of Minnesota. As I say, he's an old-timer, came in about World War I--nice guy but disinclined to do anything in terms of work. Consequently, the old assistant, which was myself, got invaluable experience because I became in effect the S-3, training officer and one thing and another for all these--I guess it was thousands--reservists that poured in there and went through a course of sprouts.

Frank: These are all officer training?

Cushman: Yes, I think. Yes, I think they were.

Frank: Yes, I believe they were.

Cushman: Yes, I couldn't remember whether they came with their battalions...oh, Lord. I think it probably was officer, yes, because in those days I don't think they had the acreage even in

Quantico.

Frank: No, they didn't.

Cushman: So, it would be an officer's deal. And that didn't last long. I made captain and got ordered to command the Marine detachment on the USS Pennsylvania.

Frank: Who did you relieve?

Cushman: "Big Foot" Brown.

Frank: I was just going to ask you, had you.

Cushman: And that was a relief, I mean, I got there, reported aboard, and old Brown says, "It's all yours, there's nowhere to go but up. I'll see you." And down the gangplank he went, and I didn't see him for three damned days, in the meanwhile, of course, there was the biggest tangle of an inventory, all kinds of stuff missing and he couldn't care less and I taxed him with this and told him I'm not going to say it's here when it isn't. So, he didn't give a damn. And it turned out that the Marines had had the worst short range battle practice of any battleship anywhere ever since the Armada. Not only that, but "Big Foot" Brown--I hadn't known this--had gone to the Naval Academy, he didn't finish.

Frank: He bilged out.

Cushman: Yes, but he was classmates with and senior to as a mid-

shipman with a number of naval officers, one of whom was the ship's exec. So, he still put himself in the place of first classman with the exec being down here somewhere, whereas, the exec had four strips--I mean, three stripes. And old "Big Foot" was a major. So, they just clashed all the time and it's a wonder he didn't get under hack--maybe he did. Anyhow, he bore me no ill will and he couldn't care less about all the problems. And as he said, "You've got nowhere to go but up. I'm leaving you a beautiful opportunity."

Frank: He had a prize winning cutter crew, didn't he?

Cushman: I don't know. I don't recall that. And we never got into cutter racing because the war was too close, and we just worked our fannies off at training. Savvie Cook was the skipper, later a four star admiral and he was the most rancid son-of-a-bitch I've ever served with, I think. I never saw him smile and he looked like he'd just eaten a rotten pickle. The only other guy I ever served under that was like that was "Long John" Henley down in the Norfolk Navy Yard, Portsmouth. He too never smiled and life was just a thing of sour pickles to him all the time. Same with Savvie Cook. And I crossed swords with both of them a couple of times, and you can't win.

Frank: Now, what were you all doing?

Cushman: We trained. We went out to sea two weeks and back in one. Out at sea two weeks we trained night and day under war-

time conditions--lights out and all the rest of it. When we got back in port, we just worked over the ship, continued to train. There was a very tough existence, but very good. I mean, it's what we should have been doing. And as a consequence, at least our ship, we were ready on the 7th of December, although, in dry dock, and we fired back at the attacking aircraft and all hands were at their battle stations and so on. So, the old tough skipper, you know, that's what he should have been doing, just what he did. And I have nothing against that, I just didn't like his personality.

In any event, I left my wife back on the west coast and I was glad I did because not only was I a little afraid of war, but she was pregnant and I didn't like the hospital facilities out there which weren't much at that time. And as it turned out, it was very smart and lucky. Our training schedule was such nobody ever got home to speak of. Well, the one week we're in port they get home, you know, late at night and on the weekend but that was it.

Frank: Let's see...you were at Pearl 24 to 30 so...what were you, sailing out of Long Beach?

Cushman: No, we were stationed--they moved the fleet to Pearl Harbor.

Frank: Oh, they moved the whole fleet, that's when they moved it.

Cushman: Yes, that'd been done before I got there. I guess it was highly controversial.

Frank: Yes. Where did you join it?

Cushman: At Pearl.

Frank: At Pearl.

Cushman: Yes, I rode a tender or something, you know, that was on the west coast on route to Pearl and I hopped aboard. You know how the orders go, "Proceed and wherever you shall find her...."

Frank: Yes. Was there any feeling of sense of imminent war on the ship?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. We were training all this hard for one thing. Second, the newspapers in Honolulu kept saying, you know, "It's going to happen this weekend, war is going to start." They discovered, it seems to me, here and there, submarine contact, and actually a midget submarine, I think was in....

Frank: One finally made it through.

Cushman: Yes. There was, at least as far as I was concerned there was a feeling, you know, that we were going to be in it. Now, what was a surprise, of course, was the attack on the ships right there at Pearl. We thought it would be, maybe, a clash at sea relating to the movement down to Southeast Asia

Frank: Yes, I was just about to ask you.

Cushman: Yes. And I also unloaded on him about teaching lieutenants how to be lieutenants under battlefield conditions.

Frank: Were you having problems with the young lieutenants coming out there?

Cushman: The problem I was having was not lack of courage or lack of technical and tactical knowledge, but lack of knowledge of leadership principles. They just couldn't be tough when it was required, but they were tired and the men were tired. For example, one of the troubles we had with the M-16 rifle was that it had to be kept clean and it was unforgiving. However, the lieutenants felt so sorry for the troops that they wouldn't make them clean those weapons when everybody was pooped out and the battle was over. They weren't tough enough when they had to be. They were just too kind hearted, which never works out.

Frank: Lost lives.

Cushman: Yes, that's right. So, I unloaded on Jimmy Masters about that, too, and things got better.

Frank: Did the Marines have any role in the Phoenix program that you know of?

Cushman: That was the controversial program leading to the elimination of the infrastructure. Yes, we tried to get the

enemy supporting personnel and headquarters, and we were successful in getting a lot of them. We kept a chart and as we were able to discover who the individuals, we put them in an organization chart that we were able to construct. Then, we'd scratch one off the chart whenever we killed or caught him.

All the controversy seemed to be directed at the Saigon level. I think Ambassador Bill Colby caught a lot of flak over it from the media and all the peacenik do-gooders back in the U.S. screaming and hollering about it. Of course, if we could capture them we would, if not, we'd shoot them as they were resisting, which ordinarily the did. They usually had a weapon even though they were not in uniform. They were Viet Cong village chiefs, for instance, and important to the enemy. If he put up any resistance, he was going to become a casualty. It never bothered me ethically or morally, and I don't know why it bothered anyone. But we never received any criticism over it.

It was not a big thing. We'd try to round up everybody within a big circle and squeeze; those causght were mostly armed Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. But, some would be infrastructure. We'd capture them and turn them over to the ARVN. If they wouldn't surrender, if they resisted, why, they'd get shot.

Frank: Talking about Phoenix.... Talking about the Phoenix program, I understand that when the agency personnel left

that the Japs were making at that time, and which Roosevelt was screaming about, they were going down to Thailand--I mean, to Singapore, Malaya, and so on. And as I recall, their ships and forces were on the move. And this is where we thought things would happen.

Frank: But, you would go out from Pearl for the week?

Cushman: Two weeks at a crack.

Frank: Two weeks at a crack?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. And we'd stand at general quarters, black the ship out, just one exercise after another.

Frank: Alright, now one of the things we skipped, no we didn't, we talked about Quantico about the training.

Cushman: Yes, and as I say, it didn't last long, just from the fall of 1940 until I went to sea duty six months later or eight months later.

Frank: Now, exactly where were you and what were you doing when the attack came that Sunday?

Cushman: Well, I was, of course, batching it. My wife having stayed on the west coast to have our baby, first one. And I had played poker til about midnight or one o'clock in one of the officer's staterooms.

Frank: You lived aboard ship?

of Marines, about a third of the detachment, was killed or wounded that morning. So, they really hit the two destroyers. We got hits on the side of the drydock and the one right on us. And then I don't know how many, probably several bombs hit the two destroyers. So, all of a sudden, gee, those things started blowing up and on fire and bullets and crap flying everywhere. And all we could do was just sit there, and we didn't catch fire, we didn't have many problems but the casualties. However, all lights were out down below and there was some panic in the darkness down in the engine room gang and some of that wasn't very nice, but we got that cooled down. And then, it seemed all of a sudden the attack was over, of course, it actually went on all morning til about 11 o'clock, I guess. And we managed, I say we, the ships around including us managed to shoot down three or four aircraft. We got off a cheer when they went down.

And of course, there was a melancholy scene because there must have been several battleships just bottoms up and luckily no aircraft carriers were in. And of course, there were rumors everywhere, Jap paratroops landing and all this stuff. Anyhow, the day finally went away and we started licking our wounds, cleaning up and the repair people from the base went to work getting the propellers on and getting us out of drydock. And I think in about ten days we were out of drydock and heading for San Francisco where we pulled into Hunters Point Navy Yard and had antiaircraft batteries, additional ones, put on, that new-

fangled radar put on and things like that.

Frank: Oh, really? Yes.

Cushman: And stayed there getting refitted, I don't know, a couple of months, and then I think I went out to sea a couple of times as they worked their way back into getting ready to join the fleet, and then about that time I got orders to San Diego.

Frank: San Diego, right. You were detached in April.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: What did you do, go back by aircraft or boat?

Cushman: Oh, no. I was in San Francisco, I don't know how I got down to....

Frank: Oh, you were in San Francisco, that's right, you were at Hunters Point at that time.

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes, I was in San Francisco. Well, we'd gotten out of the Navy Yard, I think, by that time.

Frank: Yes, you had. Who was your junior officer? Did you have one or two of them?

Cushman: Oh, gees. I had one I never saw again, Cooper, or was it Cooper? Anyway, I did have a Cooper who was pistol shot and he retired pretty early and is in the handgun business

and so on. His name was Cooper. Gee, I had a red-headed guy, and as I say, I never saw him again. He was a lieutenant and he left soon after I got aboard. And then I had another one--oh, damn-it. He stayed in the Marine Corps, I ran across him every now and then. Well, I can't think of it.

Frank: Okay. The 9th Marines were just being formed down at Camp Pendleton when you joined them.

Cushman: Yes. That was an interesting thing. I went in to report in to the adjutant--the 6th Marines had already come back from Iceland.

Frank: Yes, they had.

Cushman: So, they were forming a 2d Division and a 3d Division. They had the 6th Marines there and the 9th Marines. And my classmate, Arnie Johnston, was the adjutant. I walked in and he said, "Where do you want to go, the 6th Marines, 9th Marines? I can send you either way." So, I said, "Well, I know of Colonel Shepherd's record, I want to go with Colonel Shepherd." So, I went to the 9th Marines. So, it always occurred to me, just that little thing made, instead of going to Tarawa, I went to the other island. Who knows how you make out.

Frank: Yes, yes, that's interesting.

Cushman: How it might influence your life and death.

Frank: What if.

Cushman: And I went to the 9th Marines and reported in to Colonel Shepherd, and I was his adjutant for awhile and then just bounced around all over the place as they were forming up. I was in every battalion, you know, in period of two weeks or something like that, it seemed like. I had a weapons company in one battalion, then I was exec a couple of times, then I was a 3, and I finally ended up as Executive Officer of the 2d Battalion 9th Marines and settled in and we went overseas that way and later I became the commander.

Frank: You took over command of the battalion in June of 1943. I guess you were over in New Zealand at that time.

Cushman: Yes, we were in New Zealand, right, right.

Frank: What kind of preparations and training for combat did you undertake?

Cushman: Well, that was my strength, I guess, anyway, I always enjoyed it and worked like hell at it--the training. I was a firm believer in whoever it was said, "The battles are won on the training ground or in cricket fields of....

Frank: Eton.

Cushman: ...Eton or something. Anyhow, the training, of course, when I had a company, I just attended the training of that. But, whether I was the exec or the S-3 in these various battalions, I churned out training notes and things trying to

get more realistic training and more efficient use of time, space, all that. I just loved to work on those things. And when I fianlly got command of the 2d Battalion, 9th Marines, we were overseas, and had all kinds of space and everything to train in, then we went up to Guadalcanal and settled in for training to get ready to go to Bougainville. And I trained every squad, I wrote it all out and developed it, trained every squad in how to reduce a pillbox or bunker without having to call on anybody. You were supposed to call on them if they were there, but in those days you couldn't always expect air support and it wasn't as good as it got later and you could not always even get artillery fire. Oh, I trained them to use the bazooka, the machine gun, the pole charge and every squad was run through numerous times knocking out pillboxes and bunkers because it was already evident that's what we'd have to face everywhere. And I got through Bougainville with very few casualties, so this training--and I kept it up--proved very valuable in Guam where we met a lot of it. Guam, I suppose, I only had about half left, and had to do it all over again for Iwo Jima where it really proved valuable even though we had mostly the supporting arms we needed at that point. And then we trained in jungle warfare. We even figured there'd be some combat in built-up areas in Guam and we worked on that. But, I always concentrated on training, no matter what job I had. And I think it paid off.

Frank: How would you differentiate or characterize the troops

that you had say in the war as opposed to the enlisted Marines that were prewar?

Cushman: They were much different in one respect. Prewar I had men in my platoon in China about two just out of 30 people couldn't sign their name and had to make an X on the payroll. And some of them were real tough cookies, children of the streets in the Depression. But, they were not rebellious of authority--well, they'd go out a get drunk and they'd punch somebody and so on, but when the officers spoke to them, why you didn't get much sass or anything out of any of them ever. And they were sort of thankful to have a job and loyal to the Marine Corps and country and made damned good fighters. During the war we got in through the draft and one thing or another, we got in a very high-class group of people--college graduates in the ranks sometimes, and so on. And occasionally...of course, they were highly intelligent, a lot of them, and so you'd have more explaining to do and there'd be more comprehension on the other side. It wasn't so much kicking them in the ass, you had to provide some incentives and so on and some of it was cerebral, mental. So, it was different, but the physical fitness was probably a little bit better or at least as good, certainly. And their patriotism was unquestioned because of the war--World War II generated that kind of patriotism and support--had no problem with that.

Korea I missed, Vietnam, of course, we had the problems we know about.

Frank: Now, you received the Navy Cross on Guam, did you not?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: What were the circumstances surrounding the award?

Cushman: Well, we had pushed the Japanese partially off a hill called Fonte Hill, and in so doing, we killed a couple of battalions but there were others left who decided to push a counterattack. And they did so and caught us just as we finished our successful battle and were trying to reorganize and get squared away, they hit us. My foxhole was quite close to the front lines, I could see them coming. I'll never forget, I stood up with my damned carbine and pushed the wrong button and the goddamned magazine fell out instead of the safety going off, but I got that fixed in a hurry. And I had one platoon in reserve, so I got the platoon and together we went up to where these guys were coming at us through a small gap, put the platoon in position and we defeated the enemy attack and got squared away, reorganized. That was really their last gasp on Fonte Hill. We still had to dig some out of caves and one thing and another, out of the jungle, but that was about the last gasp.

That same day, that same morning Lou Wilson had been up there all night long, he had a company, and so for that series of events plus his part and his troop stopping this counterattack, he ended up with the Medal of Honor. I recommended him for it, he got the Navy Cross, and then they changed their mind, took

that away from him and gave him a Medal of Honor.

Frank: That's right, he was in your battalion.

Cushman: Yes, he had a company, right. In fact, I was walking between him and a lieutenant going over toward his company and the lieutenant got hit in the foot and instead of hollering about it, he said, "Boy, I'm on the way home." That was his second wound, which was the rule.

Frank: Yes, that's right.

Cushman: Two wounds and you go home. So, they missed me, hit him, and gave him a free ticket home. But, those days were full of hard fighting, but the Marines were in just wonderful fashion.

Frank: Did you find any difference in the fighting on Bougainville, aside from the terrain and he climate--the difference in the quality of the enemy?

Cushman: Well, no, because we just hit small outfits. The heavy fighting was done by, I think, the 3d Marines and to some extent the 21st Marines. We landed way over on the left, eventually, tied in with Army troops.

Frank: On Bougainville?

Cushman: Yes, on Bougainville--when we got way up on the ridge and the Army came in and....

Frank: And relieved you.

Cushman: ...we were the left flank. And they just didn't have much over there. We were the furthest from--we were at Torokina Point where the hardest fighting went on--the airfield was put in. So, we spent our time fighting the damnned swamps and mud and crap and now and then an enemy patrol, enemy small point, something like that, a strong point, something like that but never a set piece battle. And we finally set up our lines. I think we had to fight off an attack or two, but I couldn't compare. In Guam we really hit some rough going with the enemy. So, to answer your question, I don't know whether there was a great difference in quality. There may have been, but you'd have to ask the 3d Marines who fought them both.

Frank: You managed do keep your battalion nearly two years. That was unusual, wasn't it?

Cushman: Yes, I kept it til I went home. Well, most people got shot, particularly on Iwo, and I never did. I was just lucky, so I managed to keep the battalion the whole time....

End Side 2, Tape 1

Begin Tape 2, Side 1, Session II

Frank: Who was your regimental commander?

Cushman: On Iwo?

Frank: On Bougainville.

Cushman: Oh, on Bougainville, Craig.

Frank: Oh, that's right, Eddy Craig.

Cushman: Eddy Craig, marvelous guy. And then he was relieved by a lawyer, Howard Kenyon.

Frank: Oh, Red Kenyon.

Cushman: Yes, who had sort of, I think, insisted on getting out to the battle zone, as good Marines all did, but he just hadn't had the schooling that some of us had who'd already been through a couple of battles. So, he was unsure of himself and used to ask me for advice, which I gave him always. We got along fine. As it turned out on Iwo, that was really a battalion commander's battle. The regimental commanders and the division commanders, wasn't much they could do except artillery and tanks, move--you know, the weight of that kind of effort and support. But, it was just, as I say, a battalion commander's war, hell, it was a fire team, you know, private's war, because they had to just dig these characters out of these stinking sulphurous caves and emplacements.

I say people get in arguments, I had a classmate who had a battalion next to mine, and he insulted the regimental commander in front of his whole CP. So, we had a different battalion commander there the next morning. But, that's the pressure your under.

Frank: What would they do, send him off the island?

Cushman: No, I think they gave him a job back at division headquarters, counting ammunition or something.

Frank: Affect his career?

Cushman: Very peculiar. You may remember him, Carey Randall.

Frank: Oh, sure. He's the one that got early selection....

Cushman: Well, he got a Siver Star out of Iwo Jima. Of course, it wasn't publicized that he had been relieved. I knew it because I was standing right next to him while all this went on with the regimental commander. Randall got ordered to be the assistant with "Engine Charlie" Wilson when he became SecDef. And he just took charge of that damned Pentagon. I think he did it, just started out as a job, Marine Corps sent him over there hoping they could get a little information or be able to have a little influence. God, he had all those assistant secretaries just spinning in their damned seats and he got so big for his britches that he wouldn't speak to anybody at Headquarters. Finally, the Commandant asked me to talk to him. Apparently, they really got their wires crossed and I was always friendly with Carey, still am, so I'd go over and talk to him and relay messages from Headquarters and back again. And eventually, he got into a big sort of a hassle over getting promoted.

Frank: Yes, well, they....

Cushman: He got the Secretary to try to force his promotion to

two stars.

Frank: Did he make two stars, no, one star.

Cushman: Eventually he made two in retirement or something.

Frank: May have made it in retirement. But, you know, he was deep selected as I recall, quite a cause celebre, when....

Cushman: Well, it was all forced, you know.

Frank: Yes, sure, he wasn't due for a long time.

Cushman: So, for a guy that had gotten relieved on the battlefield, he made out pretty well.

Frank: He made out pretty well. Right.

Cushman: Yes, he retired and became a high-priced lawyer in Miami.

Frank: I think he's still down there.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Who was the regimental commander on Guam?

Cushman: Oh, oh, let's see, Kenyon.

Frank: Oh, Kenyon had it on Guam and Bougainville.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Okay, but he didn't have it for Iwo, did he?

Cushman: I'm trying to think, that was the period, I think Eddy Craig had it on Guam. Sure he did.

Frank: That's right, he had Bougainville, Guam....

Cushman: Yes, and then as soon as the battle was over, they shifted him up to corps headquarters, and broke his heart. Yes, because I remember lying right with him in the field watching a damned tank problem that we had--some Japanese tank--and again some kid lying next to us got hit and he and I were okay.

Frank: This is on Iwo, no, on Guam.

Cushman: No, on Guam.

Frank: Alright, why don't we talk briefly about Iwo now, and that would bring us up to your return to the States.

Cushman: Okay, I got a 12:30 deal.

Frank: Alright, why don't we quit now then.

Cushman: I'd just as soon.

End Side 1, Tape 2

Begin Session III, November 4, 1982, continuation Side 1, Tape 2

Frank: I don't want to get into the operations--there's no sense of you talking about Bougainville or Guam or Iwo Jima--because we've written the operational histories and I think

you've been already contacted, but you might give a perspective as you recall each of them.

Cushman: Right, well, I thought it might be perhaps of interest if I just started when I left ship board and sort of went through World War II as I saw it....

Frank: Okay, right.

Cushman: ...from the battalion commander's point of view. That way, I won't miss out on so many things and it will allow you to ask some questions afterwards.

Frank: Right, and have some questions.

Cushman: Right and fill in holes that way.

I left the ship, as I mentioned before, in I think it was April, anyway, it was in the Spring of 1942--and reported into the Fleet Marine Force in the San Diego area. It was then training and becoming established as a 3d Marine Division and the 2d Marine Division in the Camp Elliott area which is just north of San Diego.

Frank: You'd known Lem Shepherd from before?

Cushman: No, I knew his reputation, and I selected the 9th Marines because I had heard what a wonderful officer he was. And everything I'd heard was an understatement if anything. He was, I think, one of the finest Marine officers we've ever had. Absolutely devoted to duty, just courageous as anyone I've ever

seen, although, this part I read about, because he left the division before we got into combat. But, his record was well known. And so, I selected the 9th Marines when I had a chance for a choice because I had heard about him.

The problems were many in those early days. Two divisions were being formed, things just changed from day to day. I started as an adjutant and later was transferred to every battalion to do one job or another, usually, the executive officer.

Training was a problem because we were literally using wooden guns, every kind of substitute that can be imagined for equipment that just wasn't there. We got the people by fits and starts. At one point, I was authorized by agreement between the higher commanders to go over to the 6th Marines and pick out people I thought would be good, and of course, I was regarded as a raiding party of one and met with a lot of opposition, but since the higher ups had agreed to it, we got some good non-commissioned officers and this strengthened the 9th Marines tremendously.

Frank: You were a major now? You had been rapidly promoted?

Cushman: Yes, I was a captain for only one year and then a major for one year and at this point, I'd just become a major. Well, I was a captain and adjutant, and then became major and sent on down to the battalions one after the other as a major. And I had a machine gun company as a major and I was exec as a

major and I think I was a 3 as a major in one battalion.

But, we eventually got the job done as far as preliminary training went. We worked hard at it. We were in the field a lot of the time. We held all kinds of school at night for NCO's, school for officers, a lot of it conducted by Colonel Shepherd, himself.

We mounted out from San Diego, went down by train in the night, pouring rain, got aboard transports and headed for New Zealand. When we got to New Zealand, we went into camps in the northern area of the main island, the north island, generally out of Auckland--out in the countryside around Auckland. The 2d Division, meanwhile, went down to the southern part when they arrived--they were in the Wellington area.

Frank: That was in January '43 that you left.

Cushman: Yes, we left in January '43.

Frank: You got to New Zealand 7 February.

Cushman: Yes, yes. We had several months, five months or so, of vigorous training in New Zealand. The terrain was terrific, mountainous, terrific jungle type vegetation--no families or anything--we really got in our final training. The weather was not all that bad in terms of tropical temperature or humidity. In fact, it was not, it was winter time while we were there, so it was just the oppostie.

Frank: How were the New Zealanders, cooperative?

Cushman: Yes, very cooperative. Most of the men were gone, they were in the Middle East. But those that were there running the local governments and the local towns, the farmers, for that matter, were quite cooperative and very friendly.

Frank: Considering all the problems that the 1st Division had with mounting out for Guadalcanal with the unions and wharfies, longshoremen down there, did you face any?

Cushman: I didn't run across any such problems. Division might have, who made those kind of arrangements. I was simply responsible for loading my battalion out into the ships that were made available and do the usual planning and do the work. I don't recall any labor problems, and it seems to me Marines did the loading of our ships. In any event, the agreements would have been made higher up by division, at least, as far as negotiating with the unions went. And we did have an overall commander up in New Hebrides....

Frank: Noumea.

Cushman: ...New Caledonia, Noumea, which was....

Frank: Barney Vogel, I think.

Cushman: ...Barney Vogel. He didn't like to fly, and so he didn't. But, he came down for a couple of visits, at least one that I remember, so it's possible that his staff could have negotiated these things. But, I kind of doubt it, I think it was

somebody on the scene there, probably at division staff or the logistics staff. We did have a logistics group there.

We loaded out and went to Guadalcanal about June of that year and proceeded to train with a specific objective in mind of operations in the jungle and as it turned out, in Bougainville, which we went to in November, as I recall.

Frank: November 1st.

Cushman: Yes, and we loaded out after, as I say, intense training in the jungle and in the temperatures and humidity that we run into.

Frank: At Efate you had your exercise.

Cushman: Yes, our rehearsal was in Efate, which was interesting. We had some Marines skipped out and went into town. So, we had to do something with them and, of course, there wasn't much you could do since we were going into combat and they couldn't care less. But, we provided them with sort of a barbwired enclosure and at least kept them out of town. They were all pretty good guys and they came along on the final landing and everything was fine.

We didn't have too much fighting in my particular battalion, in fact, I guess the 9th Marines came off fairly easily as a regiment. They were on the left where there were fewer enemy.

Frank: But you had that landing, though.

Cushman: Well, we had a tough landing, a lot of boats broached, and that sort of thing.

Frank: But the Japanese came around on the left, landed, as I recall, over on Torokina Point.

Cushman: Oh, I guess they did, yes. But, it gave us so little trouble that I don't even remember having a big battle. I mainly remember getting strafed while I was on the beach by Jap Zeros.

Frank: From Rabaul.

Cushman: Yes, yes. And I don't recall that we took any casualties particularly, probably a few. But, it was just half-a-dozen planes, one after the other, and everybody took cover. About that time, I think, our planes chased them away.

Bougainville was fine training in that we didn't have many casualties, but we had the jungle, we had patrol activity, and we did have some skirmishes, and we had the engineering and logistics problems that went with that kind of fighting, along with the weather and everything else, including just before we left, two months later after we landed--we left at the end of December--a terrible volcanic upheaval in Bougainville. These 200 foot trees were just swaying like wands and the earth really shook, just rattled you in your foxhole like a pea in a pod. It was a frightening experience. But, there were no buildings there, the trees didn't crash down. Some probably did, but

not right where we were. We had no casualties from it. But it was really something. As I recall, this volcano, we were at the foot of it, more or less, where we had our lines. And it was smoking and kind of jingling a lot of the time, but then we had this real tremendous earthquake in the middle of the night as I recall. It woke everybody up and then sort of went back to sleep, no casualties. Just about that time, we all went home--home being Guadalcanal.

Frank: Guadalcanal is where the 3d Division set up--Camp Tetere, as a matter of fact. You didn't have much fighting along the Piva Trail or the Numa Numa Trail?

Cushman: We had some, yes. We were sort of on the edge of the battle of Piva Fork, is that what it was called?

Frank: That's right, yes.

Cushman: All these damned places were just a bunch of nothing in a sea of green, you know. Piva Forks was where a little trail made a sort of Y and maybe some natives lived there, I don't know. There wasn't much left when I saw it, as I recall.

The 3d Marines, I think, did most of the heavy fighting on Bougainville. So, as I say, it was great for the 9th Marines, particularly my battalion because we got bloodied, but without heavy casualties and we learned a lot without having to pay penalties for our mistakes. So, it was good from our point of view.

Frank: This is your first combat operation.

Cushman: Yes, except in China where we were innocent bystanders but were sort of in the middle of it.

Frank: Yes, Soochow Creek.

Cushman: Yes, this was the first combat I was in.

Frank: How did it feel?

Cushman: Well, I shouldn't say I enjoyed it, but it was what we'd been training for and I was very pleased with the way the battalion acted and the way they performed. We never got into situations that scared the devil out of me. Well, nobody enjoys being strafed, but if you rationalize it, each bullet's got to hit about 100 feet apart, something like that. So, you figure the odds are pretty good with one airplane.

Frank: Who had the battalion at this time?

Cushman: I had the battalion.

Frank: Did you have the battalion on....

Cushman: Yes, I took over the battalion in New Zealand, and I had the battalion and moved it to Guadalcanal.

Frank: Okay.

Cushman: Settled in there and trained it. Hankins left about something like three months after we got to New Zealand, just

about half ways.

Frank: He went to the 1st Division.

Cushman: Yes, he went to the 1st Division. Shepherd got promoted and he left and went to the 1st Division as ADC.

Frank: Eddy Craig took over.

Cushman: Eddy Craig took over the regiment and he was the commander when we were training on Guadalcanal.

Frank: They have you down in January as the executive officer.

Cushman: Yes, in January, then I got promoted to lieutenant colonel after about three months.

Frank: But you relinquished command once you got to Guadalcanal.

Cushman: No, I commanded the battalion in New Zealand after we'd been there about three months. I don't remember the exact date, but I got promoted, Hankins got promoted, Shepherd got promoted, so Hankins and Shepherd went to the 1st Division and I just moved up from exec to CO.

Frank: Well, they have you as commanding officer--you took over command of the battalion in June down in New Zealand.

Cushman: No, I took it over earlier than that, by a couple of months.

Frank: Oh, did you take it over...okay.

Cushman: Yes, because I was in command of the battalion, Duplantis was my exec, he had to have the machine gun company. And together we loaded out the battalion.

Frank: Wasn't Pete Duplantis a class of '35, too?

Cushman: Yes, right, I think he was. Yes, yes, third group.

Frank: Okay.

Cushman: And he later had the 21st Marines.

Frank: That's right, that's right. Now, it shows you here, you had command of the battalion right up until you took it to Guadalcanal and then in January they had you as executive officer, and then taking over command in February. Okay, well, it's sometimes....

Cushman: Well, January '43.

Frank: '44.

Cushman: Oh, no. I took command of the battalion and kept it until 1945.

Frank: Okay, right, well, I was wondering why that....

Cushman: That's wrong.

Frank: Then you go back to Guadalcanal and you prepare for Guam.

Cushman: Yes, we'd only had two meals a day for about 60 days while we were on Bougainville because of a shortage of LSTs so I was told. So, a lot of us were pretty sickly and I personally had malnutrition and only weighed about 160 pounds, I guess, and had anemia and all kinds of problems, and a lot of the troops did. So, we sort of took a rest for about two-three weeks as I recall and got ourselves back into shape, and then started training like hell. We had a false alarm--orders to go to Kavieng, go to New Ireland and assault and take Kavieng, which probably would have been a pretty bloody operation.

Frank: Yes, from what I understand.

Cushman: Yes, we actually loaded out although the ships did not move from the roadstead off Guadalcanal. We actually loaded them and were getting ready to put the personnel aboard when they changed their mind and redirected us toward...I think we had to unload, continue training for a bit, if I'm not mistaken--and they redirected us to Guam. I'm pretty sure we had to unload those ships, but I couldn't swear to it. And we probably were able to leave some of the stuff, at least, aboard--you know the basic, maybe 30 days stuff and so on.

Frank: It doesn't show here. Right.

Cushman: I think we used those same ships. Anyway, we sailed for Guam in the Marianas and the target date was delayed considerably, at least by 30 days, because of the struggle in Saipan

not going quite according to time schedule--and in Tinian.

We were presumably a reserve for that operation, but they figured they could take it with the troops committed, and in the meanwhile, we sat at Kwajalein for something like 30 days. We steamed around for awhile a then settled in at Kwajalein and went ashore on the atoll for training until we were called forward and sent into Guam as originally planned. But I think we figured out we'd been aboard ship 60 some days. By the time--we were so damned happy to get off the ship that the assault was sort of secondary when we got to Guam.

Frank: Well, you loaded on the 1st of June. It doesn't say that you stopped off at Kwajalein, but you were on board 50 days. 1 to 30 June and 1 to 20 July.

Cushman: Yes, yes, right.

Frank: You landed, of course, on the 20th.

Cushman: So, we landed on Guam and we were so poorly prepared in terms of maps and things, that it was just a disgrace to the United States, I figured. We had held that island since 1898, and there wasn't any map of the reefs, there wasn't any map worth a doggone of the island whatsoever--just a green blob, you know. So, we got our intelligence by dragooning some of the Navy Chamorro stewards working in the galleys and so on amongst the ships that were in the assault force--and questioned them about the reefs and so on, which of course, you can

imagine, a lot of them only remembered it when they were little kids and they didn't have a military picture of it, anyway.

Frank: That's what I understand, and as much as Guam had been one of the problems that was fought at the Senior School.

Cushman: Yes, right.

Frank: The landing of Guam, the retaking of Guam was a Senior School problem.

Cushman: Well, there weren't any maps then, and I guess the people in charge on the island just never got off their duff and did anything about it.

Nevertheless, we made the landing, in a different place from the Schools. Our division landed Asan, I think it was, A-S-A-N, between a couple of promontories. And we had a little difficult going getting ashore. Very high terrain just off the beachhead that we had to take. The left flank really had trouble from the promontory there, and tough going scaling that in the face of opposition. We crossed the beachhead...well, it was interesting, we came in in amphibian tractors and mortars immediately started hitting around us. And I didn't like that so I told the guy to veer off some, we were way off our beach anyway, and I made him veer off and head toward our assigned beach. We finally got in, nobody got hurt, as far as I remember, in our tractor, the one I was riding in. And the battalion pretty well got ashore with some casualties. There

were machine guns covering the beachhead area, the flat land there adjacent to the water's edge, so we lost people there. I recall running into Asmuth, he'd been hit there, and he had the battalion on my right. So, there was trouble all along, but we got ashore and by nightfall I think we were in pretty good shape, as I recall, on D-Day.

Frank: Did the 50 days at sea have any debilitating affect on the troops?

Cushman: Well, I don't know. We tried to exercise and so on, on Kwajalein as I recall, I think it was Kwajalein, could have been Eniwetok, but I think it was Kwajalein, and exercised aboard ship. But sure, physically they weren't as good. But, you know, we really were over trained physically for what we were doing. The real thing was to get acclimated to the temperature and the humidity, in my opinion. We took so damned many 50 and 60 mile hikes in New Zealand, I thought my knees were going to come apart. And we never hiked 50 miles the whole damned Pacific war. We might have had to if we'd gotten into Japan. But usually, you know, if you made a mile without getting into a fight you were doing alright. And that was about as far as we ever had to walk, a mile or two. So, the physical factor wasn't that important and they were in good enough shape as young kids considering that we did have some exercise aboard ship and at the atoll to where it was not a problem. Actually, a bigger danger would have been eating too

much food. I know I always had too much pounds on me and about three days after I landed, it was gone. But eating good food was such a treat that you tended to go overboard. When you made the landing, of course, you were back to the C rations and stuff and you're on your feet all day and half the night. I would say physical fitness was not really impaired to any degree that hurt us at all.

The fighting was tough. I remember now, I made my objective fairly early, I was in good shape. To the right, Asmuth had had some trouble, but he took his objective, so they pulled me out of the line, my battalion, and sent me at 90 degrees down to the south to take the harbor down there and an island that formed part of the harbor, in the Navy Yard, Piti.

Frank: Piti Point.

Cushman: Yes, Piti Point. And I was sent to take that. And to do it, I had to go along a flat land parallel to the water's edge and also get people up in the high ground on my left which was looking down my throat. And we had some scrapping along the way, but we took the objective, I think, in about a day--something like that. So then I get pulled out again and attached to the 21st Marines and sent up the hillside which they had taken with great loss and very big problems. And I got up there and relieved Henry Applington, II and his battalion. And we were in a fight as we made the relief. You're not supposed to do that, but the enemy didn't pay any attention to our books.

And he was fighting, damned near got shot just going over the map with Applington because they were looking at us. And we made the relief, passed through the lines and that's when we really got in a fight. That was the fight for Fonte Hill, and they had about two battalions. We were fairly fresh and had a minimum of casualties considering the scrapping we'd been doing. But, we hadn't had any set piece battles where you get your casualties from emplaced enemy and so on. So, we went at it and we were victorious in a couple of days, as I recall it took. The last thing we did, there were a bunch of them hiding in a weird geographical formation--a big hole in the ground, I mean big, it was like 100 feet across or more, 150 feet, all coral--and they were dug in all around in the sides of this thing. So no matter which way you came down, there was somebody that could shoot at you from the other side. So, we really went at that with care and used a lot of pole charges, a lot of covering fire, and bazookas, machine guns, just took our time and just laid it all on there and we got our Marines down in there and rousted them out with very few casualties.

Then, we went hightailing it more or less in pursuit northward up the island with combat along the way, here and there, where they fought delaying actions. And, of course, other battalions were lined up doing the same thing all the way across the island. And we got to the sea and, you know, we had a patrol get a canteen of water from the Pacific and so on to show we'd been there.

Then we moved to set up camps which we did on the eastern side of the island. I was put in charge of the whole southern half of the peanut shape island of Guam. And did considerable patrolling and helping out the native villagers. The Japs hadn't been in there too much, but there were some here and there. We cleaned them out.

The northern half of the island, seems to me I had to take my battalion along with many others, a number of other battalions, we had to go over to the northern end of the island all over again because of they guys hiding in the bushes. You know, we'd been rushing in pursuit, and we just by-passed a bunch of these characters that were hiding. So, after that sweep, we more or less went to training, got replacements, and got going, got our camps built, very nice camp, right on the water. We used to go out and get lobsters and crabs and fish off the reef and we'd set up a 55 gallon drum, fill it with water, dump all the stuff in and we had a beer ration, so we had occasional parties on the beach, the officers club, and the troops, too. It was a good life, nice camp and to use a racist expression, "Guam is white man's tropics." The only desease was mosquito borne dengue fever, nicknamed, "breakbone fever" which hit you for maybe, maximum of two weeks, ten days to two weeks, and it's gone, unlike malaria. So, we had a healthy bunch of good guys, and experience from those that had gone through two campaigns by this time and then replacements that we had to train. And we got ready for Iwo Jima, which was, obviously, going to

be a tough nut to crack. And once again, we went through all the drills for everybody being able to crack a pillbox, every squad on its own or to incorporate every kind of supporting weapon that they could get their hands on or could commandeer by communications when it was placed in support.

Things went along pretty evenly. I recall one incident--you may have it in your histories from someone else--LeMay and his bombers came into Guam, and of course, their life was one of--what I wouldn't want to do--raids over Tokyo and then back. When they weren't raiding over Tokyo, they used to lie around the beach in the day time, and of course, the Marines would see them and there was a lot, of partly good natured, partly kind of bitter, remarks passed. And one officer one night at our officer's club bar had a couple too many, I guess, and he was sounding off about the Air Force pilots who never had anything to do. And it just happened that General Erskine was standing there also. So we got on the phone to LeMay and this guy was on the morning raid at 6 a.m. over Tokyo in one of their B-51s or B-52s [B-29's], I guess it was. And he was never heard to say anything again about the Air Force pilot's life.

Frank: General Erskine had relieved Turnage, was it?

Cushman: Yes, yes, he came over from FMFPac where he had been, I think, the Deputy or Chief of Staff to Holland M. Smith. Yes, he took over from Turnage as he phased out in Guam.

Frank: Did the nature of training and so on change with the

"Big J's" arrival on the scene?

Cushman: Well, he was very tough. Turnage, you know how these twosomes operate in many cases, there's a good guy and a bad guy. It's the CO and the exec, in many cases. Turnage had Noble as his deputy....

Frank: Alfred Houston Noble.

Cushman: ...ADC. And he was the tough guy and Turnage was the kind papa type. Turnage was a very fine gentleman, Noble was too, but he was very rough in handling people. He came into my headquarters just after the battle of Fonte and I'd reported what had happened and I asked for a bulldozer. I said, "There are 800 Japanese here lying in the grass and I need a bulldozer to get rid of them. They're beginning to stink." Well, he called me a liar and called me crazy, "There are no damned 800 Japanese up there, you must be dreaming." So, anyway, I kept telling him I needed it, so he sent one up and came up himself. Well, he saw the people there alright, but in the meanwhile, Wilson, who had been wounded three times, was sitting in my foxhole telling me how his troops were doing. The fighting was just about over in that battle and he was telling me where he stood and what his situation was. And he had a little runner sitting there with him, and Noble comes in and says--Noble was always talking about the wheat fields of Choisson and how tough it was, you know, this was just a piece of cake what we were doing. So, he points to Wilson and says, "There's typical,"

you know, after finding out he's a company commander, "That's typical, sitting back here in a the damn CP instead of out there with his troops like he's supposed to be." So I said, "Well, sir, he's been wounded three times and I'm recommending him for a Medal of Honor." "Bah." About this time, out of the corner of my eye, here's Wilson's runner drawing a bead on Noble from behind. I thought he was going to shoot him for, you know, running down Wilson. And about that time, some guy with a clearer idea of life grabbed him and, you know, put the damned gun down and about that time Wilson realized something was happening and got him the hell out of there and Wilson, I think, got out too. But, this was the way Noble operated. So, that was the way that twosome worked.

Now, had Erskine come in and he was the rough guy.

Frank: Bobby Hogaboom was his chief of staff.

Cushman: Yes. He's firm and everything, but he's not nasty. Noble's nasty, in the field he was nasty. And of course, Erskine was a fine guy socially, but he was rough. He was not nasty, but he was rough and tough, demanding. I'm trying to think who relieved Noble as ADC. Jimmy Stewart.

Frank: That's right. I think it was. He had had the 3d Marines. Yes, I'm pretty sure it was.

Cushman: Yes, and got promoted. Well, he was the nice guy in that duet.

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So, we did have changes in training. Training was more realistic in terms of taking risks with live ammunition, I would say, because we set up a series of combined exercises with the artillery and air and lots of live ammunition. And we had one--they made all the battalion commanders come and watch the first one. And it was a fiasco. They dropped short in the artillery and they couldn't hit anything, and I thought Erskine was going to have apoplexy standing there watching it. And I happened to be standing there and I didn't really know him yet, but I said--because I had been doing some training along these lines--I said, "If you want it done right, I'll be glad to volunteer to do it, do the next one." That was putting it all on the line. And he said, "Okay, and you better goddamned well do it right." Anyway, we had a marvelous one, and so I was in with him from then on, he was one of my best friends until the day he died.

And then training went on and it was very realistic and we loaded out and went to Iwo where we sat in reserve for, I think, three days. I recall as we went in, finally ordered to land, they were putting the flag up on Suribachi that morning. I don't know if it was the famous shot, but anyway, as we came in a U.S. flag got put up on Mt Suribachi, so at least we knew we wouldn't get terrific fire from the left. Well, we got ashore and moved to our assembly position and gee, that was an introduction, particularly to the youngsters--the replacements. We got shot at all night long, you know. There we were, just

huddled in foxholes waiting to get orders. And so, eventually, dawn came and God, it was cold. Everybody was shivering, very peculiar change in weather from Guam. Of course, it is north, but we didn't realize how sort of chilly it would be at night. Anyhow, we moved out, took up positions between the 4th and 5th Division. 3d Division moved into that part of the line, and we started what turned out to be day after day of slugging against terrible resistance.

But, there were some noteworthy features. I had to cross an airfield, for example, Airfield #2, I guess it was. It was the first one and got captured right away, and we got into action just on the southern fringe of #2. And machine gun fire was just sweeping across that damned place, it was just terrible. So, I managed to--we all had some tanks in support--and as I recall, I managed to get some extra ones and I put all my infantry up on top of the tanks and they just took off and went across that airfield as fast as they could go. And by God, we got across there with hardly any casualties. So, we got to the side, and then we were pretty close to the first bunch of pillboxes, and so on, and had to get out and fight them. In the meanwhile, they had the tanks blasting at them too.

Another thing on Iwo, we had tremendous artillery barrages, sort of alternating behind the main effort by one regiment or another. It would end up one or two battalions or another. But, the most discouraging thing was, right in the middle of

this tremendous barrage you'd hear the damned enemy open up their machine guns. You know, it just wasn't knocking out those bunkers. So, it was just a painful, slugging with tanks, with HE and flame-thrower tanks. And then the infantry with their flame-throwers, and grenades, and pole charges, and all the rest of it, digging them out. And the casualties were fierce. By the time Iwo Jima was over, I had gone through two complete sets of platoon leaders--lieutenants. And the second set gone, we had such things as artillery forward observer commanding a company and sergeants commanding the platoons, down to half strength or less--and it was bad.

We did one thing on orders of General Erskine, we pushed a night-attack. Bing Boehm had a battalion....

End Side 1, Tape 2, Session III

Begin Side 2, Tape 2

Cushman: ...been behind with his battalion and I pushed from the front where I was and eventually we made contact by about dawn, and the night-attack worked. But, we had some problems--I had to rescue a company commander up through the bottom of a tank and things like that.

I had one close shave among many others. I had my little CP in a bunker, Japanese bunker, and just outside was the radio to contact the companies. And battalion 3 and myself alternated going to the phone. So, at one point it was his turn to go to the phone and he got zapped with a mortar shell--he's still alive

and in fine shape in Salt Lake City. He retired right after the war--well, I never saw him again, went off to the hospital, but he made out alright. It was just the sort of thing happening all the time, mortars coming down everywhere. I went forward one time to make a reconnaissance and they spotted me, even though I had a pretty low profile. I was in a foxhole--seems to me I had the battalion surgeon with me because he wrote me not too long ago reminding me about it--and they put a mortar barrage right on the damned hole we were in. Well, luckily, not a one dropped in the hole or I wouldn't be here, but it buried us in sand because so many went off right around us, threw the sand in and we had to shake off about an inch-and-a-half of it. But, that was Iwo Jima.

I recall another time, we got up to Airfield 3, which again was flat, swept by fire, and I didn't have contact with the other division on my left. Hah, old Hogaboom, I remember, he called me up and said, "What's this gap?" I guess I reported I had a gap. And he said, "What's this gap? How the hell are you covering it?" I said, "Well, it's covered by fire." He said, "What's that? Where have you got the guns and everything?" I said, "Well, it's covered by Japanese fire." And I said, "I don't want to put any people out there. We'll just keep an eye on it." So, he laughed and said, "Okay."

Then finally, about this time that Carey Randall left the area and went back to division CP and we were getting to the end. Yes, this is about the time we came to the pocket,

which got to be named "Cushman's Pocket." It was sort of a gulley-valley, not too big and full of caves and the Japs had holed up in there. I don't know how many, not too many, but enough to give a lot of trouble considering the way that they were concealed and protected with these caves. I finally got the battalion, which by this time was--oh, God, I don't know--200 people or something. Anyway, I got them all lined up and a whole bunch of flame-thrower tanks and sort of hollered "Charge," you know. And nobody got out of their foxholes. So, I picked up a rifle with a bayonet and went around and got everybody out of their foxholes the hard way. And eventually they got moving and along with the tanks, cleaned it out. And that was the last bunch of Japs in the 3d Marine Division's only action. And once again, I think we got a patrol down to the ocean and picked up a canteen of salt water.

But, I landed...because we were in reserve, we were not filled up to strength and over-strength like usually when you're in assault in a landing. So, my battalion instead of having like 900 men had about 800 men when we landed and I had on the order of...well, first, I should say I got about 150 replacements during the battle, so that added up to about 950. I had 850 casualties and so that ended up with walking out of there with about 100 to 150 men, most of which were mortar men and cooks and bakers and headquarters types, you know, that have a better chance--even though some of them also got lost. And as I say, the officers really took a beating, gee. There weren't too

many that lived through it, or some lived through it but were wounded. And I was just as lucky as they come.

Frank: Not a scratch.

Cushman: Yes, yes. No Purple Hearts even.

Frank: Did Lowell English have a battalion in the 9th Marines?

Cushman: Yes. No, he was the 21st or 23d.

Frank: He was wounded and Bing Boehm carried him out, I think.

Cushman: Yes, yes, I think so, because I think Boehm had the...no, English had that battalion. He may have gotten wounded during that attack.

Frank: That's right.

Cushman: That night attack.

Frank: I know he got very emotional about it when I interviewed him. I was just wondering why.

Cushman: Yes, I think maybe he got wounded in that night-attack. Oh, it was really--I'm sure he gave some arguments, and I did too. But, Erskine just wasn't going to listen to him. He was going to have a night-attack, he just conceived of that as the best way to put in a win without a lot of casualties. And probably saved some, but there were a lot of casualties because even in the dark the way the defenses were set up, you

know, you made some noise and you couldn't seee the damned holes of the caves anyway. I suppose we fired a lot of star shells and stuff. Anyway, it was a little different than the classic night-attack, the situation was a little different. It did succeed, but I think it had pretty fairly high costs. Probably not as high a cost as if we'd done it the next morning in the daytime, but I suppose Lowell was still emotional about that. He had to do a terrific job of punching through and getting around behind in the dark, and succeeded. But I suppose he may have lost quite a lot of troops. I lost some, as I say, I managed to rescue one company commander from a hole he was in out in front of the lines, managed to get up through--it was just swept by fire but a tank sat over the top of him and he got up through the bottom hatch. So, we had our problems with that night-attack. I wasn't emotional about it, I protested it, but when I got the orders to do it, we did it. And it was successful. I'm sure he had a lot more trouble and casualties than I did. All I had to do was move straight forward, that's all I had to tell anybody. He had complications.

Frank: I was going to ask, what impels a guy whose in a landing craft in an assault wave to run off the drop ramp into the face of heavy fire or the face of the unknown--possible death?

Cushman: Well, the fact he's with his peers, and the Marine Corps tradition. It takes more guts to stop and break into

tears or something than it does to get going. And all the teaching is that, get moving, you know, move fast, go at them. And you have much better chance. Like on Iwo, wherever I went, I just went double time, bent over, zig-zagged and moving forward--which we did. All the troops are told over and over the same thing. And the aggressive, offensive spirit is drummed into them from boot camp on. And I think that that does it, plus the fact all the other Marines are there with them, you going to be the only guy that stands there and doesn't get moving? You let your buddies down if you do that and you may cause a casualty. You're holding up people that would otherwise be on the move and running. So, there are very few people, I would say, that have no fear and they're probably a little nutty. And I always had fear. I hated high explosive, I never had much fear of small arms, but high explosive--its effects are so terrible and I'd seen so much of the effects--it scared the hell out of me when that stuff went off nearby and when it was imcoming. On Iwo they had some damn size, I don't know, 400mm?

Frank: 320mm mortar.

Cushman: 320mm asncan flying through the air about the size of a 55 gallon drum. No accuracy which made it even worse if you're down on the ground worrying about the thing. You never knew where the hell it was going to come down. So, I had my own personal fear of that kind of stuff. But, you just have

to go ahead and do what your job is. And the same with the noise with the rifle, I suppose. Some of them hate machine guns and some hate grenades, and most of them hate the whole thing. But, we also had a tremendous patriotic feeling during that war, as you remember. You were in that war, as a Marine?

Frank: Yes, sir.

Cushman: And the support of everybody at home, you know, there was no damned, "Down with the war," crap-a-roo parading in the streets of Washington with enemy flags like there was when I came home from Vietnam. So, that sustains people, too.

Frank: Yes, but wasn't there an awful price that the commander had to pay in writing next-to-kin and so on when the thing was all totaled up?

Cushman: Yes, yes, yes. I always wrote letters to next-of-kin, but I developed sort of a--almost a form for the bulk of the letter, you know. No matter how the man died, you put a good face on it. And of course, there were some occasions where people got killed by mistake. One of our own shells or in the dark, a couple of kids run into each other or something. Well, I personally never went into that detail and simply said, "He gave his life for his country in a brave and outstanding manner." How else you going to tell a parent that their child died. Yes, it was very hard to write those letters, sign them. Particularly, when in a number of cases, you knew the people in-

volved. When it came to some of the noncoms and so on in a place like Iwo where everybody was getting killed, officers and high ranking noncoms, you knew quite a few of the ones you were writing about as opposed to the fellows down in the squads you probably didn't know.

Frank: It must have been very traumatic, say in Vietnam, for these colonels whose sons were killed there.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: I can think of Dick Johnson, I can think of a couple of others.

Cushman: Yes, and there were flag officers had their....

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: I had a classmate of mine--this was really bad--a classmate of mine whose.... was just as I got to Vietnam and took over I Corps, this classmate of mine, Rear Admiral Ward, was in Saigon as head of the U.S. Navy component--Norvelle G. Ward, Bill Ward. And he had a son in the Marines who was up in I Corps and was killed while he was there. And I had to notify him and it wasn't too good, wasn't too good.

Frank: That reminds me of the time....

Cushman: We had some Marine generals, if I'm not mistaken. I know there were some colonels.

Frank: Well of course, Puller's son was...broke the man up pretty hard.

Cushman: Yes, yes. I didn't know Puller, but it was a miracle of course, that he's alive.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: I don't guess he blames anybody for keeping him alive, but I've only seen him once or twice, he seems to be getting along, adjusted to life.

Frank: There was a letter from his wife to the editor of the Post just the other day, about the Vietnam Memorial.

Cushman: Oh, I get so goddamned mad at the Post, I quit taking it, which has sort of cut my nose off to spite my face. I take the Wall Street Journal and I get all the news that I need, but I don't get the local government type news and that sort of thing that you're talking about. What did she have to say, doesn't like the Memorial or he doesn't like it?

Frank: It was a commentary on not liking the Memorial and a response to a very good article by Tom Wolfe who was very critical, you may have seen it.

Cushman: Yes, yes, and there was another one in there called a "Jane Fonda's Memorial," not a letter but a little column.

Frank: Getting back to this, I remember on Okinawa when

Frank Fenton's son, a twin, was killed. It broke the old man up, he was there too, broke the old man up.

Cushman: Yes, yes. He was really proud of both those boys.

Frank: Ike and Mike. It was Mike who was killed.

Cushman: Yes, Ike went on to become a colonel.

Frank: Colonel, retired, yes.

Cushman: Yes, the old man used to come in and see me about once a week when I commanded Camp Pendleton. He lived near by and we lived next to them when I was a young officer in Quantico, so Mrs. Fenton sort of took my wife under her wing. So, we were great friends. But, we were great friends and I had first known him out in Shanghai when I was a second lieutenant and he was an old time captain or major and had the athletic program and the clubs.

Frank: Oh, yes.

Cushman: Fine gentleman.

Frank: Well, we've gotten a little way from Okinawa--Iwo Jima.

Cushman: Right, and the battle for Cushman's Pocket, we went back to Guam and started to get ready to invade Japan. The replacements started coming in, new officers and all of us old timers, and there weren't many, that had a little over two

years in overseas were sent home. And that included me. And a whole new set of officers came in rather than just a few leaving and those that were execs moving up and that sort of thing, pretty much a new set.

Frank: You were lucky that you weren't held on the Pennsylvania, that you weren't sent back to Quantico. As you recall, a large number of officers who were serving in sea detachments went to Quantico to teach.

Cushman: No, no, I didn't. I forgot about that. One of the luckiest things, though, speaking of being ordered somewhere, was when I was in China I got ordered to the Army Signal School at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, four of us classmates. And two of us, we just never did anything about it but the orders were cancelled--Shelburne and myself, as I recall, and Laster and Ramsey went on to Fort Monmouth and became communicators.

Frank: Yes, Arkie Laster and Fred Ramsey.

Cushman: Yes, and in those days, gee, you could kiss it goodbye, you know, if you made colonel you were great as a communicator. So, I was really happy about getting those things cancelled. I didn't realize that a large number of officers were ordered back to Quantico before they even had a chance to get into the war.

Frank: Most of the officers who went to the 5th Division, for instance, had been at Quantico. That's when Arthur Worton was

back there and he hand-picked the--he became ADC, he was ADC of the 5th Division to Keller Rockey.

Cushman: That's right. But he was ADC of our division momentarily and busted his leg going down the damned gangway or something.

Frank: That's right and Wilson took over, John Wilson.

Cushman: "Bushrod" Wilson, that's right, John "Bushrod" Wilson. And Jimmy Stuart, James Stuart, he was ADC, I'm pretty sure, for awhile.

Frank: He may have been, but for Iwo it was "Bushrod" Wilson.

Cushman: Yes, I guess so.

Frank: Now, you went back to Quantico to become a student and then an instructor.

Cushman: Yes, I had one of the last that I'll ever make trans-continental train rides from San Francisco to New York City where I met my wife at the Sherry Netherland Hotel and we spent about 10 days. I had a couple of months leave, as I recall, at least a month, wartime. And we really had a time, I had $1,000 cash in my pocket and we went out and bought her a dress and we went cocktail dancing and we had a ball as only young people can. Then I had to go back to Quantico and get to work. And it was a very interesting three years at the--first I went through the course, the Senior Course, which was short, then

joined the staff under General Hogaboom who was Director of the School, Senior School, Senior Course, I guess they called it then, Senior Course. And became an instructor and an author. If I hadn't known how to use a typewriter with the touch system, I'd have been lost, I think. We did more writing putting into print all the lessons of the war. It just was something. We started all these blue-covered manuals and so on, and they're now commonplace. In addition, of course, we developed problems and we held school. One course was entirely POWs who missed out on the whole war, you know, as for new tactics and everything. I was assigned singlehandedly to write the landing force manual on the battalion and amphibious assault. And finally got that finished and then I collaborated on God knows how many others. And I enjoyed it, it was intellectual and challenging. It really was fun, I enjoyed the teaching, never liked the rehearsals and the preparation, but I enjoyed the actual teaching up on the platform. I particularly enjoyed the give and take when you opened it up for criticism, questions such as when you present a school solution, you always have a barrage of disagreeing points of view and questions. And I enjoyed that, it later did me very good stead when as Commandant I'd go and lecture at the War College and so on. The same format would prevail.

We also worked on new tactics. The atomic weapons, of course, had just appeared. In fact, as we were teaching, it went off at....

Frank: Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

Cushman: The first one, I think. I think I was already in Quantico when the first one....

Frank: Yes, you were there in June of '45.

Cushman: Yes, that's when it went off, so that immediately got us started worrying about this because it was obvious that there was a tremendous affect on the concentration of shipping and boats and everything else in an amphibious landing. So, we really had a lot of skull sessions and worked on that. In addtion the helicopter had just come sort of of age, so we worked like hell on that. And before I left, we had one of the first landing exercises with helicopters--with the students being the staff and so on as we used to run them from Senior Course.

Frank: It's one of the early Packard exercises?

Cushman: Yes, I think that was the name, right. And the helicopters only held about three people or something, but we went ahead with it anyway. And did a lot of pioneering work in the technical nuts and bolts of control and operating with the Navy and ship-to-shore and all this stuff with helicopters which hadn't been done before, and paved the way later for trying it out in Korea.

Frank: You're talking about control, what was the nature of command and control and the problems in the Pacific.

Cushman: In Packard?

Frank: No, in the Pacific. Command and control problems--I imagine there always are some in combat situations.

Cushman: Well, I never had any problems except the whole damned thing was fairly new, young, and not perfected, but I could get--I think the creekiest part of it was trying to get everything at once and not having them collide, you know, what later became, what the hell was it, Plan something or another, you put in effect, and this would restrict the trajectory of artillery.

Frank: Oh, Plans Victor and Negat.

Cushman: Yes, yes, Victor and Negat. They were just working into those, as I recall, at the end of the war. So, during the war as a whole you could see a development of coodination of supporting fire. Now, artillery was always just like that as long as your radios were working. And naval gunfire was just about as good as long as communications were working. Air, the communications tended not to work so well all the time and you never knew for sure unless it was prescheduled whether you could get aircraft. Close support was a little dicier as to how close you could get, although, I had some come in awful close by peacetime standards. But to put it all together was a little creeky until about the end of the war as, I recall. Iwo Jima, I think, they worked it up pretty well.

Frank: I think that was the first real combat operation of the early liaison parties, the....Colonel Megee had....

Cushman: Yes, right, that's right. Back on Guam we had trained with, well, Heinl joined us, as I recall.

Frank: Anglicos.

Cushman: The Anglicos and gees, they had a name starting with J, too.

Frank: JASCOs.

Cushman: JASCO, right. And all this was developing and along about, I guess, Okinawa and Iwo they jelled and you had sort of a finished product as far as World War II went. And we went from there on. As I think I mentioned in the interview on Vietnam, to my consternation, it appeared we'd forgotten all about it when we got to Vietnam. Had to sort of start all over again. The machinery was there, but nobody knew how to operate it.

Where were we?

Frank: We were talking about the School there.

Cushman: School at Quantico, and I mentioned the two things that were sort of outside of the holding school, teaching classroom stuff and classroom problems and that was nuclear--the advent of nuclear warfare and the advent of the helicopter. And, we did a lot of work on that. Then a third sort of extracurricular problem, some of us were involved more deeply than others, of course, was the fight to preserve the Marine Corps

its air/ground team and its doctrine and everything else.

Frank: Did you get involved in that at all?

Cushman: I got involved on the fringes. In it heavily was Twining and Krulak and Hogaboom and General Smith, I think.

Frank: O.P.? He was on the outer fringes.

Cushman: Yes, probably.

Frank: He had reservations. Jerry Thomas and Mike Edson were the ones....

Cushman: That's the one, Jerry Thomas. Thomas, Krulak, and Twining were the prime movers.

Frank: Dyer was involved with it.

Cushman: Yes. As I recall, that's right, they weren't working under Smith on this, they were directly under Headquarters, where the fight was being masterminded.

Frank: Right, right, the Marine Corps Board, and of course, you had Sam Shaw and Dutch Schatzel and Bob Heinl.

Cushman: Right, yes, and the guy who later became Assistant Secretary for Personnel.

Frank: Don Hittle.

Cushman: Don Hittle was in it.

Frank: And Hunter Hurst was involved with it.

Cushman: Yes. I was about on a par with the general, I guess, as far as my involvment, strictly fringe, but an occasional contribution. I knew what was going on and was able to offer anything I could think of, but the actual hard core work of doing the writing and stuff was the other people.

Frank: Did you, when you were Commandant, did you have a feeling that many of the serving officers of that time had forgotten about their amphibious tradition and doctrine, expecially during the fighting in Vietnam, all the things that the Marine Corps stood for that...For instance, I think if you go over to Headquarters now and mention the word Chowder, I doubt if....

Cushman: Oh, Chowder and Marching Society.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: Probably don't. That wasn't a very wide spread nickname except right here in Washington.

Frank: Well, alright, but the Unification Fight, the ramifications of it and what happened back there, I have a feeling that not too many general officers are sensitive. I think General Wilson was when he came in. I'm sure you were, but I was just wondering whether....

Cushman: I don't know. Come to think of it, I never gave much thought to it.

Frank: Well, wasn't that part of the--when you were out there, and of course, Krulak and Buse had FMFPac, wasn't this a continuing pain with respect to the SLF and so on to maintain this amphibious heritage doctrine.

Cushman: Yes, that was undoubtably one of the things behind keeping the SLF, but also, of course, the Navy always had had it afloat in one battalion size, and they were able to get the snips and have a two battalion size SLF and they liked it, too--the amphibious types are fairly enthusiastic about amphibious operations, unlike carrier admirals and some of the rest of these characters. Consequently, I think they enjoyed the workout and keeping the sailors moving and the ships operating the way they're designed, you know, supposed to operate in war-time. So, I think probably the Navy supported it as well as the Marine Corps back in Pearl Harbor to keep it going. And the people in Vietnam wanted them even though Westmoreland, I guess, either launched the argument or gave up trying to control them. He was never able to control either the aircraft, the ships carriers, and all the rest of it--7th Fleet, like he wanted to. So, I guess he sort of gave up. But, everybody is happy to have a couple of battalions ashore.

Frank: Well, I think that during Korea and especially during Vietnam many people lost sight of the rationale for an existing Marine Corps.

Cushman: Oh, I wouldn't doubt it, yes. I don't know, you

know, we've got the Schools supposed to continually indoctrinate the young people coming up. But, I don't know. I'm trying to think, when I was Commandant, there may have been some of that feeling. I was just concentrating on other things rather than that particular thought. And it seems to me we used to have skull sessions in Quantico, I'd take the general officers on the staff and go down there and beat out long range goals and so on, and I don't recall that ever coming up, that we were losing our grip and our sense of purpose in terms of amphibious operations. I don't recall that that was a problem.

Frank: Well, the nature of the employment of Marines in that period sort of made the....

Cushman: Well, there were criticisms by the press and everybody in the goddamned world, including, as you told me, Harold Johnson, for God sake. A nice guy, born-again Christian and not willing to give the Marines credit for anything. Not many in the Army will. But, I just can't answer the question, how deeply, you know, thoughts of ground warfare obliterated our concern for amphibious operations. I don't think that it did, and if it did, I don't know to what extent.

Frank: Well, to get back to what you were saying about the Quantico period, from what you say, as far as the instruction went and being in the Schools it was quite a stimulating period. I know that you wrote quite a bit for the Gazette during this--in the '40s.

Cushman: Yes, in fact I can brag right into the record, I won the essay contest four times, that they used to have annually. Once when I was just a youngster and I wrote something trivial about uniforms or something. And then wrote primarily on strategy and tactics and that kind of stuff to win the prize the other three times. And I used to write a lot for the Gazette nonprize contest. In fact, when I needed a new uniform, I'd sit down and write an article for the Gazette.

Frank: I guess Ed Simmons was the editor at that time.

Cushman: I think he was, yes, right.

Frank: Yes, right after the war.

At the School, what was the nature of the post-war instruction?

Cushman: Instruction?

Frank: Yes, sir.

Cushman: Well, they had first, as I say, to reduce to writing all the lessons and everything learned from the war and then our problems primarily were an extension of those tactics, strategy, procedures, and so forth that had been learned, but we faced in a different direction. One of our big problems was Iceland--the taking of Iceland. Wait did we have one in the Pacific? I seem to remember one on the Sulu Archipelago.

Frank: There's one, Cormorant, I guess that was much

later. That was based on...well, there was in about '60 when Sam Shaw had the LFTU at Coronado, was based on Indochina. But that was much later.

Cushman: Oh, yes. Well, I'm just having a hard time figuring, I was there three years and I think there were at least two big problems. And I remember one, Iceland, because we worked like hell on that. Did we use it a second year? All that work, I think they did tend to use it a couple of years.

Frank: You went around the presentations a lot.

Cushman: I just don't remember. Anyhow, that's the way we went in our instruction. And at the same time, we were working with the staff instructors on the problems I mentioned, the helicopter and nuclear warfare. And some of this got ground into the problems. It was a little new and a little difficult to provide School solutions for some of this, but I think in the problems we began dispersing ships and landing at increased time intervals--just some of the first steps in coping with this. And I mentioned the helicopter use in one of our problems.

Frank: It must have been interesting, you had fellow officers back at School from each of the six divisions and from the area, there must have been a lot of cross fertilization.

Cushman: Oh, there was, right. And a lot of, you know, he did it.

Frank: Acrimonious?

Cushman: Well, not exactly, but a lot of, "Here's the way we did it," stuff. Yes, it was, mentally stimulating, very interesting, fine bunch of officers teaching. I mentioned Hogaboom and Krulak. Krulak became my immediate superior. And all kinds of just good instructors. Don Weller was there. Oh, what a character. God, he could get up and hold everybody spellbound without a note on his favorite supject, which was naval gunfire.

Frank: Well, they had a naval gunfire scho l set up, I think he and Toots Henderson or Toots Henderson ran it after Don left.

Cushman: Probably did. In any event, he gave the lectures to the the Senior Course on naval gunfire. And then the nuts and bolts school, I'd forgotten about it, but Toots Henderson, an old artilleryman, probably would have been involved. And those are the kind of people we had--Toots Henderson and all kinds of....

Frank: What were the concepts in the Marine Corps concerning professional education for officers? Was the Corps very strong on it?

Cushman: Now, when was this?

Frank: It's right after the war.

Cushman: Well, yes, they were strong on getting everybody to school and getting the schools organized. I wasn't much in on that, but of course, they evolved toward the present set-up--the Staff College, they had Senior Course, Junior Course, and Basic School, as I recall. And those have developed into schools of their own. Command and Staff College and the Junior School. Yes, I'd say the Corps has always been very supportive of education and very forward looking on education and demanding of high performance of the students and they pretty much hand-picked by selection process those who go to schools of the other services. And the Marines always stand way high and put to shame a lot of the people from the service that owns the school. So, I would say yes, there is a great emphasis on education in the Marine Corps and I think there was even when I came in. Witness the correspondence courses we had to take, some of questionable value, but nevertheless, the idea was there. And they had, I think they always had a high respect for education since I've been in the Marine Corps. I don't know World War I days, I don't think they did.

Frank: No, there weren't too many. Of course, it seems to me with my experience, association with the Marine Corps as a former officer, that the Marine Corps went through several changes. For instance, everybody's trying to figure what the career pattern should be for successful career.

Cushman: Well, right, and they don't have enough room in the

higher level school or maybe even the Junior Course, too--Junior School, too, for everybody to make that a step in progression. In some cases you can substitute, you know, Benning or something like that.

Frank: But, there used to be sometime--for instance, I think in the '50s after Korea when there was a tremendous drive, the offiers felt that if they didn't go to Junior School at a certain rank...

Cushman: Well, that's the other side of the coin. It's very easy to slip into what amounts to preselection. If you value these schools too highly on somebodies record and you've got this little selection board that picks guys to go the school, pretty soon they're picking your colonels and majors, you know. So, you can't have that either. You have to sort of go down a thin line in between trying to get as many people educated as you can and making it some sort of ticket punching deal, with the guy just gives up if he doesn't get to go to Quantico.

Frank: General Worton told me that when he was assigned to School, and I guess he was close to General Holcomb or thought he was--of course, they both had been in World War I together, that when he inveighed against the School assignment, General Holcomb told him, "Arthur, don't you know that all your life as an officer is--as a school master, it's only that brief period of time that you're in combat that you're not."

Cushman: I've said that same thing to many young officers, that

you're really going to be a teacher of men, later on, of junior officers, all your life in the Marine Corps--day in day out. Primarily what you're doing is teaching when you're with the troops. You're teaching even when you're on field exercises, you know. And of course, all the formal hours of schooling and regular training schedule is just that, school teacher doing the teaching. So, it's still true today.

Frank: What were your perceptions at Quantico of the post-war changes in Marine Corps organization, equipment, and tactics?

Cushman: I never got in on that. Was that the period of the Hogaboom Board? No, that was later, wasn't it.

Frank: Hogaboom Board was later, yes.

Cushman: I don't recall, oh, I'm sure there was agitation for this change and that based on experience in the war, but I don't remember them. Nothing earth-shaking. It just seems to me the problem of, for example, four companies or three companies in a battalion has been going on forever--four's nice if you have enough men and you can work it with three. But, I just don't recall any great...there may have been some groups and committees working on it, but I wasn't in on it, I wasn't involved and I don't remember anything startling at the time.

Frank: Well, going back to the Pacific again, the tactics that you used at Bougainville or the tactics you used at Guam

and then at Iwo Jima where of necessity different from the tactics that you used at Bougainville, were they not?

Cushman: Oh, not much. Jungle is jungle and the Japs were the Japs and they tended to defend in the same way, mainly prepared, fortified positions. And I'd say, no, the tactics were not different. There wasn't much scope. There was scope for the division commander, perhaps, but the islands were fairly small and we had the organizations we were brought up with, regimental--each with three battalions--battalion each with three companies and a machine gun company and some mortar--there wasn't a hell of a lot different you could do on a small island but drive ahead. And down in the platoons and companies to some extent, they had some room for maneuver, but again, right out of the book.

Frank: Well, in the Pacific and central Pacific didn't the Marine Corps develop some tactics for fighting the fortifications on these coral atolls--the fire team?

Cushman: I don't know, I never came up against a coral atoll, all my fighting was on relatively larger islands than those and islands with terrain features--mountains and stuff like that. Those atolls were just flat sand spits with palm trees and they fashioned these emplacements out of coconut logs, I guess, and concrete, like at Tarawa. I never had any experience with that, except, as I say, I recognized that the emplacement was something that a squad had to be able to take if they weren't

that the Japs were making at that time, and which Roosevelt was screaming about, they were going down to Thailand--I mean, to Singapore, Malaya, and so on. And as I recall, their ships and forces were on the move. And this is where we thought things would happen.

Frank: But, you would go out from Pearl for the week?

Cushman: Two weeks at a crack.

Frank: Two weeks at a crack?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. And we'd stand at general quarters, black the ship out, just one exercise after another.

Frank: Alright, now one of the things we skipped, no we didn't, we talked about Quantico about the training.

Cushman: Yes, and as I say, it didn't last long, just from the fall of 1940 until I went to sea duty six months later or eight months later.

Frank: Now, exactly where were you and what were you doing when the attack came that Sunday?

Cushman: Well, I was, of course, batching it. My wife having stayed on the west coast to have our baby, first one. And I had played poker til about midnight or one o'clock in one of the officer's staterooms.

Frank: You lived aboard ship?

Cushman: Yes, yes, I lived aboard ship. And at a few minutes to eight, I heard general quarters go and I leaped out of my sack because I could also hear a lot of explosions and things going on. The ship was in drydock with the propellers off, so we couldn't move or do anything. And I rushed up to my general quarters station, which was secondary aft, up on the main....

Frank: Do you also call that sky aft?

Cushman: No, that related to antiaircraft guns. Marines didn't man any of those, we manned the secondary battery--the 8-inch guns, I think we had on the second level second deck down from the main deck. And I had the Marines in two compartments waiting to see whether there would be anything we had to do with the secondary battery. Didn't look like it because we could only fire on one side, the other side, of course, was a bunch of buildings. And there wasn't anything to shoot at with 8-inch guns. So then I ordered some of the Marines to assist in passing ammunition to the secondary batteries--I mean to the antiaircraft batteries which were manned by sailors. And about that time, I suppose it was about 8:30, a flight of bombers came over and really unloaded on the Pennsylvania, and the two destroyers in the drydock just ahead of us. I was down on the deck at the time, and that darn thing missed me by about ten feet, went through the deck and blew up a couple of decks down, and my Marines were in that area about one deck below me and one above where the bomb went off. And gee, I lost a lot

just going to hold up and sit in front of it forever. So, we developed tactics to take it. I don't know what the other divisions did or whether they changed tactics. They certainly had a little more room for movement on that sand, whereas, we were hemmed in with a lot of damned jungle in many cases.

Frank: Well, I'm thinking of down at Quantico, the setup of that operation where the fire team and the attack where the flame thrower man and explosive man, that one position there was set up based on the situation that George Hunt found as a commander of Company E on Peleliu, that problem was set up exactly.

Cushman: Well, I had heard of that, but I probably did the same damned thing as an independent invention. When we got to Guadalcanal, I really started training against pillboxes and devising every means I could using every arm we had at our disposal. So, it probably ended up, you know, there are only so many damned maneuvers you can do with fire teams and it probably ended up very similar to what they were doing at Quantico.

We had one problem, as I say, we had to do it mostly from the front because of the jungle inhibiting big sweeping movements and all this and the concealment the jungle gave to the enemy, you might stumble into things that would mess up the whole thing. So, we tended to have shallow flanks attacking a pillbox. I don't remember ever seeing that one in Quantico. I'm sure I

did, but I don't remember.

Frank: They used it when they had those JCOC presentations, Joint Civilian Orientation Conferences--they'd show the helicopter in the attack. I guess this was afterwards, they had this one problem set up....

End Side 2, Tape 2

Begin Tape 2, Side 1, Session III

Frank: You were at, as you mentioned before, sir, at Quantico for three years. Anything particular, besides what we've spoken about that sticks to your mind?

Cushman: No, I think we've covered it pretty well, all the projects that were sort of going on for those of us on the staff. And there was a big effort toward getting the schools running again after the war, almost an hiatus, and a lot of sweat and hard work and late hours went into it.

Frank: Writing manuals and so on.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: In June of '48 you reported to the Office of Chief of Research and Inventions in the Navy Department. Now, is that the--over at the Research Lab, Naval Research Lab?

Cushman: No, they had an office in the Department of the Navy under CNO like the others--it was the office of Naval Research and the actual office was on Constitution Avenue in one of the

old tempos, which was actually--had a little bridge over 17th Street that went into the Navy Annex that was there on Constitution Avenue, the old World War I tempo building which was filled with Navy staff. As a matter of fact, Arleigh Burke was a captain in an office just in that building across the street from where I was, and I helped out with his Operation 23. He was Op-23 and I helped out with some of the work that he was doing. Just again, fringe work, but I got to know him and got to do some things, primarily some paperwork that he couldn't handle and this sort of thing.

Frank: In relation to what?

Cushman: Well, the battle against the Air Force.

Frank: Oh, that was the...that's right, that was Op-23, the revolt of the flat-top admirals.

Cushman: That's right, yes, yes.

Frank: Let's see, Crommlin must have been there too, I guess.

Cushman: Well, there were a lot of people in the effort, but Arleigh Burke just had a little office and he was the Op-23, and I just dropped in and offered to help. I had a budget that I could spring loose a little bit of money for some of his paperwork that he had to pay for or some damned thing. That was how I got into it. I did not do any substantive--preparation of any substantive papers or anything.

That was kind of an interesting job at the Office of Naval Research, primarily, I had a limited amount of money, I had to select projects that would benefit the Marine Corps and the Navy and the Construction Corps which, of course, helped us a lot when we made a landing. I would run out of money quite quickly because I had a very small budget and wasn't given much importance by the Navy, but we did some research on--I can recall particularly soil stabilization, chemicals that could be used to stabilize the sand on a beach and, hopefully, you could hope that you wouldn't have to use all this netting and everything. It never really worked out, but that was the sort of thing that we did.

I had some time on my hands, so I went to law school at night. I got a year of law school, I used to be able to do a bit of my studying in the office. I had several people helping me; Navy, Coast Guard, and some civilian help. And a civilian deputy branch head who was, you know, an honest-to-goodness scientist and who was there all the time providing the continuity and so on. I think I had that job for one year, yes, one year.

Frank: 16 months.

Cushman: Right. And then in 1947, the CIA and the National Security Council had been established by the Defense Act. One of the people--this was 1949--one of the people who was recruited to assist in building up the CIA, which was brand new--they pulled a lot of people from State and they got in some of the

old OSS, which had turned into the intelligence group, and then now the CIA which had been formed, established in '47. This was '49, they were still just getting moving, particularly, on the covert side. So, they drafted into service a millionaire, very interesting guy, millionaire newspaper publisher from Dayton, Ohio who had married the daughter of the Chicago Tribune publisher.

Frank: Oh, McCormick.

Cushman: No, Knox, Frank Knox.

Frank: Oh, Frank Knox, yes.

Cushman: Frank Knox who became Secretary of the Navy. He had been an Army lieutenant in World War I, then he went into the Marine Corps Reserve and by the time of World War II, he was about a Marine colonel or lieutenant colonel in the reserve.

Frank: What was his name?

Cushman: His name was Rock, R-O-C-K. So, he went to his friend from World War I days, Cates, who was then Commandant and said, "I need a good Marine to help me establish this thing I'm supposed to be working on," and so he gave Cushman to Rock and off I went to CIA.

The job was very interesting, it was just getting started. And the covert side of CIA was then divided functionally into psychological warfare and guerrilla warfare and economic war-

fare, this kind of business. So, as active military, I went into the guerrilla, which is what Rock was in charge of as his branch. So, myself and we added some other people and eventually some other military were in the guerrilla warfare business writing booklets and all this kind of stuff on how to be a guerrilla and how to fight a guerrilla. It was quite interesting.

Then they reorganized and changed from functional to geographical a la State Department, and I ended up in the Far East Branch, and that's where I stayed until I left. It was very interesting--we also had a training business going on that I was not directly involved in but had to give some assistance to and in there, we had an Army officer named Pew and an Army officer named Ray Peers and my boss in the Far East Branch was Dick Stillwell. So, there were one, two, three of us ended up with four stars and Ray Peers with three as years went on.

Frank: Where was the training establishment at?

Cushman: I guess it's no...well, I don't know, they still have it. I'll just say it was on Navy land.

Frank: Oh.

Cushman: Anyway, that was interesting duty and I met a lot of people, some of whom I've just mentioned that I've crossed paths with years later. Civilians that I worked with, they're just about all gone-dead or something's happened to them. The ones that aren't were too high up, I didn't really get to know

them. Well, Allan Dulles, I might have met once or twice and that sort of thing. I never did, yes, I think I met Bedell Smith once when he was the Director, so that's the way that tour went. I enjoyed it, but I then got sent to Europe. Korea had started and the CIA was getting into that, but I got word that because of Korea, they're pulling the Marines back, you know, out of CIA. They had several there besides myself. So, I went over to Headquarters, and as I mentioned at lunch, told the detail officer, "I'm packed and ready to go to Korea." So, he said, "Well, you're packed, that's fine and you're ready to go, that's great, but you're going in the other direction. You've already had a war and you got a medal, so you're going to Europe to the Staff of CinCNELM," which is the Commander Naval Forces Mediterranean and--Europe and Mediterranean, I think it was. There I was the Amphibious Plans officer in the War Planning Group; and I enjoyed that pretty much although I also had somewhat of a battle to, of course, preserve the purity of the amphibious Marines versus sticking them in Europe somewhere. But, it wasn't so hard because I was on a Navy staff and the real battles with the people in Europe were from Headquarters and from Erskine, who had CinCLant at the time.

Frank: FMFLant.

Cushman: I mean FMFLant, and of course, they had some say about the plans for the Marines that are suppose to sail over there. That's now they were in it, and I was just on the

fringes doing the best I could off in the Navy Component Commander, which was CinCNELM, and he also had certain independent--like the Navy does, they held out the ships and they sort of ear-marked for NATO, but the Navy could still put them wherever they wanted. So, I could be thinking about landing in Denmark or landing in Sardinia. And we prepared plans, but there was only so much we could do. It was an interesting tour, two years, half of it, almost, was spent in Naples, Italy and little over half in London. We'd been in London about three months when the decision was made to set up NATO-South. And Admiral Carney, who was CinCNELM at the time was told he would have both hats and would proceed forthwith to Naples, set up his headquarters on a command ship that was at dock there and run both--and his NATO staff was ashore--run both commands from there. I stayed on the U.S. Navy staff, some were transferred to NATO, but not I. So, after about 10 months of living in Naples, it was decided by those on high that this was not the best arrangement, and they sent us back on the U.S. Navy side back to London. Sent Jerry Wright to London as CinCNELM and left Carney in Naples as the NATO-South Commander.

Frank: Did you know his son?

Cushman: Yes, yes, brigadier general in the Marine Corps. Right.

This was a period of fun, social life, and travel. We went by car from London to Naples and then back to London with

the family. There were lots of things to see and do, sightseeing and so on. And there wasn't anything really you couldn't take care of in an eight hour day as far as work went. So, it was a pleasant sort of interlude, a European tour that not too many Marines get to have.

Frank: What were you doing actually?

Cushman: Planning, amphibious planning, and sort of fighting for what they wanted. You know, I'd get the word from Headquarters. Like at one point, Shepherd was looking for a training area and I went to Sardinia, went all over that island--there were some good places there for training. I checked North Africa out, did a lot traveling of that kind. I took a trip with Jerry Wright and some of the other staff officers to his area which went all the way to Burma and we went to India and what's now Sri Lanka and we went up to the Khyber Pass to the Afghanistan border and we went down to Djibouti in French Somalia--fascinating trip. And then I made a couple of trips across North Africa--Port Lyantey, which was a Navy base and then on through Tunis and Libya, before we got messed up there. We used to have Wheelus Air Force Base there. So, it was a very interesting tour and professionally, I got in some amphibious planning of a strategic nature. But, it wasn't all that great. The trips that I made were really the most fantastic and the most interesting to me and I learned a lot of geography and that part of the world bordering the Indian Ocean.

Then, while I was packing up to leave Naples and to go to England, again, I somehow cracked my back and herniated a disk. So, the first thing I knew--I got to England alright--but the first thing I knew I couldn't walk after I'd been there several weeks, getting worse everyday and not knowing exactly what was happening. And so, I was turned in by our doctors to a British Army Hospital, which I don't necessarily recommend. The only good thing about it was you got a drink of scotch every night on the hospital. The treatment was that I had to stay in bed on boards and I did for six weeks, and then I got up and had to learn how to walk all over again. In the meanwhile, it had only fixed my back temporarily. As soon as I got limbered up a little, why, it went again. But I stuck it out until the end of my tour, which was in 1953.

Erskine had come over to inspect and talk about plans and I got through that alright, and then I just began to really deteriorate. I got on the ship and stayed in the bed the whole time, got off the ship in New York and told my wife, "Goodby," and she went on back to her home in Portsmouth and I just checked into Bethesda, straight from the boat. Sort of knocked on the front door and said, "Here I am," and of course, they didn't like this, they like some other doctor to admit you. Anyhow, I stayed in there for something like four months. Finally ended up with an operation and sick leave following that and the board of survey which found me okay again. And in January I was ordered to Armed Forces Staff College. Oh, I

forgot to say, we did have a house that we bought before I went to Europe and it was right near the hospital. So, my wife, after touching base at home, she came back and set up housekeeping. We had a tenant in it and that sort of thing. So, I had her to visit everyday and so on while I was there in the hospital. And then I had a rather lengthly convalescent leave--somthing like six weeks or two months long.

Frank: How'd you do it?

Cushman: Just bending over to pick something up. As I recall, I was thinking, well, bend my knees, I need to stretch a little bit. Boy, crack. I found out the doctors have no idea why it happens. They know all the mechanics of it but why it should be weakened and break like that, they don't know, or why that one should break and not the next one.

In any event, the operation was a success, and I went back to duty. First I went through the course at the Armed Forces Staff College and then became an instructor and took charge of the Operations Department, which had--oh, I'll just pick a round number--15 instructors, about a third from each of the departments; that is, the Army and the Air Force and the Navy and myself as a Marine. There was a similar proportion throughout the intelligence department, and so forth--logistics and whatnot. Mine was operations. And I enjoyed that, we did a lot of teaching, we didn't do any text book writing, we did a lot of teaching. And, I had to harness these horses from the

different services to get out our problems and do all our stuff. And it was interesting, I think we put out a good product, did a good job. It's a valuable school, a lot of seminar type work or committee type work, I should say, were they all have to get together, they all have to contribute to plans and come up with workable plans to problems on a joint basis. So, it's a good school, worthwhile and the friendships these people make is very valuable and proved valuable in later years as they crossed paths in the Pentagon or Vietnam or where ever.

After two years of that, two and a half, I finally got back to the FMF. General Shepherd would come down as Commandant to give a lecture to each class as most of the Joint Chiefs did, and so I would importune him, having known him before from the war, as to getting back with the Marine Corps and the Fleet Marine Force. And I pointed out that it had been, oh, something like 11 years, I think, that I hadn't had a fitness report signed by a Marine officer. I'd had from '49, when I went into the CIA, and then the Navy in Europe and then the Armed Forces Staff College, that was '56, so it was '49 to '56. Yes, that I hadn't had a fitness report signed by a Marine. Well, he took pity on me and said, "Okay, you go to the 2d Marine Division." Sure enough, the orders came out in June '56 and off I went and took over--the division commander was nice enough to give me the 2d Marines.

And again, a very interesting period, a lot of field work, and we were working on helicopter tactics in a nuclear environ-

ment. So, we had all kinds of new and different twists that we worked on. Again, I did considerable writing about what we were doing and very enjoyable. And having a regiment was the best part of it all, of course. We had one exciting period where we were loaded out to go to the Suez when the British and the Israelis and the French invaded Egypt to seize the canal. And Eisenhower told them get out and they did, but in the meanwhile, we loaded up, loaded the regiment, and got aboard ship, and we got as far as Norfolk not knowing who we would shoot. If we went to the Suez, you know, we were going to shoot our friends the British or were we going to shoot the Egyptians or who the hell are we going to shoot? Luckily, we didn't have to go. We were stopped in Norfolk, kept there for a while, then sent back. We unloaded and all was peace and quiet again.

Frank: When did you make colonel?

Cushman: Oh, I made colonel while I was in CIA. Again, I had to take a promotion exam, 1950 and passed the promotion exam after selection and made colonel, 1950. And I can't remember if I had to wait a long time because I was in CIA and not wearing a uniform, so between selection and passing the exam, and when I actually put the eagles on, you know, it might have been six or seven months. I don't remember.

Okay, we got back from Norfolk, unloaded the ships, and the 2d Marines, and life went on as usual until--oh, I don't know, I guess it was about January of '57--and I suddenly got

a message--gee, I think it was at lunch--"Get up here and see the Commandant tomorrow morning."

Frank: That was Pate.

Cushman: Pate, right.

Frank: Who commanded the division when you had it?

Cushman: Oh, the old-timer who had been a prisoner of war the whole damned war.

Frank: Sam Howard?

Cushman: No, no, graduated from St. Johns.

Frank: Oh, Beau Ridgely.

Cushman: Beau Ridgely, right, fine gentleman. I don't think he was a great Marine general, but he was a nice guy and good to work for. But, somebody with the rank of major general having missed the entire World War II even though he went through that class and I helped teach him, just wasn't up to what the others were who had gone through that. Anyhow, wasn't his fault and he was a fine gentleman, he was a good division commander. He gave me a regiment and then he picked my regiment to go to the Suez, so I couldn't have been happier because I was the only one that loaded out, as I recall.

I frantically scrambled around, got a goddamned train ticket, got on the train, and got up to Washington. I'll never

forget, I got up there and found out that damned winter had descended on the place compared to where I had left, and I had to run and buy an overcoat--I nearly froze to death--which I did and got over at the appointed time, 10 o'clock or whatever it was, at the Commandant's office. And he called me in and--no, by golly, that was the day he came rushing out the door having to go somewhere else, saw me, and I said, "You asked me to see you, General." And he said, "Oh, they're looking for an officer from any service to be aide to the Vice-President." [Nixon] And he said, "We're sending your name over and you better win it and get the appointment or go over the hill," with just a slight smile. So, at that he's going double time down the corridor.

Frank: Had you known Pate before?

Cushman: No. Oh, I'd met him, yes, I'd met him. But, you know, we never served together.

Frank: Right.

Cushman: No, I didn't know him. And so, I said, "Yes, sir," and off I went to the first step in this which was to be interviewed by Admiral Radford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And I went over there and there was supposed to be somebody from each service. Well, I represented the Marine Corps and had a fine record and everything. The Navy apparently didn't care about it, an old friend of mine claimed that he was offered the

appointment but he gave it up, didn't want it, and therefore, he's responsible for all my success. You may know him, Bill Mott.

Frank: Yes, I've heard the name.

Cushman: The judge advocate, formerly, now retired. And used to live in my corridor when I was a midshipman.

Anyhow, the Air Force sent a major and I never did know who the Army sent. You know, if anybody, they apparently weren't really fighting for the job. Only the Marine Corps sent somebody of a caliber to really fight for the job. And so, I passed the interview with Admiral Radford. The Air Force guy also was accepted, he was a major, he was accepted as aide, and I was accepted to be whatever the Vice-President wanted to have me do. My next step was to go over and the first thing was to get interviewed by Rosemary Woods. If you didn't get by that, you could just tell immediately you were going to be in trouble with the final interview. Well, the Air Force guy became one of my very best friends and recently retired with three stars, named Don Hughes. Anyhow, we both got by the young lady in good style and then were interviewed by the Vice-President and he okayed it. So, we set to work with no instructions, no precedents, no anything, and hardly any office.

At first Hughes and myself were both sort of put to work as an aide. The trip to Africa was coming off in two weeks, so I was to operate as aide and Don Hughes as aide to take care of

the press, and he rode the plane that had all the reporters in it. And I rode in the plane with the Vice-President and his wife and the staff members. God, what a fantastic trip through the middle of Africa. As aide, I'd have to get him these presents, write letters. We went into some places in Africa where they have characters in witch-doctor's mask who'd jump out of the bushes with a presento and some unpronouncable name like "Ugodogodog" and I actually got all this down and wrote letters to them. And also, of course, the leaders of the country that we met. It was a very interesting trip.

We started in Morocco then went to Liberia, cut across the waist of Africa to Entebbe, which is now--was Idi Amin's area, but then was British....

Frank: Uganda.

Cushman: Right, Uganda, well, it's still is Uganda, isn't it? Yes, that's right. But anyway, it was then still under the British. From there we went to the Sudan, Khartoum and Omdurman--very interesting. Then we went to Ethiopia and I got in on all the State dinners, being the aide, dressed all up in fancy uniform and....

Frank: All the aigulettes and so on.

Cushman: Everything, yes. Particularly interesting was the dinner at the Royal Palace in Addis Ababa--the silver and everything was gold, the service was gold, food fantastic.

Frank: Western cooking or native type?

Cushman: No, no, French.

Frank: French cuisine.

Cushman: Yes. And the lady on my left was the wife of the Czechoslovakian ambassador, and my Czechoslovakian was zilch and she spoke no other language, so it made for some quiet eating on my part--wasn't anybody I could talk to--I've forgotten who was on my right.

So, it was still very interesting. I got to sort of talk substantive business, the Vice-President called me in, wanted me to talk with the military about--we were giving them aid in those days--listen to their cries for more. And so, I started to sort of work into that area. We then went to Tunis and I think that was the end except to drop in on Rome and they had an audience with the Pope and then back home again. I believe that was the entire itinerary. But it sort of cemented me in with the staff and the group and the Vice-President and his wife and gave me sort of a head start. We all worked like hell from six in the morning until midnight.

Frank: Tell me about Mr. Nixon. What kind of person is he?

Cushman: Well, I was discovering that when I joined his staff and got to work with him, I liked him very much. He had a lawyer's approach to problems; that is, pragmatic and he had the intellect to cut right to the central issue. He was kind of, in

a way, a shy man. Kind of surprising to think of him pressing the flesh and everything.

Frank: Private person?

Cushman: I don't think he ever really enjoyed that part of politiking. Oh, he was talkative enough, you know, in a conversation and so on. He's mostly all work, a very hard worker and very intelligent, so there wasn't a lot of small talk, even if you go to lunch or something, you know, mostly business.

Frank: A lot of people characterize him as a sneeky, sleazy, furtive type of individual. Of course, those are his enemies, but psycho-portraits, psycho-historical portraits--poor toilet training....

Cushman: Oh, no, no way. No, no. He was different as President, and I found him as Vice-President.

Frank: You did?

Cushman: Yes. Vice-president, I was a great admirer, all for him to become President and I really respected his brain, plus all the hard homework. I've seen him stand up for two hours at a banquet with nothing but the editors, you know, that yearly meeting that they have, Association of Editors and top correspondents are in on it to, I think, firing questions at him on everything from domestic policy to foreign policy when he was Vice-President and boy, he'd just rattled it right off and answered

every damned thing. And I was the most surprised man in the world to witness the debate between him and Kennedy and have Kennedy come out on top. If you listened to a tape and didn't watch anything, it didn't sound like Kennedy came out on top, but combined with his photogenic personality, why of course he did. And I don't what happened to Nixon, he banged his knee and then he got nervous, he always looked like hell, anyway, in the lights.

Frank: Beads of sweat, heavy beard.

Cushman: Yes, heavy beard, shaved twice a day. Anyway, I admired him as Vice-President. I enjoyed working for him, did so for four years.

After that first trip, I was in charge of planning all foreign trips in coordination with the State Department, and this was an interesting job, because we'd pick out what he wanted to see and do and he disliked the State Department intensely, and I had to carry all the cudgels, you know, to beat them on the head and get things done the way he wanted them done. They always wanted to do something different, usually milk-toast approach to everything.

And then, probably one of the damnedest assignments I ever had was when we went to Russia.

Frank: The time of the kitchen debate with Khrushchev?

Cushman: Yes, but even before that was the fact that Rickover

was invited to come. We got permission for him to look at the atomic ice-breaker, the nuclear ice-breaker which was up in Leningrad. And if he wasn't something. As far as I was concerned, he was a disgrace to a naval officer's uniform. He shows up to accompany the Vice-President on this trip to international capitals representing our country, and he shows up with one of these cardboard suitcases you can buy in the old days at Woolworth's for a buck and a half. That's just the way he was. In any event, I was told by the Vice-President, who rapidly got sick and tired of him, "Keep him happy." Of course, that's the most impossible assignment I was ever given, and I never kept him happy, but at least I kept him from talking to the Vice-President. Whenever he called in irate--he's always irate--they'd pass the call over to me. And I'd soothe him down.

We went over to Russia on that same trip, and I recall I had to stay upstairs, but I could look over the balcony at the reception with Khrushchev and the Vice-President, and Rickover was down there, I just happened to look down, here he is going like this at Khrushchev's chest telling him something, which of course, I couldn't understand, being too far away, couldn't overhear. I thought Khrushchev was going to hit him one. Anyway, he just got rid of him. But what a character.

We had another time when I did attend a dinner party at the American Embassy--Ambassador's residence--and we had T.Y., C. Y.--Eliott....?

Frank: T.S. Eliott.

Cushman: No, no, no, this is Y--middle initial Y, famous educator from Harvard.

Frank: Oh, William Yandale Elliott, political scientist.

Cushman: Yes, he was along and....

Frank: This was about the time, well....

Cushman: Well, he came on the trip because Nixon asked him to. He was a great favorite of Nixon's.

Frank: He was a conservative, as a matter of fact.

Cushman: Yes, they liked to bounce each other intellectually, back and forth. Anyway, we were sitting at dinner with Rickover holding forth on education. So, Elliott reminds him that he's a naval officer and doesn't know a goddamned thing about education whereas he, William Y. Elliott, has spent his liftime in education and he'd now proceed to tell Rickover where he was wrong, which he did. And Nixon sits at the end of the table saying, "That's the way, go at it you two guys, go at it." It was quite a debate, but that was typical Rickover, you know.

When I was Commandant, about every month he'd call me up and tell me what's wrong with the Marine Corps and what I ought to be doing, you know, and I'd say, "Thanks," and hang up. He still had so much power that you couldn't insult him or he'd take it out on you, you know, up in the Congress when it came budget time. The happiest thing, I think, for the naval service

was when he was forced to retire. He'd just been there too long, wielded too much power.

Frank: The Navy owed him a lot though.

Cushman: I'm not sure. (Laughs) I've talked to a lot of naval officers, I'm not so sure what they owe him.

Frank: The general opinion is that he dragged the Navy hollering and screaming into the atomic energy age.

Cushman: I don't know. There's no question but what his approach probably got some things done faster, but I've talked to others who say he's no more the father of the nuclear submarine than the man in the moon, and named the other people that actually had, you know, the real stuff to do. Whereas, Rickover was the irascible son-of-a-bitch that managed to cut some red tape and that sort of thing and do some arguing. No question they owe him something, but not as much as he makes out, I'm convinced. Well, he's just a bad influence. What was it, three years ago the Naval Academy was forced by him to provide young officers to the nuclear program whether they wanted to or not, whereas, before it had always been a volunteer.

Frank: Yes, volunteer.

Cushman: Some of his interviews were just insulting. Well, you've probably read Elmo Zumwalt's and some of them were worse than that.

Frank: Yes, I've read it.

Cushman: He wanted to know about the guys sexual habits, and you know, home life with his wife--all kinds of insulting goddamned things. It's a wonder somebody hadn't slugged him long before he had to get out. Anyhow, that's an aside. But, I did brush up against him those two times, as Commandant and as working for Mr. Nixon.

Frank: Were you made part of the Nixon family with Mrs. Nixon and the girls or did he strictly separate his political life?

Cushman: No, I was always friendly, there were a few social occasions, but their social occasions generally didn't have much of the staff. You know, official U.S. business, and occasionally they would have something at their home and invite members of the staff and so on. I was friendly with them, but not as much as Rosemary Woods who had come up from the days when he was a Senator, and you know, had helped babysit the kids and everything else in the early days. I wasn't on that kind of basis with them, no. I knew the children and they knew me to say hello. I doubt they if they remember me now, they're grown up. Mrs. Nixon knew me because I had to take care of her and the Vice-President when they're aboard the plane. But in the course of, you know, week-in, week-out I'd never see her. And I would see the Vice-President fairly often, but things got busier and busier as he approached the time he ran for President

in 1960. And it got to be where I would only see him occasionally. He moved from the office next to where my office was in the old Senate office building, he moved to an office over in the capitol building. And Rosemary Woods and some of his staff moved over there and I stayed back. In the meanwhile, they filled up all the empty spaces with the political types and so on that were helping him do his campaign, prepare to run. So, I did most of my work by memo in those days, and then when a crunch would come, I'd go over and see him. I had a lot of memo writing because in a typical day, I'd receive the intelligence--I'd get down there about 6 o'clock in the morning, the office opened at 9--a guy from CIA would come over about 6:30 or 7:00 with the intelligence and I would brief it and get on the typewriter and bang out a memo relating to the day's intelligence. I would digest it and consolidate it, shorten it. And that would go over to him. And then all kinds of damned paperwork in which I would make recommendations. These might be problems that the Security Council is wrestling with or domestic problems, I'd stick my oar in. All kinds of times people would write him letters and I would get the letters to answer and to make recommendations to him as to the answer. I finally got to where he allowed me to write letters and sign his name without him even seeing them, if it wasn't a matter of policy that hadn't been decided or was sort of this way. I planned all the foreign trips, I was liaison to the government committee--I mean the President's Committee on Govern-

ment Contracts, of which he was the chairman and I was sort of the legman. All these committees had executive directors which stayed there all the time, had an office somewhere else, and I would run back and forth.

Frank: Yes, sure.

Cushman: And in one case, had to fire the guy. Anyway, the President's Committee on Physical Fitness, the President's Committee on Government Contracts--and I was also the liaison and legman on speeches that he would write and he'd say run over and get the Secretary of State to okay this or run over and get the Secretary of Labor to okay this. So, I soon learned my way all around town, and I also learned the Brotherhood of Executive Assistants which later was one of my titles. The other was Assistant for National Security Affairs. As executive assistant, I had to do all this kind of liaisoning and I found that every cabinet member had--and many others--had executive assistants and they all worked late, they all could get an answer from the boss because they could walk in and out and that this is the way business got done. And I learned that fairly soon and before long got to....

End Side 1, Tape 2

Begin Side 2, Tape 2

Frank: ...and that's the way you operated on these things.

Cushman: Yes, to get things done, you know, if I wanted to get an okay from the Secretary of the Labor or to see what he's thinking about this.

Frank: You know who to go to.

Cushman: Yes, I'd know who to go to, practically into the middle of the night, you know.

Frank: Were they assiduously clear--on the time he was running for President--keeping you out of anything political?

Cushman: Yes, oh well, I couldn't have stayed there if I hadn't been a Republican because there weren't a lot of walls. They have these half--like they had over in the Pentagon for years, I mean in the Marine Corps Headquarters, for all I know they still have some--sort of half way walls of plexiglass with a wood bottom. And I sat right next to the political guy, when I first got there, it was sort of the two of us. I was in charge of everything non-political, the guy in the next cubicle was in charge of everything political. And hell, he had guys running in and out of there, you know, all day long and I could--if I wanted to--overhear everything that was being said. So, just from point of view of having a spy in the organization, you know, if I'd been a Democrat I'd have lost....

Frank: Did they ask you?

Cushman: No, they never asked me. But, it just would have

become evident, unless you were completely apolitical--I never was in that I had always had, you know, preferences and policies that I would vote for. I often thought of that, I would have had a hard time if I'd been a Democrat.

Frank: Well, would you have been as happy working for a Mr. Rockefeller or some of the Republicans who were not as conservative?

Cushman: Oh, sure, yes, I wasn't that doctrinaire, but I would have been very uncomfortable later as I got to know--working for say Kennedy, JFK, who was right across the hall at his Senate office. A real liberal like that or like Teddy Kennedy, no, I couldn't have stood it. I would have had to withdraw or never have accepted it in the first place. There was that advantage, I knew what I was getting into, in a way, as far as ideology went before I ever got interviewed by Admiral Radford.

Frank: Had you been of the other political stripe you would have had to be honest and tell them that.

Cushman: I think probably. Luckily, I never came to that, I don't know what I would have done. Well, through the country I can do it, you know. But the way the offices were set up would have made it kind of difficult not to over hear what the hell was going on, and if there was something I really hadn't liked, that would have been a problem.

Frank: Your conscience.

Cushman: Yes, whether to pull out and ask for relief or not. But, it never came up.

Most enjoyable tour and very interesting, got to meet people and do things, you know, that Marine officers never would. Maybe it later years, but I was the first one, there weren't any other jobs like this.

Frank: Did you go down to Chile with him or South America that time.

Cushman: Yes, yes, I went to South America, I planned that trip. We knew bad times were coming, we had all the intelligence that the Communist were laying for us. And they started the first country we went to and it just got better coordinated and worse each sucessive place we went. They had time to learn the lessons and get the word to the next place and we finally got to Venezuela and in Caracas, it was terrible. We landed at the airport and they spit on him from balconies, he had to go underneath to get out of the airport. We got in the cavalcade--I was in about the sixth car with Rosemary Woods--and oh, they came screaming at us. Looked like something out of CHIPS, the TV show, where they have the chases on motorcylces and automobiles. Anyway, they started harassing us, cutting in and out of the motorcade with automobiles on the way up from the airport--up that great big hill to Caracas. And we got to--the first stop was supposed to be to lay a wreath at the Piazza de Margarite in Caracas. Well, we didn't even get there. The

Communists had a truck pull out in front of the cavalcade and stop and that blocked us, stopped the cavalcade, and they immediately came pouring out of the streets, out of the buildings and everything on both sides and started banging the cars with rocks and sticks and jumping them up and down. It was bad, you know, it looked like this was it. And these hate filled faces with rocks, gee, you never saw anything like it, and you're so helpless. I didn't even have a sidearm.

Well, the Secret Service got out of the lead car where the Vice-President was--I think his wife was either with him or in the second car--they got out and without firing any shots, shouldered these guys away from the Vice-President, got the doggone truck out of the way, and got back into the car, and we started to move again just in time. My car, some clown with a brick, big rock, had busted the glass on Rosemary Woods' side, left side, and just showered her with glass splinters and I grabbed her and put her on my lap and bent over to shield her from this business and just about then we got moving.

So, we got out of there. As an aside, one of the most pleasurable moments in my career was to go back there as Commandant of the Marine Corps and lay a wreath at the Piazza de Margarite, the very same place that we never made that day. And I thought that I was doing that for a sort of revenge for what they did to us.

After that horrible time, we sort of took shelter in the Embassy and all hell was breaking loose. God, I think Eisenhower

alerted the Marines and the airborne, and they were getting ready to move. And about this time we got the word back to Washington that we were safe and were in the American Embassy, and all of this had subsided, and what we were going to do about it. Well, Nixon called in the head of the junta. I think his name was--what a name for a Venezuelan--I think his name was Admiral Wolfgang Larazable, something like that. He was the head of a five-man junta, if my memory serves. First, Nixon sent for him, the guy came, and Nixon made him wait for an hour, then called him in and just chewed him out from top to bottom and sideways for an hour in every kind of language you could think of--because it was their fault. They knew all about this and that it was coming, but they didn't want to make any Communist mad, so the police never even answered the call. They were right alongside on their motorcycles while all this damned beating on the cars was going on. They never did a damned thing. So, Nixon was just furious. They had nothing but these guys, nobody in reserve, no police protection, no military protection, so he really chewed him out. And then we went to a different place, got on the plane--a field under military control over by their fabulous officers club--we got on the plane and we went to Puerto Rico and the boss said, "Take the night off and relax." We were all in the Hilton, we had a sumptuous dinner, a bunch of drinks, and just relaxed and unwound and the next morning went back to Washington. But that was some trip. As I say, we had minor versions of this

in every city. Lima was terrible, gee, they threw rocks at him, stones. He went to speak at the school, which was a hot bed of damned young communists. They sort of besieged the hotel.

On his later trips, I used to stay in the hotel and run a headquarters operations, messages in-messages out, all that kind of stuff--communications. So, I wasn't with him on these things. Don Hughes was, he was by his side all the time along with the Secret Service. But, of course, I got all the word about what was happening, and he had a bad time in Lima, Quito, I don't recall such a bad time, and La Paz wasn't so bad. Christ, nobody can breath in La Paz, I don't know how in the hell they could mount a Communist demonstration--I suppose they could. And we had some problems in Buenos Aires, lesser problems in Montevideo, where we stopped first. But quite a trip.

Frank: This was when, 5--?

Cushman: '59, I think. I think it was '59.

Frank: '59.

Cushman: So, made another trip to London to dedicate the Eisenhower Chapel. Short trip of a few days, nice trip. I planned that one, I planned the Russian trip, did not plan the African trip. But, I soon found out on that trip--my first one--what the Vice-President thought of the State Department. Already he

was sending for me and telling me to tell the Ambassador off. Of course, surprised the hell out of me. And gee, I got hold of one in his pajamas, had to tell him how the Vice-President felt about his performance. So, he said he used me for a little bit of a hatchetman. Another time, he wanted an immediate message sent back to the Secretary of State, who was Foster Dulles, concerning the performance of duties of some poor guy--I think he was the ambassador in the capital we were in--and I had to drive 50 miles in the middle of the night where the plane was, in Siberia--the damned airport 50 miles from town, to send the message. The plane had the only communication gear I could use and still keep it secret from the Ambassador. So, this kind of beginning to do this kind of thing from early on, right from the start.

Frank: Was he being vindictive or was it actually....

Cushman: No, he just couldn't stand their wishie-washie statements and lack of spine. A lot of ambassadors, as you may know, get to these countries--and the Foreign Service ones particularly, not so much the political ones--and you'd think they were representing that country. They don't want any fuss, don't want any waves, they just do whatever the host-country wants them to, practically. And if they're told to take a firm stand, well, they'll sort of say the words, but there isn't any firm stand. A lot of them are just terrible. One thing, Nixon did change. Some of these guys--the one that I had to write

the message on--he had not been back to the States for something like 20 years. He went back to Roosevelt, the New Deal, and all this stuff, and that's all he knew of the United States. Every time he had a vacation, he'd go to Europe, and the rest of the time, he's kicking around Africa or somewhere and never went back to the States for some 20 years. Nixon made that trip in 1957--and he hadn't been back there for some 20 years. And he was just so out of tune, you could tell. He just couldn't represent our country under those circumstances, so the boss set about getting him fired.

Frank: Now, did you go to Japan, no, that was Eisenhower that went to Japan?

Cushman: Well, before I got there, to the Vice-President's office, which was the beginning of the second administration of Ike's--the first administration had seen Nixon go to Asia. And you're right, I did later go to Japan and couldn't land, we had to pull them out. And Nixon went all over southeast Asia and I just missed my trip, I wasn't on duty with him at the time. But they learned a lot of lessons from the trip and I profited by those. The trips were not nearly as well organized, they were more harum-scarum, more dropped shoes, and one thing and another. I found from talking to Rosemary and others...they sort of left the planning to the Secret Service who had a hell of a lot of other things to do to protect the President as opposed to fighting with the State Department and the foreign

embassies and one thing and another, trying to get an itinerary ironed out. So, a lot of dropped shoes occurred on those trips, apparently.

Frank: Did you get to know Eisenhower, get to see much of him?

Cushman: No, no. I got to know--I met him several times, but you know, going through the line. I think I met him once in the White House when I was talking with somebody on his staff. No, I got to know members of the staff fairly well, quite a few, that were in the same business I was in. I also had to liaison--besides the committees I was talking about--liaison with the planning groups. I could set up a highly formal structure for the NSC, what they called the Policy Planning Board, and theoretically, was to work beautifully with the NSC as to signing, it would come down to the planning board and they translate it into a plan, and then point the finger at this and that and the other department to carry out this and that part of it and report back, and you know, all this. Of course, nothing ever worked perfectly, but all these groups met and the Vice-President was supposed to be--he was--a member of each and I represented him--not on the NSC which was above my level, but on the Policy Planning Board. And I got to know a lot of people there because this was composed of people from every agency--Defense, CIA, and the Vice-President. And they had a little staff, permanently worked on the agenda and all that stuff--writing up the

orders when the decisions were made. So, this was very interesting. And Ike's intelligence aide was General Goodpastor. I got to be good friends with him. In fact, he later on came to Vietnam and then still later was over in Europe. Fine gentleman, fine officer, highly cerebral, very intelligent.

Frank: He was involved with the unification fight from the Army side and was very much anti-Marine Corps.

Cushman: I don't know, maybe.

Frank: He was one of the brains.

Cushman: Yes, he might have been.

Frank: Did you get the feeling that Eisenhower treated Nixon as Rupertus treated Shepherd and treated his ADCs?

Cushman: Did what?

Frank: Did Eisenhower treat Nixon as Vice-President as Rupertus treated his ADCs? I've heard that was the case.

Cushman: Oh, I don't know how Rupertus treated his ADCs.

Frank: Well, I thought we'd discussed--no, I guess, no, I discussed it with General Gayle. He treated them like 2d lieutenants. Had them set up their own staffs and have their own messes and so on. They were not really--he treated them as though they were not really part of the....

Cushman: I'll be darned. I didn't know Rupertus very well. I knew him, but....

Frank: No, that's right, I tend to get my interviews mixed here, but that was the case.

Cushman: Well, I don't really know. Ike always maintained that he had respect for the abilities of the Vice-President. He stood with him when the great attack was made on him.

Frank: Checkers case.

Cushman: Something about his fund out in California. He stood by him. I heard criticism from the staff of the Vice-President directed at Ike's chief of staff. They didn't like him worth one cent.

Frank: Who was that at that time?

Cushman: That governor of New Hampshire, that got mixed up with vicuna coats.

Frank: Oh, yes, yes.

Cushman: Sherman?

Frank: Sherman Adams.

Cushman: Right, Sherman Adams, who was a very rough, cold, zero personality type. You know, one of these who wouldn't even say hello on the telephone, he was wasting his time. He

apparently didn't like Nixon and I think may have--now, this is hearsay--may have sparked some of the problems that Nixon had on the campaign train, was advocating that they throw him off. But, Ike stood by him.

Frank: You weren't on the campaign?

Cushman: No, I never went on a campaign being non-political.

Frank: That's right, yes.

Cushman: I had to do some work during the campaign. If he would make a speech that had defense information or State Department information or points that he was making, I would ordinarily have to get research done on it and make sure it was accurate. And a couple of times I had to get on a plane and take it to him in time for him to use it in his speech. But, it was non-political as far as the substance matter was concerned--being put to political use.

Let's see, where were we?

Frank: Did he ever complain to you that....

Cushman: Oh, you were asking me about the relationship with the White House and the Nixon staff, I think it's been this way throughout history, at least since Nixon who was a Vice-President with substantive duties and things to do as opposed to say Garner, who played pocker and drank bourbon, probably a little back door, smoke-filled room politiking, but nothing substantive.

And I think since Nixon, it's been true that relationship between the two staffs have never been very good, any vice-president in the White House. Whether the President and the Vice-President personally love each other or not, the staffs don't. White House staff sees itself as all seeing and all wisdom, all knowing, and the boss. They don't much care for the Vice-President's staff because they feel that the Vice-President is always ambitious, wanting to cut things out from under him and take over. So, since the one staff doesn't like the other, it's reciprocated and there's never too good feelings between them.

In my case, I had good relationships with people in the White House that I had to work with, Max Rabb, was Secretary of the Cabinet--now the ambassador in Italy; Ed Gleason; and oh, I God I can't remember this guy's name, anyway, they ran the Planning Board. I was good friends with them. Goodpastor, I was good friends with him, and the naval aide, captain who later made rear admiral--aviator--I was on good terms with him. So, I got along fine, but when it came to the political boys, the Vice-President's staff, and say Sherman and some of the other characters, the relationships weren't that good.

Frank: Well, apparently it's been the same always because during Vice-President Humphrey's tour, came over to the Marine Corps and asked for a Marine Corps aide, someone to brief him. And I forget, I think it was General Beckington may have been the one who went there.

Cushman: Yes. He did, that's who it was.

Frank: It's like the old story that Alvin Barkley once told about the widow lady who had two sons, one was a captain and was lost at sea, and the other became Vice-President and he was never heard of again, either.
(Laughter)
And I compared, paralleled the relationship of the Vice-President or Nixon to Eisenhower as Rupertus to his ADCs who just treated them like dirt in a way.

Cushman: I don't think Eisenhower did, no. We felt that he didn't give the support he should have when Nixon was a candidate. Ike maintains that he did, and that it was an entirely facetious remark that takes two weeks and try to think of something that he'd done, you know, when he was asked that question. He was obvious, it was joke because the Vice-President was busy all the time. But it sure wasn't, it really hurt Nixon because the press just played it up as though this was a serious accusation. Ike denies later that he had any such intention, but he did the damage. But, as far as I know, personally they got along. At least from our end of it, Nixon handled himself superbly when Ike had his heart attack and I think the press recognized it, even the press that hated Nixon recognized it. And Nixon gave the impression that the President didn't like him and respect his abilities. You know, liking in politics may not even exist, but respect is what you usually find.

Frank: Did you perceive of Nixon being Presidential timber when....?

Cushman: Yes, yes. I was pulling for him, voted for him, I certainly did, yes. I think he'll be rated as much better than people think. I think he was great in international affairs, he wasn't as good in domestic, but we didn't have the domestic problems then that we have right now. He certainly knows the Communists and how to deal with them. Oh, I think he had presidential timber and I'm just disappointed in what happened when he became President.

Frank: Did you have a feeling in this assignment, went on for four years, that you were losing something by it vis a vis the Marine Corps?

Cushman: No, I got selected for brigadier about 195--the same year I joined--1957. It took a year to make my number, put the stars on in 1958. Kept right on wearing the civilian clothes. The Vice-President was not fond of the military.

Frank: He wasn't?

Cushman: No, he didn't dislike them like he did the State Department, but he wouldn't let me wear a uniform since the first trip when I was his aide, more or less had to. And he often hollered about waste, duplication, this sort of thing. Gee, he had me give him a list of missiles one day, and he blew his stack, you know, everybody had the same goddammed kind of

missile about three of them, and just wasting millions of dollars. This sort of thing just drove him up the wall.

Frank: Did you get selected in time, or were you deep-selected for BG?

Cushman: No, I was never deep-selected for anything.

Frank: In other words, so you don't think there was any Vice-Presidential influencing in your selection?

Cushman: Well, I figured the board would look pretty stupid, because I saw the fitness reports I got from the Vice-President of the United States, it'd look pretty goddamned stupid to pass me over.

Frank: To pass you over.

Cushman: And my record up to that point was good. So, I figured that I sort of had a walk on it, but you never know for sure. Boards can sometimes be strange, independent. But, outside of that, the Vice-President gave me a nice fitness report, but did nothing else. No behind the scenes phoning or anything like that.

Frank: Nothing like that Secretary of Defense Wilson did for Carey Randall, that was out-and-out obvious interference.

Cushman: No, no. Yes, loobying. No, no, he didn't, I wouldn't have asked him and I don't know that he would have done it.

Probably not.

Frank: No, no. Did you keep close relationship with the Marine, with Headquarters Marine Corps?

Cushman: Yes, I sure did. Having Carey Randall as example before me and being inclined anyway to be more loyal, I'll say I guess, to the Marine Corps, keep them advised on things that might be of interest to them. There weren't all that many, but what I did was arrange to come over to Headquarters to the Commandant's briefing when I could make it, which was once a week. And this kept me abreast of what the problems were at Headquarters, what was going on. There rarely was anything that came up in the Vice-President's business that I needed to tell Headquarters. Once in awhile, maybe, some rumbling and service rivalry over something would surface, but he just wasn't mixed up much in the ins-and-outs of the Pentagon. The larger view, defense policy, he was, but you know, that didn't really translate into things I had to run over to the Marine Corps forthwith.

Frank: Did the Marine Corps try to use you as a viaduct for anything?

Cushman: Yes, occasionally, yes. Occasionally they had something.

Frank: Such as?

Cushman: Well, there is always fights going on over what

service would have some of the big jobs, and it seems to me they touched base with me a few times on something in that nature. But, I never did much with it, you know, it's just not the way to operate as far as I was concerned. The Vice-President had no immediate first-hand either knowledge or way to do it, to try to dabble in that kind of stuff. I recall one of his constituents and I guess an old-time friend who wrote endless letters trying to get the Vice-President to make him Judge Advocate of the Navy. He was a lawyer and a Naval Reserve officer, if I recall, and I think he had a lot of active duty. But I could tell, the Vice-President was real peeved, he couldn't turn him off with an angry reply because he's an old friend and supporter and all that, but I had to send some answers that were diplomatic, but no, no. So, I could tell that if I did anything like that he wouldn't like it.

And that's about the only thing. I don't remember clearly or anything about it, except that I think there were a couple of positions being filled that the Marine Corps had an interest in and wanted to know if I could do anything about it. I think I just told them, "No, but if there's an opportunity, I'll stick my oar in," but I don't think I was ever able to.

Frank: Did General Pate ever use you personally for a viaduct for anything?

Cushman: No, no. No, I never got to see Pate much. Hogaboom was a good friend of mine and still is. He was chief of staff,

yes, I'm pretty sure he was chief of staff. I don't think Jerry Thomas was yet. So, he's the guy I'd liaison with.

Frank: Jerry Thomas had been chief of staff.

Cushman: Oh, he'd already gone to Quantico, I guess.

Frank: He had already, he had gone to Quantico, and he was retired by this time.

Cushman: Yes, Hogaboom, that's right, Hogaboom was the chief of staff.

Frank: General Shoup had one year as Commandant when you were there. What were your relations with General Shoup?

Cushman: As little as possible.

Frank: We want to get it in later about the problems that you had with him later on.

Cushman: Yes, yes. I never liked him and....

Frank: You'd known him before?

Cushman: No, but I sure knew his reputation and I never liked him, so I just....

Frank: Made your manners so to speak.

Cushman: Made my manners and continued to come over to briefings, some of which were brutal, boy, the blood thick on the floor from

way he conducted them. And I was just out of the line of fire, he never wanted me to do anything, so....Then, when he lost the election, I sort of figured if he won it, I'd go on to the White House for a starter anyway and, perhaps, relieve Goodpastor, something of that kind, and maybe get into the national security field. In any event, he was defeated, so the morning of the 21st of January I was out of a job, but I actually had been over to Headquarters and requested...my wife found out later and I thought she was going to hit me with something--requested Okinawa as the ADC and I got it. Shoup said okay. So, I went over there, I was ADC til September. I got over there in March, I was ADC til September, when Don Weller, the division commander was transferred and they meanwhile, just about the same time I made major general, so they gave me the division.

And then, my goddamned troubles really started.

Frank: Let's talk about your tour under Don Weller as assistant division commander. This was in the early days, a lot of contingency planning for operation southeast Asia. Don Weller had that joint task force, Vic Croizat, I think, was chief of staff of.

Cushman: Yes, gee, was he still....anyhow, I took the task force, right after I'd gotten there, I took the task force down to the Philippines. We'd drawn up all the plans to land at the Vientiane airport and take over the town and the airport, of course, and then operate from there to get Laos on the side of

the west, having been beat up and bargained for by Hannaman and I don't know who else, and given it to the Communists. Anyhow, the orders never came but we sat there and trained in the Philippines just on the fringes of Clark Air Force--well, within the boundaries of Clark Air Force Base--but on the fringes of the field, out in the damned jungle.

I was lucky because I could get into the officers club swimming pool with my jeep, and got a little swimming in. But, we worked hard at it. I used to have 4 am hikes and head-out with them and all this stuff. But, I was the only one in the task force with any troops. The troops landed at the Navy airfield at Cubi Point and settled in down there and all these damned staffs were piled up out in the jungle--I had a pretty good size headquarters company, those are the people I went hiking with in the jungle there. We had Harkins, who was three star and his chief of staff was Dick Weede who was a Marine, and then we had me as the task force commander and under me was some regimental commander, I think. And we actually had a battalion of troops that was down from Okinawa--I came down with them. So, we had the plans all laid, but we never executed it. And after a couple of months, I think it was, we went back home to Okinawa.

About that time, when I got there, I noticed my jeep driver was having a lot of trouble keeping his jeep running. And I said, "What in the hell is the matter?" He said, "Well, I have to buy my spark plugs down at the filling station." I said, "You're kiddin?" "No," he said, "I can't get any spark plugs from the

supply system, so I buy my own so the General won't have to walk." I said, "Okay," I went to Don Weller and told him, "Something is in one hell of a mess in the logistics supply of this division." And I said, "I suggest you make me a committee of one to start looking into this," which he did. And I started looking into it and found out that the 3d Marine Division was in one hell of a mess. They were just beginning to convert from hand-manual accounting the supply system to electronic--not electronic--EDP.

Frank: Computerized.

Cushman: Yes, got to have punch cards.

Frank: Data processing.

Cushman: Yes, punch card. Still wasn't computers or anything, but punch cards, all the rest of the Marine Corps was on the system, only the 3d MarDiv was not and God knows, they had 6,000 miles pipeline and it had just fallen apart.

So then, I set up--beginning to set up to attack this thing and whammo, I get to be the division commander and it couldn't have been but a month after that that we got hit with the damndest typhoon for many a year. It scattered everything from the warehouses out into the streets and rice paddies. Soap was all over the streets mixed up with toilet paper, soap suds, God, six feet high. Everything was just in a mess. The same typhoon kept going and struck the camp up at Fuji in Japan.

And I started getting messages from Shoup about how stupid I was to let a typhoon destroy Fuji. I don't know what the hell I was supposed to do about it, but anyway, that was the tenor of the remarks.

We got things going. I had determined that the first step in straightening out the supply thing was to get a wall to wall inventory. Nobody knew what the hell we had. So, we were starting on that and the damned typhoon came and it took us a month to get sort of back on our feet again. And just then, the general accounting office descended on us.

Frank: GAO came out there.

Cushman: Yes, GAO. And oh, Jesus, the scathing remarks they put out. What the hell they'd have done, they never say. But, we just kept plugging away. I also found out that General Shoup, according to the paper work that I discovered there, had cut the budget by, I think it was, 2 million dollars when he took over saying, "I ran the 1st Division of so many millions, and that's the way we're going to run this outfit on." Well, it turned out that was just the size of the pipeline, just about the amount he cut. So, what happened was, everything came together, the system collapsed, lot of stuff destroyed, the pipeline ran empty, we had no money to refinance it. Things were in one hell of a mess. Well, by dint of hard work and help from the people at Pearl, who never paid any attention to supply whatsoever, which is one of their big functions....

Frank: Let's see, who was back there, Alan Shapely or....

Cushman: Yes, Shapley and then Carson Roberts. They just never paid much attention to it. At most, they were supposed to monitor it but they didn't do much, and the stuff was supposed to come out, you know, directly through the pipeline to Okinawa. Well, we finally began to get our head above water and we got, I remember pushing the button for the data processing system to start, and we began to get our feet on the ground. Just before I was ordered back home, Shoup convenes a Court of Inquiry, headed by Carson Roberts. And Don Weller was called back to Okinawa and he was the chief target of Shoup's court, and of course, I was there somewhat of a target. But at least I'd made efforts to correct things and things were getting back in place.

Frank: Had Don Weller not known what was going on there?

Cushman: No, I don't think so.

Frank: So, even though the thing had started in Shoup's regime, Don Weller is culpable for....

Cushman: Yes. Between Shoup, after Shoup there had been, I think, Bob Luckey, or maybe one other whom I can't remember, and then Bob Luckey and then Don Weller and then myself. And I don't think Bob Luckey or Don Weller were interested in logistics, they just relied on their staff to keep track of it, and I guess they didn't.

Anyway, this Court of Inquiry went after Don Weller, I don't know what they finally came up with, but I think he went home and retired not too long after that. I went back and was assigned to Headquarters, Shoup wanted to keep me out there almost two years, and I was protected by Shapley who protested it, so actually, it was a 13 month tour and I actually stayed about 15-16 months and then went home. My wife was so mad at Shoup, she could have shot him. Everybody else doing about a year, a little more, and I got stuck.

I enjoyed the duty, we had a wonderful landing exercise in conjunction with the Filipinos.

Frank: Blue Star, was it.

Cushman: Well, I've forgotten the code name, anyways, it was down on an island, smaller size island--Mindoro. Anyway, it was a fine exercise, although Johnny Condon got in trouble on it.

Frank: Oh, how so?

Cushman: Well, just a little excess celebrating and the word got into the Filipino newspapers and the papers got sent to Shoup and that was that.

Anyway, I went back to Headquarters and was assigned to be G-2 and G-3 with the statement, "I'm running the whole goddamned Marine Corps, so I don't want to hear any bitches about you being G-2 and G-3 both." "Yes, sir." I worked on being G-3

and G-2, however the first damned thing that happened was that the GAO report came bouncing in and accused me in effect of being an, I don't know what. Lying about combat readiness because there were some tanks that they didn't think could run, and oh, goddamndest bunch of stuff I ever read. So, I must have spent two months answering all the damned crap.

Frank: Were you given anyone to help you rebut this?

Cushman: Hell no, just the GAO report and Shoup hands it to me and gives me a deadline, you know. No, I had no help, I typed it out myself. And then, of course, I had help in smooth copy, yes. And I could use the records, but there wasn't anybody around who knew anything about it. I put Orm Simpson to work on....

End Side 2, Tape 2

Begin Tape 3, Side 1, Session III

Cushman: Then Orm Simpson got sent off to Thailand with some helicopters and infantry to set up a task force there in northern Thailand. So, it was a struggle to get the division on its feet, particularly with this new-fangled data processing that was coming in.

I answered all the allegations and defended myself and the division, as far as I was concerned, satisfactorily, because I never heard anymore about it. To show you the ridiculousness of the GAO report, it started out with, "None of the following

should ever hold an official position again in the Department of Defense: Secretary McNamara," and it went on and on through all the damned Secretaries, Assistant Secretary, Navy, Marine Corps, and ended up with me. So I thought, "Well, I'm in good company." As soon as McNamara goes out of business, I will, too.

Well, Shoup was well known for raising hell about expenditures, travel; he would often send for colonels' and general officers' travel vouchers and go over them and this sort of thing, to see if they've done anything wrong. So, I just figured, you know, why make a bunch of trips. So, I would use the phone to keep in touch with the recruit depots and some of the other stuff that went on and I would make occasional trips. And one day, it wasn't long before Shoup was due to retire, and Wally Greene says, "What's this with you and General Shoup?" And I said, "I don't know anything about me and General Shoup. I stay clear of him as much as possible." He said, "Well, something, he's just taken a disliking to you." Jesus, two weeks before he retires, he calls me into the office and says, "I believe or I relieve. I don't believe you and you're relieved." And then he goes down a long list of horrendous crimes such as, you only visited the recruit depots once this year or something like that. And oh, he raised hell and fussed and fumed, and he had the Assistant Commandant in as sort of a witness and the chief of staff. The Assistant Commandant, as I recall was Fog Hayes and Wally Greene. So, I didn't say a

damned word. He says, "You're relieved," and I found out that since he had to get the permission of the Secretary to do anything with me, he didn't. He just assigned me to the chief of staff. So he didn't have to report anything to the Secretary of the Navy. And so, I reported to Wally who sent me down to work with the G-1, who was my old roommate from Basic School, Jeff Fields. And so I sat there for two goddamned weeks; and I knew Shoup was trying to drive me out of the Marine Corps and I refused to go. So, in the meanwhile, also, I was moving over to a new house over in Tantallon in the middle of all this goddamned business. Anyhow, I worked around--they gave me some project in down in G-1 and worked on that, sat there in the G-1 office till Shoup got the hell out two weeks later, and Wally Greene then put me back as G-3 and took me with him on a trip that he made as the brand new Commandant. Within a few days after taking office, he suited up some of the staff and myself, and Robertshaw and a couple of others and we went off to the war in Vietnam and the Far East. I came back and stayed on as G-3 and then I got orders to Camp Pendleton in about June.

Frank: Yes, I remember when you were G-3.

Cushman: Yes. And so, having been G-2 and G-3 and then special assistant to the chief and then G-3 again, finally get the hell out of there and get out with the troops.

Frank: Was Shoup ruling the Headquarters Marine Corps through fear? Was there anyone he got along with there?

Cushman: Oh, yes, strictly fear. He--gee, I just ran into him at that Cherry Point Plan golf--he did become a brigadier, was outside the office as military secretary, aviator from Georgia, southerner--anyway, Shoup would curse him out, I mean nasty, obscene four letter words, you know. Well, he threw stuff at Wally Greene. I wouldn't have put up with that for a goddamned minute, I'd have walked out, put him on report, Christ sake, for assault. He threw things at him. Of course, his misdeeds as a poker player are legendary. Christ, they're still talking about him in Okinawa when I was there about how he'd sit down with a whole bunch of lieutenants and play table stakes and then just, when they ran out of money, if there was any complaints from the wives or anything, he'd ruin them. One poor guy got put under hack, Shoup took all his money, wife complained, so he put the guy under hack for not supporting his wife properly. Shoup was a vicious bastard.

When I went to Vietnam--he was then retired, he'd already written this book biting the hand that fed him all his goddamned life, fussing about the Marine Corps and how lousy it was, he and this guy Donovan--my troops started getting shells fired at them that had propaganda inside. And the propaganda was statements by Shoup about the Vietnam war. Well, when Chappy came over to visit as Commandant, I said, "You're the only son of a bitch in the Marine Corps that speaks to him, tell him to shut up and tell him why, tell him I said so." And the next time I saw him was at a garden party at the Commandant's quarters, at the

general officers' symposium or something. He said, "Well, you're doing a great job out there, you're doing a great job." I just walked away. I couldn't stand him.

Frank: Were you, let's see, in 5--he was selected, you were where--who was your candidate for Commandant when Shoup made it?

Cushman: I wasn't really into it.

Frank: Were you a general officer at that time when he was selected?

Cushman: I was over with Nixon. I think I was a brand new brigadier, yes. But, I wasn't much in the Marine Corps swing of things. I just knew or I heard that Pate preferred Twining, I think it was, but that Tom Gates couldn't stand Twining. They'd crossed swords somewhere, whether one of those symposiums or seminars down there or what. And so, that ended Twining.

Frank: Quantico, yes.

Cushman: And then Gates just, I guess, thought Shoup was something great because of his medal and war record and all this kind of stuff, I don't know why he picked him, but he did.

Frank: I'd heard that the incumbent Commandant had input on who his successor would be and that it generally went that way and also that the incumbent Commandant would solicit his general officers for an informal ballot of who they thing....

Cushman: I never got solicited by Pate, but I got solicited by Shoup and by Greene.

Frank: You did?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Okay. But, even though you were on Mr. Nixon's staff, Greene--pardon me for a minute. (Interruption)

Even though, you know, you weren't current with things that were going on in Headquarters, certainly, such things as the Green Letters or policy statements.

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes, I got the stuff that went to all general officers, sure.

I don't know, I was just working so damned hard where I was, I didn't have too much knowledge of the race. I just had heard Twining was probably the preferred one and Shoup was a big surprise to me. I can't think back to any other, you know, that I would have thought was a candidate. I don't know who might have been second in the running outside of Shoup, second in the running to Twining.

Frank: Had you known Twining?

Cushman: Yes, I knew him and I worked at Quantico there right after the war, he was there.

Frank: That's right, that's right.

Cushman: So I got to know him, at dinner parties at his home and one thing and another.

Frank: Now, this is the story that I've heard, but at the time that the GAO report came in and you presented yourself before General Shoup, that in essence, Wally Greene, when Shoup relieved you as G-2, G-3, that essentially Wally Greene saved you and put you on the back burner to keep you out of the way.

Cushman: Yes, yes. Well, they had to do something with me, as I say, two weeks before he left, Shoup would have looked a little bit silly going to the Secretary of the Navy and saying, you know, "I want to send this guy somewhere else out of town, and here's why, I don't believe in him anymore," or something. Well, maybe he could have made it stick, but I would have fought it like hell. You know, if it had to come up before the Secretary.

Frank: Does the Commandant have to go to the Secretary on the posting of slates of his general officers?

Cushamn: Oh, you bet.

Frank: I didn't know that.

Cushman: Oh, lord yes. Yes, yes. You can shift them around within Headquarters, but once they're in Washington, you can't move them to Quantico, Pendleton, or anywhere outside of town without an okay from the Secretary of the Navy.

Frank: Really, I didn't realize that.

Cushman: And with three stars you've got to get an okay just to move them around Washington as I recall. And of course it depends, old Schlesinger, SecDef, God, he was in on all kinds of crap that he had no business in as far as I was concerned. But, yes, you have to take the slate over every year and get it all okayed, individual changes in between time, you've got to get them okayed.

Frank: What was the reason for that?

Cushman: I don't know, you know. As far as I know, you know, it's gone back, I just know what my predecessor did, and that was it.

Frank: Well, did the other chief of services have the same thing with their flag and general officers?

Cushman: I don't know, I suppose so. Well, it's just the way of the Secretary keeping his thumb on it. And some of them don't give a damn and just take whatever list you give them, others do, particularly if they know a few guys, you know, that they've run into around town, then they want to know where the hell they're going, what they're going to do.

Frank: Starts to get a little political when you're up that far.

Cushman: Oh, you bet. And making three stars and making four

four stars is....

Frank: Even more political.

Cushman: ...the Secretary of Defense has got to be happy with you.

Frank: Do you think this four year tour as assistant to Vice-President Nixon affected your career one way or another?

Cushman: No, except that it broadened my view tremendously. It enabled me to get along with civilians, I was much better prepared to be deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I sort of knew my way around town, although personalities changed and some of the structure changes. Still, once you've been through all that it really was a help. I thought it was professionally very broadening, actually, because I got in on National Security Council things, Planning Board projects, and plans at the very top. So, it was really good for me, I thought. Then, a lot of the work was good in terms of planning trips, helping prepare speeches, getting research out of various departments to help the Vice-President.

Running the office was one thing that I had to do that wasn't all that professionally rewarding. The Vice-President said, "You're in charge of the office, hire and fire, don't make anybody mad." So, I only had to fire a couple of people, had a couple of girls that just insisted on coming in way late and not pulling their weight, and I had to get rid of them. I

imagine they were mad, but I couldn't help that.

And a tremendous amount of letter writing. God, I must have written 10,000 letters personally. I had nobody to dictate to, everybody else was busy to. So, I had to write them on the typewriter myself. And then we did have a pool we could feed them to to get the smooth done. I had nobody to take dication.

Frank: Was the Vice-Presidential sector operating on its own or did it have to closely coordinate with the Presidential?

Cushman: No, we operated on our own. I was amazed to the extent, but the Vice-President might occasionally check with the President--I'm sure, occasionally--but the staffs just didn't operate that way.

Frank: The President's staff would never brief you on policy matters or the solution or what have you?

Cushman: Oh, no, God no.

Frank: You were left out in left field as far as they were concerned.

Cushman: Oh, yes, they couldn't care less. If the Vice-President had nobody except his six year old daughter sitting there with him, they couldn't care less. The White House would only put the heat on, you know, go out and campaign, go out and do this and that for the President. Then they wanted action and

fast, otherwise they wouldn't pay much attention to you.

Frank: Now, going to the period that you had the 3d Division, what kind of contingency planning were you working on?

Cushman: Oh, we had all the contingency plans for the area that you could think of, you know, landing in Korea, landing in Thailand, Christ, landing everywhere. Everywhere but the place we probably would have actually landed in case of a war. You know how those things go. Well, we just had a barrel full as I recall, plans for every damn place you can imagine, coming under--well, let's see--well, 7th Fleet had plans, there were other plans for reinforcing and all this kind of stuff. Came out of, I suppose, out of Pearl.

Frank: CincPac. Who had the wing at that time?

Cushman: Johnny Condon.

Frank: Was he senior to you?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: So, he had the joint task force.

Cushman: He had the--what the hell did they call it?

Frank: He was 116 was it?

Cushman: Not III MAF, but something. Oh, there was a task force 1 something or another, and had the task force number

assigned by 7th Fleet and they operated as the division-wing team.

Frank: Oh, whoever was senior, the aviator was senior, he was the....

Cushman: Yes, well, no, whoever was senior, ground or air was the boss.

Frank: Yes, that's what I'm saying.

Cushman: Weller was the boss when I reported in as ADC and then Johnny Condon came up and I came out and he was senior to me, one number I think it was.

Frank: He's not the same class as you, is he?

Cushman: Who?

Frank: No, class of '34.

Frank: '34, right. Were you concerned about Vietnam this early?

Cushman: Let's see. Oh, God, I can't put it together. I don't think so, I don't think they'd started yet, had they, on dividing the country in two and all that?

Frank: The French were still in there, no, it was a little early yet.

Cushman: When was Dienbienphu?

Frank: That was '58.

Cushman: Well, then that had happened. I think it was the French had lost.

Frank: Was it '58? No, it was '54, no. It was '54, Dienbienphu and you had the Geneva....

Cushman: I had been in and out of Saigon so damned many times. I was in Saigon when the French were there. I was in there when I was at CIA in '50, and I think I may have made a visit when I was on Okinawa, but I can't remember. I made a visit when the French were still there--did I make one twice--anyway, I just can't remember. I was on Okinawa 1960-1961, I think I visited Thailand and Hong Kong just for the hell of it, and I went to Taiwan--I think I went to Thailand to coordinate some stuff we had going with them--their little Marine Corps.

Frank: That was probably the SEATO involvement at this time.

Cushman: Yes, I'm kind of hazy on my foreign trips, I have to look up all my orders, I guess, to see where the hell I went.

Anyway, Vietnam, I don't recall thinking about it too much.

Frank: I think Thailand was probably a concern at that time.

Cushman: Yes, and eventually we had to send troops down there, and Laos and Thailand were having troubles with the Communists.

Frank: I think maybe this is a good place to stop, General,

because we've got some substantive things to talk about tomorrow.

Cushman: Yes, okay.

End Side 1, Tape 3, Session III

Begin Session IV, 5 November 1982, Side 1, Tape 1

Frank: What I do want to get back to and we're not too far away from it, I don't believe, is when you were the executive assistant to Mr. Nixon, talk about the Russia trip again.

Cushman: Yes, I was thinking over what we'd done yesterday in our interview and I didn't quite say enough, I guess, on that trip. It was a fascinating trip and I got to attend some things but not all. However, I was fortunate enough to attend the kitchen debate. I was in the crowd, I was not right up close to where I could practically lay my hand on their shoulder or anything, but close enough to hear what they said. And then, of course, it was widely televised as I recall.

It was very interesting and it showed Nixon, I thought, at his best at taking on Communism. And he did a good job, and it was generally acclaimed by most citizens as having been a good stand-up argument to Khruschev. I was intrigued to noticed that Khruschev got a big reception from his countrymen wherever he went. Now, whether this was prearranged, as many things are in a communist country, I don't know, but I think that if he had to run for office he would have been elected in Russia. I think he was popular because of his flamboyance and general

character. However, that doesn't hide the fact that he came up through the Stalin era, through the purges and he had to be a pretty damned tough cookie to survive all that, so he wasn't any bargain as a gentleman or anything. But, he had a certain appeal to his countrymen, I was convinced, after kind of watching him operate a little bit with crowds around and so on.

The exhibit was of modest interest, as I recall, I didn't get to see too much of it because as usual I had to run the office, headquarters affairs. But, we had a good tour. We went first to Moscow, then to Leningrad, where as I mentioned Admiral Rickover got to go through the nuclear powered icebreaker, which was of interest to him. Hardly anyone went with him, except his own--I think he had a couple of guys with him. Then we went into Siberia. We went to Sverdlovsk first, and it's in the Urals. And when I was arranging the trip, I had tried to get a side trip to a rocket base that they had there, with no success. Then at Sverdlovsk, I don't know what the boss did. There were some interesting things that he saw, I believe, in the industrial sense--some mines and one thing and another. Then we went off to Novosibirsk, which is in the middle of Siberia and was a very interesting place that was created out of nothing in the middle of nowhere as a scientific community. So, Mr. Nixon had a great time going and being shown through various laboratories and things of that sort, research institution. The fact that it was in the middle of Siberia we got to see some of the old wooden houses that are

characteristic of that part of the country, and very interesting. Again though, I had to stay home and mind the store. We had two dachas out in the pine forest, one for the boss and one for the staff.

Frank: Outskirts of Moscow.

Cushman: No, outskirts of Novosibirsk.

Frank: Of Novosibirsk.

Cushman: And one interesting anecdote, I guess you like anecdotes?

Frank: Yes, certainly.

Cushman: We had a secretary along for the staff as well as Rosemary Woods for the boss's private secretary, and I would go out into the woods with her and dictate messages and so on that had to be sent because out in the forest we figured there would be the best chance of not being overheard and some of the stuff was classified.

I might digress and go back a minute. When I came into the Vice-President's office, as I mentioned, he had just been asked to sit with the National Security Council and some of these other deliberative bodies which had a high percentage of classified documents. And Rosemary Woods was striving mightily to handle them, she'd been cleared, but there wasn't any storage, you know, there wasn't anything. So, I personally had to get a

good. From there, we left for Warsaw, where we had the most tumultuous reception I've ever seen. Well, it was just like the couple we had in South America where people are enthusiastic and get out and line the streets by the thousands. And they weren't lined up by any government, obviously, because the government was not only hostile but hadn't even published when the Vice-President was going to get there. But, the word spread and oh, it was just the darndest mob scene of cheering people I'd ever seen.

Frank: Were there courier flights each day with mail and stuff from the States to the Vice-President?

Cushman: No, it was done by messages to the embassy. And as you may know, I think it is still true, the CIA handled the message traffic within the embassies, which peeved many an ambassador. But that's the way it was, so consequently, secrets could be kept and transmitted through the embassy communications. The classified ones were run by the CIA personnel and their equipment. So, it worked out alright.

No, we didn't get any big bags of stuff, the trips were not that long. So, everything was message traffic.

Frank: Now, this famous kitchen debate took place at an American exposition or American exhibit.

Cushman: In Moscow, yes, right. And it was a model of an American kitchen--which is where it got its name, they were both viewing it and they got off into discussing each others

governments and philosophies and one thing and another and that's why it got the name. It wasn't about the kitchen or anything.

Frank: Right. The common understanding is that, or view is that Nixon established himself as a hard negotiator with the Communists because of this debate. This established his reputation.

Cushman: Yes, right, yes. He'd always had a line, I mean a reputation as a hard-liner against the Communists, of course, stemming from first spotting Helen Gahagan Douglas as a goddamned radical who symphathized with a lot of causes that agreed perfectly with the communist line, sort of a fellow traveler they called him then. And she never got over it and neither did the liberals in California ever get over it. Anyhow, that put him in--I think that was the race that put him in the Senate....

Frank: In the House, I think.

Cushman: Or in the House.

Frank: That's right.

Cushman: Then he was on the committee, the unamerican committee, I think, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee that looked into the Hiss case and nailed him to the wall primarily because Nixon was persevering and didn't believe any of the stories he heard and finally nailed him. So, along with the pumpkin papers

and all this stuff--so, he already had that reputation behind him and this just furthered it, much more statesmanlike, you might say, and in the international scene. So, it did help him tremendously.

Frank: It's also a view or been told that your performance as the assistant furthered, more greatly solidified your relationship with Mr. Nixon.

Cushman: Yes, yes. Well, it was just a matter of working for four years and I gained his trust and confidence and, as I say, eventually he let me sign letters that he never saw.

Frank: Yes, you mentioned that.

Cushman: I guess it's not secret, they have signing machines.

Frank: Oh, sure. What you do is wet your finger and see if the ink is wet.

Cushman: The signature that he put on the machine made one little tiny quiggle in it and so we on the staff knew which was which in case we ever had to know, which sometimes became necessary to figure out whether he'd actually seen the letter that went out and might have caused some kind of a flap, you know, or gotten somebody mad.

Frank: Oh, really?

Cushman: We got some of the damndest letters. It was drudgery,

but some of it was so interesting that it sort of pepped up the work. Gee, I can recall letters from people that were old friends, you know, knew him when he was young, and a couple of these people were older than Nixon, supported him through the years. Oh, they just couldn't stand some of the letters they got. You know, they could see sort of a form letter, then it lacked the personal touch of the old pal, and gee, they'd write in and really blast him. Then we'd have the job of either letting him sooth them down, or he ordinarily was so darn busy that we had to do the letter writing. And somebody that was really precious, why, we gave him a rough draft and then he'd either work on that or okay it. But some of the letters were really...And then, of course, just your plain everyday fanatic on one side or another of an issue.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: When some big issue would come along, we'd get hundreds of letters and we'd sort them out in piles, you know, for--against--and in the middle, and then write a letter that would answer each one. It was very interesting because you'd never, in the service, run into anything like that.

Frank: Could you pretty much tell when these letters came in which arrived as a result of a great drive and those which were spontaneous?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. Every now and then you'd get a bunch

that were almost word for word--were word for word, or some form letter that a group had told their members....

Frank: Special interest group.

Cushman: Yes, that had asked their members to write. But, it wasn't as bad as it is now-a-days. Most of the letters were not that way. They were sparked by feeling for or against some stand that he'd taken or some event, political event that had taken place ordinarily. I can't put my finger on one right now to save me, but we had them.

Frank: After you left this job, had your other assignments, did you keep up a relationship with Mr. Nixon?

Cushman: Yes, I wrote letters every now and then, particularly when I got to Vietnam. But while I was in Pendleton, he lived in California, in fact, he had that unsuccessful go at becoming governor and I had him to the Ranch House, invited him to the Ranch House several times, and he came once, along with Bob Finch and a number of others-- Herb Kline lived out there and who had been in the Vice-President's office or campaign and whom Audrey and I knew. And we put him in a room, a guest bedroom in the Ranch House, and we got some very nice pictures of it and they're now still hanging there. It was called the President's Room or something like that because I think FDR either visited and liked the room or maybe he stayed there over night. Although I don't think he did. But anyway, when

Roosevelt dedicated Camp Pendleton, he went to the Ranch House and his name got connected with that room. So, we had a few jokes about that and he enjoyed his evening there. We had a big dinner party and the occasion was, I think, he was just had taken a day's rest before giving a speech in San Diego because I recall riding down with him in a small plane to San Diego and hearing the speech to some group down there.

Then later, when I went to Vietnam from Camp Pendleton I used to write an occasional letter giving him my thoughts on the war. And I remember one time, I got a write up in the New York Times, they patted me on the back for trying to conduct mobile warfare and this sort of thing and he sent it and said, "You must be doing something wrong if the New York Times is patting you on the back." And I had off and on correspondence with Rosemary Woods, and we had her to a few social affairs. I think we had her to the Commandant's quarters, and I think she came to our present house for a party we had, off and on, she's in Washington. So, off and on we've seen her and talked to her on the phone.

Don Hughes, who was really one of my best friends when we finished that tour of duty, went on into the Air Force. He rode a jet into the ground trying to save it when it flamed out and damned near killed himself, but he recovered. Then when Nixom made President, he was made the aide. He was a colonel, became brigadier general on the job. He never really liked being aide, so he stayed two years and then talked the old man

into letting bust loose and get back in the Air Force, and he went on in air defense, he was a fighter pilot, he went on in air defense and finally ended up with three stars. He had, I think, a couple of commands in the States of three star rank, then ended up in Honolulu as Air Pacific, commander of air in the Pacific, component commander. He used to be four stars but it was down graded to three, and he retired from there, we'd been just exchanging Christmas cards and then even that sort of quit and I don't know where he is now, whether he retired out in paradise land or what. He was a fine officer and just a gung-ho pilot, Air Force guy. He had been enlisted, then went to West Point and graduated from there in the class of '36.

Well, let's see. When I came back from Vietnam, I was invited to the first inaugural, and I got good seats and everything. I got to see Mr. Nixon, talk to him, and sort of got it figured out what I'd do when I left Vietnam which was go to CIA as a deputy.

Frank: Oh, he tell you that at that time?

Cushman: Yes, yes. The inaugural was in January '69 and my tour was up in March. So, it turned out that there was somebody else--he never paid much attention to this job, and I guess, of course, he was pretty damned busy, I guess he figured it was just another job to be filled automatically, sort of realized it would be a service man and somebody else had already been selected by the joint chiefs and Mr. Nixon pointed this out and

I said, "Well, you're the President now, Mr. President, you could change it if you wished. And if you want me in there, that should not make any difference, if you don't, why, I'll go about my business in the Marine Corps, but I would enjoy the job and and I think I could do a good job for you." So, he said, "Okay." And my orders came through somewhat later with considerable publicity and whatnot. And as I mentioned before, when I came back from Vietnam, I circled through southeast Asian capitals and checked in with all the station chiefs of the CIA and got briefed on the way home by all those guys.

Frank: Well, we skipped ahead, but....

Cushman: Yes, now we ought to go back to....

Frank: But, I want to ask one question, did you come back from Vietnam just for the inaugural on leave?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Okay, and then went back out there.

Cushman: Yes. And it was not just for the inaugural, I had to brief the Joint Chiefs, brief the Marine Corps, you know, that sort of stuff. Plus even got a little leave in with my wife, R & R.

Frank: Oh, good. We left off that last time when you were the G-3 at Headquarters Marine Corps. That was that period about six months and into General Greene's Commandancy.

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. Actually, I was G-3 about two years.

Frank: Yes, that's right.

Cushman: With the two weeks off to be chief of staff's special assistant.

Frank: Right, and you went out with General Greene to Vietnam, Southeast Asia on his first trip out there. And this was before Marines had been committed.

Cushman: I think we had--oh, no, no, we had Shufly, we had Shufly out there.

Frank: Okay, that's right.

Cushman: And in fact, let's see, this was '64, I think Shufly had gone in the south. I don't think they'd moved up to Da Nang yet.

Frank: No, no. That's right.

Cushman: But we went to Okinawa, checked the division, the Commandant inspected the division, made a command visit. Then we went to Saigon, did everything he was supposed to do down there with the headquarters, and we took a couple of trips. We made one trip to a Montagnard defended hamlet--strategic hamlet or something. They had some name for it. We had to drink this damned home brew they made out of big pots with, it looked like everything from frogs to moss floating on the top of the damned

damned thing. And I remember I took a drink of it, I think the Commandant, he either took a drink or made a damned good camouflaged attempt. Bill Jones refused to drink the damned stuff. As I recall, he was on the trip. But, it was a lot of fun and very interestng. They all were in costume, and brass bracelets jangling and all this stuff. They were entirely different from the Vietnamese.

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1, Session IV

Cushman: ...colorful mountain tribes in their local dress. Let's see, that was about it. I just don't remember where else we went--like if we went to Japan. Of course, we stopped in at Pearl, but then we went on back. And the Commandant, General Greene, spent his time talking with all of us and setting out certain policies that he thought the United States should follow in Vietnam, generally along a hard line and an expansionist line of United States military action.

Frank: That's about what I was going to ask you, whether General Greene perceived that there was going to be a need for additional troops and....

Cushman: Well, yes, we didn't have any troops. We didn't land until '65.

Frank: No, but I mean a need for a commitment to Vietnam.

Cushman: Oh, yes, for the United States to get in there and fight. Yes, that's right.

Frank: He did feel that?

Cushman: Yes. Bombing, naval action, he was for really pushing it.

Frank: Now, you as G-3, did you beef-up or have the training schedule syllabi at the various training centers at Lejeune and Pendleton accelerated to....

Cushman: No, no, it didn't come about while I was G-3, it came about when I was out in Pendleton and I was on the receiving end and had to set up, oh, a large number os specialist's schools training in the various MOSs, and preparing the replacement drafts, battalions, and sending them out. As G-3, we weren't really into it. We just had a very small outfit over there, primarilly, helicopter outfit. And I left in '64 and we hadn't even landed yet. I got out to Pendleton in June of 1964 and we didn't land until the next year. So, I had one year to learn to play golf, I took golfing lessons and played golf about twice a week and then whammo, we landed at Da Nang and I was ordered in rapid succession to set up all kinds of schools, to reorganize a replacement system, to beef-up the 4th Marine Division and take it over, the nucleus headquarters and to establish the 5th Marine Division. So, all of a sudden, I was so damned busy, I didn't know which end was up. And that went

on for two more years that I was in Pendleton. Wally Greene came out and on his last visit said he was going to send me out to relieve Lou Walt.

Frank: That was the first perception you had that you were going to go out there as III MAF commander?

Cushman: Well, yes. Yes, yes, right. Oh, I figured my tour was coming to an end, three years in Pendleton, in fact, that was longer than most. It was a great place to send generals for a while that had about a year to go to retire, so they had a lot of general officers who didn't stay very long as you looked at the rack of pictures and dates on the wall.

So, I had a good long tour, got to know all the local communities and I enjoyed it thoroughly. Even before I got into the Vietnam war, it was running a small city. And whether you played golf twice a week or not, there was plenty to do and was all interesting. You know, you had your own fire department and your own police force, utilities--just like running a city. Like running a national park too, because you had forestry and game management, fish management, wildlife--all that stuff as well as the city type operation. And you had community relations with, primarily, 100% nice people. The movers and shakers were nice people.

Frank: Oceanside.

Cushman: Oceanside, San Clemente--had to break them down a

little bit. They weren't so friendly to start with, but we became friendly. Carlsbad and Fallbrook. Now, Fallbrook had a water problem and they were up stream from Pendleton, and later, after I left, that caused some friction. I think they settled the dispute that had been going on about 20 years. I think it was just after I left, maybe while I was there. And that caused some ill-will because the decision kind of went against Fallbrook, as I recall.

Frank: Was Ace Bowen still on your staff as the water expert?

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: He was there for years, I believe.

Cushman: Yes. What a character, gees. Ride to work on a horse at 8 o'clock in the morning clanking by my window on the damned asphalt. He knew water, though, and knew the locals. He was in good with them.

Frank: Well, he knew the laws and so on out there.

Cushman: Yes, yes. Let's see, we haven't really got that far yet, though, have we? I was still G-3, I think, before we finished that. I found G-3 not all that interesting a job as I thought it would be. I didn't have much idea what Headquarters G-3 did, but you have one very important but dull job and that was individual training, you know, do you throw out this subject--life saving or something--and put in another subject. You only

had so many hours and what was important and what wasn't had been hashed over for years. That was one area.

Another was sort of, gee, never-never land, planning for mobilization. And Christ, you couldn't get any money to do anything, but you could just sit there and write endlessly detailed plans for ever. So that took up a lot of time.

Marksmanship was interesting, but that's pretty cut and dry. You had the experts at Quantico teaching would-be team shots and they'd get themselves, finally, through qualifying matches--competitive Marine Corps matches and eventually end up at Camp Perry. We had some inter-service matches. But again, gee, that had been going on for so damned long, there wasn't anything you were going to do to change that and besides, it was in the hands of experts. So, you just go visit.

And then we had mobilization--I mentioned mobilization planning. Then we had the war plans, but they had a different outfit, really, working on all the Joint Chiefs matters.

Frank: Well, that's the point, I think. By the time you'd taken over G-3, the functions that were important had been taken away from G-3 and were more in the joint....

Cushman: Yes, yes, they were in the joint arena, they called it. Nevertheless, G-3 had to be ready to go over there and sit in in case the OpDep--Bill Buse I believe--was absent for some reason or another.

G-2, again, Christ, the Marine Corps doesn't have much of

a G-2, it's all tactical out in the field. So, it was just setting some policy here and there, and running in and briefing Shoup. The poor colonel would brief Shoup every morning and got his balls cut off regularly, and bled all over the carpets. So, that was about it.

Frank: Of course, Shoup was an old G-2 instructor down at Quantico before the war.

Cushman: I guess so, yes, I don't know.

Frank: Intelligence instructor at the Schools.

Cushman: The colonel made an incautious statement. He ran to over-enthusiasm, and we had some research projects in G-2. We had probably the most interesting thing they had to keep track of. And he made a wild statement about a breakthrough on some goddamnded mortar locator or something like that. You know, everybody carry it on their back and locate mortars. What did Shoup do but run over and announce it to the Joint Chiefs. And it turned out to be completely half-ass premature, shall we say. And the first thing I think the chairman said, "Oh, we know all about that." Then somebody, I guess the Army guy chimed in, "And it isn't working right." Old Shoup was so mad. It didn't take anything to get him mad anyway, but he came over and I thought he was going to put that guy under hack for a year or something like that.

All-in-all, I couldn't recommend tours at Headquarters to

anybody. And of course, life was so unpleasant anyway, with Shoup there. I had no enjoyment or feeling of accomplishment or anything else out of either one of the jobs. And thank goodness, they only lasted two years.

We did have one bit of excitement. '62 was the missile crisis. And I was G-3, I believe, at that time. And we had a lot of fiddling and fussing around, moving Marines into CinCLant's--well, he already had some Marines, but I think we loaded up Fairbourn and some west coast Marines and got them positioned just in case.

Frank: Ray Davis was a BG at that time, I think he took a task force around from Pendleton of the 1st Division.

Cushman: I thought it was Fairbourn.

Frank: Was it Fairbourn?

Cushman: I think so. Never quit talking about it so much. Do you know what Fairbourn is doing now? He's working for this left-wing LaRocque, Admiral LaRocque outfit.

Frank: Oh, really?

Cushman: Yes, can you imagine that? Disgrace to the Marine uniform. And he's out in the hustings, all over the midwest screaming for nuclear crap that the KGB has fomented around the country. I just can't understand people like that. He's a classmate, he always was a little nuts, I thought, but now I'm

sure. He had the division at Pendleton, at least the first year or so that I was there.

Frank: Did you have your choice of assignments?

Cushman: Did I have what?

Frank: Your choice of assignments?

Cushman: No, I was sent to Pendleton and I thought, "Well, Christ, the old man's had it with me and all the troubles I've been in, so I was glad to get out of there. I didn't know anything about Pendleton or running it, but....

Frank: You'd never been--well, you had been there.

Cushman: You know, I'd rather have gone to a division, but since I just had one, why, I couldn't really expect one.

That was one of the problems with making general officer. A lot of the excitement went out of it and the fun went out of that you had when you were a lieutenant, captain, major, you never knew where you were going next, and it was just such a wide choice of jobs and usually a surprise of somekind, a new area, a new something. But as a general officer, the higher you go, there is only so many spots. If you just had a desirable one, you know damned well you're going to get one that isn't so good next. So, I used to discuss with Bud Masters. He used to agree with me. You know, the fun goes out of it. If you have a division, that's great, but that's about it for a major

general that's any damned good and fun and gets you out with the troops and everything. And three stars, Christ, that's it. You know, you're just a big manager, except Vietnam, was a battle, war. But, being a commander, FMFPac, FMFLant, Quantico, those are really, you might almost say desk jobs. You have to get out and inspect.

Well, enough of that philosopy. We're just leaving G-3, I believe.

Frank: Leaving G-3, I think so.

Cushman: And heading for Camp Pendleton.

Frank: Camp Pendleton. Yes, you had three hats as the base commander, as commander of the 4th Division, commander of 5th Division.

Cushman: Yes, right, yes. To be more accurate, 4th Division nucleus, because the troops were a reserve scattered all over the United States.

Frank: A paper division.

Cushman: And they just had a nucleus headquarters that was supposed to do the mobilization planning and that kind of stuff. And I had Larry Oppenheimer as a BG. I got him to come in, I always got along with him fine and liked him. Cocky little guy, but smart.

And that was never a big problem in terms of taking up a

lot of time and work. We did have some real planning problems and I put in considerable time on it and again, it related to never-never land of mobilization and where the hell the tents would go and where would you ever get the money to get them and all this kind of stuff. And the age of the data processing was just coming in and we found one guy who knew something about it and we set up data banks and everything for all that kind of stuff--the nuts and bolts of mobilizing and getting going on the training and so on.

As I say, I had about a year before the roof fell in. I had to establish a lot of schools and for that they gave me instructors. But it put the heat on getting them all running and getting them going right. And then we had to have a outfit that would put this all together and form drafts and send them out. Ordinarily, I think we sent them out through El Toro.

Next was setting up the 5th Marine Division. And Christ, that was a headache, logistically particularly--getting all the gear. The troops came in, and of course, Marines have no problem snapping to and strange officers and strange Marines rapidly getting to know each other and getting organized. So, the troop problem and the training problem wasn't so bad. But, getting the logistics and getting it ready for mount out was a real big job and a headache. But, it went ahead and finally I turned over command of the 5th Marine Division, I believe it was to Jeff Fields, who had just come back from Vietnam where he had the 1st Marine Division. Seems to me he was the guy

that got the 5th. It didn't go over as a division, but a couple of regiments, or at least one.

Frank: 26th and 27th went over.

Cushman: Yes, two of them, that's right. 26th and 27th went over as regiments and joined up with the divisions that were already there.

Frank: Was it a complete division that was mobilized or division minus?

Cushman: No, I'm pretty sure it was a complete division. Now, there might have been a minus, but I seem to recall artillery and three infantry regiments, engineers, you know, essentially a complete division.

Those were busy days and a lot of fun. I really enjoyed that, as I mentioned before. I enjoyed running the camp and setting up a brand new division is an experience not too many people get and so I really appreciated that. Worked hard at it and I think turned out a good product.

Frank: Well, you did a thorough job there enhancing Pendleton as a rotation base for Vietnam. I recall you set up several schools there.

Cushman: Oh man, I don't know how many, on like the order of at least a dozen. They went by MOS and so we would have a school for this MOS and one for that and we had a lot of

specialty...and I think it was split between coasts. They had east coast schools with different MOSs and then we'd put them all together. They'd send us a bunch when they were trained and we'd amalgamate them with our guys and send out a balanced draft. I think the balance was prescribed by Headquarters, but anyway, we would send them out.

I'm trying to think, I can't remember--I think we had infantry, machine gunners, and that sort of stuff, too. And perhaps those schools were duplicated on the east coast because you need so many of those people. And then the specialty MOSs were sort of split between the different ones on the east coast and the west coast, which when married together would give you the full spectrum of the MOS.

Frank: Did you have any problem--well, a problem arose later, and I was wondering if it occured during your watch. A considerable number of AWOLs, AOLs, there was a crowding of the brig and so on.

Cushman: Yes, there was a crowding of the brig. I suppose it was AWOLs. It brought bleats of complaint from bleeding hearts, but I'm trying to think how we solved it. You know, they sent the inspectors from the naval prison system or whatever it was. They're crying all over the place. I think we got a construction project for enlarging the brig or it sticks in my mind that maybe a brand new brig was completed just about that time. I remember inspecting a brig, it was really something. It was

new, and had sort of wings coming up from the center and all kinds of TV sets and everything to inspect the cell blocks. So, I think that's how we solved it, it was already in the books. But I remember catching a lot of hell from the people who thought that if you did wrong and became a prisoner you should live better than if you lived in the barracks, which I always objected to violently pointing out those characters in the brig got there because they deliberately did something wrong and it wasn't supposed to be a vacation. But, you know how some of these characters are, gees, they're the same types that in civilian life worry about the victim instead of the criminal.

Frank: Worry about the criminal more than they do about the victim.

Cushman: That's what I meant, I got it turned around. They worried about the criminal and forget all about the victim.

Let's see. Oh, we had another big problem in terms of running the camp. And it resulted in the Quartermaster General losing his job.

Frank: Oh, really?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: What were the particulars of that situation? Who was the Quartermaster General at the time?

Cushman: Battell.

Frank: Oh, Bill Battell, yes.

Cushman: I damned near got the ax myself, I think. What happened was that we had to--a question of promotion or assignment or both of a particular individual that had run afoul of Wally Greene and I didn't know it, Battell did. And Battell, I just worked with Battell on it because it was in the commissary and was a quartermaster problem. So, I called him up and said, "This is what's in the mill, how about it, what's the score?" And he said, "Oh, that's fine, yes, appoint this guy to the job." I think it was in charge of a branch or something being set up. Well, gees, it turns out after much research--well, just a scorcher came from Wally Greene at Headquarters as soon as he found out. And oh, he really read me a riot act, you know, why the hell didn't I call him, what am I doing this for without referring to the Commandant, and I won't have that man in any such position. I didn't know anything about it. Just a simple matter of the Quartermaster General as your chief staff officer in these matters okaying it. So, later, we dug up a whole bunch of papers and in that little tiny hand writing on one of them was this civil service guy was mentioned in there, a little tiny note scribbled on there by Greene, "We shouldn't even hire this guy. If we could fire him we should..." or something like that. Was some--I don't like to use the word shady, but there was some kind of mish-mash investigation and this guy just

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didn't, you know, never was found guilty, but Wally Greene just didn't want him around. And so when I told him the Quartermaster General had okayed it, he quit yelling at me and got hold of Battell and Battell was gone about a week later. Because, Battell knew that Shoup didn't want the guy but he told me it was okay to go ahead.

Frank: Shoup or Greene?

Cushman: I mean, no, no, this is Greene. I'm sorry if I said Shoup--Greene.

I can't think of anything exciting. We had very good community relations, I mentioned that. And they participated in events on the base, and I participated in events in the various towns.

I found one interesting thing when I took over. They had this annual rodeo, which was the biggest thing up and down the west coast and it was just as illegal as hell the way it was run. So, the question was, am I the guy that shot Santa Claus or do I just ride along and hope nobody catches it. It was the way they raised money for it. All kinds of illegal tricks to raise money.

Frank: For Navy Relief, was it?

Cushman: The final proceeds, yes, it was either Navy Relief or some other cause. It was like Salvation Army, I'm pretty sure it was Navy Relief.

So, it had a good cause, but gees, the whole camp spent about one month on the taxpayers salaries and everything doing nothing but that. Nothing else was done and I mean thousands of troops working night and day, for a month. So, I put an end to it, and oh, gees, I got some hot editorials, of course. They just did too much, it was hawked up and down the coast--big business. And booths were set up and Marines were forced to operate them. So, I just got it back to Special Services competition for Marines to compete with Marines. And we still were able to invite some of the local horse riding teams--you know, there is a lot of that in California. They're in every parade. And they still came in sufficient numbers to interest the crowd. The crowd was just people from around and people on the base. Before that, they gathered and bussed people from Oregon, as far as I could find out.

One of the funniest things, for example, to show you how this all went--they decided they'd have a queen of the rodeo. So, they lined up the women Marines and picked one and then they spent something like $700 for a breakfast where the judges would have breakfast with the nominated--nominee for queen to see if everything was suitable.

Frank: Who're "they?"

Cushman: Bunch of officers running the thing. They had a committee working, you know, for the commanding general. So, they had this $700 breakfast and they finally discovered to-

ward the end of the breakfast that she couldn't ride a horse. Out she went and there went $700. Well, you just can't explain things like that to the GAO or the Marine Corps IG, you know. If you know about those things, you've just got to take some action. So I did and it simmered down by the next year, was back on a safe and sane basis and was fun. It had gotten to be just a burden, just terrible.

That's just about winds up Pendleton, I think, unless you've got some questions.

Frank: Well, one of the things when I was out there doing some of my TAD trips and I got to see Pendleton, talk to some of the kids, some of the people there, tremendous problem of crowding in the barracks, not enough locker space.

Cushman: Oh, I'm sure, because of the influx of...you know, everthing was fine until Vietnam and then there is an influx of the people I was telling you about, trainees as well as people from the east coast who'd been trained, become trained and are ready to go overseas.

Frank: People coming back from Vietnam.

Cushman: Yes, and there was some of that, too, people coming back. Not as many, I believe, they went through Travis--I think--and went on home, pretty much. But, it was the people going out.

On the other hand, the opposite was true with married

officers who were in quarters. There were a lot of them left, of course, with Vietnam, some of their families left, but I got permission from the Commandant to keep them at Pendleton as long as there was room. And I didn't know it was going to benefit my wife at the time, but she stayed, she moved out of the Ranch House and moved up on the hill into general officer's quarters that were vacant up there. And I got a lot of letters from grateful dependents on my being able to get that ruling. And I think it stood up for about a year, a year and a half before the ebb and flow and everything settled down and you weren't able to do that anymore.

But in the meantime, the other services had opened up quarters. The Army had some in the middle west plains somewhere, Leavenworth, or some such place. And they opened up some of their quarters to Marines, as I recall.

Frank: To Marines?

Cushman: Yes, to dependents that is.

Frank: Yes. I think that made them a lot easier, made the minds of the people who went out to Vietnam a lot easier.

Cushman: Right, it did. Oh, one thing I forgot.

Going back to getting off the Pennsylvania at the beginning of World War II and joining the 9th Marines down at Camp Elliott, we got orders to march up to Camp Pendleton and put the camp in operation. There were no troops there except engineers and

civilians building the buildings. And Fegan was the CG of the base. Well, Shepherd really led up on a hike, it was 60 miles, roughly, we took three days, but we didn't just hike up the road. We had flankers out on the damned mountain tops, and guys scouting out around the hills, and we had tactical march the whole way. Typical Shepherd, and all of us learned a heck of a lot. So, we marched up and that's the first time I saw Pendleton and I used to remark about it when I became the commanding general, that quite a difference between marching up there as a young major and arriving to take command as a major general with all those years in between.

Frank: What about community relatinships with Oceanside. You mentioned them briefly before. But it seems to me that every base commander at Camp Pendleton, there were so many gyp-joints at Oceanside....

Cushman: Well, let me go back. Erskine had a tremendous fight with Oceanside over schooling.

Frank: Schooling, right, yes.

Cushman: And it left sour relations, I guess, for a long time. By the time I got there, there wasn't too much trouble downtown, no more than normal, you know, Saturday night drinking and this sort of thing. Drugs were not that big a problem, marijuana, on weekends, I'm convinced the kids were using it. But, I think we kept it out of the barracks pretty well. I think we

had some arguments with the police chief being too rough on guys that he would catch and that sort of thing, but not all that bad. Then when numbers grew, of course, we also had correspondingly more trouble out in town, but, I would say nothing out of the ordinary. And the townspeople were not angry at the base. The only guy who was a pain in the neck was Tom Braden, who ran the little Oceanside newpaper and was trying to sell newpapers by sniping at Marines. He had been much worse. When I got there, he sort of calmed down. Somebody faced up to him and told him to shutup, I guess he pulled in his horns--so he figured he could sell more papers that way.

We did have one trouble, if I can mention, in civil relations. I set up the first advisor, black captain who's now risen pretty high in Kaiser Aluminum, to be my race relations guy. Forgot what the hell we called the office. Had to make up a name.

Frank: Human Relations.

Cushman: Something like that, we had to make up a name for it. In any event, I found out that we were having all kinds of trouble with trailers. One of the big parks was run by a Hispanic, for God's sake, and he's discriminating against black Marines when he's running a big trailer park. And so we really went at it. I just told him, "I'll put you out of business, and I'll build trailer camps all over Pendleton and you won't have a damned thing to say about it. And you know, what are

you doing being discriminatory anyway, you're a Hispanic and always crying about being discriminated against?" We talked pretty tough with him and they had an association of trailer lot owners and I had to take them on. And with the help of the citizens, we finally broke through. I never did break that guy, as I recall, but all the others, enough of the others went along where our guys would report in for duty, they could always find a place for their trailer and eventually, we did have a small trailer camp. Eventually, they might move on the base or just stay where they were.

That was about the only big fight. We had a lot of relationships on civil relations, goddamned, I wish I could remember the name we gave it.

Frank: Equal employment opportunity. Well, it wasn't employment opportunity. Anyhow, we worked with black groups in the town, just on ways to break down discrimination. Didn't have any--or enough to worry about--on the base. And we didn't have any black/white problems. They came later, I think, in Lejeune. They had a hell of a damn time.

Frank: Oh, yes, yes.

Cushman: But we didn't have any of that. We had very little trouble with the women--one company of women Marines. Occasional trouble with some guy trying to get physical, but pretty much okay. I think we had a little trouble with a couple of girls dating black Marines, which always starts a problem.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: Not a hell of a lot you can say about it, that's the trouble. But, all in all, I thought we worked out good programs and we were ahead of our time, and sort of, as far as I knew, we established new paths in this field for the Marine Corps. And I continued that when I became Commandant.

Frank: Did you have much relationship with the retired community around there?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. I'm glad you asked that. We gave briefings and we had one club, down on the beach, which I kept formal just for the retired. They liked to have coat and tie and damn what the weather was, they didn't want to see anybody that wasn't in a coat and tie. And of course, I had all these younsters dating nurses and surfing, you know, young lieutenants. So, I opened up the other club in the 17 area up on the hill to a less formal type fun and games. Music, over great protest, I opened the bar at noon, and simply said, "You want refreshment, there it is. If you over do it, I expect you'll end up under hack and won't get promoted. So, it's up to you." Never had any trouble there. And in the evening, we used to have sport shirts and sport coats without a tie, and that sort of thing. And the youngsters could dance and have some fun. But the retired, if you let anybody do that down in the other club, the retired all cried and screamed.

There were quite a few retired folks that were community

leaders and got to know all of them and got them to the Ranch House, entertained them, and so forth. Well, the fellow I relieved, Toby Munn, there was W.W. Rogers--I wouldn't call him a leader in the community, but he was there--Henry Paige--did I mention him?

Frank: Yes, Reid Paige.

Cushman: Let's see, Paige and Munn....

Frank: General Good?

Cushman: Yes, Twining and Good were both there. But Twining, he was still very bitter, he wouldn't come down off his mountain top for anything. Good participated, and of course, Fenton, the old timer, he participated. We had a few bitter ones like Twining, and some younger colonels that hadn't gotten promoted, Haffner--I didn't even know he lived there for about a year.

Frank: Oh, really? Loren Haffner?

Cushamn: They never, he wouldn't even touch the Marine Corps. And there were a few people like that. Now, there is a lot more generals, my own era, that are retired out there.

Frank: Yes, Ray Murray is out there.

Cushman: Yes, Ray Murray.

Frank: Russ Jordahl.

Cushman: He's one I try to think of as old timer, he's quite active.

Frank: Yes, he's old timer. Yes, he's still going. Russ Jordahl, and let's see, Snedeker wasn't too far down.

Cushman: That's right, he's in Carlsbad. His sort of hobby was Boy Scouts. And he really worked at that. He'd get the mess hall in the evening and bring the scouts in and I think he furnished--no, we furnished the food and cooked the meal, and they paid for it, and that sort of thing. He was very interested in scouts. And there were all kind of---there were some old time colonels around that participated in things.

Frank: Now, Nixon was President at this time.

Cushman: No, no, he was....

Frank: That's right, you'd told me.

Cushman: No, he didn't make President until '69.

Frank: Right, he ran for the governor--he ran for governorship.

Cushman: Yes, and flopped, and then he went to New York.

Frank: So, you didn't have the problems as commander of the base when he was living at the little White House at San Clemente. I think Donn Robertson had that chore.

Cushman: I had that problem when I was Commandant, which when we get to it I can talk about it.

Frank: Well, why don't we talk about it right now while we think about it.

Cushman: Oh, well. He's a former President, when he had to resign, and he was living in San Clemente and I got the word that he wanted to use the golf course, the commissary, and the post exchange. I don't know if it was his idea because he had a Marine aide at the time.

Frank: Who resigned or retired.

Cushman: By the name of Brennan, whom I couldn't stand. In any event, that was too hot a potato for me, I sent it over to the Secretary of Defense, and they said no, I think, except to the golf course. But, there was a lot of wrestling and a lot of hassling from his staff and from SecDef, you know, "Why don't you tell him no." I said, "No way, it's your damn command, you stick your neck out, step up there and say yes or no." Well, he finally said no.

Frank: What was his aide's name, Brennan, wasn't it?

Cushman: Brennan, who parlayed, he was a mediocre major and he parlayed into full colonel over my objections and every other damned thing when I was Commandant. He was rude to me, arrogant, he thought he was President.

Frank: Yes, that often happens.

Cushman: But he was so ingratiated and intrenched and admired by Nixon that you couldn't do a thing to him. I got in the damnest fight, actually, with Rosemary Woods. She was talking for Nixon, they just couldn't understand that the Air Force and the Navy had different promotion laws. He could make Don Hughes whatever he wanted simply by calling over to the Secretary of the Air Force, and hell, they'd make him whatever was wanted, as a sort of temporary deal, I think. But anyway, they could do whatever they wanted.

Frank: Okay.

End Side 2, Tape 1

Begin Tape 2, Side 1, Session IV

Cushman: I had to explain over and over again that not even the Secretary of the Navy can make this kind of spot promotion. And they just couldn't understand it, the Air Force can do it, why the hell can't you? And in the meanwhile, there were a couple of Congressmen who'd been stirred up by some of Brennan's colleagues who he left way behind, still majors or something, who protested to their Congressman about this guy Brennan and so they were putting the heat on, no promotion, Nixon wanted him promoted, and I just said, "You're going to have to use your Presidential prerogative and do it as President in the first party or get the Congressional committee to do it."

But, I said, "Over here in the Defense Department, you can't do this to the Marines and Navy." Well, never understood, and they finally got him made colonel through the President just sending a piece of paper over with his name on it. So, I don't know if Rosemary ever forgave me for that. I don't think she believes to this day that it wasn't me with a pique against this guy for rapid promotion.

Frank: Who assigned this him as White House in the first place?

Cushman: I don't know. You know, they send over for somebody to be an aide and Brennan really did it himself. He was in the Personnel Department and got the damned request, see, you know. It had to go up stairs, but.....

Frank: Past all the tests.

Cushman: Yes, first name gets there. That's my understanding, anyway. I wasn't there, so.

Frank: I think you might have mentioned this, but I think this is the proper time to bring it in again. When did you learn that you were to be CG III MAF?

Cushman: Oh, when--I don't know what time, but it was the last visit, I think. Pretty sure it was his last visit to Pendleton while I was there as CG.

Frank: Whose last visit?

Cushman: General Greene.

Frank: Greene, right.

Cushman: Yes, Command visit to the base. And in the midst of everything else, he just mentioned he planned to send me over there.

Frank: As III MAF?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Okay. We talked a little about your staff and your relationships. Now, you were very close to E.E. Anderson at this time?

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: He was your BG, chief of staff.

Cushman: Where are we now?

Frank: III MAF.

Cushman: Because I'd known him before that.

Frank: Had you known him before that?

Cushman: He came out through Camp Pendleton to go--he had research. I think he was going out to the Far East on some research business and he stopped in and we had a long talk. I'm trying to think if I hadn't run into him before somewhere because

he was heavily into helicopters. I can't remember. One of his best friends is McCutcheon whom I'd known for years.

Yes, then I went out to Vietnam in 1967. The chief of staff was Bob Owens, aviator, when I took over.

Frank: Aviator, right.

Cushman: And a year later or almost a year later, E.E. Anderson came out as chief of staff, brigadier. And he was followed a year later by George Dooley, who was a brigadier general aviator. They all were.

Frank: Another aviator.

Cushman: The way it was run, I had no choice.

Frank: That's what I was going to ask you. I know during Shoup's regime, he was against any empires and the people following the senior officers around. He did everything he could to break it up. And this wasn't the case in Vietnam. But, on the other hand, these people, these more senior officers such as--general officers were given the assignment in their orders, you will relieve so and so as chief of staff, III MAF. And you weren't consulted about it or anything?

Cushman: No, they let you know what was happening. You had a chance to make a big stink if you wanted to. In one case I did. They wanted somebody to be a division commander and I didn't want him to be a division commander and had a long

fight and I won that fight. But, mostly they picked pretty good people. I didn't have any quarrel with it.

Frank: You were content to take whomever you had.

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: Did this relate to the colonels who came out too?

Cushman: No, it related to the division commanders. And the ADCs, too. Yes, general officers. For example, I never had any say who was going to be Force logistic commander, I remember that particularly. They just cranked up some guy with the right MOS who was a brigadier and met their criteria, whatever they established, and sent him out.

Frank: So, perhaps these agreements on assignments for general officer assignments were made by the Commandant with FMFPac, CG FMFPac?

Cushman: SecNav, well, yes. He consults with CinCPac--FMFPac--but he has to consult with the Secretary of the Navy.

Frank: Oh, yes, we spoke about that yesterday.

Cushman: So, this kind of stuff is done before they go over to see the SecNav with the list in case there is a fuss by either FMFPac or myself. Then it would be all settled before they took the names into SecNav.

Frank: What happens if the chemicals weren't right?

Would it be a short tour?

Cushman: Walt fired Karch, I think he fired somebody else, too.

Frank: Henderson.

Cushman: Yes, Henderson, that's right. That was early on. I had perhaps a little more trouble. But, for real malfeasance, you know, sure, you're going to be able to fire them. I mean, would have been able to or I would say a division commander could fire his ADC is he really blew it. It never came to that while I was there. Lieutenant colonels, I fired a few, but.

Frank: Well, that's a good question because it seems to me, my perception of it, that during when General Walt was out there--and I have kept up with the subsequent period, maybe during your period--that there was a tremendous amount of reliefs made. And it looked like during Lew Walt's regime, it was because he was--he had this reputation, you know, the big grunt from the sky--that he would make almost snap decisions and judgements there. Platoon leader--he was looking over these people, and battalion commanders--tremendous amount of reliefs.

Cushman: I guess so, well, he's very hot tempered, demanding, and almost impossible to work for, as far as I'm concerned. Not my case as his deputy, but I mean, God, some of his staff officers really took a beating. And gee, here's the Corps 3, he's always dragging them in where here goes, and Walt always

goes where the goddamned bullets are flying around, whether he needs to or not. And he got--while I was there just before I took over--he got his 3 shot up, you know, just dragging him up to Con Thien for no goddamned reason.

Frank: Who was that?

Cushman: I can't remember his name now. He retired soon after. And I would say that you're right, that there were a lot of reliefs, even though I don't know it. Of my own knowledge, I would think there would be, because of his style, Walt's style and his demanding perfection and rash action on the battlefield, even beyond what was required, in my opinion, and this sort of thing.

Frank: Well, I keep quoting General Worton, when I interviewed him, he was telling--he was discussing this about the fact that when he was in Santo Domingo in '20 and '22, that they didn't have the press looking down, it wasn't this immediate response. And now in Vietnam, it is so, where the President could get on the phone and talk to a platoon leader out in the field.

Cushman: That's right, if he wants to he can.

Frank: Yes, and that there was this constant looking over the shoulder of the division commander or the battalion or regimental commander going out--where the division commander was fighting a company war or a platoon leader war.

Cushman: Yes, there was too much of that, too much of that. I mean, squad leader from the sky, there is a lot of truth in that. And it's bad. I was guilty one case. I went into a battalion--well, the battalion was having a battle, and I could see the battle was developing and I dropped in and I couldn't find the battalion commander and I talked to a couple of companies that were in contact and having a fight, and said, "Well, he's back over there." And I found him hiding behind a rock, you know. Not like this, but he was just sitting there behind a rock where nobody could hit him with a runner and a radio and that was it. He wasn't doing a damned thing. And he didn't know what was going on and I fired him right then and there. But, it's not really the way to operate. But, if you're on the scene, you know, you've got to do something. And you hate to not drop in when there is a pressure point or critical thing going on--firefight--if you're in the sky right over it. So, it's something, I think, commanders haven't really learned how to handle correctly.

I suppose the ideal way would be you in the air and the division commander in the air and the regimental commander where you could talk to him and say get that battalion commander. But, the distances were so great that unless you were in the air, you couldn't get up to the battalion commander and see what was going on. It just wasn't safe to go riding around in a jeep like we used to do.

Frank: Do you think there were as many reliefs--well, were

there many reliefs in World War II that you know of, of battalion commanders and company commanders?

Cushman: I don't know, there were some. I relieved one company commander on Iwo who was, gee, he was supposed to lead the column of companies that were going to move to the attack position at about dawn, and I look around and here he is--comes over, clutches at me, kind of slobbering, and falls to the ground screaming he couldn't go. And I called the doctor, told him to give him a shot or something to quiet him down and haul him off to the hospital or, you know, evacuate him. And of course, you can't say I fired him really, something just had to be done. He was not rational, so I should take it back that I fired him. I didn't, I just removed him from the scene.

Frank: I'm thinking that the situation in Vietnam where almost every eye was focused on things from the President....

Cushman: Yes, I was really too high up. As I say, the personnel was really a division, regimental, battalion problem. They handled all the individuals and the details and everything. And when it came to platoon leaders, company commanders, even battalion commanders, I didn't know if they were relieved or not. Battalion commanders, I got to know quite a lot of them, but just there they were in the battlefield, and I happened to be looking around and there they were. You know, they'd always brief me, shake hands with them, want to know who they were and this sort of stuff. And then, probably wouldn't see them again.

Regimental commanders, it was different, of course, headquarters was a little more stable, stationary.

Frank: Now, you had as 1st Division commanders during your tour there, Donn Robertson and Carl Youngdale and Orm Simpson. You had three division commanders.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: Okay, and the 3d Division you had Lou Metzger or Bruno Hochmuth.

Cushman: Yes, Bruno Hochmuth.

Frank: And Lou Metzger, who was acting.

Cushman: Interim, yes.

Frank: That's right. Tommy Tompkins and then Ray Davis.

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: What was your relationship with your division commanders?

Cushman: Direct and closer with the one that was close to my headquarters which was the 1st Marine Division, because I think he used to pop in just for our briefings because he was close enough to do it. He and I would always attend the briefings at General Lam's headquarters together because as time went on, I was giving orders directly to the army division working directly

with General Lam and working directly with the 1st Marine Division, and 24th Corps was the conduit for operation plans, orders, and instructions, and so on to the two Army divisions and the Marine division that were up north of the Hai Van Pass. So I was a little closer to the division commander right outside my headquarters because I saw him much more often, and I would have to take a trip--which I would do frequently, at least once a week, often twice a week up to see the 3d Marine Division and the Army divisions and the corps.

Frank: Now, you had two wing commanders during this time, Norm Anderson and Chick Quilter.

Cushman: Yes, right. And I think Ben, Robertshaw was there when I first took over.

Frank: Yes, he was, right.

Cushman: Or at least he was there when I was the assistant.

Frank: Right, that's right, he was.

Cushman: I didn't work with him too long, then Norm Anderson spent a year there, and then Chick Quilter, I think, he was there when I left. A little bit overlap before he went home, and Thrash, I think, relieved Quilter but I was gone then.

Frank: Right, yes.

Cushman: I remember because Thrash met me on the west coast

and piloted the helicopter that took me as a passenger down to where my wife was in Pendleton. I landed at El Toro, I believe. And he was talking about taking over the wing. I gave him a little fatherly advice.

Frank: What were--we talked about the problems with the 7th Air Force, about single management and so on when we did our Vietnam portion. What was General Anderson's position and thoughts on the employment of fixed wing?

Cushman: Oh, he was an old-timer in this fight. It wasn't as famous as the Chowder Society, but there was a big fight about air going on all the time, seems to me, starting with what they did to us in Korea and there was sort of a campaign against the way the Air Force wanted to do things and in promoting the way we wanted to do things, particularly, convincing the Navy we were right, and this sort of business. He was in that campaign, he did a lot of work on it. I guess he was in headquarters, if I'm not mistaken. Anyway, he knew chapter and verse, chimed in with many of the arguments and made a lot of the points, you know. And that was his position, the Marine Corps position.

Frank: Is there anything we didn't cover during the Vietnam thing that you can think of, that you want to discuss?

Cushman: No, I don't think so.

Frank: Well, we spent a considerable amount of time the other day, about 50 some odd questions plus the other ones.

Cushman: Yes, yes, right. I know a couple I couldn't answer, I still don't know what Prairie Fire is. And it's so familiar, you know, I should know.

Frank: Well, we'll look it up.

Cushman: I can't put the operation with the name.

Frank: Now, you mentioned earlier today that it was during your trip back to Washington for President Nixon's inaugural that he told you he was going to bring you back at the completion of your tour to be Deputy Director of CIA.

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: Was this the kind of assignment that you found satisfactory?

Cushman: Yes, I wanted it. I thought it would be darn interesting. As I mentioned it earlier, for three stars you've got to have a job where you have to take off one of the stars. And they had stuck me in the personnel business, which was a billet they made for Walt when he came back. And I was assigned to that, but it just didn't sound very intriguing, very interesting compared with this other job. And all the other slots, you know, they were all filled up and people weren't due to leave, the two FMFs and Quantico, so hell, there wasn't anything else.

Frank: It was either retirement or reverting to two stars.

Cushman: Yes. And so I kind of lobbied a little bit when I met the President and I got the job.

Frank: Oh, you asked for that job?

Cushman: Yes, yes. Well, I'd been talking with Don Hughes and found out that the job was a vacancy that had to be filled. Don didn't know that the Joint Chiefs had already picked a name, but that's about as far as it had gotten. I don't think SecDef or anybody had yet approved it. So, there was a chance to slide in there, and I took it.

Frank: What'd they generally do, ask the Joint Chiefs to provide a general officer?

Cushman: Yes, yes. Well, it depends. If there's no Presidential interest or SecDef interest, the Joint Chiefs will just pick some military guy from a different service than the one who is presently there and slide him in there. If the President takes any personal interest, he appoints whom he wants. And if SecDef's got some guy he wants to see over there for some reason or another, he'll do that. And he might very well have because there has to be coordination between the CIA and the Pentagon. So, it can be handled either way. It's like making CNO, if you're under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, I think he personally appointed only admirals he knew. He knew a lot about the Navy, he loved it, and that was his interest. Probably couldn't care less who was chief of staff of the Army.

Then another President, Truman, who was an Army guy probably wouldn't pay much attention to the Navy's powers that be except to say okay when....

Frank: Yes, right. Do you think that the President or that Mr. Nixon consulted with the Commandant as to your appointment, or just it was a fait accompli, he said that's what he wanted?

Cushman: Right.

Frank: Now, you got a fourth star out of this, did you not?

Cushman: No.

Frank: Wasn't there a fourth star involved with the job?

Cushman: Off and on. The guy that worked for Allan Dulles for years and years as his deputy CIA eventually got four stars--Air Force guy. Then next, I've forgotten who was next, anyway, the guy I relieved had three stars. Vice Admiral--oh, goddamned it, class of '33, I think it was. Anyway, he's dead now. Retired and got cancer. Let's see, then I had three stars, then the guy that relieved me had three stars, Dick Walters. And then they reorganized as they're always doing, and they had another set up where they had a four star admiral, Dan Murphy, in charge of some goddamned amorphous outfit that was supposed to keep everybody happy with liaison and one thing and another with the DIA and the White House, and I don't know who all. He got four stars. The deputy--and he was not the deputy, as

I remember. Anyway, you really lose track fast because once you leave the door, you leave your cards, your keys, and everything--you can't get back in. So, I just don't recall how the hell it all--Dick Helms left, Bill Colby came in and I just don't know who was deputy. Anyway, it was not a four star job, it's a three star job until they reorganized. I don't know what it is--now there are two civilians. The law says you can have two civilians, but not two military.

(Interruption)

Frank: We were talking, before we broke for lunch, the CIA.

Cushman: Yes, we were talking how I got appointed.

Frank: Right.

Cushman: So, I went to CIA and walked in and reported to Dick Helms, who was the Director, and I had been preceded by some horrible newpaper articles about being sent over to straighten the outfit out, spy for Nixon, and all this stuff.

Frank: Yes, I remember reading that.

Cushman: Helms been around long enough not to take it too seriously. Anyway, he never said anything about it, of course. And I reported in and he said, "Well, I'm glad to see a military man here." He said, "We've got a war in Laos and you're in charge of it starting now." And I was for the whole time I was there. Not much of a secret that CIA was running it altnough

it was supposed to be. But, like the Bay of Pigs, which I should go back and treat that a little bit, for Mr. Nixon.

Frank: Were you involved with that?

Cushman: Yes, in a peripheral way.

Frank: Well, maybe we ought to put that in right here now.

Cushman: Alright, fine. I think I mentioned that when working for the Vice-President, I had a CIA officer come over every morning with the intelligence and I would brief it and transcribe it onto a typewriter so that he didn't have to sit there forever, and he'd go home with his stuff and I'd take my memo and either brief the Vice-President or usually just send it in to him so he could read it when he had time.

Along about the last year of the administration, about the time Mr. Nixon was gearing up and getting ready to run for President--I think I have the timing right--the Bay of Pigs started to cook up. An operation which, at least in concept and for planning, had been approved by the President and the CIA was proceeding full speed ahead with the planning and recruitments of Cubans and the training and the political and financial business that goes along with this sort of thing. And I was told by the Vice President to monitor it and report to him on progress. He was in favor of such an operation in principle. I do not know whether he urged it on the President or in other councils, but I do know that he believed it was the sort of

thing we ought to be doing in combating Communism. He spotted Castro as a Communist when Castro made his visit to the United States and went up and made a speech to the UN and he had an audience with the Vice-President, who afterwards wrote a memo for the record in which he in effect stated regardless of what Castro says, what he does is in line with the Communist objectives, Communist plans. So, in effect, he walks like a duck and squawks like a duck, he is a duck. So, he's a Communist regardless of whether he's carrying a card or not. This was the great debate at the time, you may recall. He's just another one of those agrarian farmers or something, agrarian reformers. So, the Vice-President spotted him as a Communist, made a report to the President and J. Edgar Hoover as to the results of his interview with him. So, Nixon was very interested, he believed Communism was settling in down there and was in favor of the Bay of Pigs operation, and I was told to monitor it and keep him informed.

I did this, I renewed aquaintances, in a couple of cases, and met people involved in a couple of others, who were project officers and working on the project for CIA. The project appealed to me, but it worried me from the start because the training was--at first, I didn't think the numbers were sufficient, I didn't think the training would be good enough in terms of communications and perhaps gunfire control and some of these things, control of air support. And they--as everything went on, I told the Vice-President that if he had to okay it, which

he would have had to if he became President--it was just at that awkward time of transition from Ike's administration to whomever would follow him--I suggested to the Vice-President, first secrecy is not very much and everyone will know the United States is behind it, backing it, perhaps even in it, and that therefore we should stand ready to be sure that it succeeds even to the point of providing air support, Marine landings, drop in the airborne troops. If necessary, we've just got to get in the battle and make sure we win it or we will be a laughing stock. Well, he didn't get elected, he didn't have to approve it, it did go, Kennedy refused to give it air support and the damned thing was a fiasco. So, that was my tale there of relationships to CIA during that time both for furnishing intelligence and for monitoring this project.

Let's see, I think also I was made aware of the U-2 flights and the resulting intelligence. And I would occasionally would get to look at some of the pictures and then I could brief the Vice-President on that. In fact, he went over to where they were developing these pictures at one point, and we watched them do it and marveled at the detail and so on which was highly held secret at that point.

And a little later, the U-2 got shot down and I maintained a sort of liaison with what was going on on that. The Vice-President was interested to make sure he was really shot down, and he wanted a lot of questions answered, you know. After all,

the guy had cyanide and one thing and another with him, as I recall, to keep from falling into the hands of the Russian. But, it didn't work out that way. The plane got shot down and he more or less rode it down and, I guess, jumped out in a parachute. Anyway, they got him, so I had to do a little liaisoning on that and keep him informed of what CIA's thinking was on it and so forth.

In taking over the job of the deputy director, I found it tremendously interesting. I was pretty much assigned, at first, to be the acting director when the boss had to leave town, which he did very seldom. Second, I interested myself in data processing, which was coming full speed into the CIA, particularly on the logistics and house management side--budget and all that. Third, I was the CIA member of the United States Intelligence Board. The Director was the head of it, the Chairman, and then I represented CIA and they had people representing all the other intelligence outfits in the intelligence community-DIA, as a courtesy, Army and Navy intelligence chiefs and Air Force chiefs also sat as observers. That is, they didn't have a vote, whereas, the DIA man did. And we had the FBI and the State Department. Anybody else? That was about it, I think. And then assorted experts, depending on the subject matter. And I represented the CIA. And there was a lot of work connected with that. And sometimes he'd leave and leave me to chair the committee and beat out compromises on intelligence estimates and this sort of thing.

Also, we had a committee made up of the people that were on the board, sort of a sub-committee to wrestle with the exchange of data problem and working it into the data bank. NSA was a particular problem. My classmate was the head of it, Noel Guyler, and they had a tradition of never telling anybody anything. So, to get data out of them was very difficult. But, we eventually made an arrangement whereby we could get data from them, Pentagon was a tough nut to crack, finally got things going so we were developing a data bank which would cut across all the agencies, and we could retrieve material.

I think I mentioned the war in Laos, and I was in charge of that.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: Which meant besides several visits there, that they would come in to me with the battle planning and I would go over it and either okay it or tell them to do something different and indicate what I thought ought to be done. And then they'd go back out through their CIA reps out there in the field and they would get together with the Mao general, Vang Phow. And General Vang Phow, a very interesting guy, would then do his best to carry it out with his Meo tribesmen. The problem was that our people were not permitted to accompany the troops that they advised. They could only advise them, you know, in the bivouac, so to speak and then for operations, these guys went off on their own. These were the ground rules. I

don't know who set them up, but that was it.

Frank: Were those guys military or strictly agents?

Cushman: Mostly young former Green Berets and special service types from the Army, yes.

Frank: That had been recruited by the agency?

Cushman: Yes, yes, they belonged to the agency. May have been one or two military that stayed--I don't think so because of the clandestine nature of the thing.

Anyhow, the advisors in Vietnam, of course, were permitted to go with their troops and just the opposite in Laos. The Meo fought quite bravely. Vang Phou had been a sergeant in the French Foreign Legion, and in fact, had marched to the relief of Dienbienphu out of Laos. But luckily for him they didn't get there, the North Vietnamese took it before they arrived. So, he was in the French Foreign Legion and spoke a sort of French, but it was more than my French could take care of, so we spoke in sort of broken English with each other. He was quite a character, he had three stars and he was also the tribal chief, and he was also in the regional government--the chief of his region. He could usually be found firing mortar shells to support the attack of his tribesmen, he was still the perfect sergeant in the French Foreign legion. He had leadership qualities, but he had no formal training as a general officer, of course, or in strategy and so on, but he was a good tactician

and probably no more than was demanded of him by the situation. He had a good sense of humor. One of his favorite jokes was, "You think you got troubles, you should go on vacation to Bangkok with five wives," which he had and a few younger ladies strung around too, I think.

Frank: Did you go out there? You must have gone out on a field trip.

Cushman: Oh, yes, I went all over Laos where I could get. You know, there was the northern part held by the North Vietnamese, some Chinese advisors and they had a Laotian Communist army, the Pathet Lao, but the Vietnamese were the real spine to all of this. And it was tough to get around and dangerous. They had short take-off and landing aircraft made by the Swedes. I forget the name of it, but they'd take off from the darnest little landing field you ever saw in your life. Some of them just built on hillsides, you'd stop because you were going up hill, and to leave, you head downhill. So, the flying was very hairy. And they had a couple of helicopters. The weather was terrible, almost got trapped by low-lying clouds several times, in the helicopter. But, it also was interesting.

Went into the Golden Triangle where the opium was grown. That was an experience. You land in a villiage and the pigs would run between your legs and the women naked down to here, strictly out of National Geographic, and the idea was that they'd have some local troops there, and you know, you want to

give them a big hand and keep their loyalty. This sort of thing, very interesting. But finally, the Vietnamese just said, "The hell with it," you know, our position was weakening by that time anyway, so they could spare some troops, they just said, "The hell with this, we're going to go in and clean it up," and they pretty much did.

I'd already left, we were holding our own when I left CIA, as I recall.

Frank: What was the relationship you had as deputy director to the White House?

Cushman: Only such relationship as the White House wanted, because I was the deputy. The director had to go to every National Security Council meeting and brief them on intelligence of the world and then pertaining to whatever they were going to talk about. And if he couldn't, which several times he couldn't, I would take his place and do it.

Then at the beginning of the administration, since they knew me, I was called on several occasions in by Henry Kissinger and John Mitchell with their complaints about intelligence estimates as to the way they were written. Change in Presidents, Nixon didn't mind reading a bunch of material, he liked to and he liked to see the reasoning on both sides when there was a conflict of opinion. Whereas, the previous President couldn't have cared less, he didn't want to read a bunch of crap, as he put it, you know, one page and this kind of stuff. So, it was

a complete change in the consumer--of the intelligence product. And since I was sort of known quantity, I was called in and told this, so I'd carry it back and tell Dick Helms and he'd say, "Well good, get hold of the people and let's hold school and we'll change." We'd put out what the customer wants.

Then I was called by Erlichman and Haldeman at one point and asked if I could do a surveillance job on the President's brother and I said, "Hell no, it's against the law. What's the matter with the Secret Service?" Already they're paranoid. "Oh, the Secret Service worked for Johnson, we don't trust them," this kind of junk. And so I just told them it was against the law for the CIA to conduct any in-country police functions and that was that. They were feeling their way. As time went on, it was just the opposite, they were not feeling their way anymore, they constructed the Berlin wall and the only way an old friend could get in to see the President was if the President sent for him. And he sent for me on several occasions in connection with closing the harbor by mining at Haiphong, whether to do it at Sihanoukville, invasion of Cambodia, and this sort of questions. He already had advise from all kinds of people, but I was flattered that he asked my advise too.

A couple of these occasions he had Tom Moorer and myself in there at the same time, Tom being the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, which kind of put me on a spot, but no problem came of it since Tom and I saw eye-to-eye on all of this.

I went to the second inaugural. By that time I was Commandant, I believe.

Frank: Yes, you were.

Cushman: That would be '73, yes, I was Commandant.

Frank: '73, you were Commandant.

Cushman: So, all of the chiefs went, nothing special there.

Frank: What were your relatinships with Haldeman, Erlichman, Butterfield, and so on?

Cushman: Never heard of Butterfield.

Frank: You never heard of Butterfield?

Cushman: No. Well, I'd known Haldeman when he was what they called an advanceman for the Vice-President in his first run at the Presidency in 1960. John Warner was an advanceman at the same time. They'd come floating through the office real quick and get in with the political guys, but usually I got to meet them and say hello without becoming great pals or anything. Same with Erlichman.

End Side 1, Tape 2

Begin Side 2, Tape 2, Session IV

Cushman: ...other than that, I didn't have any real relationship, you know, no social relationships or anything like that, and not

very many business relationships, except when they'd call up, send for me, or something of that sort.

Now of course, whenever the boss was not available for committee meetings, the ones that were chaired by Kissinger, in which we discussed and recommended to the President covert action and things of that kind, I went to those and I struck up a pretty good relationship with Kissinger and with Al Haig, who was his number two guy. And occasionally, there would be questions about this or that estimate and so on, and there'd be calls back and forth between myself and Kissinger and Al Haig, particularly, if I was acting director, I'd get calls. So, my relationships were really with Haig and Kissinger and John Mitchell to some extent because he sat on these committees just because the President valued his advise and wanted him to sit in. He had no damn business sitting in, I mean, it had nothing to do with the Justice Department--the things that we considered. And of course, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs would come over to that and a guy from State Department and so on.

Erlichman was domestic affairs, I had very little to do with that. And I say, it would be an extraneous matter that he'd call me in, like surveille the Presidents brother who was in and out of Los Vegas gambling halls too much to the Presidents--kind of unhappy. Always been kind of unhappy about brother Don anyway. His younger brother is a different matter. A naval officer and a pretty good guy.

Frank: Is he still in?

Cushman: Haldeman sort of became chief of staff, but he di try to run the CIA or anything. That was Kissinger's provi dealing with CIA. So, I never had much to do with him eith We knew each other on a first name basis, but that was abou

Frank: How would you characterize Kissinger?

Cushman: Well, I was an admirer of his intellectual capaci and I thought he was doing a damned good job for the boss i executing and helping to develop foreign policy, which was Nixon's specialty. I liked working with him. Working for h is something else. You could tell he had a Teutonic real to approach to the people that worked for him on his staff, ver demanding, perfectionist, and work all hours. But to sit ar the table at a committee in which he chaired was very intere ing to see his intellect operate and how he ran the committe And he always had a light remark to break up any problem are tension between people. He's very skillful.

Frank: How about Haig, how would you characterize him?

Cushman: Well, when I knew him he was, in those days, he wa lieutenant colonel and very able, very hard working, smart, a a good contact. You know, he was always there no matter whe Kissinger was, sort of like the executive director type that described before in working with cabinet officers. He was always there and had the answers and could get them. And aft I became Commandant he--you might say all of a sudden, he was

data banks, get intelligence information into data banks, and this sort of stuff. I worked fairly closely with a West Point guy who had been wounded in the war and retired and went into CIA. His name was Red White, Army colonel, retired who was the number three guy, and he was the housekeeper. Not logistics, that was another department that ran logistics for our people out in the field. This was house keeping, you know, you need a new building, this was the guy that was going to have to work with it. And I worked closely with him on a lot of things. Trying to think, I didn't get involved in personnel much, but I saw every chief of station who would come back into headquarters to report, as they did occasionally. And I would always see them.

One time, I had to head up a board of inquiry into the death of the wife of one of our agents overseas, call those people back in and I ran it just like a military court of inquiry. Occasionally, I would get some kind of extra job like that.

Frank: Was she murdered by her husband or something?

Cushman: Well, that was the worry. But, we found that no, it was apparently an intruder. It was in Bolivia, La Paz.

Well, as I say, there was always huge books of estimates and papers like that. Intelligence, every night I had to sort of put the intelligence paper to bed that came up the next morning, particularly if the boss wasn't there. If he was

there, he also usually looked at it, but I'd go over it first.

I was also the head of the Watch Committee of the U.S. Intelligence Board. We were supposed to tell the world, the President whenever a war was going to break out. And if you don't think that was something, goddamned. We had the Israelies and the Egyptians staring at each other across the Suez Canal, armed and ready and we were supposed to be able--and they'd been there for months--we were supposed to be able to tell if on Tuesday morning if they're going to jump across the canal and start a war. We wrestled with this sort of thing the best we could.

Frank: How good was the intelligence that the CIA was manufacturing?

Cushman: What's that?

Frank: How good was the intelligence that the agency was manufacturing?

Cushman: Oh, I thought it was good. We had a failure or two. Was this the time that Quaddafi took over without anybody knowing about it? I think so, but I'm not sure when he took over. I think so. We had a couple of those kind of deals where it is really hard to tell what the hell is going to happen unless you're sort of on the inside. You've always got a bunch of smoldering colonels in some of these countries and you just never know when they're going to jump. If you knew, presumably,

the government would know and throw them all in the slammer. I think we had a couple of failures like that. But, when it came to estimating Russian strength and so on, we had arguments with the Pentagon, we accused, I think it was, of under estimating and they tended to over estimate because it supported their budgets. Even a subliminal, you know, military tend to go for the worst case, anyway, and the truth lay somewhere in between. The CIA as events unrolled and you looked back as to what your estimates where, they were too low. I think they were a little sanguine. But, the people at CIA were intensely motivated, patriotic, and working like hell to do the best thing they could for the country. I felt good working with them, I always compared them with Marines in terms of a lot of people out there don't like them. You know, there's not a liberal in the world that wouldn't do away with the CIA in a minute if they had the chance. So, the CIA always felt kind of beleaguered, like the Marines do, being attacked from all sides on occasions. So, I enjoyed working there, both tours.

Frank: When did you first become aware of Watergate?

Cushman: When I was Commandant of the Marine Corps and overseas on a trip to Belgium and Holland. I think I was in Holland not a trip to Belgium, they don't have a Marine Corps. Holland, Dutch Marine Corps. Well, to go through the story of my relationship with the White House plumbers.

Frank: Yes, please.

Cushman: I got a call from Erlichman and he said, "We've just hired a new guy who used to work for you people. His name is Howard Hunt." Well, I had met Hunt, sort of said goodby to him when he retired, and he's sort of a bull in the china shop type guy. Would-be novelist, detective and spy stories, sharp enough mind, and lots of energy. And I said, "Okay, so what's the purpose of the call?" He said, "Well, we've got him working for us on security and he wants to come over and talk to you. I hope you will, give him a lesson...."

Frank: Who's this that called you?

Cushman: Erlichman.

Frank: Erlichman did.

Cushman: "...and take care of him. He's now working for us," in other words. So, do what what he says is the inference.

Frank: That was tantamount to an order?

Cushman: Yes, and just like in the military, the boss desires something, it's an order.

Frank: He was speaking for Nixon then?

Cushman: Well, what else, you know, the number three guy in the White House calls you, who else would he be speaking for?

Frank: Sure, sure.

Cushman: That's not real, that's what you have to assume, but as you well know, guys in those positions just use that as a power backing and it may there own goddamned idea and the President never heard of it. You don't know. Anymore than some aide calls up and you don't know if the general ever heard of his scheme or not.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: So, Howard Hunt came in. Smartest thing I ever did was punch the little button under my desk that started the tape recorder, and the hell with these courtesies of, do you know you're being taped. So, we had a long conversation and what he asked for was, a means of disguising his identity because, for the White House, he had to interview a person whom the White House did not want to know Hunt's identity. Well, we often did this with defectors, the interviewee would be disguised so he couldn't be identified for one reason or another. So, we had the stuff to do it with, nothing earth shaking. This was, presumably, some political enemy, the White House or something, I've forgotten what cock and bull story he gave--that he had to interview, and so on. Well, he got a--I think he got that famous wig.

Frank: Red wig, yes.

Cushman: Yes, anyway, he got something that would alter his voice and something would alter his appearance. What they

called pocket litter, ID, and odds and ends in the pocket that would ordinarily belong to somebody else. Well, I phoned down to the people that did this sort of thing, and told them that Howard Hunt would be there, give him the stuff, and that was that.

In the meanwhile, I notified, at our daily staff conference, I had notified Dick Helms that this guy had been hired. Howard Hunt was kind of, you know, when I said bull in a china shop, everybody knew him, knew who he was. And considerable amazement was expressed over his being hired by the White House.

Frank: Had he retired from CIA?

Cushman: Yes, oh, yes, he was retired. I went to his retirement ceremony.

Frank: Forceably, you think?

Cushman: No, I don't think so. I think it was more a case of, had he run into the age? Like the service, they had some pretty strict deals on the length of service and years of age. He might have run into that or he might have seen that he was at a dead-end as far as future promotion. I don't know, but I don't think he got called into the director's office and fired, no, I don't think so. But again, I don't know.

And that put Helms on notice and it put the staff on notice that this guy had been hired by the White House. So then, I had my interview, and I was acting director for about two days

and had the interview, okayed, given him the damned stuff. The boss came back and I told him, he said, "Well, okay." Then, about four weeks later, they call up from downstairs in the place where they hand out all these things--of course, I thought he'd gotten his stuff and gone on about his business and that was the end of it--they called up and said, "Hunts been back here, he's in here all the time trying to get radios and tape recorders and cameras, and we've been giving him a lot of this stuff." Gees, what the hell, I told you what to give him, I mean, I told Hunt what he could get and what's he doing asking for all this other stuff. And not only that, he'd been a member of the outfit and he knows the damned rules. So, I called up Erlichman and said, "You've got a bull in the china shop in this guy Hunt and he's going over the line as to what CIA can do and I won't have anything more to do with it. And if you're smart, if I were you, I'd fire him." Well, that didn't get me anywhere except that they accepted the fact that I wasn't going to support him anymore, but they kept him on obviously.

Now, what he'd done, was he'd taken the damned disguise that I'd given him and had gone out and hit Ellsberg's psychiatrist office. And then he came back--they took a bunch of pictures with the camera they talked him out of, they took a bunch of pictures and they passed them in, I think, to be developed because these pictures appeared later on, pictures of the damned office and the safe open, I mean, the filing cabinet open, and one thing and another. And so, that came forth and

raised holy hell when they discovered it. And they discovered it at the time of Watergate, when that broke. In the meanwhile, I had become Commandant and I was on a tour over in Europe and gees, all of a sudden there are ten million press screaming and banging on my door in the hotel where I was staying--sort of a house, actually. And Christ, I came out there and they wanted to know about Watergate and all about Howard Hunt and all this, and I just told them, "No comment." And then the phone started ringing from the Pentagon and every other goddamned place. And eventually, of course, I was hauled up before--I think there were four intelligence committees and a couple of other committees that stuck their horn in somehow--and I answered them all and ended up with Symington and Scoop Jackson patting me on the back and saying, "By God, you said no to the White House and that's good enough for us. We're convinced of your clean bill of health." So, I got absolved of any problem for messing around with that guy Hunt. And I was helped by the tape in which he described what he was going to do which had nothing whatsoever to do with going to Los Angeles and breaking and entering.

Frank: Didn't he use that interview....

Cushman: That really ended it for me. As I say, I got a clean bill of health on it. Watergate, I knew nothing about. And far as I know, CIA didn't either. But I couldn't vouch for it because I wasn't there anymore.

Frank: Didn't he use that wig to interview this Dita Beard, too?

Cushman: Well, that's what the papers say, but I don't know anything about it.

Frank: No, of course not.

Cushman: And I don't even remember if he got a wig. I guess he must have. That's part of a disguise of his appearance that he would be liable to get, yes. No, I didn't know anything about that until I read about it in the papers, and I didn't know anything about what the hell he was doing, as a matter of fact, until he himself, you know, they caught him at Watergate and then it all came out. Not only Watergate, but the messing around with Ellsberg's file.

Frank: Being over CIA, of course, you wouldn't know anything that was going on--I assume you didn't know anything that was going on with the plumbers and all this other business?

Cushman: No, all I heard was a phone call from Erlichman saying they'd hired Hunt and that he was going to be involved in security at the White House, working for the White House, that's all he said. And about talking to him, he wants to come over and talk to you about something, and that was it. And of course, the inference was we've hired him, you know, you better damn well make a date and hear what he has to say.

Frank: Yes, yes. Now, when was your first intimation of being selected as the next Commandant?

Cushman: I think it was very late in the game because the Secretary of Defense, as he said, he didn't believe in lame ducks. Goddamn, that really caused me some problems.

Frank: Who was SecDef at that time?

Cushman: Mel Laird.

Frank: Laird.

Cushman: And he told me in November that I was going to be the next Commandant and I don't think it was announced until, oh God, late in November. And then I immediately went over and started getting briefed. But, I was on duty in CIA until midnight of the 31st of December. In fact, I had to field several phone calls about problems. And then at midnight, I got a call about 1:00 am and told the guy, "I'm no longer it, you've got to call so and so." You know, my next in line, number three guy. I'm now starting to worry about being Commandant.

Frank: Was Mel Laird the only person that you talked to?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes.

Frank: Who were some of the people that were in the running? I mean, you probably knew that you were....

Cushman: Oh, Chaisson, I thought he was going to be Commandant,

I think. Ray Davis was sure he was going to be Commandant. Those were the two primary....

Frank: Jones?

Cushman: He hoped for it but he was out in Pearl Harbor. And of course, the guys right in town were Davis and Chaisson. I'm trying to think if there was anybody else. You know, some people think they are in the running, but they aren't. I think Jones thought he was in the running, but it turned out he wasn't.

Frank: Had you been interviewed ahead of time by SecDef?

Cushman: No.

Frank: Had the others been interviewed that you know of?

Cushman: I don't know. They might have been interviewed by SecNav or something. But, I was sort of out in left field with CIA.

Frank: Well, yes. You were out of the main stream.

Cushman: Yes, nobody interviewed me.

Frank: Had you done any politicking for this?

Cushman: Not particularly. Well, yes, I did a little bit. I told Don Hughes and Rosemary Woods, who were close to the President, and I told Bob Haldeman, and Wally Greene. I told a couple of other people, "Yes, I would be interested in being

Commandant."

Frank: Oh, did you tell Chappy that?

Cushman: Yes, I told Chappy that.

Frank: Of course, Wally Greene had been retired by this point.

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. Yes, I told Chappy.

Frank: Now, do you think there was any direct intercession on the part of the President to...of course, he makes the final recommendation.

Cushman: I'd say this one came right from the top, yes.

Frank: Did come?

Cushman: I think so. I think Mel Laird did not object or there would have been a big hassle. Now, there was a hassle when Davis became Assistant Commandant because my name was put in too. And Davis got the nod, but it was done at the SecDef level, the decision. Nixon stayed out of that one.

Frank: Let's see, that would have been two years earlier.

Cushman: No, it was only...Walt retired, Davis had only about a year, something like that.

Frank: That's right.

Cushman: That caused a lot of consternation. Chappy didn't like it, I'm sure.

Frank: Oh, that Ray Davis was a....

Cushman: No, that there was a fuss about who was going to be it. He'd pick Davis and all of a sudden my name was in there holding up everything. Finally he said, "Oh, the hell with this. I'll leave it in the hands of the civilians." So, the civilians, SecDef primarily, I'm sure, put Davis in. Then when it came time for the Commandancy to come up, as I say, I let a few people know and the White House staff that I was available, so to speak, and that's all I did. I never talked to the President personally about it.

Frank: Had you told Chappy that you wanted to be Commandant?

Cushman: Yes, I told him so he wouldn't think there was some skulldulgery going on. I knew he wasn't recommending me. But I thought I better tell him because, one reason, because of the flap that had occured before on being the Assistant Commandant, and I didn't want him to think something was starting again like that. As I say, I knew he wasn't going to recommend me, I don't know who the hell he recommended, but it wasn't I.

Frank: Were you on pretty good terms with Chappy?

Cushman: Yes, I always had been. We were classmates and we were at Headquarters at the same time. When I was G-3 he was

G-4. We used to commiserate. He was a great favorite of Shoup's and I was just the opposite. Occasionally, I'd commiserate with him on that. We never had served together until, by golly, we got to Headquarters. But of course, we were classmates, I'd known him.

Frank: What were the things that faced you when you took over the Commandancy, what were the problems?

Cushman: The biggest problem was that I'd been away for three years. I had about three weeks to really get with it and then after the ceremony of being made Commandant, had about three more weeks as I recall before coming up against the Congressional inquisition that occurs every year--state of the Corps, the budget, and all those presentations. So, I didn't get a hell of a lot of sleep, I can tell you. From the time I found out until the time I went before the committees. But it went fine and I can do a lot of homework in a hurry. What is it they say in the stage, a quick read?

Frank: A quick read, yes.

Cushman: So, as a matter of fact, we did fine with the presentations to the committees and that was the biggest problem. Long range--I mean, that was the biggest immediate problem personally for me and indirectly for the Marine Corps if I hadn't sold the budget and so on. You know how that is, you lose something.

The biggest long range problem was actually personnel recruiting. It was a time of flux. Vietnam was over, yet we were still being told to take--as I remember this--told to take so many Group IVs and the pressure of the war was off somewhat. We were in the process of losing it. We just had a hell of a time with quality. And I had an awful decision to make. Do we drop our numbers down by insisting on quality--we'd have lost at least 10,000 people below our ceiling if we had insisted on--well, it was as great figure in those, 75-65%, I've forgotten now, high school graduates. And I perceived that if we did drop our numbers to keep standards at a certain level that the Congress would snap on that in a minute and you'd end up there forever. So, we tried to do everything we could think of to get quality as high as we could but not give up too many numbers. And God, the convolutions we went through... In the meanwhile, we also had all these goddamned problems over numbers of blacks.

I took the position that when we got up to, as we were, getting up to 50% of the riflemen in rifle companies black, that they love it when they see it in peacetime, but those guys would the first to leap on you with knives when the casualty figures come in when the shooting starts. And that therefore, we should do something about this. And we wiggled around on that one trying to evade the civil rights fanatics and take our proportion of blacks, which we were doing, but get them better educated so they could qualify for the better MOSs. And we

went through a number of programs to do that and had some success. We had some success in getting the Group IV blacks the hell out of the picture by various twists and turns of regulations we put out.

Frank: Group-IV whites also?

Cushman: Well, we didn't have so many of them. Yes, we had some, but it was the Group IV blacks that were ending up in the disproportionate numbers in the rifle companies. The Group Iv whites, they'd end up there too, but entirely different matter. The blacks would start screaming over casualties. They already did in Vietnam. They had been screaming about black casualties. You never heard any of the whites, of course, screaming about white casualties as a matter of race, whereas, the blacks do. So, that was the problem and we got it down, we got some solutions going. But the thing we didn't get down was the quality versus numbers. I thought Wilson probably did a smart thing when he put the recruiting and the boot camp program under the same general.

I tried to use the computer to follow a--what the hell was the name for that thing, a group of people recruited at the same time? Cohort.

Frank: Cohort.

Cushman: Yes, that's the thing. To track a cohort coming out of a recruiting station or even by an individual--recruited by

an individual--follow them through boot camp and if they didn't pass, if they were the bums, go right back and get that recruiter.

End Side 2, Tape 2

Begin Session V, 9 November 82, Tape 1, Side 1,

Frank: We are now entering on the period of your Commandancy. I wonder if you remember about, oh, sometime in December in '71, there was a dining out over the Commandant's house and the dinner for generals and Commandants over at the band hall, and walking over there you walked over with General Simmons and told him about the approval for consolidated Marine Corps historical program and that General Chapman had spoken to you and General Chaisson had polled the other contenders for the Commandancy and they agreed to support this historical program and at that time you told General Simmons that John Chaisson had spoken to you and that you would support it to the hilt.

Cushman: This is before I took office?

Frank: Yes, sir. That was December or so.

Cushman: Yes, yes, right.

Frank: Of course, you've been supportive ever since, supported the building of this--the reconstruction of this building that we're in now.

Cushman: Yes, I was the one that got it in the budget.

Frank: That's right, that's right.

Cushman: Yes, John Chaisson asked me specifically if I would be willing to keep Ed Simmons on active duty, called from the retired list, and I said, "Yes," knowing as did my predecessor, of course, that it took one number from the other generals numbers that we were allowed. You had to count one on active duty from the retired list just as though he was not retired. So, I told him okay.

Frank: I think there were two stipulations that General Simmons made on his agreeing to take the program which John Chaisson probably told you. Number one, that he would be given the full support fiscally, financially, and so on by the Commandant and also that we could have the personnel, he could have the personnel to run the program.

Cushman: I don't remember that specifically, but undoubtably he did. But I don't know that anyone could--any Commandant could make a promise that his budget is always going to be exactly what he asked for and his personnel the same. I think a willingness to do the best possible is about all you can do in the way of promises because so many other things press in on you for money and support and people. So, I don't recall--I'm sure he asked for support and I'm sure he was told he'd get it and I think without going into exact details of every dollar in your budget is going to be approved, I don't think anybody could give that.

Frank: Of course, to rehabilitate this building meant taking the money--came out to, I think, a $1,900,000, something like that. Take from your other milcon budget.

Cushman: It did and not once but three times because I had the budget thrown back and they always took out something at the top of the list and I kept pushing this building rehab at the bottom of the list. And they did this to me three times during the same--you know--budget reviews. I kept it in in spite of it. I figured, it was the bicentennial year and so money was looked upon for those kinds of projects with more favor than they ever would be again. And I felt that if we didn't get this building in that budget, we'd never get it. I was probably right.

Frank: Yes, I think that's the feeling we all had.

Cushman: And I think it was a worthwhile expenditure of the taxpayers money. It's great for the Marine Corps and it's great for the tourist who never really came in off the highway to see things at Quantico and still don't, I don't believe, even those they still have the aviation museum there.

Frank: Oh, yes.

Cushman: Compared with what comes through here, but I don't know the figures.

Frank: No, the aviation museum is got a bigger draw than

this place.

Cushman: Is that right?

Frank: Yes, strangely enough.

Cushman: Do they advertise it on the highway?

Frank: Yes, it is advertised on the highway and we're not, which is one of the problems.

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: But then, neither is the Navy Museum, but the Navy Museum is locked in with these tour groups. So, they do bring busses around. But, we've improved, we improved. I guess we have, no we don't have as much as we can handle, but we have a good volume.

Cushman: Well, I'll still say it benefits the Marine Corps and the public.

Frank: Without your support, of course, we couldn't have had it, and I think that ought to go on the record.

You became Commandant on 1 January 1972. By then, the Marines were essentially out of Vietnam except for the advisors. General Chapman had been Commandant of the Marine Corps from 1968 until 1972, a period that could be called the downside of the Vietnam War. General Chapman has said that he say as his main mission, "Getting the Marines out of Vietnam in the best

possible shape and preserving the Marine Corps as an institution." How well do you think he succeeded? In other words, what was the state of the Corps when you took over?

Cushman: I thought it was first rate. The problems were, like after the end of any conflict, people maintaining their quality. I think we still had this, take so many Group IV edict from Secretary of Defense and the Congress, as I recall.

Frank: Was this the Project 100,000?

Cushman: Yes, that was somewhere in there. This is a period of change in this Group IV thing--mental Group IV and I can't remember just when we quit having to fill a quota, so to speak, and when it was just a problem of having to take some to sort of fill up your strength and hoping you could get by with taking none, you know.

Again, the race problem interfered in that if you turned down blacks, you were in trouble. Yet you wanted to turn down blacks that were Group IV, of course, and so there was a conflict there.

But in any event, to get back to your original question, I thought Chappy did a fine job in easing down into a peacetime configuration and posture.

Frank: You don't mean, necessarily, when you talk about Group IV blacks that you necessarily took Group IV whites?

Cushman: Yes, but we didn't have to take as many. If you

turn down a white nobody cares, except the individual. If you turn down a black, you've got about ten Congressmen jumping all over you. It's entirely different. So consequently, you can't just say, "I'm not taking any mental Group IVs because immediately you've cut out practically half of the blacks that are applying. And only a small percentage of the whites that are applying for enlistment. So, that's where the conflict comes in in those situations.

Frank: In Group IV, there were a greater number of blacks than whites in that category?

Cushman: I don't know, but as I'm saying, if you cut Group IV, you can do it with whites, but you can't do it with blacks. I don't know what the proportion--I think blacks had a higher proportion of the Group IVs in relation to all other percentages. And this was proven later on by some of the rifle companies which had 50% blacks, whereas the Marine Corps had about 12 or something like that--percentage.

Frank: What were some of the other challenges or problems facing the Corps when you took over?

Cushman: Well, I found some problems which received no publicity whatsoever. Let me read some of the things here, I did have a file on this.

Frank: Oh, good.

Cushman: What the hell did we do, you know--the way I say it, anyway.

Well, I start out, this is in '75, before I retired, that I had determined that each year we'd get a small group of the policy making generals from Headquarters and go down to Quantico and get in a room and shut off the telephones and take about two days to plot our goals and aims for the coming year. And this we did and it was most beneficial and it was much better than a general officer's conference which was more to spread the word among all general officers, but to really figure out where the Corps ought to be going, this was much better. A small group, major and two and three star generals in Washington.

And the achievements that came out of that during my regime, I listed as, these are the major ones. The annual publication of a CMC defense programming and policy guidance paper, which in turn lead to the preparation of a comprehensive study on the role of the Corps in national security strategy.

Next, the complete reorganization of Headquarters Marine Corps to streamline it, bring it into consonance with Department of the Navy and OSD. This was one hell of a job and I wasn't really, as I recall, I wasn't really able to do it until Jim Wright retired. He was a complete stumbling block and active opponent in any kind of reorganization of the supply--you know--installation and logistics, what it is now. And it was just something else. And complete ruin and mess

was predicted. He retired, the damned thing went through in a couple of weeks, no problems. He was something else.

Now, we reorganized the artillery to make it completely helicopter transportable. We executed a series of studies which lead to action the reorganization of the Marine Corps logistics system. We included the organization of combat service support, we wanted to streamline it, in particular to protect it from external assault, which we were really getting from the Defense Department logistics experts. They really wanted to take over Albany and Barstow and incorporate it into some goddamned, you know, defense-wide structure, and so on. Then, the Navy tried to take over all of our legal business, so, we got established finally, an independent special court-martial authority commanded by the senior Marine lawyer. He's not only a staff officer, but now he's a commander of the legal system--was when I left, and I guess it's still the same way.

Well, we continued modernization of fighter and attack aviation, which was a continuing problem. I really ran into a buzz saw on the F-14. At first they refused to give the Marine Corps any.

Frank: They being the Navy?

Cushman: And we had nothing coming up, you know, no F-18s or any of that stuff. They refused to give us any. Then, all of a sudden, they woke up to the fact that the price for coffee was too high and the only way they could bring it down was to buy

more. So then they forced me to take it.

Frank: Was this the Navy?

Cushman: Yes, oh yes, yes, SecNav and the CNO. And they forced me to take it, by refusing otherwise to provide anything. Airplanes were beginning to fall apart, the F-4s and the A-4s both, as I recall. And just had one hell of a time. So, I finally accepted the F-14s and I mean I really had problems. I had to go up on the Hill and explain all this turn about and, you know, most embarrassing.

In any event, we were to get F-14s and all the gear that would make them expeditionary. It looked like it was a so-so, 50-50 deal as to how good they'd be in the amphibious environment. They were a marvelous airplane, still are, I guess. I guess we still have them.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: Then I turned over to Lou Wilson and I think he just managed to cancel the whole thing.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: And by this time, apparently the F-18 was on the board, so there was something he could get. In other words, to replace the aging inventory of aircraft we had.

The heavy helicopter program--I spent a couple of hours at breakfast with Clements over in the Pentagon and saved the CH-

able to buy and to scrounge by requesting instead of money things that people might have that were of that period. And we were able to carpet the area, to paint it-repaint it, and redecorate it. We used some appropriated funds for that type of thing because that was okay. Then we did all the furniture and got a lot of furniture pieces and things that represent that period. I don't know if you've been in the house since it's been done.

Frank: Yes, I have.

Cushman: So you can see what was done.

Frank: Yes, it's beautiful.

Cushman: Well, we prepared a new Home of Commandants book, with colored photos and it's quite a striking comparison with the previous issue which also has photos and was put out by, I think, Wally Greene. And of course, my wife and others--Ed Simmons was also in on it, Twoomey, who was CO of the barracks at the time, helped a lot.

Frank: Dave Twoomey.

Cushman: And between them, they got all this stuff and really, I think, was a great effort. The house, I found out, I think Wally Greene had recommended that the house be a historic monument, landmark. And I found out it just died somewhere, Walter Washington, Mayor Walter Washington's in basket or pending, never do anything basket. And so, we stirred around

and forced the damned thing up to the top of the pile and finally got it through the incredible damn bureaucratic red tape that it takes to get this done, you know, just unbelievable. And eventually, who the hell is it, the Department of the Interior....

Frank: Yes, National Historic Sites.

Cushman: Yes, yes, finally okayed it. I think it has to go through the planning commission as well, then the city.

Frank: It had to go through the city?

Cushman: Oh, yes, just unbelievable. You know, everybody that has the remotest interest has to put his initial on it, the way I gathered. And none of them worked very fast at anything like this. We just had to keep pestering them until they came up with it.

Frank: Were there any other problems with living in the Commandants house?

Cushman: With living in there?

Frank: Yes, or with the refurbishing.

Cushman: Oh, no, no. We stayed out for a number of months while it was going on and I think it was Wally Greene had put the place in good physical shape. You know, plumbing and electrical wiring and all that kind of stuff, and strengthening

the foundations were required. He had had that done. So, the structure was sound and what was required was refurbishing, redecorating.

Frank: It was generally believed that the quality of Marine Corps manpower had suffered greatly both as to officers and enlisted as a result of the consequences of the Vietnam war. Would you comment on the officers first.

Cushman: I don't think I'd put it that way as far as the officers go. I thought they were same quality as always in general terms. I did not have that impression, no, no. I had a much greater impression of that being true after World War II. The officers who came in with me, as we discussed earlier, were of the highest quality and caliber, both physically and intellectually. World War II brought in large number of college graduates who were patriotic and really gung-ho. After that, I sensed sort of a fall-off, not noticeable until, oh, along when I was Commandant and could survey all of the officers. I used to say, "Where is this up-coming generation--by that I meant the colonels, lieutenant colonels--where is this generation's Krulak and Bill Jones and some of the others?" There weren't very many who stood head and shoulders above their colleagues. As a consequence of the lowered quality of U.S. education, you ran into more people who couldn't express themselves, particulary, in writing. I've got a son-in-law who is a graduate of

the Naval Academy, who can't spell. There are a lot of them can't spell and he's in his 40s now, he went out as a lieutenant colonel on 20, but there just wasn't the educational background they had in earlier years. I think things are picking up again, particularly, whenever you have a downturn in the economy, things look up for recruiting, both officers and men.

But, that's the only thing I noticed. I did not notice among younger officers coming in any diminution in physical fitness, desire, patriotism, and that sort of thing. I suppose there might have been because there is a different philosophy in the high schools and colleges, but I didn't really...maybe, I was too high up. If I'd been a battalion commander, company commander, I might have run into it.

Frank: How about the quality of the enlisted Marine suffering as a consequence of the Vietnam War?

Cushman: Well, yes. I think so, because we all of a sudden had the bottom fall out. I guess even the last couple of years the war wasn't popular or anything, but there were large numbers who wanted to be Marines. As the war went, maybe they dwindled some, but with the war over and the economy booming, you had a hard time keeping up the quality of the enlisted man. The great all volunteer force came in and we had our troubles keeping up the quality. It wasn't numbers, it was quality. And I would get complaints from battalion commanders and others about some of the people we were getting in. As I told you, I

tried to use a computer system to carry the blame right back to some of the recruiters that were recruiting people that couldn't even read and write or were a hundred pounds overweight and this kind of stuff. The system just put improper pressure on the recruiter. And in attempting to at least enforce that pressure to where he had to stay honest rather than a pressure to be dishonest--as I say, I tried to use a computer, figuring that if we fingered a few of this people that were being careless or deliberately getting people that weren't up to our standards, we could correct it.

I think Wilson made a wise move in trying out, as he did as soon as I got out, trying out running recruiting and recruit training under the same general officer on each coast. I don't know how it worked out because other factors over which you have no control started working, I think, in the community as inflation, economics, and this of thing. Now we have a recession. All of this helps recruiting.

Frank: What did you do to improve the quality of manpower? What steps did you take?

Cushman: Well, let's see, what didn't I try, I guess. Everything except what Wilson tried.
(Interruption)

Frank: The question was, what steps did you take to improve the quality of manpower?

Cushman: Well, like I was telling you, what didn't I. I talked to every DI, I talked to the generals that ran the recruiting-telling them to kick people out that couldn't measure up. I never could get them to do it. They felt, I think, that if they had too much attrition percentage in their boot camp results, than they looked bad. And I told them, "We don't want people that don't measure up."

Well, that was one thing, and of course, everything you do helps a little bit. Well, I talked to all he DIs, primarily, trying to straighten out the abuses of the system with relation to beating up on the recruits which is sort of a different subject. I put a brigadier general in charge of recruiting at the Headquarters level, I visited recruiting stations wherever I went. Then I was always massaging the numbers and trying to get the mental Group IVs down to the lowest possible level, and the high school graduates up as far as we could. We had trouble getting high school graduates, they just weren't interested in joining anything but the Air Force, really.

Frank: What made the Air Force so attractive to these people?

Cushman: Oh, it's always attractive, you know, glamour, they stay in the same place for five or six years. If they're married, that's a big help. The Air Force for years never had any problem getting their quota. High school graduates, my God, 90% or something like that. A minimum of drug user trouble, you know, they're just whatever a young man wants to join,

apparently. It was when I was worrying about the problem.

Well, we just made great efforts to try and keep our quality up. We went to bat trying to ferret out juvenile delinquents, which you can't get a hold of the records. And we struck out there. We couldn't change the laws and we couldn't get a law passed in Congress, as I recall, which we tried to do. So, we weren't able to plug that loophole. And of course, you'd find judges that sentence people to run out to the nearest recruiting station. And we weren't able to stop that, although, we made great efforts through the legal system.

Frank: A lot of people thought the service was a fine place to rehabilitate the offenders.

Cushman: Yes, right.

Frank: I guess that's been the case.

Cushman: Right. Let me see if I've got anything else in here on it. That's about it, I guess. Continuing effort to cut down mental Group IV and a continuing effort to increase the number of high school graduates, coupled with the fear that if we simply refused to recruit enough people to come fairly close to filling up our authorized strength, that the Congress would soon cut the Corps to whatever we were able to maintain with our recruiting. And this was a decision that was very difficult to make because it meant you had to lower your standards somewhat to keep the number of people up to-near the authorized strength.

I believe Wilson did cut for awhile until external factors enabled him to recruit the numbers he wanted from high school. I think he did cut the....

Frank: Yes, I believe he did.

Cushman: Yes, now he had, of course, tremendous influence with Montgomery and Stennis and I think he probably relied on that to be able to prevent the Corps from being cut. I don't know this because I never talked to him about it. I'm pretty sure that was how he was able to come back up with his authorized strength or maintain it.

Frank: General Ray Davis continued as Assistant Commandant until 1 April 1972 when he retired. He was succeeded by General Earl E. Anderson, the first Marine aviator to reach four stars on active service. I wish you would, if you could please, review the process or considerations that lead to your selection of General Anderson for this post. He'd been your chief of staff when you commanded the III MAF. Had this been the first time you worked closely together?

Cushman: Yes, I'd known him before, but he was a superb chief of staff in Vietnam. He's extremely smart, extremely hard working. I felt that we needed an aviator as Assistant Commandant with the Commandant being a ground officer--line officer. I felt that way for a considerable time. It had formerly been that way. Shoup had Fog Hayes, Toby Munn had been in that job

with Pate, I guess it was.

Frank: Mangrum was there, too.

Cushman: And Mangrum had had that job. And I felt it made a good balance. Obviously, other Commandants have not felt that way at all. So, the experience in Vietnam which showed me the abilities of General Anderson, plus my feelings that there should be an aviator in the job were the things that prompted me to request an okay to put him in there from the Secretary of the Navy.

Frank: How did you perceive the division of authority and responsibility between the Commandant and the Assistant Commandant? In other words, what were your specific delegations to General Anderson? I suppose you discussed this at length with him?

Cushman: I never delineated things that he should do and that I should do. Ray Davis had a list on his desk that Chapman had put out saying, "You'll go talk to all the kids at these speeches for young people, you'll do this and that." I insisted and I've always believed this throughout my career, I've insisted that the number two know everything the number one knows. First, most obvious, he has to take over in case the Commandant really crapps out. He would have to really step in until and unless someone else were eventually appointed. Second, just day to day, if the Commandant makes a trip, the Assistant

Commandant has to go to all the meetings where the other four star chiefs of staff are operating, and therefore, he's got to know not only the policies but he's got to know all the papers that go through relating to these subjects and so forth. So, I simply--I guess it's somewhat that way now where they have both offices combined, chief of staff and the Assistant Commandant. So, I routed all the papers through him and he's, as I say, such a hard worker and fast and highly intelligent that it didn't hold up the paperwork, anything to speak of or I'd have had to do something else if things were clogging up in his office. But never did they clog up there. He had been the personnel man at Headquarters as a major general so I used to rely on him for his knowledge of the personnel system which was extensive. I think I was much more interested in logistics than he was. I was the spark plug on changing the entire logistics system and on reorganizing Headquarters too--on that. So, we fell into the areas of expertise, I would say, where each contributing a little more perhaps than the other. But, essentially, he handled everything first and then I got it and made the decisions and so on. And that way, he knew what was going on and knew everything that was happening on the staff.

Frank: Now, this didn't mean the matter that you bypass your chief of staff, though, did you? He was in the chain of command?

Cushman: Oh, no, no. He was, right, and he had to handle, you know, a lot of the day to day staff operations and papers like

always, yes. No, I didn't bypass him. We'd have the three of us get together everyday as I recall, chief of staff, Assistant Commandant, and myself, and we'd sort of set the course for the day and maybe make some decisions and so forth.

Frank: Was that Les Brown who was your chief of staff?

Cushman: No, he was the preceding chief of staff under Chapman.

Frank: Okay. No, Chaisson had been.

Cushman: Chaisson was chief of staff--wait a minute, I'm getting confused. Chaisson was chief of staff to Chappy when I took over and I kept Chaisson on for quite a while. In fact, I would have kept him right on because he was a highly efficient and intelligent and hard working Marine officer, fine officer. And about that time, of course, he had disappointment, I guess, because he wanted to be Commandant and hadn't been selected. At about that time, Shlesinger, whom he knew, took over the Atomic Agency....

Frank: Energy.

Cushman: ...yes, whatever the hell they called it then. They change the name frequently--and asked Chaisson to come in and, in effective, be his executive assistant, I think. And Chaisson accepted and retired and I guess a month later he was dead from a heart attack.

Frank: Yes.

Let's see, then who went in there? Was it Frosty?

Frank: That's right, it must have been.

Cushman: Foster LaHue and then the later fellow from out in San Diego.

Frank: John McLaughlin.

Cushman: John McLaughlin. I think that's....

Frank: Those were your two chiefs of staff.

Cushman: Yes. Now where Les Brown. He must have been chief of staff before that, before Chaisson. No, no....

Frank: He may have been for Wilson.

Cushman: For Wilson.

Frank: That's right.

Cushman: Exactly, because when I went out to Japan as Commandant, Les Brown had the wing out there at Iwakuni. That's right. He came in and relieved McLaughlin and I think he was around for a while getting snapped in because I remember he was around. he was Wilson's chief of staff.

Frank: I believe that John Chaffee was the Secretary of the Navy when you became Commandant and he was succeeded by John Warner and J. William Middendorf.

Cushman: Yes.

Frank: What were your relations with these three secretaries and how did their management styles differ?

Cushman: Well, they're the boss and that was my relationship with them. Style differing, Chaffee wasn't there very long and Warner was the Under Secretary, so my dealings with Chaffee were just to my getting snapped in, you might say. My relations with Warner I think were very good and the same with Middendorf whom I'd first met when he was Ambassador to the Hague and I was over there visiting the Dutch Marines. Warner was a Republican and had worked for Nixon. As I say, we got along fine. He'd been an advance man and I think I probably met him at that time. Middendorf was right wing and a money raiser and a moneyed man as well. So he liked the Marines starting right out when he was ambassador when I first met him. He liked the Marines and he liked the conservative approach to life that we had with short haircuts and so on when everybody else was going in the opposite direction. I got along with him. He was kind of peculiar though. I didn't think that all of his actions as Secretary of the Navy were quite what a real hot secretary should do in terms of learning what it was all about.

Frank: In what way?

Cushman: He was much more interested in art and he would sell, he'd have paintings all over the damned office and sell them. He

was buying and selling art all the time.

Frank: When he was in office?

Cushman: Oh, yes, yes. And from the office. And it just seemed to me he would rely on others to provide the arguments with the Secretary of Defense and to provide the know-how and the savy of running the Navy.

Frank: Was he lazy or just unconcerned?

Cushman: No, he's not lazy, he's just peculiar.

Frank: Like the time he conducted the Navy band in a bear uniform--costume?

Cushman: When we were wondering who would be the next Commandant, I found out he would walk into an officer's club on some trip and just grab some guy at the bar, a major or whatnot, and say, "Who do you think ought to be the next Commandant?" This kind of stuff. As I say, I got along with him, but I got along better with John Warner. Mainly because I just felt Warner was more competent as Secretary of the Navy.

Frank: Now, was Don Hittle Assistant Secretary of the Navy during his time?

Cushman: Yes, for a period, yes, manpower.

Frank: Manpower and reserve.

Cushman: Yes, I had a couple of dinners with him, as a matter of fact, over at his office.

Frank: Of course, you took him out to France with you the time you went.

Cushman: He was there independently, as I recall, but we kept together.

Frank: I thought he went out on the plane with you that time.

Cushman: Oh, he may have, but I think he had an independent mission, I think.

Frank: Oh, I thought he was in your party.

Cushman: I think he was doing something else, but I can't remember now. But, he was there and his wife as well. And we got together, stayed in the same French officer's club. He was there on someother mission because I don't remember him being in the party as such when we went out to the--maybe my memory is falling. But we went out to the cemetery at Chateau Thierry and I made a speech and reviewed the troops and then we went to a local village mayor's place for lunch and then we went off and toured the champagne cellars in the area and I don't recall the two of them being on that particular trip, yet they were in the officer's club just down the hall and we got together for a drink. I think we had dinner in Paris together.

Frank: I'm talking about the trip you went out to Belleau

Wood when Paradis went with you.

Cushman: Yes, that's what I'm talking about. Hittle and his wife were there, but I don't think they remember....

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

Cushman: ...the sponsoring organization, American Legion.

Frank: Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Cushman: Yes, that's right, Veterans of Foreign Wars. He was an officer in their organization. Well, my memory just slips. If he came along, it was sort of a courtesy ride and because he was in the VFW and he may well have gone to the ceremony and everything else and I just...He wasn't in the car with me, you know, and that sort of thing.

Frank: Who were the Chief of Naval Operations during your tenure and how would you characterize your relationships with them?

Cushman: Bud Zumwalt was the CNO and our relationships were fairly prickly. Then Jim Holloway took over for my final year and he was first rate, we got along just great, still do.

Frank: What was the problem with Zumwalt vis a vis the Marine Corps?

Cushman: He was not attuned to amphibious needs or amphibious warfare. We just didn't get along. He didn't care about Marines and couldn't care less about me either.

Frank: His son was one, wasn't he?

Cushman: Yes, his son was. But I'll never forget, I found out that he just raised the roof when the Navy Relief Society elected Donn Robertson as its president, you know, what's a Marine doing being president of the Navy Relief Society. Well, he and I just plain didn't get along.

One thing I did, for example, was we had long had on public works--MilCon--we had long had a certain basic percentage that we would get from the Navy MilCon budget. This gave us a sense of continuity, we knew we could fall back on this little nest egg each year and then we would negotiate during the usual budget process with the Secretary and the Navy guys that were in on all this stuff additional monies and come up with our budget that way. We always had a small Corps amount so we could count on that for maintenance and that sort of thing. And I conceived of the idea, since we were having great troubles with the Navy on goddamned airplanes and the money therewith and therefore, and my staffers were having problems. One year you'd have a feast, the next year a famine and get nothing, so I proposed that we would set up the same sort of fenced in amount based on past years for aviation procurement, maintenance, and all the rest that we got from the Navy. And

then, negotiate above and beyond as required. Gee, this turned the Navy upside down. So, just about this time, Zumwalt's leaving, so he wrote a long letter to the Secretary of the Navy telling him what was wrong with Cushman and the Marine Corps and how they apparently forgot that Zumwalt was the executive agent of the Secretary of the Navy and as such, he's the boss of every goddamned thing in sight. Well of course, he's the executive agent for some things, some things he isn't. And of course, he completely ignores the fact that we're a separate service under the Secretary. So, I got the damned thing, of course, went over to Middendorf I wouldn't even give it the courtesy of a, you know, I wouldn't even dignify it with a reply, so assinine. So with that, Zumwalt departed and we got a good CNO.

Of course, the shoe was on the other foot too, because I thought what he was doing with the Navy was absolutely terrible. And I suppose it showed although I never said anything about it, wasn't any of my business whether sailors looked like slobs or not. But, that sums up my relationship, I think, with Zumwalt.

Frank: Did you maintain a copy of this letter, did you ever get a copy of it?

Cushman: I don't maintain copies of anything, no. That's government stuff in my opinion, and doesn't belong to me. No, the only files that I have are files of personal correspondence

and I don't know why I'm keeping them.

Frank: Well, we'll take them, take them for our Personal Papers Collection.

Cushman: Yes, but it's all a bunch of crap, though. It's all thanking somebody for a plaque I got or a nice dinner, you know, when I went to visit their command. I don't know what use it would be. You'd have the damnedest search to find here and there maybe something with substantive comments.

Frank: Do you recall any other doctrinal or organizational issues that colored these relationships?

Cushman: Oh, well, yes, we had fights over aircraft and our share of aircraft and what kind they should be. We had all kinds of fights over--we had a continuing debate over Zumwalt taking amphibious ships and making, trying to make--what the hell did he call them? Some kind of ship he was trying to develop, he had a term for it.

Frank: Frigate

Cushman: Well, yes, but he had some term for the ship. Well, I can't remember. Anyway, he was taking amphibious ships for flagships, for trial runs as this damned ship whose name I can't think of. It wasn't a frigate, frigate was a separate from the ground up building program. The name of the ship had something to do with--well, I can't think of it, but I'm sure

your researchers can because it was coming up all the time.

I protested when he took the Marines--and we took the Marines off of one of these ships and he got it and sent it over to the Med for one of these trials and I protested and said we should have Marines aboard because we might have an emergency over there. And the chiefs voted me down, and sure enough, we had a damned emergency and had to evacuated American citizens from someplace. I can't remember.

Frank: Beirut.

Cushman: May have been. This is like about '73-'74, right in there. It was either Egypt or, it was in the Middle East of course.

I can't think of anything else specific.

Frank: Sea basing was a popular term in 1972. It was the name given to a supposedly new concept of greatly increasing seaborne logistic support so future operations would not need the great sprawling logistic complexes that had characterized Vietnam. In April, 1972 you said, "I don't want to give the impression that we are rewriting the book on amphibious warfare. Seabasing represents a evolutionary refinement not a revolutionary new concept. We have deployed forces which were essentially sea based since the end of World War II including our Caribean and Mediterranean Ready Forces and our special landing forces in Vietnam. We are pulling our heads out of the jungle and getting back into the amphibious business. We are turning our

attention seaward and reemphasizing our partnership with the Navy and our shared concern in maritime aspects of our national strategy." How does that sound to you after ten years and now well did the partnership with the Navy work out?

Cushman: What was the first word, the what?

Frank: Seabasing.

Cushman: Oh, seabasing. I was thinking of the letter C, like in CQ and all this kind of stuff. Seabasing. Sure, yes. I think it's still--and I would still say the same words. We did need to forget about six-seven years of fighting in the jungle and get back with the amphibious operation. I don't know what people think now. I suppose about the same. Just seemed to me self evident that we had to get back with it. We never really did away with our partnership with the Navy, but as we pulled out of Vietnam, I was getting all this flack from Schlesinger about Central Europe and what the hells the matter with the Marines, you know, they don't know how to fight in Central Europe. So, I was getting a lot of that stuff too, and I wanted to emphasize to everybody, including the general officers who were listening to some of the same crap, that our mission was amphibious and we should stick with it.

Frank: Now, you mentioned earlier when we were talking about Zumwalt, the problem of getting amphibious shipping or having him pay any attention to his amphibious responsibilities. This

seems to have been a problem that Commandants have had forever.

Cushman: Have had forever, yes, that's right.

Frank: That the Navy would put a captain in....

Cushman: Still have, when I was Commandant, you know.

Frank: No admiral or anything.

Cushman: No, had a captain. Naval gunfire, hell, you couldn't get any interest out of any of them on naval gunfire, couldn't get them to budge on the light weight 8inch gun. You know, they don't mind developing the gun, but then they don't want to put it on anything. So, just a continuing battle, the same battle people have always had, yes. But, personalities change the environment in which the debate is held and as I say, Zumwalt was just somebody Marines couldn't get along with. And I don't think I was alone.

Frank: A very positive feature of this renewed emphasis on amphibious warfare was the building of the LHAs, the multi-purpose amphibious assault ships that could handle helicopters from the flight decks and amphibious vehicles from their holds. The program, I recall, was cut from an originally planned nine ships to seven ships to five ships, the first of which was not completed until 1975. And I guess that was the problem with the outfit down in New Orleans.

Cushman: Well, there was all kinds of problems. Money was the

problem. And in effect, of course, the Navy would give up every damned LHA if they got one more carrier or one more surface ships. Amphibious warfare is just an orphan.

I can't claim any credit except for saving the program. I had to fight like hell to save it, from being cancelled entirely because as the numbers went down, the per ship cost went up to where it got to be a very high profile item in terms of the Congress and everybody else. And it took a lot of arguing to save those five from being just wiped out. So, that's about the only credit I can take and the fact that Audrey got to christen the first ship, launch the Tarawa. They're badly needed ships and it's a good program and I was glad the thing went on to completion.

Frank: What was the name of the shipyard that built them?

Cushman: Well, Litton Industry owned the shipyard. I think they had--was it Ingalls? There was some other name connected with just the shipyard. There was also a submarine program down there that Rickover used to beat on. There was another name to the subsidiary of Litton that was actually building the ships.

It was an interesting operation because they had computer controlled cutters for the metal and welding for the metal. And it was quite interesting, it was an assembly line approach to building the ships. And they were out there on huge tracks and they moved them just like an assembly line, you know, for Ford automobile or something.

Frank: Well, you spoke about your personal involvment, what did you have to do--go up to Congress and justify, or was your fight with the Navy?

Cushman: A little bit of both, I guess, but primarily with the Navy. They were the ones wanting to cancel and they're the ones that had to bear the brunt of the argument, because it was shipping, with the Congress with me in a supporting role when it came to amphibious ships.

Frank: Another thing that had to be worked out was the mix of new aircraft that would follow the F-4s and A-4s. You've mentioned that.

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: I believe that you had to agree to take the F-16, and I'm not sure, I guess that's....

Cushman: F-14.

Frank: The F-14, in order to get Navy support for the AV-8 Harrier. Is this correct?

Cushman: Unspoken, but primarily the threat was that if I didn't take the F-14 they wouldn't even provide the money for updating the A-4. There was some kind of a program we had, I think it was called the Slotted Wing--and the technical modifications to the airplane would increase its performance. And I wouldn't be able to get the money for that and, of course, there was no air-

plane at all that had been approved in the future except the F-14. There wasn't any F-18 and that sort of thing. So, they had me over a barrel. So, I took the F-14.

Frank: To what extent did General Anderson, as the Corps senior aviator, influence your decisions on future aircraft mixes and types?

Cushman: Not tremendously. While I couldn't fly an airplane, I knew as much about the program and the aircraft as anybody, and made it my business to. So, we reached decisions pretty much together on aviation things. But I was my own man on aviation programs. I think some ground pounders probably thought I was a captive of the aviators, but I was not. I always believed in close air support and in having our own fighters. And these were battles that had to be fought just all the time. Schlesinger was trying to take away the fighters, a lot of people tried to take away the fighters. We just had one damned argument after another about it.

Frank: Throughout this period there was criticism amongst some of our civilian critics as well as, perhaps, within the Marine Corps on the supposedly disproportionate number of dollars going into the purchase of high performance aircraft.

Cushman: Well that's the stupidest thing I ever heard! I don't know how it even got enough credence to be printed in the Gazette as a letter to the editor. The money comes out

from the Navy, doesn't come from the Marine Corps. And they sure as hell aren't going to say, "Oh, you didn't buy an airplane today. Take this money and go spend it on the infantry." You know, it's just stupid--people that write that way, talk that way, don't know what they're talking about in any form or fashion. I used to really blow my stack when I'd see this. Nobody ever said it to me, of course, directly. But it's ridiculous. No matter what proportion you spend on aviation, you have to get it from the Navy, so you don't spend it and if you don't spend it, you won't ever see it. So, it's just ridiculous to say we're neglecting the infantry and spending money on aviation. People say that have no understanding of the Marine Corps budget or of the interrelationship with the Navy in budget matters.

Frank: This was a letter that did appear in the Gazette.

Cushman: I think some kid, yes, you know. That's fine, they've got a freedom of expression and a forum for it, but somebody should have corrected the damned thing. The editor should have put something in the thing underneath the letter explaining how real life is. But, that's the way things go.

Frank: Who were the Chairmen of the JCS and would you comment on each in turn as to the style of leadership, their attitudes toward the Marine Corps, and principal issues involved.

Cushman: Well, Tom Moorer was the chairman, and a very fine

one, I thought. And I got along with him. He appreciated the function of Marines. Never had any problesm. As a matter of fact, the whole time that I was Commandant in the JCS arena, I never had any problems really. There was nobody attacking the Marine Corps. The problems that came up really related to issues that concerned the United States and there wasn't much backbiting or shooting at one service or another. I guess I was lucky. I think some of the Commandants have had just the opposite.

Frank: Yes.

Cushman: The next chief of staff was George Brown, who was a fine gentleman. I'd known him for a number of years since he was a brigadier working in the Pentagon. And we got along alright. He's not a Marine lover, but he's not an aggressive down with the Marines guy, either. Nobody in the Air Force really gives a damn about the Marines. You know, they just don't understand it and just figure it's another outfit with a separate air force that's in competition with them as far as airplanes go. So, that's their thoughts, and of course, the senior ones have gone through West Point and also have sort of an Army tinge. But, I got along with them.

Well, their style of leadership was similar in that they conducted the meetings in a dignified way, occasionally with a little humor. If things were getting a little tense or something, both of them were able to pull a joke out and get things re-

oriented. And they both are very smart and were able to conduct the meetings, I thought, very ably.

Frank: Now, who headed the Army during this period?

Cushman: Well, first Westmoreland, wasn't it? I think he was still--yes, he was still there as Chief of Staff of the Army. Then he was relieved by Abrams, who died of lung cancer after what--about a year? And then came a good friend of mine, tall, red headed general whom I'd known quite well in Vietnam. I'm telling you, as you approach 70, you can't remember things that are right on the tip of your tongue. Well, you can find that, I'm sure.

Frank: It wasn't Johnson?

Cushman: Oh, he's way back, old-timer, way before I was around. He was Chief of Staff of the Army. This guy retired after two years sort of indicating two years was enough for anybody. He was not a West Pointer, he was vice-chief of staff when Abrams died. And as I say, he had one of the field forces in Vietnam when I was there. Well, maybe I'll think of it, maybe I won't.

Frank: How about the Air Force during this time?

Cushman: Oh, McConnell, he was first, then came John--big tall guy, followed by Brown followed by Davy Jones. Well, I don't know, I can't pick the aviator's name--head of SAC and became chief of staff. I'm going nuts with these names. You know,

I'd see them everyday and call them by their first name everyday. I can't remember his last name to save my soul.

Frank: How did the Marine Corps fair generally in discussions in the tank? Was there any ganging up?

Cushman: I spent about a third of my time, I guess, on stuff that went on in the tank and a third of my time on Congress, the budget and all that and a third of my time running the Marine Corps, which was the easiest of the three jobs. No, I was fortunate, we just didn't have debates that impinged on the Marine Corps in any bad fashion. I mean, where we all struggled on budgets and things like that, we didn't have big problems.

Frank: Now, you were not a full fledged member of the Joint Chiefs at this time?

Cushman: Only Wilson got that job.

Frank: Wilson got that through.

Cushman: Nobody was before that.

Frank: That's right, but in any case, you declared that most of things that they discussed were of Marine Corps interest and so kept up the presence.

Cushman: Oh, sure. You know, that long time gone by when there was any fussing about that, and you just routinely, practically got every subject because it was of interest to the

United States, it was of interest to the Marine Corps. Only an occasional service problem, you know, who's going to be the attache in Poland or some damned thing might drop out of the hat, what the Air Force and the Army fight about it. Most things were of interest to the Marine Corps and they had been for years and so declared, as I recall the figures.

Frank: Well, did you find that the lack of full membership on the staff, JCS, a handicap in dealing with the chairman, the other chiefs?

Cushman: Oh, no. Handicap was simply a matter of ego, in that you always brought up the tail-end whenever the Joint Chiefs went anywhere. You stood next to the Coast Guard, and you never could take over the chair if all the principals were gone and their number two guy was there, you still never could take over because you didn't rank as a member.

Frank: Who would take over?

Cushman: So, that simply was ego, it had nothing to do with handling business whatsoever.

Frank: No problems with the Secretary of Defense?

Cushman: No.

Frank: Who were the Secretaries of Defense during your tenure and how much contact did you have with them? Schlesinger you mentioned.

Cushman: Well, you have a lot of contact with whoever. They have weekly meetings, got on the budget and all this damned paperwork and programs and stuff comes along you got to be there to defend them. You have lots of contact with SecDef. And the first one was Mel Laird and second one was Schlesinger. Let's see, he got fired by Ford and Rumsfeld--during my final days, I think, I think. Schlesinger may have been there til I left, I don't know, I don't remember exactly.

Frank: Schlesinger, perhaps, was the least friendly of the SecDefs that....

Cushman: Yes, he was very anti-Marine, although, he denied it. Said, "I think Marines are the greatest," and he used to wear a red cummerbund, you know, to show he was a great Marine or something. Actually, his statements boiled down to, "a Marine is a great infantrymen and that's what he ought to stay, you know, that's it. They're no good for fighting in Europe, they shouldn't have airplanes, they're no goddamned good for anything except shooting a rifle." And I spent literally hours and hours and hours debating all this and so on. And in fact, before he got there, I had my troops make up a complete research job on all his speeches and everything. It started way back when he was with Rand, which is an Air Force think tank, and he never changed.

Frank: Did you find that you had to constantly defend the Marine Corps in your relations with him?

Cushman: Yes, yes, constantly. And he's a hard guy to argue with, you know, he's a rude, intellectually arrogant, nobody knows anything but him, and if he knows it, he isn't going to change his mind. So, he was a very difficult guy to operate with. However, we managed to come out intact pretty well as far as budget and people and things that count--programs that count.

Frank: Who did you say the first one was before....

Cushman: Mel Laird.

Frank: Laird. How about your relationship....

Cushman: His statement was, "Don't let anybody"... he said, "I won't let anybody touch my Marines." No problems with Mel Laird.

Frank: Had you known him before when he'd been a Congressman?

Cushman: No, no, I hadn't. He was on the Appropriations Committee as a Congressman. I met him when I had to go over there to testify when I was in CIA, but didn't know him, you know.

Frank: How about Rumsfeld?

Cushman: I didn't know him til afterwards. I met him here and there, I don't know just how, after I retired and I met him somewhere. He was always pleasant, said hello, I guess I met him--well, right after Ford took over, I think I met him over

in the White House. Had to go over there a few times.

Frank: Early in your tenure there was a flair up of renewed combat in Vietnam at the end of March 1972. That's when the North Vietnamese began their so-called eastern offensive, crossing the DMZ in four division strength. This caused us to position the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade off the coast and to put Marine fighter and attack aircraft groups back in the south Thailand--Vietnam and Thailand, South Vietnam and Thailand. What are your recollections of these events, to what extend where you involved in the decisions, either as a participant in the JCS or as a service chief?

Cushman: Oh, I don't remember a thing about it. Obviously, involved in the JCS and you're always asked what forces do you have, so you're supposed to be able to tell them and that's about it. Actually, it sounds like the forces all belonged to the 7th Fleet, so consequently, the 7th Fleet would be ordered down through the Commander in Chief Pacific and so on, what to do. I don't recall any details worrying about it at all.

Frank: In February or March 1973, the prisoners of war came home from Vietnam, 26 of them were Marines. Did you have any personal involvment in their homecoming. I believe that President Nixon gave a White House dinner for the return of the POWs. Did you attend that dinner?

Cushman: Yes, it was a very fine gesture, I thought, very fine

dinner. And I don't think there is a POW to this day that doesn't support Nixon whom they credit with tough negotiating in getting them out of there. I did not get involved in their return. I'm trying to think, they were greeted by Noel Guyler, who was CinCPac because most of them landed there. And then they were whisked to hospitals and their homes and so on pretty much from there as I recall.

Frank: Didn't they come--I thought they landed first in the Philippines?

Cushman: Well, they may have, yes, yes. But no place that I could really, you know, go.

Frank: How frequent were your social or professional contacts with President Nixon during these years? Did he ever single you out for conversation as his former military assistant?

Cushman: Well, yes, he sent for me a few times to discuss Cambodia, the invasion of Cambodia, mining of Haiphong harbor, well, he wanted to put Sihanoukville under a blockade. Socially, I went to dinners at the White House, but only taking my turn with the other Joint Chiefs. They were sort of invited on a rotating basis.

Frank: I believe he kept that up and Mr. Carter cut out having the Joint Chiefs.

Cushman: Yes, well, Nixon wasn't very much happy about it,

didn't want to worry about inviting the military all the time. There are a number of dinners where nobody from the Joint Chiefs went, in the White House, as I recall. Previous to that, I think, it was pretty much every dinner had one member under Johnson and Kennedy. You say Carter cut it out entirely.

Frank: Yes, pretty much so, as I remember reading.

But you did go over there numerous times to consult with him or he'd consult with you?

Cushman: Several times, I would say, not numerous times, three or four.

Frank: Three or four. Okay, in January of 1975, North Vietnamese began what would prove to be the final offensive of the Vietnam war after the fall of the Lom Nol government. On 12 April after the fall of the Lom Nol government, President Gerald Ford gave the order to execute Operation Eagle Pull, the evacuation of Americans and certain foreign nationals from Nom Phein. The burden of the evacuation fell to the Marines and neighboring South Vietnam, President Thieu's government collapsed on 21 April. And on 29 April, the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade got orders to execute Operation Frequent Wind, the evacuation of Americans from Saigon and other Vietnamese locations. To what extent were you involved in these operations? From press accounts, the impression is gained that President Ford

played a very active role in the decisions to execute these evacuations and watched their progress closely. Was this the case?

Cushman: As I recall, yes. You know, he gave the order after consideration of the factors involved. I don't recall anything different in the Joint Chiefs handling--you know, recommending we go ahead and again, it was a 7th Fleet operation. So, Commandants just don't get involved except as the Joint Chiefs deliberate on this sort of thing. The troops and their supplies and ammunitions are already out there, so not much the Commandant does to influence the action out there at the scene of the action. But only as a member of the Joint Chiefs where it is discussed and you have to outline the capabilities of the people that are there and so on. That's about it.

Frank: Now, how well did you know President Ford?

Cushman: I'd known him slightly when he was the senior Republican in the House--minority leader--but I can't say that I knew him well, no.

Frank: Can you comment on his interactions with the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs as compared with the style of President Nixon.

Cushman: Well, no. I wasn't in that arena when Nixon was President for very long. President Nixon called in the Joint Chiefs a few times as a body. I remember a breakfast, I remem-

ber down in the Oval Office a couple of times. Ususally just to outline the situation and get our thoughts, not a decision making thing, but sort of a briefing thing so that he could say that he discussed with the Joint Chiefs such and such an item. Ford had us over once or twice, same sort of a deal. Well, that's about it. I'm trying to think whether one of the times with Ford related to the Mayaguez deal or not, but I can't remember.

Frank: Yes, he was and we get to that shortly.

During the Watergate period and so on, did you observe the falling apart of the Nixon administration? Did you get called over there?

Cushman: No, no. I had my own problems with that goddamned business. I think I appeared before five Congressional committees and two grand juries, so I had my own problems testifying and all that junk. I think I outlined earlier that the only thing I had to do with the entire thing was dealing with Howard Hunt which was at the instigation of the White House and which I called off just as soon as I smelled a rat and which was no thanks to me but the people who were actually providing things called me up and started worrying about what Hunt was asking them to do and as soon as we found out up in my office, we just put the clamp on and I called the White House and said, "That's it. I'm not supporting this guy anymore."

Frank: Who did you call at that time?

Cushman: Erlichman.

Frank: Erlichman, that's right, I asked you. But except as being an outside observer like we all were, you noted what was going on. You had no inside information as to the breakdown of Nixon's....

Cushman: No, and of course, I was Commandant when the whole thing broke, and that dragged in this relationship to me with Hunt, so I was Commandant when I was trying to handle all this stuff which was blown up by the press, and I was hounded by various people. But, as I mentioned, my stand and my actions were applauded by Symington and Jackson. And that sort of put an end to it, except I had to go through all the four committees relating to the damned thing, plus, what the hell, some other committee on intelligence, I think. And then grand juries that were operating on the Erlichman trials, bringing him to justice.

Frank: Had you any information of what was going on in the White House at this time?

Cushman: No, I knew nothing, not a thing.

Frank: Shortly after the fall of Saigon, we had the Mayaguez incident beginning with the capture of the ship on 12 May. What are you recollections of this incident, particularly, the role played by the Chiefs and the President?

Cushman: Well, only that the decision was made to go ahead with the rescue attempt, is about all I remember. That's to say, I guess it was discussed--now that you bring it up--with the President on one of the meetings when we were called to the White House and there was some discussion of it and pretty much of a go ahead. It was successful, but it cost casualties--but I think the President was happy with the execution.

Frank: Well, it looked from the photographs of the time, that the whole command post was set up right in the executive office, in the Oval Office, that he was getting minute by minute and so on.

Cushman: No, no. Well, the White House always had a command center for whatever goes on, but the Joint Chiefs didn't sit around over there, no. I just recall a daytime meeting, you know, 30 minutes or an hour.

Frank: He was the one that gave the go-ahead to....

Cushman: The President pretty much had to, yes.

Frank: While these events were going on in Southeast Asia, there were serious problems of a different sort at Headquarters Marine Corps. You were in your last year as Commandant and the selection process for the new Commandant had begun. Will you describe that process, please.

Cushman: Yes. I made my recommendation to Middendorf, who was

out getting his own from Officer's Club bars. He said, "Well, what do people think of it?" And I said, "Well, I'll take a sounding." So, I sent out a letter to the general officers and I keyed it--General Anderson's secretary did the writing because she was an expert typist and so on. And believe it or not, nobody in my immediate office was. So, we keyed it to the area to see if the responses represented all the generals or didn't because my instructions were. "You don't have to sign the letter if you don't want to, just let me know who you think would be a good candidate and your views will be between you and me." I got each letter in personally, unopened, and opened it and made a tick mark by whatever name they had recommended which I wrote on a piece of paper and then destroyed their letter. Well, nobody has ever seen those letters but me and they're all destroyed. The sounding showed--I don't know what it was now--60-65% favored Anderson, and number two was Lou Wilson and I guess there were a couple of others mentioned--Snowden, perhaps, and there were a couple of other names. But, the two people were Anderson and Wilson. I recommended Andy Anderson and I was asked to provide a second name and I provided Wilson's.

Then, somebody complained that the letters were keyed and I said, "Well, I thought everybody did that," not by name but by area since they didn't have to sign their names it's nice to know that you got a response from Norfolk represented everybody in Norfolk or you get nothing from Norfolk. So, there was a big hue and cry over that, and I just told everybody it wasn't

any of their damned business, it was private communication between me and my general officers. But I got hounded by--oh, what the hell was his name--his was Middendorf's under-secretary. And he really was nasty about it and the complaint had been made so that several Congressmen knew about it, they were raising hell. And so, the end of it was nothing really, except I told a guy in the press that I thought had been done before, and wasn't forced to give a name, pressed to give a name, I made the mistake of mentioning Wally Greene. And all hell broke loose, of course, and the next morning said I made a mistake, because I had. I thought in some of our conversations that it was true, but I certainly wasn't going to argue about it. I used to have Chappy and....

End Side 2, Tape 1,

Begin Tape 2, Side 1

Frank: You were talking about having Generals Chapman and Greene over.

Cushman: Yes, I used to have them over to keep them abreast of what was going on and we'd have lunch and quite a lot of conversation and then they'd go down to the command center and get a briefing and go on home. The point being that I had lots of conversations with Wally and Chappy, so I made a doggone mistake and I had to eat crow on it, and I did. So, that was it. As it turned out, it was a hell of a mistake to key the damned

things by location, but I hadn't given it much thought, not enough thought, obviously. If I had to do it over again, I wouldn't. I don't think I would even have written the letter in the first place because I remember getting letters previously....

Frank: That's what I was going to ask you, had....

Cushman: ...by Shoup and by Wally Greene, which really encompassed the time I was a general. I don't think Chappy, I never got anything from Chappy, I don't think. I might have, I can't remember now. But I did from Shoup and Greene.

Frank: Well now, the Commandancy of the Marine Corps sometimes compared to the Papacy with the general officers forming the College of Cardinals. The general officers like to think they have a voice in deciding the selection of the next Commandant. I understand that one of the devices used was the polling by letter of the generals asking them to nominate anonymously their choice, and you mentioned that you think it happened....

Cushman: What was this again, now?

Frank: Well, the polling by letter of the generals, and you answered previously, the question was do you have any idea when this practice was started. And of course, you'd only know about it when you were a general officer.

Cushman: Yes, that's right. And that was when Shoup was

Commandant and I got a letter in his regime, I got a letter from Greene, and I don't recall getting one from Chapman, but I can't remember for sure whether he sent any out or not.

As I look back, I wasn't much in favor of it when I got the letters. As I look back, if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't have done it at all.

Frank: You wouldn't have polled your generals?

Cushman: No, no.

Frank: Well, the polling of the generals by the Commandant gives him some idea of whom the generals would like as their next Commandant.

Cushman: Yes, right. But it also opens up the possibility of campaigning. You know, there is always a couple of front runners.

Frank: Right.

Cushman: And everybody knows who they are and they themselves know who they are. Now, there's nothing to stop them from calling up people and asking them for their vote, politicking.

Frank: Yes. But, the supposition is that by polling his generals, the Commandant's recommendation would be based on this poll, and in effect the Commandant has a great say in who the next Commandant is going to be--who his successor is going to be. Is this true?

Cushman: Well first, I don't think it should be a matter of vote. As I say, I think I made a mistake in doing it. And I don't know how far back it goes, but as I say, if it's going to be known that every Commandant is going to do this, it opens up a politicking option for everybody that's in the running, two or three people to importune their colleagues to vote for them. And I just don't think that's the way to run it. I can't say that it happened, but it opens up the possibility.

The selection of the Commandant is up to the President. A President who takes a strong, personal interest in the Marine Corps would have a lot to say about it, naturally. He might even know some of them, and so forth. This is what happened in my case where the President knew me personally, and my record was supportive. In other cases, the Secretary of Defense may have a great say because he has an interest and knows somebody; witness Tom Gates. Again, it could be Secretary of the Navy who presumably would know practically all of these general officers who would have the most say and people up above would simply take his recommendation not knowing any other options particularly or having any other inclinations. In all of this, the Commandant, of course, makes a recommendation, but if any of the above disagrees with him that's the end of that.

In my case, I was disagreed with and asked for a second choice, so two names had to be made. I said I didn't want to give two names, but I was forced to.

Frank: Well, don't you think that the Commandant is the one

who best knows his generals and best knows his Marine Corps as the one whose recommendation should be taken as his successor?

Cushman: Well sure, but this is the real world. You have politically appointed people and in some cases they want their man in if they know him. So, in theory you may be right, on the other hand, as I mentioned, there are three things you have to do. You have to get along with the Congress and be persuasive; and you have to get along with the civilian hierarchy and be persuasive all the way along the line and you have to be able to function in the Joint Chiefs; and finally, you have to run the Marine Corps, which is as I say, the easiest part of it all. So, the civilian hierarchy has to consider whether you are competent to do all those things or not. And what other Marine generals what vote for or even what the Commandant might recommend will not in every case go through. In addition, you always have personalities involved, sometimes politics are involved. I think we discussed it, a number of instances where that happened.

Frank: Yes. On 9 April, you appeared before the Newmaker Breakfast of the National Press Club, if you recall.

Cushman: Yes, I think so.

Frank: I have a transcript here of your remarks, and you may have seen it already. I'd like to get your permission to put this in with the transcript of your interview.

Cushman: God, I don't know if I've ever seen it. What the hell are we talking about?

Frank: Well, here's the--you sent out copies and there is your letter of distribution.

Cushman: Oh. Well, I haven't read it, I don't remember word for word of what the hell I said.

Frank: I can get a copy made and send to you.

Cushman: Yes. I think I said essentially what I just said.

Frank: Right. That and there were some other matters that came up in discussion of the F-14 and so on. So, there were others.

Cushman: Oh, oh, yes. Yes, I guess I might as well read it, so I'll know.

Frank: Okay, I'll get a copy made.

On 10 April, the next day, there was an article in the Washington Post by Michael Gettler, concerning General Anderson's aspiration to become Commandant--this is what blew it up.

Cushman: Yes, yes.

Frank: This set a whole chain of events into motion, including charges that the letter sent out to the generals had been coded so that the responses could be identified with the individuals. You were then quoted by the Washington Post as you said, saying

that General Greene had suggested coding the responses and this brought about a vehement denial in a couple of days by General Greene. What is your recollection of these events?

Cushman: Well, just what I said, that first, yes, I coded it, at least I told the gal to go ahead and change it a little bit for the major areas. Then, the second point is that nobody ever saw the letters but myself. So, there's no new guy has a reference for knowing who voted against him or for him. I mean, I may be dumb on this thing, but I'm not stupid and I burned up every damned letter and no one, absolutely no one ever saw the letters except me. So, whether they're coded or not really had no practical effect.

Frank: But you knew what the code was, you could....

Cushman: Yes, it wasn't--what I said was simply I think it was just place the first paragraph in a different position depending on the several major areas that we sent out to. What the hell the gal did, I don't know because I didn't pay much attention when the letters came in. Almost everybody signed their name. So, you know, there wasn't problem.

Frank: Did you know that even before the Washington Post articles that there was a widely held perception of the Marine Corps that you had either delegated control or lost control of the Marine Corps to General Anderson and that his nickname was "Super chief?"

Cushman: No, hell no. Nobody dared say that to me, I'd globber them. No, I didn't know that.

Frank: Did you know that again, even before the Washington Post articles appeared that a number of Marine Corps generals had combined, at least loosely, into a cabal dedicated to preventing General Anderson from becoming Commandant?

Cushman: No, no. I think he thought there were, but he had sort of a conspiratorial view of life and I can't say that I knew it. No. Rumor, but no knowledge.

Frank: In other words, you had a perception that the appointment of an aviator as Commandant was going to be controversial in itself?

Cushman: Yes, sure, I knew that. But cabal, no, I didn't know that. I knew there were people didn't like it, wouldn't like it. You know, that went without saying.

Frank: Things moved very quickly after the Washington Post articles. On 30 April, that's less than a month, after this whole thing started, it was announced that Louis Wilson would become the next Commandant. Can you illuminate the sequence of events that lead to his selection? You mentioned the fact that ....

Cushman: Yes, they just, you know, they picked Wilson and that was that.

Frank: But you put in the recommendation you wanted only a single name--you submitted only Anderson's....

Cushman: Yes, and I was told to come up with another one. I had to come up with an other one.

Frank: General Wilson was, of course, an old time comrade of yours.

Cushman: Yes, right.

Frank: He commanded the company in your battalion during much of World War II.

Cushman: That's right, I got him his Medal of Honor.

Frank: How would you characterize your relations while he was CG FMFPac and you were Commandant--cool or cordial?

Cushman: Cordial, cordial, until it was indicated to me by the Secretary--who was then Warner as I recall, not in writing but orally--that I ought to keep fresh blood flowing through the Marine Corps and that we needed some new lieutenant generals just as a matter of principle. And you may recall Shoup's famous statement, "This is not a life time job being three stars," or whatever it was he said, and it generally had gone along that way. Three star generals did not ordinarily stay the whole tour of the Commandant that made him. So, taking this--which I didn't enjoy too much--FMFPac and Quantico and Lou Wilson were all asked if they would not step aside and get

some new people in. And Wilson refused, the other two did, Wilson refused and said he wanted to become Commandant. So, I said, "Okay, Lou." He said, "So, you want to demote me if you want, but I'm not going to get out." I said, "I'm not going to demote you, you stay right where you are, and if you're taking a run at the job, okay."

Frank: You meant FMFLant because Lou Wilson had FMFPac.

Cushman: Yes, that's what I said.

Frank: No, you said, Pac and Lou Wilson. Who had Lant at that time, do you recall?

Cushman: Keller had Quantico and Axtell had Lant.

Frank: Two aviators.

At what point did you decide to retire six months early. The public perception was that you reached this decision as a result of the embarrassment coming out of the Anderson affair. Is this true?

Cushman: No, the result, I mean the cause, was the damned financial laws. And as it turned out, things were saved by the bell, I think, in October or something. Rhodes, I guess, or somebody got the thing changed, but I figured out if I stayed past, I think it was September, if I stayed past September based on actuarial figures, my wife would lose a couple hundred thousand bucks. And I would lose I don't know how

much, but a hell of a good sum because of the weird inversion between retired, active duty, and the ceiling. And it was just topsy-turvy land, you know, absolutely no rhyme or reason to it except that Congress won't raise their pay and be criticized by the voters. So, of course, they go get more stamps and post allowance and stationry allowance and they're allowed to put that in their pockets, so that's the way they raise their pay. In any event, I told the Secretary that I wanted to retire before the September, I think it was the September deadline, if you hadn't retired by then, you went into the next era, as I recall it. And he said, "Okay," and then in talking to Schlesinger and saying I was going to get out in the fall in September, he said, "Well, all the other chiefs change on the first," which in those days was the fiscal year. So, I said, "Well, it doesn't make any difference to me." So, I went on out on the 30 June. Well, of course, the fiscal year has been changed to the 1st of October and I can't remember whether it was Rhodes or Towers or just who it was, somebody came up with an act of Congress that saved this inversion problem, at least for a while. So, that was the story of my getting out when I did. I think they pressed me at that breakfast, was I going to get out, and of course, I said, "No, no, I'm not going to get out." But, I'd already been doing the figuring and it was unbelievable the amount of money at risk.

Frank: I know, I saw the article.

By retiring early, you missed the celebration of the Marine Corps 200th birthday. Wasn't this bicentennial worth waiting for?

Cushman: I thought of that, but that was in November, beyond the deadline. I just wasn't going to risk it, I knew there would be criticism, you know, after all these years you're going to worry about a little money? Well, I was worried like hell the effect my wife might have on the...because I subscribed to that--whatever the hell it is--survivors benefit. And the way it was, you know, I would lose a steady amount of money the rest of my life. Well, they changed that, but I figured for a few months--I'll be at the birthday party anyway.

Frank: The 6 May 1975 issue of U.S. News and World Report featured an article entitled, "What's Wrong With the Marines?" It was probably triggered by the Anderson affair, but it also reflected growing criticism and doubts about the future of the Corps which reached a crescendo with the publication of the Brookings Institution study by Jeffery Record and Martin Binkin entitled, "Where does the Marine Corps go from Here?" Do you remember that?

Cushman: Well, yes. We knew about that, it was in preparation for some time. As I recall, we had somebody that worked with them, you know, a Marine, in an assisting role trying to make sure they put out something that was accurate and we knew that thing was coming out for a long time and were trying to change its conclusion to something we thought was much more realistic.

Yes, we knew about that thing coming out and were not overjoyed, of course.

Frank: Well, there was a great hue and cry. A lot of it reflected Mr. Schlesinger's thoughts, I believe.

Cushman: Right, sure did.

Frank: Do you think he was behind this at all?

Cushman: Yes, I do.

Frank: General Wilson arrived from Hawaii and was set up with an office in Headquarters. What other arrangements were made for the transition and how frequently did you see him during this period and did you give him any personal council?

Cushman: Oh, yes, sure. I saw him fairly frequently, and he was given a comphrehensive schedule of visiting all parts of the Headquarters and getting briefed and finding out whatever he needed to know to do the job.

Frank: The actual change of command ceremony took place on the parade ground of Marine Barracks at 8th and Eye at 1430, Monday, 30 June 1975. What are your recollections of that event and was General Anderson among those present?

Cushman: I don't know. I thought it was a very nice ceremony. Schlesinger was there and Middendorf, and you know, everybody made speeches and I got a Distinguished Service Medal, my

fourth. And of course, Lou Wilson was there for the turnover. I thought the ceremony went well, then we had a reception in the garden and that went very well, I thought. That's my recollection of it, kind of a warm day, sun shining, and the usual speeches, and a nice ceremony.

Frank: This ended 40 years of active service.

Cushman: Yes, right, 40 years as a Marine officers and four years as a midshipman.

Frank: That's right. How did you feel about this, emotional?

Cushman: No, I'm not an emotional type, really, on things like that. No, I just looked back on the 44 years as being something I'd do all over again. I enjoyed it, but I certainly wasn't going to cry about it, because you know, there's more years to come and get on with doing other things. I was busy getting ready to build my house, so I had plenty of interests.

Being Commandant these days is not really something you want to go on and on and on doing. And when the time comes to quit, I just had no problems in taking up other interests and laying down the cudgels.

Frank: Was it a hard four years? Was it a demanding four years?

Cushman: I thought so. I worked every damned night, weekends. There is a tremendous amount of work if you're going to do it

properly, I think. I just was never able, I guess, I can delegate authority but there's enough problems come bubbling up to the top that it will keep you busy. And if you go off and play golf, you're just abdicating you responsibility in my opinion. Your going to have to let somebody else make the decisions on a lot of these matters.

Frank: Were you able to get much leave at all?

Cushman: I don't recall ever taking any leave. A few days, maybe, at Christmastime. I've never taken much leave during my career. We used to be able to save up four months, and the end of World War II, I had four months and they paid for two of them. Then you are allowed to keep two, and I carried those two until I retired and got paid for those. I never really was one to use up my leave too much.

I don't know, we took leave in between stations and short leaves like a week or something of that sort. I never was one to go off for a month very much.

Frank: You know, fairly or unfairly, these events that we have been discussing have been called the Marine Corps Watergate. Reasons are obvious, although, possibly superficial. There was your identification with President Nixon, also a scrambling for power driven by personal ambition on his part. An invasion of privacy which was exposed publically, and your own early retirement. This is a harsh and unkind indictment, but it is one that was widely circulated. I think it would be well if you

took this opportunity to comment on that.

Cushman: Yes, I vehemenently deny any such comparison. I don't exactly see where it is analogous, in the first place. And second, the perception might have been there, and of course, the media is never of any particular help except in accusing people. I even went so far as to consult lawyers over some of the articles which were slanderous and libelous, scurrilous. Seymour Hersh, for example, without knowing a damned thing about anything, called me a criminal. So, all the advice I get is, "You're a public figure, you won't get a damned thing out of it."

Frank: When was that that he called you a criminal?

Cushman: Watergate thing, when Howard Hunt and the Watergate and all that--they were all accusing everybody of everything, you know. And I was concerned because it in the beginning reflected on the Marine Corps until I could show that I wasn't mixed up in it in terms of any kind of a guilt or anything. But that was the big worry and I guess I was never able to completely put it to bed.

Frank: Did this get to you?

Cushman: What?

Frank: Did it bother you a lot?

Cushman: Yes, sure. Oh, there were some terrible articles

written. Heinl and gee, there was some old-timer--written without ever talking to me. Couple of them I called up and they changed their tune when they found out what the score was. But, it was a bad time, yes.

Frank: During his time that he was a newpaper columnist, did Bob Heinl come and visit you often for interviews?

Cushman: No, he came out to Vietnam as a correspondent and he came into my headquarters and I was out as I was almost every morning checking troops and one thing and another. So, he wants to see me, my aide said, "Well, he's not available. He's out with the troops and won't be in until after lunch," or something and wasn't able to make an appointment. And Heinl took it personally for some unknown reason becasue I'd known him all through the years. And he went on out, I think he paid a visit to the battleship that had just shown up.

Frank: He had a hand in its resurrection.

Cushman: Yes, yes. And he then proceeded to write a nasty article which took the Army view of disputes that the press speculated might have been going on between Westmoreland and the Army and myself. At the time, I was setting up MACV forward, later XXIV Corps. So, he wrote a very nasty article about that. So then we didn't speak to each other for quite a long time. Well, we didn't really speak to each other. And the next thing is he writes some nasty articles of the period

we're discussing. And then about the last act before he went on vacation and died, he wrote me a letter and asked for an autographed picture, which was typical Heinl, I thought. Anyway, that's the story with Heinl. And I don't know why he got so mad because I wasn't in the headquarters and couldn't give him an appointment, but he was furious.

Frank: How would you sum up your 44 years of active service?

Cushman: Well, I like to think I made a contribution to the country. I enjoyed it, but I had a lot of service and I believe in serving the country. I think every young man should have a crack at it one way or another. And I have a great feeling of satisfaction with my career. I enjoyed it, worked hard, but I just love the life. I don't miss it because I'm at an age where it is pretty hard to keep up now with the active life that is involved in the military.

Frank: What events or happenings during this career gave you the greatest satisfaction?

Cushman: I think the greatest satisfaction that I had was contribution to winning the war. I always felt that battalions were maneuver elements and very important and I was very proud to be in command of one and lucky enough to last, survive through the war. And re:

of the logistics system and of Headquarters Marine Corps. Those I think will be and are long lasting, they were necessary to get geared in with the Department of Defense. We had a completely different damned thing, you know, trying to mesh with them was difficult and it was leading to demands to take over this, that, and the other on the logistic side.

Then I was rather proud of the fact that I was able to do some writing for the Gazette, and assisted in the development of new tactics while I was at the schools after the war and again when I was in the 2d Division. We were doing a lot of experimentation with new tactics and as a regimental commander I had a chance to get in on that and to write about it. And in general, I guess, those are the principal events that stand out in my mind.

CIA was something separate. And of course, I enjoyed both tours. And I enjoyed tremendously working for President Nixon when he was Vice-President, making trips with him, and sort of running the office.

Frank: For your time as Commandant, you've already mentioned what you consider your greatest successes and your greatest failures if any, what were they?

Cushman: Well, I mentioned the projects that I'm happy with and I would say my greatest problem and the one I did not solve was personnel and keeping the quality where it should be. That always bothered me and I wasn't able to solve it. It's difficult

to solve because there are so many external factors that operate against you or for you over which you don't have much control.

Frank: One other thing. Are you aware of a letter that General Anderson sent to General Greene after this thing broke in the papers?

Cushman: No.

Frank: I have a copy here if you'd like to see it.

Cushman: Yes. Has he ever given an oral history?

Frank: Who, General Greene?

Cushman: No, Anderson.

Frank: No, no. General Simmons more or less felt it was not the appropriate time. He may still be smarting, and I don't think he's available around here anyway.

(Pause while General Cushman reads letter)

Cushman: Oh, intersting, interesting.

Frank: Yes, yes. Do you have a comment on that?

Cushman: No, no.

Frank: If you saw in the papers, the inner circle of the Nixon administration just celebrated the tenth anniversary of the second presidential election of Mr. Nixon. Were you invited

to that party?

Cushman: No, I was not. But it was organized, as I read the paper, organized by the Presidential advanceman crew, which I never really knew. I knew the Vice-Presidential advanceman crew--some of them--who later showed up, of course, in the White House--Haldeman, Erlichman, and others. No, I didn't know, about the only one I knew there beside the Vice-President was Rosemary Woods. The others just knew slightly.

Frank: Well, we've gone through 44 plus years of your military career, General. Do you have any last remarks you'd like to put on record?

Cushman: No, if I think of something before, well, I'll have a chance by reading the proofs, won't I.

Frank: Yes, sir.

Cushman: If I think of something, I'll throw it in, which I might.

Frank: Okay. Well, it would be appropriate enough.

I want to thank you very much. I've enjoyed these hours that we've spent, and I really appreciate your coming in.

Cushman: Well, I've enjoyed doing it. I procrastinated long enough.

Frank: I wasn't going to say anything about that, sir.

Cushman: My only regret is I can't remember names, and if I'd done it after I got my house built and moved in--which was a two year job--then I might have remembered some names.

Frank: Well, when you get to read this, there may be things that you.... Thank you very much, sir.

Cushman: Well, some of the names your researchers can provide you like Army chiefs of staff and so on.

Frank: Right, yes sir. Thank you very much again.

End of Interview.

McGill: This is an interview with General Robert Cushman, USMC (Ret.), 29 June 1977 in General Cushman's home. The interviewer is Colonel John P. McGill, USMCR.

We have some basic questions we usually start off with that we developed in our BQ, General. Were you ever affiliated with the 4th Marine Division in World War II?

Cushman: No.

McGill: When was the first time you heard of the 4th Marine Division per se, as it is associated with the Marine Corps Reserve?

Cushman: Well, I don't really recall. I was told to organize the 4th Marine Division headquarters nucleus and I don't recall thinking much about it when the 4th Division was on _____ Iwo Jima the same time I was, when I was in the 3d Division. But, other than that, I didn't particularly keep up with the reserve establishment. It was in my bailiwick.

McGill: Had you ever worked with the reserves over your career?

Cushman: No, I never had.

McGill: Yes, sir, like in a district or an I&I duty?

Cushman: No.

McGill: The 4th Division headquarters nucleus was formally

established on the 14th of February 1966. At that time, you were the Commanding General, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton as well as the commanding general of the 5th Division. I believe the 5th Division was organized shortly before that?

Cushman: I think it was shortly after that.

McGill: Shortly after that, yes, sir. So that this--talking with Colonel Roger Peterson, who was the OIC of the RLU at Camp Pendleton, he had indicated to me both in conversation over the phone as well as in writing that there existed at Camp Pendleton a file on the mobilization procedures to be followed in the event that the 4th Division or the reserves were mobilized. And on one day that the word came in--however, whether by Almar or bulletin or message--to activate the 4th Division. And I have not been able to determine that yet.

Cushman: Message, I'm pretty sure.

McGill: Yes, sir. I assume it was a message that might have come in that the RLU, in essence, became the basic element of the headquarters nucleus, as basic as one can be with maybe one or two officers and several enlisted men.

Cushman: I guess it was, I've forgotten that. I might go back to one of your earlier questions. I did have this association with the reserve, I was G-3 at Headquarters Marine Corps and responsible for mobilization plans of the Marine Corps.

McGill: What period of time was that, sir?

Cushman: '62 to '64. So, I was familiar with the staff work involved in mobilization planning which turned out to be fortunate.

McGill: Do you remember Colonel Wood at that time, Rancin Wood, who might have been in the 3 shop, or was he with division reserve at that time?

Cushman: I can't remember, they bounced this planning around to some extent, I might say to. I know the division reserve had to be in on it, but I don't recall just how they were.

McGill: General Fairbourne was the Director of Reserve at that time, and he's left there to go to, I think it was the 1st Division.

Cushman: 1st Division at Pendleton, right.

McGill: And this time frame, the redesignation of all units took place on July 1, 1962. In fact, I have a copy of the orders.

Cushman: I remember there was a great turmoil that went on when they reorganized on the mirror image principle or whatever they called it at that time.

McGill: Yes, sir. And this of course, is the beginning of the departure from utilizing reserves as individuals within the

regular establishment to utilizing units within the 4th Marine Division Wing concept.

Cushman: Well, they always had units, but they were scattered all over the place, and as you say, their assignment I think, was intended to as individuals but they had reserve units for training and so on.

McGill: Some of the written or printed comments that I have seen regarding the establishment of headquarters nucleus indicated that there were several functions being performed at Camp Pendleton prior to the activation of headquarters nucleus. There was, maybe, an administrative function, a file function....

Cushman: Not for the whole reserve, that I know of.

McGill: No, sir, not for the reserve. This is strictly for a possible mobilization potential that each, maybe, office at Camp Pendleton had a responsibility. The 3 shop had a minor responsibility, the 1 shop, the 4 shop had a responsibility. Does that ring a bell with you at all?

Cushman: It may have been, I don't recall because the planning immediately got so involved and important upon the establishment of the nucleus for just the items you mentioned, that if there had been any planning done previously, I don't remember. Must have been very minor. Maybe Peterson did some. Primarily, we were involved in pretty heavy training schedules in the summer for the reserves, but I don't recall much in the way of national

scale mobilization planning at Pendleton.

McGill: This basic mission of the headquarters nucleus, of course, was to further the plans of mobilization.

Cushman: As I say, up to then as far as I knew, mobilization planning was done in Washington.

McGill: Yes, sir. Division Reserve, I believe, had primary responsibility for that in connection with....

Cushman: Now of course, there would have been some work, I'm pretty sure it was very minimal in terms of what does Pendleton need in the way of mobilization material--decks, and tents, and all this kind of stuff. But, there was never any money for it, and my feint recollection is it was very low on the totem pole as far as the base planning went.

McGill: Yes, sir. One of the initial SOPs that headquarters nucleus developed, of course, provided I believe some ample help in that summer of '66 with the development of the ATDSOP, and up until that time Pendleton, Lejeune, Twentynine Palms maybe had a very basic SOP schedule. And of course, the Vietnam war was on and was thick and heavy, and this may have lent itself to the development of the ADT to provide more realistic training for the reserve _____ particularly in those aspects that we often tend to overlook--administration, logistics, rather than 3 functions and 2 functions.

The actual constitution of the staff sections, I believe,

began in March of 1966. I have a copy of one of the initial orders that was sent to me by Colonel Jim Mooney out of Hawaii. We sent him a questionaire and he in turn sent back a very nice letter and the first initial order assigning people to their respective staff functions.

I wonder if you can recall anybody who worked with you in that nucleus at the time besides General Oppenheimer and Colonel Peterson? You might recollect other people who worked in the division.

Cushman: Well, when we formed the nucleus, the mission of course was to develop mobilizatio plans. And the biggest problem was logistics. Now, the logistics of moving the people to Pendleton was handled by Headquarters in conjunction with the overall Department of Defense Movement Plans that had to dovetail with all the services. But logistic planning for supplies and for the arrival of these people and putting them up and training them had to be done. As I recall, I made a big drive to get all this done and put on computers and so we'd be ready to go.

The two people most involved that I recall working with were first of all, of course, chief of staff, General Oppenheimer, who was then a colonel as I recall--Larry Oppenheimer of Kansas City and he's still there. And on active duty, then colonel now retired brigadier general named Noland Beat, B-E-A-T, who was a logistician and supply specialist who really went to work on getting this stuff reduced to computer language and so on.

That's about my recollection of the main drives that went forward within that nucleus. As I mentioned over the phone, the reason I'm not all that much help is that at the same time, our Camp Pendleton had to expand. We set up a tremendous number of schools, and of course, we were the funnel for the pipeline going overseas which really got going by the time I left for Vietnam. And then forming up the 5th Division was a tremendous job. So, I'm afraid that as far as my energies and so on went, that the 4th Division nucleus was third among those three jobs at that time.

McGill: Yes, sir.

Cushman: And consequently, I don't remember the details as much as I would like. That's why I suggested that perhaps you would want to talk to Larry Oppenheimer and Noland Beat, whose address I don't have. I'm sure you can get it.

McGill: I can probably get his address from Headquarters with no problem at all.

Cushman: And Peterson, of course, who stayed right on through, as I recall. I hate to say it, I can't remember what job he had on the staff of the 4th Marine Division nucleus right now. But, he'd been reserve unit man all the way through.

McGill: He was initial chief of staff and then I believe he took over the 3 job for awhile and it was not too long after that that he retired because he had been on active duty for....

Cushman: Yes, right you are. In fact, I have a copy of a book he just wrote, he sent it to me a few months back.

McGill: Oh, something about the Rockies, wasn't it?

Cushman: Yes, yes.

McGill: There have been, of course, developments as there always are is in this type of organization over the years and there was a parallel for a number of years, a parallel responsibility between the reserve units and a division. It's hither and dither, the district directors being responsible for the administration of the units.

Cushman: The person in the middle.

McGill: And the division trying to develop what it thought it should have, the control of them both opcon as well as adcom. And this of course, resolved itself partially in January 1, 1970 and I cannot recall if you were Commandant then or not.

Cushman: No, I became Commandant in '72.

McGill: And this was the beginning step and then in 1977 this year, we assumed full control. But problems that existed for a number of years was to whom do we report to? And that has sort of been resolved now. Now we've come to the point where the division as such mirrors--almost, maybe not in training or excellence, the regular establishment. In your experience in life and experience in the Marine Corps, do you perceive an

instance where it would be feasible to call the 4th Division as a total division or would it be more practical in light of realistic politics in the world maybe to call up maybe a regiment at a time?

Cushman: Well, there are two sides to that, one is political. Even when there is an emergency, the political leaders hesitate to activate the reserve units and consequently, you have to be able to activate a few, you have to be able to do it on an individual basis or on a unit basis. The same might be true in a major war for replacement purposes, but presumably, in a major war the political decision has been made and then it's a military problem as to whether you could use the 4th Marine Division. And that would depend a lot on the 4th MAF and that would depend a lot on the type of war and the military situation in which you found yourself, as to whether you could wait to have the 4th MAF form up and become an effective unit--which would take a little time--or whether you'd need replacements right away. A lot would depend, I would think, on how the early days of the war went for the Marine Corps. So, I think that what they have done is sound. I don't know what it is now, but as I recall, the state of the planning and the policy when I left office and retired as Commandant was that the reserve should be able to be mobilized in toto and then either reinforce the action going on in a size determined by the situation all the way up to 4th MAF if you could wait that long. Or on a much more immediate basis, reinforce with

regiments and groups or even in an emergency to send individuals. Now, it's much more complex than that, but also is an interweaving of some regulars fleshing out the reserve units and some reserve units being able to provide replacements right away and this sort thing. Essentially, flexibility was the key when I left the job.

McGill: In 1968, the condition of the situation in Vietnam there was thought, planning, consideration given to the mobilization of one of the regiments of the 4th Division at that time which was not really the 4th Division, but talk was and of course, instead they sent one of the regiments of the 5th Division--the 27th....

Cushman: Yes, sent one regiment of the 5th Division, 27th Marines.

McGill: ...the 27th Marines went to Vietnam and just immediately, I guess it got down pretty close to the wire, whether they were going to call up the--I believe it was the 23d Marines stationed at Camp Pendleton to fill in the sort of reserve rather than sending them to Vietnam. And this seemed to be a practical way to go, may not be logical because as you point out, public reaction. Now, they had instances of that during the Berlin crisis....

Cushman: That's right. If there is an emergency type situation, the fellow that has to quit his job and all this sort of

busy always wonders if it is that big an emergency and so that's why political leaders hesitate to call up the reserves. On the other hand, if there is a major war it's _____ at least it was in the past. There is no question but that everyone has to serve in some way. So then you don't have that problem. As I say, then it's a military situation type of choice that you have whether to do what you've mentioned--call up one regiment or just call up supply units as the Army has to do ordinarily, and that sort of thing.

McGill: In the beginning of the 4th Division in 1966, most of the officers assigned to the division at that time were reserve as well as when they constituted the regimental headquarters in the era of 1960-70, the commanding officers of those regiments, Colonel Keilly, Colonel _____, Colonel Macland, Colonel Sweeney, I believe were reserve officers. Now of course, experience has shown and time has shown that it would be better to have regular officers in these billets because of their experience and the need for somebody who comes from a regular billet someplace else to step right in--the continuity. It's difficult to take a reserve who needs maybe 90 days or something like that to get a handle on procedures for telephoning somebody or the terminology that's publically in use. But, do you think that there should be a modification of this? Say for instance, the regimental COs obviously because of their long time experience continues active duty--regular officers. But, within the headquarters of the 4th Divisi--maybe it is the same with the 4th

Marine Air Wing--the change has taken place now where a predominate number are more regular than they are reserve. And this may be because reserves can't get off their jobs anymore. There is no crisis, the justificiation. Many of us were able to do this by telling some big, tall story to somebody to somebody and saying, "I'd like a leave of absence because I got to go, I got a telegram." Now, what would you think would probably be the proper mode to go with, stay the way it is, General, or do you think they should have an even mixture in the headquarters, not the regiment?

Cushman: Well, I think a mixture is valuable, of course. Now, these reserves you're talking about are on extended active duty?

McGill: Yes, sir, for two or three year period of time.

Cushman: Well, I think it's always desirable to do that if you can get individuals who are competent and who can get away from their jobs for that period of time. No question about it. The more trained reservists we have, the better off we are. The biggest difficulty has always been training the--well, even battalion staff--but regimental and division staff particularly because they don't get together often enough and the people are involved in other things. So, if yhou can get some who can put in a tour, so to speak, so much the better.

McGill: Thinking today, of course, is that the configuration of the division as it is now, that in the event of a mobilization,

time spand before actual commitment to action would probably be a 30 to 60 day basis, either in its entirety as a division or maybe as separate regiments. And of course, this does not leave very much time for brushing up on those things one should have been brushing up on all along or gaining the knowledge necessary to go across the line of departure. There is a feeling that if there is a crisis, the division would be called up and used only within the States for awhile. But yet the training has been, even on a small basis perhaps, sending reserve units to Nato exercises, which is an outstanding exposure and outstanding experience to give everybody from officers all the way down to lowest rank enlisted. And have you had much experience in, perhaps as Commandant, dealing with this or approving such operations?

Cushman: Well, it was entirely Congressional mandate. Sometimes they'd say, "You're not allowed, you can't use any of this money to send any reserves to Nato," sometimes they'd relent and let you send some. We had some terrible times overcoming some of these objections because none of them were military in nature, whole bunch of penny-pinching _____.

McGill: Nothing to do with the legal aspects of it?

Cushman: No, no, it was all money, entirely money. But we managed to get units to Nato. Another problem of course is getting everybody in the unit to get their time off from work at the same time. But we were able to use individuals in the

form of communicators quite often to go over to the Nato exercise. And we used to manage to rustle up some scout snipper type, in the scout platoon, whatever the phrase was. They change the name all the time. Some of those people were able to--reconnaissance outfits--were able to go. But an honest to God infantry unit, I can't recall ever getting one over to a Nato exercise. First place, they don't take place in the summer when people get their vacations and all this sort of thing.

McGill: There has been an effort in the past year or so, or at least consideration given to the establishment of a training procedure, whereby units would be trained throughout the year rather than just summertime because of the burden this inflicts upon local bases such as Pendleton, Lejeune, this is a tremendous burden on them. And they had a Nato exercise here, I think last fall, they sent an outfit over to Norway. It was a company size, I believe, no more than that, company size with some associated units going with it.

We see in the 4th Division, of course, the constant need to be prepared in emergency. But, there is another aspect to the Marine Corps reserve that is really very supportive of the Marine Corps as such is the fact that we are spread throughtout the United States and we are involved in a lot of community effort, exposure. And as with anybody in the Marine Corps, whatever good that is done by the reserve in their respective communities reflects upon the Marine Corps. And anything of an ill nature which is done by a reserve in the Marine Corps also

reflects upon the Marine Corps. Our Marine reserve have consistently participated in disaster operations around the country. The floods up in the northwest, hurricanes on the northeast coast here, fires, projects as bridge building and I'm not sure if much of this has ever come to your attention other than what you've maybe read in the papers because this is quite often how it happens.

Cushman: Oh, yes. I did when I was Commandant. And of course, regular units do the same thing. And as long as it's in an emergency it's fine. We'd occasionally get into a squabble when a sort of do-gooder project, for example, building a bridge, and somebody gets the idea it's cutting their end of the labor union's prerogatives, or somebodies civilian job. This sort of thing, but other than that aspect, it's totally for the good, and of course, it cements bonds with the civilian community, between the Marine Corps and the civilian community--whether it's reserves or regulars that do the action.

I might go back to that--way back to that first question. I did have another job involving the reserve. Before World War II, I was an operations officer in the reserve training center set up at Quantico to train all reservists being mobilized for World War II, back in 1940-41, before the war started for the United States, but it looked like it was coming and the reserves were mobilized. We put them all through training and I had that experience.

McGill: The concept, the thought has been broadcast by the Defense Department, particularly, right after Vietnam concluded, that the reserve, National Guard--Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, would constitute the total force, total force concept was evolved out of the Department of Defense that because of cost considerations, changing political climate in the world (it changes everyday), that future military conflicts would see a greater reliance upon reserves, National Guard than had been the case in Vietnam, maybe even Korea. Is that a valid premise in light of again the politics of calling the reserves up or the cost considerations of maintaining armed forces today?

Cushman: Well, as far as I'm concerned, that was just a--we used to call it a buzz word. It meant absolutely nothing because of the political realities of life. For example, the Army used to almost have to mobilize units to get their combat service support units and the ones behind them. And they found they'd have an awful time functioning logistically because they'd been relying on reserves to supply the backup to their combat forces. Well, I don't think you can do that. Total force concept jsut sounds nice when you're cutting the budget, that's all. It involves relying on Nato and on the regulars and on the reserves. Well, that's fine but can you rely on the reserves in terms of political courage to call them up? I just don't think you can. I think the Marine Corps has got the sound approach in that you have a mirror image and can therefore function without it if you have to, but it's going to be a real

punch, an honest to goodness reserve unit when you do mobilize.

Now, this is not to say that the 4th MAF could conduct an assault landing 30 or 60 days after mobilization. But, they sure as heck, I think, could back up an action already going on. And they certainly, if they have the luxury of an extra 60 days probably could go in an assault. But, there are many questions besides the ones you're examining in connection with the 4th Marine Division that enter here. And one of them is aviation, the Navy supply of parts for Marine Corps aviation reserve and all of this has to dovetail before you can say they can go in and make an assault. However, the ground troops, I always thought, were logistically more ready in my day than the air. I don't know what the situation is now, and that therefore the ground unit could probably go in earlier in an assault, but the air units might not be able to support that particular unit and they'd have to go in under the umbrella of air units of the regular Marine Corps, something of that sort. But as long as you stay flexible, there are so many possibilities. But I think that's the thing to do, retain those different courses of action of different capabilities. But, to call this a total force concept, it simply means this is an excuse for cutting the budget, cutting the regular force and saying well, you've got the reserves to make up for it and this sort of thing. Other problems enter in--recruiting is much tougher when there is no war in terms of getting quality people and technical people into the reserves.

McGill: Yes, sir. That's one of our major areas of concern today.

Cushman: Yes, and as the war fades into the distance, experience pilots are going to be getting older and older and older. And so, we never used to worry about the pilots, had plenty of young fellows been flying in Vietnam or Korea or whatnot. But, there will come a day when they get too old for that. So, that means you've got a big training program to train reserve pilots from scratch.

McGill: Recruiting, of course, is as you mentioned very, very difficult obstacle today in the reserve program because of the relationship in the community where as one joins the regular establishment one is in there, one is doing that all the time. Maybe it's a lack of patriatism today, maybe it's lack of diversity as a result of material things in life. People do not want to take that burden upon their shoulders in the local communities because in every community there is a need for people to work various charitable organizations, other things, getting them to do that is a difficult task. And this may have well been one of your major concerns during your tenure as Commandant particularly with regards to the reserves--how are we going to maintain them. Because with the end of the draft, the end of the six month _____ there has been an almost steady decline to just recently where it's sort of leveled off. General Wilson spoke just last week of the slight improvement

he has been able to perceive transpiring in recruiting efforts of the reserves. That is, instead of 2,000 shortfall this year, we might only have a 1,000 shortfall this year. And your knowledge there would probably offer some comment. How do we best appeal to this young men in the community who are either recently out of the service or where never out of the service--who have never been in the service? How do we get them to come into the reserve program?

Cushman: Well, if I knew, _____would have been 45,000 when I left office as the way it was when I came in or even more I guess when I came into office as Commandant. But, it's just difficult, and you have to do everything you can think of. There is no one magic key. You have to go into a real selling program based on patriotic motivation, the fact that it is some spare cash, all the things both materialistic and spiritual, if you want to put it that way, that the job involves. You're still going to have difficulty because it is an extracurricular activity and as you say, for people with ability in the community, they've already been asked to work at a number of extracurricular activities that don't involve the military.

McGill: Do you think a return of the draft might help this out, that they would make it like a universal military training?

Cushman: I think so, yes. If fact, the draft probably would be necessary, it seems to me, in case of a major war to provide the replacements you're going to need. It's going to be awful

hard to recruit a replacement for a casualty in a major war.

McGill: After the war starts, it's too late.

Cushman: Yes, because it seems to me it's going to have to come to this, but I don't know, that's a political decision.

McGill: Much of the reading that I've done on this, the history of the 4th Division, of course, obviously leads it into other aspects of the reserve program. And there has been mentioned over the years almost going back to day one of the need for a career pattern within the reserve program. Primarily, again for the officer staff because of the extensive number of reserve officers who desire to participate in the program but do not participate equally because of constrictions of inability to get into units--others are locked into these units over a period of years and there is no rotation in and out. Obviously, as an example, community such as say New York City has several reserve units in the area. They also have several, I think one staff organization, several BTUs, so that a young man coming off active duty--say a 1st lieutenant perhaps--who moves into the area applies for a billet that's open, he's assigned to the billet, and going back again to right after the Korean war, can perceive how same people are always in the organized units. And this to many of us in our way of thinking, destroys the incentive, to feeling that I need the training, I desire the training. And you may have some thoughts on that which I'd like to hear about it if you could because we feel

that there should be a definite clear pattern and that it should be enforced by the regular establishment onto the reserve establishment. And the reserves, who again, have a tendency to politic too much. I know Joe here and he's been a friend of mine, we live down the street, we play golf together, get him into the unit. General Kelly pointed out one time to me in a discussion that he knew of a Marine Corps Reserve Officers Chapter that voted amongst it's members as to who is going to be the next CO of the organized unit in the respective area. And this is utterly disastrous to my way of thinking and to many of us. And you can probably perceive it much better than we do how adverse this would be. Do you think a Marine Corps order, bulletin, could maybe answer this problem or the leadership problem?

Cushman: Well, if what you mean if what policy should there be....

McGill: Yes, sir.

Cushman: ...how you enforce it or put it out, I think is not the problem. I suppose you have some trouble between having a rigidly enforced career pattern and the volunteer nature of an officer service for a certain period of years, to become voluntary, doestn't it?

McGill: Yes, sir. There are many of us have not been in the pay unit except for maybe a period of two years.

Cushman: So, a guy can just quit if he doesn't like it. When you talk about the politicing for getting the top job, you're going to have repeal human nature. I think to change that, as long as there are a number of fairly ambitious people that want to be the CO, you're going to have some of that.

Now, there is no great career pattern in the regulars when you come down to it. There is a policy for younger officers that you'll do your time in the FMF and then some kind of other duty. Then you have your schools, so there is sort of a pattern, but you get up to field grade and still try to get in the FMF, sometimes it's a battle. The jobs get fewer for the number of people that would like to have them. So, I don't know whether some kind of rigid enforcement by the regulars would work. I think you could have a policy and that's probably what you're talking about.

McGill: Yes, sir.

Cushman: We do for the regulars. The reserve officer ought to do duty with a certain type of unit depending on his MOS and then perhaps staff duty and this sort of thing. And that this would be the desirable pattern, and then it's up to the detailers, of course, to try to do this. Isn't it?

McGill: Yes, sir. Because in the experience of many of us who came on active duty to go to Vietnam or much of the 4th Division and then the Vietnam and then worked on various summer exercises, it's like black and white to us. Maybe it might not

have been black and white before hand because we had been in the reserve program and then walked into the regular side of the house saying that is not the way to do it and this is the way to do it. And then we began to see, well, why is it like this? And I think this also seeps down into the senior NCO ranks as well as--and inversely affects the younger Marine coming into the reserve program who is looking for opportunity, obviously, the challenge, the departure from his regular efforts of work and home and relationships. And we think that maybe one key to the aspect of recruiting is to say, "Hey, this is the wide-open range for anybody and everybody."

Down the road here, of course, we see the 4th Division continuing as part of the 4th MAF team. Do you perceive what its future role if any might differ from the present time other than just being a force in readiness, ready to go--the reserve force in readiness? We have a changing nature of the world, a changing nature of warfare transpiring and war can be over in 15 minutes. And this has been the case for a number of years. Or will there always be a definite need for this type of idea we have today?

Cushman: Oh, well I think so. I think all of the nuclear weapons and the horror weapons and so on really so far anyway have only furnished an umbrella under which conventional warfare goes on. I just feel that the Marine Corps as a continuing mission as a force in readiness and one that can be afloat, all the reasons that we've been giving through the years to justify

the Marine Corps as well as the success we have when we go on a mission, I think still hold good and of course, they hold good for the regulars and for the reserve units as well. You have shipping problems, of course, for the regulars and this would mean also for the reserves, but you'll always have to go by ship. In fact, the reserves might well move by air to back up regular unit that has gone by ship and made the assault, for example.

Wherever you have an international problem, if the American people are willing to back it up and the political leaders decide they have to do something, I think you're going to have a call for Marines.

McGill: I have no further questions, General, unless you'd like to make some additional comments as to maybe some of the shortcomings of the reserves or the benefits of reserves.

Cushman: No, except to say I think it is a worthwhile project that you're embarked upon, a history of the 4th Marine Division as a reserve division is worthy, I think, of the efforts you're putting into it. History of 4th Division in World War II has been done, as far as I know anyway.

McGill: Yes, sir. I think in this regard here we can learn something from maybe one point that is very evident. That the effort began in 1961, maybe, '62 with the approval and it's now 1977 and it's been a 15 year effort. And of course, why does it take so long. If there was war effort, it would have not

taken more than a days time to do it, but again, this is the procedure of, I guess, way of life in this country, to approach things fairly cautiously, take care of the more urgent things at one time and let that which is not so important....

Cushman: Got some two great balance wheels, or maybe, I should say anchors you have to drag along. And one if money, which it takes for not only people, for supplies, but also for training. And then you have the Congressional approval required for the entire function, shape, and everything of the reserve, including numbers and money. So, these things prevent you from just, say, in 1962 we're going to redesignate everything and have a new kind of a reserve. All the services have the same problems. You can't move quickly and decisively because they have to convince the Congress and this takes some doing and some time.

McGill: I recall in 1968 when I was with the 4th Division and into 1969, talk of acquisition of a computer from Kansas City, one of older models that was available and was not being utilized to program some of the efforts that were being undertaken by the 4th Division nucleus at the time. I don't think they got program time on any computer until about 1975. Again, as you say, it's two anchors, one if the Congress, the others the money. One is not going to release the other.

Cushman: Yes. _____ Congress won't let you buy the computer without their approval, when I was last mixed up in

this business. And some Air Force general here recently just got himself in all kinds of trouble over that very thing, trying to get a computer when he didn't have the authority or so it said in the paper, anyway. And of course, it's a democratic country and that's the way it has to be run, and it does keep you from running off in all directions or from spending the taxpayers money rashly. At the same time, it can inject perhaps over-caution and certainly it injects delay--sometimes undesirable delay. But, it will always be that way as long as we have this government that we have.

McGill: Yes, sir. General, I have no further questions, and I appreciate your taking the time to talk to me today. I think we will learn something from what we're doing here.

Cushman: Well, I do to. I'm sorry that I don't have a fresher memory of these things to go into more detail. But, I'll think that you will find some people that remember much better because they were doing the work everyday like 16 hours a day when the outfit was formed up. They probably recall and give you some wealth of detail that I wasn't able to do.

McGill: This then concludes the formal part of the interview, General. Thank you very much.

End of Interview.

Debrief of General Cushman, former CG, III MAF at Headquarters FMFPac, 31 March 1969, Tape number 4058

General Buse: ...on an extremely successful short tour in Vietnam, and we're anxious to hear what you have to say that you think will be helpful to the staff. And I'd just like you to tell us anything that you think will be of interest and after which why I'm sure some of the staff might have some questions to ask. We are taping this.

Cushman: Well, the principal thing I'd like to say first is that we get outstanding support from you and your staff. The personnel and logistics problems that we have are always either taken care of or else they are insoluble. There's no problem of you not supporting us out there. The insoluble problems I guess we all know. They seemed to have been with us for years and continue right on as problems of engineer equipment and the like. But, they are not really hampering, in my opinion, the combat effectiveness of the forces to the extent they can't do the mission.

The wing, of course, has problems. They have a lot of individual units that are C-3 or even C-4 for one reason or another--usually, personnel, I'd say. Of course, everybody knows that they're not really not not combat ready because they are doing more than their share in the air war. There has never been any lack of air support. And probably the single bad mark on the escutcheon was single management which we all fought and while we lost the battle eventually. However, again, because the

wing was able to surge and would do so when required, there was never any lack of air support for either Marines or Army. And we forced changes in the Army system, which benefitted the Army greatly at what turned out to be about the minimum cost to ourselves, I think, that's possible under this system. There's a little bit of delay, but it's a matter of hours rather than days as it used to be. We always got the air support when we needed it.

As to the present enemy situation, they seemed to have changed their strategy from a year ago from one of all out attempt at military victory to now a series of pin pricks designed to prolong the war at least cost to themselves, keep a steady cost going against U.S. lives, and thereby test the patience of the American people and the new administration. The strategy is the worst for us and the best for them that they could have devised.

The type of attacks which they have gone in for are mostly by small groups and units and very difficult to come to grips and destroy the forces as we were doing previously in 1968 when they would mass for these heavy attacks. It was nothing in 1968 to go kill a battalion a day of the enemy, 500 or so. Now it's very difficult to kill over a hundred a day unless as presently in the DMZ you do come across somebody that's going to stand and fight for awhile. Then you can run up their casualties on them.

In addition to this, their strategy is designed to attack

the pacification program, to make the people apprehensive, and hopefully from the enemy point of view, make the people demand that the U.S. get out and so put an end to the war. Of course, to destroy any support for the government in Saigon which the enemy _____ through a puppet government. In this they are not succeeding at all. Surprising enough while, of course, people do have some apprehension, as anybody does when they're getting shot at, they are really more angry, I think, than they are scared. Their system of training people self-defense groups and arming them is proceeding at a pretty good pace. Not as good as we would like, but about as fast as we can get the Vietnamese to do it. They still have a little worry about handing out rifles, but I think as they look back over the past month or so, the Vietnamese government will have more confidence because not a rifle, at least at I Corps, has ever turned in the wrong direction by these people and they have killed--oh, the last figure I remember something like 170 of the enemy in about a three or four week period there starting at the end of February. So, they're doing fine and of course, this is going to be one of the keys to taking the countryside. Now, when I left, I guess we had about 75% of the people under government control in I Corps and the goal was 90% by the end of the year, which I think will be obtained.

The enemy really is sort of on the horns of a dilemma. If he continues this strategy he's got, it makes no real military headway. It's strictly aimed at the minds of the American

people and doesn't really do a thing to the armed forces out there on the ground. There are some casualties, but they are in no way militarily significant, they don't reduce our combat effectiveness. The problem of that is that it's a race. While he's doing this, we're scooping up the countryside and putting it under government control, and scooping up his political cadre, because he doesn't have a heavy enough military presence to prevent us and doesn't occupy us with fighting main force units to such an extent that we have to turn our eyes in that direction and energies and assets and sort of leave pacification to second place. This is what happened last year when the heavy attacks came. We never completely neglected pacification, but when you're fighting ten divisions of enemy as we were in I Corps, pacification does have to take second place because you just don't have that many assets.

What it takes for pacification is troop density of one kind or another, whether it is people self-defense forces or RF and PF or RVN or U.S. You've got to have troop density to sort of blot out the guerrilla or political cadre activities. The enemy, therefore, is and we are really running a race, I'd say, as to whether we can scoop up the countryside and induce him to talk because he's lost his political cadre or whether he's going to exhaust the patience of the American people first. This is what the situation looks like, at least to me.

I sort of assume that we're going to have to do something this year to indicate a direction of the war and that within a

advisor for practically every commander and staff officer in RVN. They going to try and cut down. In I Corps, the proposal that I saw just before I left would have cut quite a few out of--more than 800--that are in the advisory group. I've forgotten the exact number, it cuts something like 48 out of division team, I think it is, and about the same amount out of the headquarters corps' advisory. Anyhow, this will cut the advisory effort to some extent. But, it shows what improvement there is in the RVN. We can do this and there won't be any loss of combat effectiveness. They're learning their trade and have become much more professional. They don't need as much advice. In many cases, as a matter of fact, some of the oldtime battalion and regimental commanders can advise the advisor who has perhaps just arrived out there and he's supposed to be advising a combat commander whose been in the field for maybe a couple of years.

The command relationships have been satisfactory. Of course, I had to take a lot of heat from the press, but that's to be expected. But, only had three divisions in the north that Corps commands that are entirely satisfactory to me because the span of control is getting a little bit much. Not so much for me personally, although it would be very hard to get around to the five divisions individually as much as you should if you didn't have a corps commander to take care of three of them for you, but the staff was feeling the strain. There are an awful lot of other commands besides just the five

divisions that you have to work with as you all here know--logistics commands, the wing, and so on, as well as the advisory group and the relations with the Koreans and various other problems that we have. So, I was glad to see the corps come into being. Now there are only two divisions north of the pass. It's probably isn't necessary, but it is such a delicate subject since it involves a three star Army billet, that I never brought it up. And I figured they would think of it themselves if they wanted to. Well, they did think of it--it also has political connotations as well, of course, so I didn't bring it up and I imagine that corps command will stay there. I didn't hear any rumblings otherwise.

Buse: Of course, all of the plans for withdrawal shows the corps headquarters to be there after the MAF has....

Cushman: Yes, and sort of take the last phase of the roll-up.

Buse: And then they go out of existence.

Cushman: So, that apparently will be there. I mentioned single management, of course, was a great struggle and one which we didn't come out a hundred percent. Now we have succeeded thanks to General Buse in preventing them from writing it as a permanent MACV directive, which they tried to do. And also, I guess, thanks to Honolulu, I believe, MACV contingency plan or another area had it written in and we managed to get that out. And I gathered from conversations this morning, there may be other

such plans written at this level.

Buse: He was referring to Korea, which our staff caught here. I don't understand it.

Cushman: We caught one for Cambodia and Thailand and that area that MACV was preparing and stuck it in the cards. It's a party line to the Air Force--and which we're going to have to look at every plan. They're going to write it in every plan hoping some day somebody won't read it and get it out of there.

The commands that were not under my OpCon all functioned very well, the main ones sort of say, the Seabees, the NSA, and the Da Nang support command of the Army's first log command all cooperated 100%. Of course, the closer you get to the bullets, the more everybody cooperates anyhow. So, there were no inter-service tangles at that level whatsoever.

The SLFs finally got back on the track. As the year's hard fighting ended in '68, we were able to release the SLFs so that they could be employed in amphibious operations more frequently on board and back--on board and back in again. We just always had some crisis going on on the battlefield in '68 where we never felt we could do that.

The SLFs...It's a peculiar situation really. There's no enemy shore line and everywhere you land, of course, well once 1968 got going we got five divisions and then the RVN, of course, has a corps, we pretty well covered the area with troops in every place. Thinner in some places than others, but in other

words, you're always landing sort of in the middle of friendly forces and against no enemy held positions, really. So, it eventuated as being more training, really, than an amphibious operation in combat. As the end of '68 came, we got started again. So, we decided we might as well recognize that fact and not worry so much about preparatory fires and screwing up the air picture, this sort of thing. The Air Force is always trying to get into that act, too. So, we decided to target the SLFs against the pacification objectives and to employ them in cordon and search. Now the first couple of operations, they had to get into the swing of things, and required a couple of operations for them to get the word on how to do it, but after that they participated in some very successful ones--the one down in Rantangan penisula comes to mind immediately.

What I did was I had the CORDS people who sort of run the pacification effort, they run the dakaks and so on, come up with the targets. Now the tactical commanders could also come up with targets. The fact remain that I always picked one of the others. This year, I think it worked out all right. Whether General Nickerson will continue this or not, I don't know. But I do bring this to the attention of everybody on the staff because especially in the Navy, I think there is some misunderstanding about the SLFs and just what you can do with them. As I say, it's friendly territory in I Corps, practically everywhere you land. So, this is a fact that has to be taken into consideration. The ComNav ForV has asked for them also. And I

managed to keep them up in I Corps. Other Corps areas have not--the Army commanders--have not pressed any requests very hard that I know of for the SLF. But, Admiral Zumwalt did_____.

Well, I think that's about the principal points that I want to make, just off the cuff. We can throw open, I guess, for questions and comments and so on.

Q: I have a question, General. In the '69 plan, as you know, has called the withdrawal and the Marine division is one of the first ones out--whether or not we withdraw or redeployment in the sense of becoming a reducing forces--withdrawal in the sense of mutual withdrawal terms. When you left, which division would you have moved out first if you had been directed to?

Cushman: I guess we picked it out, didn't we? I don't know. This would take some doing to figure out--what kind of engagement was going on in the DMZ. That would be the on_____, I think, sort of against the hardest, the hardest part over. Near the end, they were engaged in considerable fighting, might be the easiest to pull one out that's right there in the deep water point. And then the terms of reference of the withdrawal _____, a complete cease fire is being honored and this kind of thing.

Q: To follow along with one question here. Is the 1st RVN Division, are they in the process now of trying to learn to --where the fire support bases are, the patrol's and thing with the eventual thought of taking over up in the 3d Division area?

Cushman: Well, their battalions just operate all mixed in with our battalions. I mean, they'll have a Marine firebase on one hilltop and an RNV battalion firebase on the next hilltop. So, we always have combined operations. But in the sense of moving onto our bases just to learn about them, no, they haven't done that. They have an area, of coures, with one regiment in it within the DMZ area around Gio Linh. And that's about the only place which sort of operated side by side with the areas drawn out, rather than just out in the back woods someplace, down in the plains where they don't draw any circle, they just mutually cooperated, keep out of each other's way and they'd operated side by side.

Q: I'd like to pursue that a little bit more. In the Americal Division, it was divided into regimenatal, brigade centers, and the RVN were assigned along with the US Army units.

Cushman: That was to force closer cooperation than they were getting. And I think it is a pretty good idea. I had verbally made sure that Gettys and his counterpart were getting together. But, it was sort of an area in the middle where the RVN had most of his troops and there were no American troops. Figured it would be a little better to mix them up a ittle more, so now we've got a brigade, which is to say a regiment, of Americal and a regiment of Vietnam.

Q: In other words this is actually done specifically for that area, not as a pattern for the entire I Corps?

Cushman: No, no. It just works out that way. Up north you have two divisions and you have two provinces, so you have a division and a province and RVN troops who are already working sort of in the same area. Down south it hasn't worked out that way. In Da Nang, you have the 1st MarDiv and the 51st Regiment already in the rocks, already working together.

Q: General I would ask one question about the Army officers that you had on your staff. Were they _____ productive in terms of the Marine having to help them a lot or did they stand on their own?

Cushman: Oh, no. In fact, when we got them, they were a life saver. The Army's got a big enough base so they can pretty much field a first team and keep a first team in the field. Marine Corps, we have to take our cut, and you get some warm kids as well as outstanding people in every sort of bunch that you have. And when the Army first moved in we damned near went under because they were putting the heat on us anyway. When Abrams came north, oh Christ, we got messages all night long, in the middle of the goddamned night and everything else--come up with anti-tank plans by morning and all this sort of business. And the staff was about to go under, so I borrowed from Brute Krulak a number of Marines from here and I sent down to Saigon and borrowed including an Army PG that they forced down my throat. I finally got that converted to a productive job. And I took one of the ADCs and made him G-3 and just saved the day

or we'd have had--we wouldn't have been able to perform. So, to answer your question, they're first rate and troops they definitely contribute. We've got Army divisions in there and it's not a case of the Army helping the Marines and the Marines helping the Army. There's plenty to be done, they have the expertise in Army matters and staff matters, so there is no problem like that at all. It's not a Marine command, it's about even you might say in round numbers. A Marine command for all Marine peculiar things in relations here, but for tactical operations it's a joint command.

Q: General, we've been very enthusiastic about the VCI program _____ otherwise, that we've been given here. I understand there are two critical points for the improvement and progress of this program that has to do with the terminology of VCI and then again, the detention facility. This has been directly involved with your _____ operation, too. Would you like to comment? I noticed that we received a report that General Lom was into this in detail now, that CORDS has this coordinated program going. I'm curious as to whether the detention locations have been established, whether they are outside of I Corps in this phase of the program, sir.

Cushman: Oh, it's the biggest problem they have in connection with the program, is the legal problems involved with screening suspects and trying them and the court system that will have to go along with it. Detention facilities are jammed pack, over

crowded, provide unparalled opportunities for bribery and corruption and it's a real sore point, particularly, with me. I--again and again tried to build a camp over on an island on Quang Nai and got turned down by Saigon all the way around. So, we've just thrown it to Saigon. And essentially, we send the overflow down to Saigon and they stick them on some island down there, which I've never been to, _____, I think it is or something like that. And they just need more facilities--too much chances for bribery and it's not unheard of to pick up the same guy a couple of times that's been let loose. But you have them as a suspect in the hands of the province chief, and as I say, a great opportunity for the guy _____ suspect ___ haven't proved anything, how about letting him go.

Carter Berkeley is supposed to be working on this problem, I haven't seen him for a long time. He's hanging around Saigon doing something in connection with this. But they do have people who are supposed to be responsible for this part of the program. And General Lom is very concerned about it, all of us are, and can really only be solved at Saigon level.

Q: The integration, too General, I would imagine with the terminology, this is the problem we experience here on this command and with other joint commands around here, that is, dettermining what a VCI is and we don't seem to be able to get this pinpointed down as far as COMUSMACV and III MAF are concerned.

Cushman: Well, they just put out a directive on what it is and

about whereas if the division has it, they administer them, feed them and everything else and simply task the division. And there are very few such missions, really. Now in addition, of course, we get the Delta Force, and this we use, have used in the past, as a III MAF asset. Right now they're attached to XXIV Corps for mission. So, when you do this it's handier because I could task XXIV Corps to provide the assets as well is they're required in terms of reaction--helicopter forces.

An FSCC, we have a DASC now at III MAF. Of course, you don't have any force artillery as such nor would you be able to employ it very fruitfully. So, a DASC is about all we need. The divisions are the ones where the coordination has to take place--the divisions that are forward. As I recall, XXIV Corps is a DASC, but they have--under Stillwell I think--no, I don't think they actually control the fires of Corps artillery, they have a Corps artillery officer BG, they have Corps artillery, but I think they respond to missions from division fire direction, if I'm not mistaken.

Now, the one thing that I would do differently is, I'd have an air/ground intelligence tie-in and I would have the wing headquarters next door, if I could possibly could. Intelligence now is a little difficult to meld it together the way I think it ought to be. There's not a real air war going on, so maybe the air part of it isn't so important_____ which has to be taken care of by the wing as far as the soldiers go. But I think in terms of what's to be, MAGIS, when we go in with

all the equipment a similar dealI think would be very profitable. We were never able to get the real estate.

I might add that on one note on helicopter usage, as some of you here know, we had a long battle to utilize helicopters efficiently. And it took great overhaul on the part of the divisions and the way they ran their logistics and a great overhaul on the part of the wing on the way they ran their helicopters. It was finally, pretty much--I think we've got them working now to optimum, considering that we have one wing and two widely separated divisions that that wing has to support.

But, I found such things for examples that the--some of the helicopters from Marble Mountain would go up to Phu By to provide some support and hell, they'd come all the way back to Marble Mountain to eat lunch, just as baloney as that. I finally had to make the wing put a BG to doing nothing else but running the helicopters and devising efficient ways to do it.

Buse: Well, this was a complaint that had astounded me out there on the last trip. I just can't remember who it was, but they said on an operation you knew that at 11:30 you were going to lose all your helicopter support until one o'clock in the afternoon because helicopter crews had to go back and eat and change crews. So, I mentioned this to Homer Hill and who was it, _____, do you remember?

Q: The only one I could think of was probably Bob Barrow.

Buse: It might have been Bob, yes. I don't think they _____

but there was some of this going on. I guess it was Bob. He said they knew that between 11:30 and one or 1:30, they weren't going to have any Marine helicopters. If it was Army, they would have them, but Marine they weren't. I couldn't believe it.

Q: They never worked on a clock system.

Cushman: In my opinion, there is a lack of good leadership at the group and squadron level. And the wing commanders would not really put the heat on because I jumped on Norm Anderson who said, "Well, they'll quit if I jump on them. You know, I'm trying to retain pilots in the Marine Corps, so I don't dare say anything to them." Hell, they'd leave him standing on the helicopter pad and forget to pick him up, but he wouldn't do it. I mean, this was the sort of background against which to play this statement, "They were having lunch," well, some of them were because, you know, guys will do whatever somebody lets them do usually. And there wasn't anybody making them do something different. So, we got it straightened out, but it took some time, some doing.

Q: Do you have any thought on the organization, General, as opposed to Army? The helicopters they had What about their responsiveness, as we're talking about Marines?

Cushman: Well, they have more. They have a set up where a certain number of companies are in direct support of a division, in fact, are attached there too. And it's usually a company of

hooks, which are C-47s. They do all the logistics and the hauling of guns. Then the Hueys are the assault ships and they have, oh, I guess a battalion of them supports a division ordinarily. Anyway, they have more helicopters to support one of their divisions than we have over there to support one of our divisions. And the mix is better for the purpose. I don't know whether when we--I used to tell the press we did--that we were forced into our helicopter mix by the fact of shipping space and the problems of an amphibious operation, and I suspect that that is the case. But, there's no question to what Hueys are better for the assault. I mean, you lose less per package, if you lose one, then they're more flexible and so on. But, we went in for the 34 and now we have the 46. We still call the Huey our VMO. They're lousy for observation, however, as everybody knows. And there's a million other missions eveybody is always stealing them for, so you end up with neither enough--not enough for any particular mission, and wound up screaming about that.

Long since, we put in for three more squadrons of Hueys for Vietnam, but I don't imagine it will ever come to pass. Problems of procurement, both aircraft and pilots, being what they are and the money in now Program Six a problem.

The Army has another thing which is unique to the airmobile configuration, and that's their air cav. They have three waves, as I recall, and three groups. They have the scouts, which are in OH-13, I guess it is, a little tear drop

affair, very streamlined, always looks a little_____, carries about two passengers. And they go at tree top level and scout the place out. Following that are the gun ships, Cobras; and then there is, they call these blue and gold and whatnot, by colors. And then the third bunch are infantry to expoit whenever necessary or desirable. This has been a very productive outfit.

In the other type divisions, they have what used to be called sky cav and this again is primarily helicopters scouting and shooting. And when you see the terrific kills that sometimes accrue to the Army divisions at practically no cost to themselves, it's usually these outfits that have caught some enemy somewhere. Now, there is no question that what they sometimes catch some farmers, too. And we've had to put out a few things on that. They happen to go and get a little careless. But nevertheless, it's a potent weapon in that type of war. I don't know how it would be in a fight with the Russians. Everything would be much more difficult, but for what they're doing there now, no question but what they're effective and we could use some similar system, I believe.

We had a cross exchange program with our pilots and some of our recon people moving into the air cav outfit and vice versa. And sort of mixed the quartz, I think it got into headquarters eventually. But overall, I think it is a good concept. But again, whether we get the ships or not, I don't know. It seems to me we really ought to reexamine our helicopter

mix because even in an amphibious operation and ground combat, once you get ashore, you're going to require mobility such as we've been using in Vietnam. It might be that we're going to have to look at Hueys as somthing more than VMO.

Q: Turning to logistics for a few minutes now, Rick, G-4.

Q: Yes, sir. I wondered if you know the FLC concept has been going on for awhile and wondered if you would give us your opinion of that concept or any significant weaknesses you've found.

Cushman: Well, I think it's great. The only problem we've got now is reconstituting the mount out. But I suppose the divisions, some of them would just as soon have their service battalion back. I never lived under the other system, so I don't know how it would work. I suppose it would work either way. But, it's hard for me to say whether we gave the divisions back to their service battalion and kept the 1st Force Service Regiment as sort of the school book says--whether this would be any better or not. I just don't know. You had to break out the logistics support groups and units, stick them up there by the divisions, anyway, so maybe the old system would be just as good. But once you get everything started and warehouses filled and so on, it would be a big loss to try to change now, I think. There would be a lot of damned confusion.

Q: It appears that they are moving along very well, too, as they're constituted....

Cushman: Yes, that's right. Yes, it's just a job, that doesn't relate to the organization, I don't think. The job had to be done, it was the middle of a war, don't want to take time to do it, too busy doing something else.

Q: Well, now is the time it has to be done_____.

Cushman: I know how it was working when General Krulak set up this system. I mean, there's been something going wrong.

Q: No, sir, I think they went in, of course, _____ a battalion and then the----------
by Da Nang and they just sort of built this way. You had to have a command over FLC. But we wondered sometimes, if the overall service battalion with the division _____

Q: Communications and electronics, any questions?

Q: I have nothing.

Q: G-5.

Q: You better not, he's the guy responsible for it.

Q: General Cushman, I wonder if you would comment on the ROK Brigade [Republic of Korea] and their efforts in pacification.

Cushman: Oh, lousy, Christ, I couldn't say it in Korea, but they're completely useless. It's a very horrible spot on the escutcheon. It isn't our training or our advice, they're under

wraps from home not to have any casualties, and the way General Kim got around that was, he just never did anything. And General Lee's more energetic and I guess smarter. He works like hell, but he makes sure that he doesn't get any casualties. I think the WOK are not counted as casualties. But he mainly just sets out ambushes at night. They usually manage to whack up about 15 of the enemy every night without getting any casualties themselves. So, they're pretty damned skillful at ambushing. Now, they're skillful at mines and booby traps. They only detonate about 20%, I think, of all the mines and booby traps they run into. I know it's 80% they find _____ step on them, which is way the hell above what we manage. Our ratio is just about the opposite, I think. And so they have intensive training on that. They do nothing but ambushing, they insist on having company bases which, Christ, they dig in so a hydrogen bomb wouldn't bother them. But you can see, they've always got to have about half their damned people tied into these damned fortresses. And they just -------cruel to the people. People don't like them. Lom hates their guts, he smiles, he's polite, but he'd just as soon they'd go the hell home or some other Corps area. They won't move from their TAOR. The western part of it, they won't go into it at all. They're just useless, I mean, next to useless. Of course, they're occupying some ground and they do kill some VC every-night.

_____ pat them on the back and tell the Commandant

how damned good they're doing. Almost choked.

Q: General, we went off on a big outing a couple of years ago and started what was called at that time, dye marking, it's gone through several names. And also we have the Da Nang barrier, and a few things like that. Would the General comment, though, on the future of sensors in warfare.

Cushman: Oh, yes. A fine thing if we can afford them, yes they're great, they're great. I was very supportive_____ to read them out. And as we get more sophisticated, they're going to tell you where the enemy is, whether he is on the move or not.

Q: Are we achieving that skill?

Cushman: Oh, definitely, yes. There are places where the enemy has even put up signs, "Don't go here," because every time they do, they get shot at from nowhere, you know. They don't know what the hell--one of them has put up mines, until artillery dropped in on them. And the weaving of this stuff in with the other intelligence will eventually, I think, enable us to save a lot of troops particulary in a situation like we have in the DMZ--you're going to find_____. Now the Da Nang barrier was to make it difficult for rocket carrying parties--that's right where they have to set up. And we used some of the balance pressure system in there. That's working very well once we got to learn to read it. The only trouble with it

is it doesn't tell you whether they're coming or going. Whereas, the other sensors you could place them so that you get an indication of directional movement. The Da Nang barrier doesn't stop a good sized force, still it alerts you....

End Side 1, Tape 1

Begin Side 2, Tape 1

Cushman: ...it gives also an opportunity for population control. Just another stop in preventing trucks from bringing explosives into Da Nang--gives you a place you can check trucks and so on.

Q: Do the infantry people understand what's going on in this respect?

Cushman: Who?

Q: The infantry, the regiments.

Cushman: Oh, sure.

Q: They are getting with the program?

Cushman: Oh, yes, sure.

Q: Ordnance?

Q: I don't have any.

Buse: Thanks very much, appreciate it.

End of interview.

DEBRIEF ON A SHAU VALLEY OPERATION AT DA NANG ON 2 MAY 1968

General Cushman has come over today to give you an update on action in Delaware, Lam Son 216 from the period 21 April through 30 April. And General, I'll turn it over to you now.

Cushman: Alright, thank you.

As you know, we have gone into A Shau Valley for the first time in two years with combat forces. So, I'm glad to be able to tell you about that. But, even more important, as you know, we've put on a new system for covering this operation. General Westmoreland decided that we cover it in portions of about a weeks length or there abouts depending on how the situation rolls along, and that news would be embargoed for that period of time so we could be certain that the facts which would be given out would then already be known to the enemy. It became evident some of the past operations, I'm afraid, that people just like myself talking too much, and then of course it appears in the papers and the enemy knows a little bit too much.

Well, this operation in A Shau Valley, is of course, considerably riskier than some we've been on because it's out there at the end of the line in difficult weather territory and it's entirely depended upon air for support. In addition, there may be enemy forces near by which can move against us should they know the details which would permit them to plan that type of move. As a consequence, the decision was made to brief you now on the events which occurred since we went in there and then at a later date to brief you again on events sub-

sequent to yesterday, to the 30th. The only reason, as I said, for doing it in this way is security of mens lives. We just don't want to take the chance.

Now, they went into A Shau Valley on the 19th of last month, 19th of April and it was done by air assault by the air cav division, the 1st Air Cavalry Air Mobile. And a fine job they did. They landed in the northern end of the valley and since then, they have leaped-frog in several landing zones and have gone on down to a good half the length of the valley. Now, this valley is not a particularly a redoubt, a fortress of combat troops, as far as we can determine. But, it has been a--almost a highway, you might say, for logistics supply and for the movement of reinforcements and replacements. The troops actually in the valley apparently are engineer forces to build the road; some security troops and a large number of anti-aircraft forces; so that the ground combat has not been sharp nor difficult in that area but rather has been characterized by brushes with the enemy followed by the discovery of rather large arms caches and supplies hidden away back there in the valley.

Now, in reporting this operation, I might mention, that there has been laid down certain ground rules and these they are--unit designations can be used down to division level, so as I just mentioned, elements of the 1st Air Cav have participated; units of the 101st Airborne have participated in a movement which is coming down from this direction toward the

valley so that we not only get the supply installations in the valley, but those which were built up along this axis, apparently in preparation for operations out on the area where the population lives in the Hue area Phu Bai area and so on. Specific unit locations I'm not permitted to give. And I can't give unit strength. The use of nicknames, for example, the landing area of Pepper can be given, but not a geographical location. So, these are the ground rules that I have to go by and which they're asking you to observe.

As you know, there is a highway built through A Shau Valley which we call 548 and extends from Laos comes in and then goes on down back into Laos again. And in fact, goes on into South Vietnam far west of here where they have just about come to the end of the road at the present moment, we think. We found them building back in there and have taken action against it. But then more important, they started building a road from here, which was most interesting because we built the road from here to about this point last year and then put some guns out there which we fired into the valley during the dry season and when the wet season came we moved them out. Low and behold, they started building their share of the rural development here, and apparently, we're coming to meet the road we had built. However, in a more serious vein, it was obvious they were building that road for a very serious purpose. By the use of such a road they could bring artillery to bear against the coastal cities and they could perhaps move tanks in and they could supply by

truck rather than on the backs on people. Consequently, we took a dim view of it and have been bombing it, reconnoitering it, and finally mounted this operation against it. We call it "Delaware Lam Son 216." In addition to the air cav moving into the valley, 101 has moved into this area and in each case they're being assisted and supported by elements of the RVN. An RVN regiment has moved in along with the air cav and an RVN airborne task force has moved in with the 101. So, they're side-by-side with us. Now, Colonel Fraser has a day-by-day sketch of what's happened. As I say, the contact in the valley has been sort of a brush against the engineer troops and what not that are in there--nothing real serious. The contacts in here, however, have been of a different nature in that there are some organized infantry units contesting this action and we have had rather difficult actions against some of them because of the very rough jungle terrain and the fact that the enemy has dug in in bunkers. So that both the RVN and the 101 have had some rather difficult set-to's back in that rough country. However, they have been victorious and are pushing along. They have discovered in there also some supply areas. Consequently, we feel that the operation is going along in good--with the fair wind, you might say, behind it. It's going in good course. The weather has hampered us, weather is always a risk back in there and it hasn't been as good as it's supposed to be guaranteed by the farmer's almanac. You're supposed to have very good weather in here during this month from about 10 o'clock

in the morning til the middle in the afternoon. We haven't had that every day. Consequently, the introduction of some of our equipment, and on occasion, some of our logistics has been either delayed or has had to be done under considerable difficulties. Nevertheless, we have never been in trouble for a minute and have been proceeding along, as I say, doing the job that we're set out to do and accomplishing the mission.

Now, I don't know whether you'd like to hear day-by-day or whether you'd rather just read it on the bulletin board, in any event, Colonel Fraser has it. Why don't you read a few of the days and see how it goes. Just go ahead and start, it won't take long to read the whole thing, I don't think.

Fraser: Now, start with D plus 2, which is the 21st of April. In A Shau Valley, units improved their LZs, landing zones, and brought in supplies. Contact was light. Two enemy bulldozers were destroyed near one landing zone. Additional troops of th 101st Airborne Division were airlifted into a landing zone along Route 547. Then on D plus 3, 22 April, elements of the air cav division air assaulted on the eastern side of the valley with light contact. Additional RVN elements landed in the 547 area. Moderate to heavy contact continued in this area throughout that day. Then on D plus 4, 23 April, the enemy attacked one of the northern air cav landing zones with mortars and small arms in the morning. 155mm Howitzers of the 1st Air Cav Division were airlifted into the area. During the day, elements of the 101st and the RVN Airborne Task Force had 16 contacts re-

sulting in 48 enemy killed. The 101st began developing a fire support base. RVN airborne troops also located a large ammo cache. D plus 5, 24 April, elements of the 1st Air Cav Division assaulted into the northern central portion of the valley. Weather hampered operations in the valley and remaining cav units in the valley improved their positions. Weather also limited 101st action and RVN action along Route 547. D plus 6, 25 April, additional elements of the 1st Brigade of the Air Cav Division assaulted into the northern central portion of the valley. Five enemy trucks were destroyed and a large cache of weapons were discovered. 101st action continued moderate with the force engaging two NVA companies, killing 22 enemies. A later contact that day resulted in 28 enemy killed. A total of 30 contacts were reported during the day. D plus 7, 26 April, the troop and logistical build-up continued. Moderate contact continued in the route 547 area with one 101st contact accounting for 13 enemy killed and 12 weapons captured. D plus 8, 27 April, in the valley poor weather conditions limited ground action to very light and sporadic contact. In a landing zone north of Route 547 and RNV airborne unit called in an artillery mission on 80 NVA killing 56. D plus 9, 28 April, poor weather continued to restrict operation in the valley. Elements of the 1st RVN Division were airlifted into the central portion of the valley without incident. Additional artillery was airlifted into the valley and the logistic build-up continued. One 101st unit discovered an enemy base camp with a large cache of ammu-

nition. The base camp appeared to have been hastily evacuated. D plus 10, 29 April, the air cav build-up continued in the valley with marginal weather. Another 155 Howitzer unit was airlifted into the valley. Six enemy trucks were destroyed by tactical air. Contact remained scattered and light. Other elements of 1st RVN Division were airlifted into the central portion of the valley without incident. Along Route 547, the 101st Airborne had seven contacts killing 20 enemy and capturing ten weapons. On the last day, D plus 11, 30 April, that is the last day of this report, air resupply continued to support the logistic effort. There were no significant contact. There were four scattered contacts along Route 547 in which 21 of the enemy were killed. The cumulative result of the action 21 to 30 April, is as follows: enemy casualties, this is overall, U.S. KIA 63, WIA medevac 307; enemy casulaties, 377 killed, 2 POWS, 598 individual weapons--598, and 37 crew served weapons.

General, would you like to resume with the summary or would you prefer that I do that?

Cushman: Yes, we've captured quite a list of things. We have some out here, I believe, thought you might be interested in--on the patio. But such things as--I see you have here three 37mm anti-aircraft guns. My figure is seven, I think they got four more yesterday or something or the day before. And as you can see, they're a ponderous piece of equipment. So they'd have had to build a pretty good road to get that stuff down in there. And of course, it is a formidable weapon. Losts of

rifles and several trucks, and more interestingly, artillery rounds of various calibers--152mm, 122mm for that type of gun. We discovered some very new mine detectors, gas masks, flame throwers, communications and propaganda broadcasting and processing equipment, all kinds of small arms and the B-40 rockets, 122mm rockets, 75mm Howitzer rounds, and lots and lots of TNT and demolition equipment. But as I say, the significant thing, probably, is to note that they were building up stocks and building roads with which they could at the last minute bring in artillery pieces and start firing artillery if we didn't do something about it.

We're going to have periodic briefings on this either here or at ProvCorps V, and we also at the conclusion we'll hope to bring in participants and so on and have a complete layout for all of you of personal experience type thing and so on. So, that's what we have on that. Might be of interest to you to know, as I guess many of you already do, that we have some very sharp contacts going on up in the Dong Ha area--east of Dong Ha, west of Dong Ha--and we had one, mostly RNV, north of Dong Ha which is pretty well concluded with a victory for the RVN. But, these are the enemy in battalion force and apparently they have come back out of hiding or wherever they went to refurbish and get their replacements and ammunition up near the Ben Hai someplace and are back down again ready to contest the field. Whether this is a preamble to more extensive offensive operations, I cannot say. But in any event, in an

area that has been quiet, we're now rather active again.

You might have some questions, I suspect.

Fraser: If I may, yes, sir. But before we get into the questions, just for emphasis, I'd like to reieterate what the General has already said as to why General Westmoreland is conducting this type of brief. And, I know most of you well and I know how you desire to assist, aid, and abet us in safeguarding human life. And this is the primary reason it is being done this way. General Cushman is now ready for your questions.

Q: Yes, sir. This road going northeast toward Hue suggests strongly that artillery emplacements could have been set up to fire on Hue or Dong Ha, Phu Bai for instance. Does it also suggests to you, sir, that this could have been used for large number of troops--is it possible that Hue could be facing another large round of _____?

Cushman: No more so than when it was just an old road that hadn't been improved. Troops have always used it, I'm sure to walk up, but actually as far as people are concerned, there are other trails from the point of view of the enemy that are safer ones to walk down as far as putting in replacements or units. The fact that they improved the road and could run trucks a little further up, I don't think it made it any likely that more people would be coming. There was already that likelyhood.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: Oh, I'm sure they're going to use them to shoot at us with.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: Well, I 'mean their objective is defensive. They're, as I said many times, invading the country. Of course they want to take what they can get. What do they want to get? Well, they tried to get Hue and held it for several weeks. They tried numerous other cities and didn't hold them. So I assume they're still trying to seize and hold some territory as opposed to just overrunning a place in the course of a night and taking off again.

Q: General, how far, as of the 30th, how far into this funnel, did this_____ Inaudible.

Cushman: Well, there are operations going on in the road junction area.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: My last report was yesterday and they had not at that point. They're still working through this rather difficult area. They're away from their landing zones, but they were not just going down the road which might get them further quicker, but they're trying to search out in the valleys to the side and so on.

Q: Are the roads to the rear fairly secure now or is that just _____?

Cushman: Oh, there's some trouble along there, every now and then some fire comes at helicopters going down the road, an occasional small ambush is tried. But in general, there are maneuver forces of ours working the entire road. So, they're using it, for example, to supply ammunition by truck as far as the road is trafficable from our direction, that's as far as Bastone. Yes, yes.

Q: Well first, I know that you don't like to talk about future operations, but you seem to be about roughly 10 or 15 kilometers from the valley. Do you plan to push on through or clear the whole road or_____.

Cushman: Well, we're just going to play it as it comes. What we're trying to clean out is what we find. So, if where we are is where the enemy stored a lot of gear, why that's where we'll stay til we clean it out. The objective, of course, is to consider the whole area as one, which is why it's all one code name for the area of operation, Delaware.

Q: Do I understand correctly that you're saying the road is in pretty good shape then from the delta all the way to Hue?

Cushman: No, it's not.

Q: How far then?

Cushman: I don't know the exact length, let's just say from a little bit east of the junction--that was a far as they got with the road repair.

Q: _____the physical problem rather than an enemy problem in that area?

Cushman: Oh, yes. The road has never improved for a big chunk in the middle, that's what it amounts to. We improved the road a year ago from our end and the enemy worked like mad to improve it from their end, but there is still a chunk in the middle which is practically a footpath.

Q: It's fairly secure militarily, the difficulty is in the condition. Does it appear that the ____anti-aircraft ____ _____?

Cushman: I think most of it has been taken care of. There's still the usual small arms fire, but I think we've gotten a large percentage of the formal type AA, that is 50 caliber. The 37--I don't know if it's firing or not. We have had occasional reports of them shooting 37, but it didn't appear to go into action to oppose this landing--but a lot of 50 caliber, lots of small arms.

Q: General, what percentage of resulting combatants_____ _____

Cushman: I don't know, there's still a lot of nooks and crannies

we haven't looked into, so I couldn't really say.

Q: How much longer do you_____.

Cushman: Well, I can't say how long we'll stay.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: Well, I can't say that either.

Q: How many of the 377 _____

Cushman: I believe they're all NVA. _____ that's the way they were reported. And there were no VC reported as far as I know.

Q: Any indication of any enemy action _____ do you think possibly_____

Cushman: I just can't say for this reason, we'er doing quite a bit of fighting sd you know know out on the plains. We don't know whether they're trying to get rice and that's why their there, whether they're trying to make some kind of offensive action and we're just in the way. But we're discovering them, as we ofter do, dug in and we take them on. So whether any of that's a reaction, probably not. They were already out there. Whether the attacks up in Dong Ha are a reaction, I don't know either, could be.

Q" Inaudible.

Cushman: We have not found any, so I speculate that they might have decided to treat the ammunition and then bring the guns in in the last minute.

Q: General, on the A Shau Valley itself, do you consider it as the main supply route in the whole general area or merely sort of a forward transit for a still larger supply area buried back in Laos somewhere or up on the trail, a staging area perhaps rather than....?

Cushman: Oh, I think it's a fairly good size base area from which, perhaps, they broke their items down by various destination, some going on further to say the Da Nang area, some going up to the Hue area, and this sort of thing.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushamn: No, I don't know of any that's been discovered yet, do you?

Fraser: No, sir. I have a handout, did you happen to get it?

Q: Yes, I did.

Fraser: This is every bit of _____ and that should--I didn't remember seeing any_____. It says miscellaneous communications equipment, I don't believe you could call radar.

Q: In regard to that list, now your talking about 37

_____ of equipment. Does that include this updated 7 37mm ___?

Fraser: I sure does.

Q: Inaudible.

Fraser: Inaudible.

Cushman: Machine gun.

Fraser: Machine gun, right. _____

_____

Q: Does this 37mm gun, that's a pretty old model, does that _____

Cushman: I just saw it, I'll have to go look in the book. I don't know. I suppose it is. It may be a rather primitive method of radar control, it isn't all locked in electronically, but you have to feed the dope to the man on the cite, I don't know. I have to look it up.

Q: Inaudible.

Q: General, you indicated that most of the opposition in the valley has been light weight as far as troops. Is there any indication that larger body of troops were able to move out?

Cushman: Not that I know of.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: I don't know what he might say, but I attacked it for military reasons and the political reasons will have to be taken care of elsewhere I guess. I've had absolutely no instruction except that there is a war going on and I'm suppose to continue to march.

Q: Would that anthing to do with--sometimes the political and military objectives _____.

Cushman: This was a very important military objective and we did not have the resources to go out there until we got these forces that were sent up here to I Corps.

Q: _____ and may be a very successful operation on the bases_____

_____.

Cushman: Well, we'll have to see what happens. Maybe we'll move, maybe we won't. In any event, there is an awfull lot of ammunition and guns that are going to be shot at us.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: Obsolutely.

Q: With operation Cumberland _____

_____

_____

Cushman: Yes, I wanted to...Obsolutely, I went out there so I could put some fire on that road.

Q: What happened next?

Cushman: Well, when the rains came, the road washed out and we couldn't supply the place, so I pulled out.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: Well, I think so, yes. We're sitting right on their supply line for everybody south of the sort of Khe Sanh/Dong Ha axis. They've got trails up in there they can go through to get to troops they have in that area. Everything south of there, we're sitting right on top of it. And so, we're behind everybody that's forward to there and can chop everything off that goes down the trail.

Q: World War II, there's no indication------
Inaudible.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: Well, you're certainly a good forcaster when you said I can't say.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: No, we never really held it. You have to keep on the move up there. We hold Con Thien and the RNV holds Gio Linh. Because of the observation, you who've been up there know these are tactically important pieces of ground. But, most of the troops have to keep on the move.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: No, no. That's a matter of opinion. We had a sharp engagement and drove enemy troops who were wading across the river back across the river. And they came back again. So, where's the best place to defend the area which extends for 40 miles from Laos to the China sea and for about 10 miles from the river to the Cam Lo River where some 50,000 people on that valley and which is our lateral supply route--Cua Viet, Dong Ha and so on and then Quang Tri just behind that, so how do you defend that area? I think the worst place would be the lying up along the river bank. This terrain you just can't do it. It takes too many troops to make any kind of impenetrable area. This, of course, is the reason we tried to put in a barrier there, as you know, which we call the Trace which would prevent infiltration. And the tactical situation prevented us from pursuing that as the rains came and the enemy came in divisional strength. The best way to tackle him, I'm convinced, is to keep on the move and just as we now are. We've got three of his elements located and we're going after them. But, as long as you sit too long in one place you become a target. So I try to

keep the minumum people inside these strong points we have up there and use them for a base and the fellow can come back there and get something to eat, but mainly he's out on the move trying to locate the enemy.

Q: What are the three elements that_____

Cushman: I don't know what their identification is. We've got some prisoners, but haven't read out the interrogation yet. I think it was 320th Divsion.

Q: Inaudible.

Cushman: I don't know, I'm just guessing. It's still habitual operating.

Q; Inaudible.

Cushman: As I said, I think there's three battalions, probably.

End of Interview.

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380

11 April 1975

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: CMC Interview

1. The enclosed transcript records my remarks and answers at the 9 April National Press Club "Newsmaker Breakfast."

2. The syntax is rough and some of the thoughts disjointed, but the remarks are feelings that are heartfelt. I still believe the Corps should solve its own problems -- and that we are all Marines first and other skills second -- aviators are not second class citizens anymore than tankers or data processors.

3. I deplore the destructive way in which some people are expressing their differing views. It is resulting in outsiders achieving a considerable momentum in their drive to dismantle the air-ground team -- a prime current objective.

4. I call on all loyal Marines to close ranks -- to express any dissent to me in the time honored way: directly -- to stop turning our affairs and our debates over to those who would turn Marine against Marine.

5. Subsequent to the breakfast I was interviewed concerning the letter I sent out. The article stated that I got the idea of geographic identification from General Greene. When I went over my notes of the meeting I discovered I was mistaken. He had not indicated that he had ever done it. He has asked me to make this clear.

R. E. CUSHMAN, Jr.
General, U. S. Marine Corps

DIST:
All General Officers and Commanding Officers

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CMC INTERVIEW OF 9 APRIL 1975, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

CMC REMARKS The big question, or course, is how do you make out in an all-volunteer force? We stress quality rather than quantity and we had a chance to prove it last year. We ended up about 7,000 short. We were having trouble anyway and then the Congress put a mandatory high school graduate requirement on us. We couldn't make it, so we came up short. This year, perhaps due to a number of things, including the unfortunate recession, we're succeedir in both quality and quantity. But we do have to wor for it. The first thing we did was take actions to improve our recruiting. We had to change from a sellers market to a buyers market so to speak. Instead of a recruiter who knew how to fill out forms when somebody walked in, we had to get a recruiter that could be a salesman. We had competition from the other services and we had competitic from colleges and business. So we had to have sales men instead of order-takers and we arranged that. We consolidated our recruiting, put in under a BG, changed the curriculum of instruction and got these fellows hustling. On the attempt to measure quality we came up against the biggest problem. We knew what we wanted, but the big difficulty was trying to determine whether a fellow who walks into a recruiting station has the moxie or whether he hasn' and this really is two categories. One is, can you train him, does he have enough "smarts" to make out, and second is he amenable to discipline or is he goi to be one of these anti-establishment guys that gives you trouble whenever somebody tries to give hi an order. This is a difficulty in today's world because some of these youngsters have never really obeyed anyone. Some of them come from broken homes, their parents have to work and are not around to ta charge, the youngster doesn't obey his teachers or the policemen on the street. It's considerably different in some parts of the United States than it was when I was young. In any event, we're able to turn a lot of these fellows around in boot camp and subsequent training, but some of them never do and this costs a lot of time and effort and you hav to get rid of them eventually. The trick is to try to determine this at the recruiting stations to save all this trouble. We're not always success ful; we have to get rid of about 15%, a little unde that, at boot camp, they don't make it. Some of them make it through boot camp, and then turn out not so well afterwards. Another thing, you can't tell if he has a police record or not, particularly if he gets in trouble as a juvenile and this gives

us some additional trouble. The father will tell him, "I'm sick of messing with you", the first time he rescues him from a police station in the middle of the night. He sends him down to a recruiting station and the kid can say truthfully he hasn't been in jail, perhaps, but of course he has been in trouble and he's a trouble maker. Some of them straighten out and some don't. So this gives us probably the biggest problem we have and the burden is insuring that we have high quality. Our mental group IV is very low. Some people say, well, the tests are not all that accurate, and that may be true, but they give you a curve and we're taking a good 95% out of the best part of the curve and only about 5% of the MGIVs. We feel we are making progress there. We change the test and alter the test at different intervals, we tighten up the scoring procedures, so that there's more emphasis on the reading and the arithmetic parts of it. So I would say that I'm looking with more or less cautious optimism at the people we're taking in now-a-days. They are improving and we're going to be able to continue to have a quality Marine Corps. It is tougher now than it was before the days of the all-volunteer force, but I think we are going to be in good shape.

People take about 75% of our Marine Corps dollars.

On the equipment side, we use Marine Corps dollars to buy new tanks, and new anti-tank weapons. We didn't learn this lesson out of the Middle East War, we just had it confirmed. You may recall, in '72 they had a very big tank battle in the northern part of South Vietnam and the same lessons were evident there that came out later, more vividly perhaps in the MidEast. That is, that you've got to have tanks and anti-tank weapons of the most modern kind. In addition, you have to have balanced forces and you have to operate your air with your ground units and they have to all operate together in terms of tanks, artillery and infantry and the air has to be overhead and all has to go at the same time. The Israelis made the mistake of keeping their artillery and their infantry back and sent air and tanks up and we all know they had a lot of trouble. So we have that lesson confirmed for us. On the air side we have a very interesting part of the Marine Corps, but it's one that causes problems. Marine aviation is a part of Naval Aviation. In fact, we always try to have the same airplanes, a couple of the models we have are different because we do have a different mission than

the naval aircraft; but essentially we try to just paint some of them with USMC on them and the pilots in the plane wear a green uniform -(Marines first and pilots second) rather than Naval Officer aviators. Marines have close air support and fighter cover and that's it, essentially. So we're a part of naval aviation. What I have to do is talk the Navy out of the money to buy the airplanes, because they're bought with Navy money. We do work together and we have gotten our fair share, there's no question about that - with good airplanes. Our aircraft have to be carrier capable because we operate on carriers as well as on the beach. In fact, when we make a landing we use an air field that's nothing more than a carrier deck stuck ashore by the SeaBees. It has a catapult, you have to have a tail hook, and arresting gear. It is a short airfield made out of planking and that's it. So we have got to have a carrier capable airplane and in addition, at any given time, we're liable to have as many as 2 - 3 squadrons on duty on carriers for a 6 months tour. We also have detachments of our photographic and electronic counter measures aircraft which ride the carriers regularly. So we're part of naval aviation. They train our pilots at Pensacola and they train our mechanics at Memphis in the Navy schools. They provide our aviation spares, they provide our rework, the overhaul jobs. So we're part and parcel with naval aviation and I bring this out because there's a lot of loose talk, you know, four air forces and all this kind of business. It's not correct. To make a landing the Marine Corps has to have the aircraft they do - whatever source they come from. They're not extra airplanes by any stretch of the imagination. Now, when it comes to F-14's this has always been a controversial subject - we did a lot of studies on this and it showed me, as well as studies can - they're never a real substitute for combat - they showed that we can do a pretty good job, particularly on the landward side, defending our beachhead with the F-4. But, you would perhaps lose a few more pilots than you would if you had a few F-14's mixed in. The studies showed also that when the carriers leave and the other ships stay behind in the ocean side of the beachhead area that the F-14 can do a job of protecting those ships that the F-4 cannot do and this is because of the Soviet anti-ship missiles which are hard to defend against. We were turned down for the F-14 but finally got an OK on it primarily because the DOD said the Marine Corps should modernize their fighter force.

So we end up with 2/3 F-4's and 1/3 F-14's the tactics which we've worked out are to have an F-14 patrol leade who can see out over a hundred miles with radar and can track 24 targets, pick them up and actually keep tracks going on 12 and shoot at 6. The F-4 has a much shorter range - but we could have 4 of them working with an F-14 and with the Marine Corps control system the data from the F-14 can be sent back to the F-4's vectoring them onto the target as the F-14 picks them up. I hate to use a cliche, but it really is a "high-low mix". We think we'll improve the performance of our major aircraft, the F-4, and spend the least money on the very expensive.

QUESTION What's the Marine Corps' view on the air combat fighter do you have any particular preference or are you going to get into that at all?

CMC Oh, yes, the status of that is, as you probably know, the Air Force made its choice, the Navy is still working on a decision as to which choice to make.

QUESTION Do you have a preference as between the F-16, and the F-17?

CMC No, As far as I know, we've not been in on any of the testing and so on. The situation, I believe, is that the Navy is examining the proposals of the contractors as to how they could make a Navy version. Neither one of them is carrier capable so they have to be strengthened. So the problem is, how do you do it? What are the costs? What do you come out with? If Navy buys that aircraft, then we would be interested in it as a replacement for our F-4's.

QUESTION Is there any certainty there that it will be either of those two?

CMC I don't think there is any certainty, no, the thing is still being studied by this board but no decision has been made. I simply say there is a lot of pressure, to have commonality of course, to adopt the cheapest buy possible.

We need to be able to get close air support to the troops in any kind of weather. So we have a rather expensive and very effective all-weather attack aircraft, the A-6. We also have a work horse, the A-4 and we have a few squadrons of the new Harrier that takes off and lands vertically when required. That is for very close in stationing of the aircraft so that they can be responsive in five or ten minutes. They can operate from a pad that can be put up in a

matter of hours by the engineers right in the vicinity of the beach. They can also operate off a flattop whether it's an aircraft carrier or a helicopter type platform. They are very useful for quick response. Now we need this mixed bag of attack aircraft because, for one reason, the landing - the critical phase when there is opposition, etc. - has very little fire power except the air. Naval gunfire is a vanishing thing, - missiles have replaced the gun and big ships are put in mothballs so that about all you have (left) is destroyers and most of them are armed with missiles to a great extent. You can't get your artillery ashore, although we can hustle it in by helicopter. But there is going to be a period before you can do that and before the infantry can take the ground that you are really going to need that air. It will be critical. So we are prepared to operate in bad weather or in darkness - we have to be able to operate with a quick response and we have to have the work horses there to carry a big load, and this is what we have.

I hear sometimes from Marines and others about the "balance" in the Marine Corps between air and ground. The way we arrive at this is as follows: we selected a scenario in the Warsaw Pact area and we selected one in Korea, on the other side of the world. We have to go up against the equipment those countries have. We figure out the sorties which will be required in the combat area and will give us a good chance of success in our operations and translate that into aircraft. We have enough aircraft to fully support a division/wing team or perhaps a two division/wing team assault. That's about the same amount of shipping that we have. We can make a division/wing plus maybe a third assault with shipping that we have - we've got enough air that would fully cover us against the toughest opposition there is. Actually we have three division/wing teams. The aircraft are split up into three wings but you can bring them together, of course. And you might well have to do that. The reason I say this is because we are paying particular attention to the NATO scenario. This is in line with the strategic thinking of the Secretary of Defense and it is only common sense. We in the Marine Corps are oriented Eastward and consequently that is why we want to make sure that we have tanks, anti-tanks, and aircraft required to plan against that kind of opposition. Facing Eastward, of course, we have one division/wing team on the east coast. They are in the "Top Readiness" category and are filled up 100%. We also have to keep very ready troops in Japan, on Okinawa, because

of possible trouble in that part of the world. Nevertheless, they are at the same readiness, I would say, as the East Coast people. On the West Coast, I took my shortfalls in people. The West Coast for some time has been looking both ways, to follow up in either direction should trouble break out in the East or the West. But we are, in effect, telling them that they should look Eastward rather than the other way. We are filling them up as we are having success with our recruiting and we are putting more people in the West Coast units to make up the shortages I had to force upon them last year. They will be ready to do their part should their efforts be necessary On the balance between air and ground I will say that half of our air is flying trucks - helicopters, which goes by the name of landforce aviation and is not regarded as tactical air. The other half of aviation is the tactical air. There is the same number, approxiamtely, of aircraft in each (about 475 helicopters and 475 fixed wing). Those tactical aircraft (fixed wing) are many less than they were in WWII and our numbers of people are roughly the same. They may have gone up a little bit. It takes more mechanics now than in WWII and a lot of the aircraft have two seats. It takes two to fly them. But overall the balance has been maintained - in fact the ground forces have gone up considerably since. In the 50's and in the 60's there was a steady increase until Vietnam and then went back down. We are now down to about 196,000 Marines. Ten or eleven years ago when I was G-3 we were somewhere around 180,000 or 185,000. So there has been a gradual increase in ground forces which is considerably greater than that of aviation.

QUESTION Is that about your level for the next 5 or 10 years?

CMC I certainly hope so. One of my objectives is stability for all the obvious reasons -- keep the same strength, fewer transfers of leaders and troops - less problems, and it's great for families to stay in one place as long as they can. So, stability is my aim and as long as the Congress and DOD OK those numbers I'm alright. So far the changes have been very minor. So we do have what I consider to be a good and proper balance for tactical reasons, that is, the fire power we need from the air to help the ground and we have now, as far as I'm concerned, we have a good balance. Aviation also includes the Red Eye and the HAWK missile who have to coordinate within the air space. They are air users, so they're on the aviation side

for command and control reasons. I think that gives a pretty good picture of where the Marine Corps is, why we constitute it this way and where we're going. Our first squadron of F-14's should be formed in December. We have no big new ones in the works, except in R&D. We have a new helicopter being developed, the CH53E, which will lift twice as much as the present CH53 and it's undergoing the long torturous route of research and development testing. There's one of them flying - it's not on the drawing board, it's way beyond the drawing board - and looks very good. This is an improvement over the existing model so that the risk factor is not very great. That's about it, I guess, as to where we are and where we stand.

QUESTION Could you give us your view of what the prognosis for South Vietnam is at this point and what the possibility of surviving is and for how long?

CMC Oh, I'd hate to try to be a prophet. The enemy has fresh divisions and they have victorious divisions and they have some momentum and the South Vietnamese have suffered a psychological and a material blow and have lost some fighting troops. So it's a problem of stabilization and of digging in and being able to hold. Beyond that I can't say. It's going to take a very strenuous effort and there's no question about it.

QUESTION Do you see any chances that they ever could regain the ground that they gave up? Or is it best?

CMC I think they're going to have to try to hold what they have. In the very beginning this was supposed to be an orderly withdrawal. When we left the country, I guess we left our tactics of fire bases and outlying posts where they would help prevent infiltration. There also is a requirement for troop presence throughout the countryside because the people are there and they are very important. They attempt, in many cases, to continue their farming and all of a sudden there came a considerable military emergency, however, which just didn't permit their having small bits and pieces out around the countryside. They attempted to contract and to come back to the coastal plains. This is a difficult maneuver to do and they obviously were not able to execute it.

QUESTION General, currently in the news accounts you now have two BLT's either off Vietnam or en route to the Vietnamese waters?

CMC I think I can say this, we have a battalion of Marines, a MAU, which has been in the Gulf of Thailand for a considerable length of time ... (LAUGHTER) In WWII I spent 52 days aboard ship, en route to Guam and I can really sympathize with them. Then we have a battalion that distributed platoons aboard contract ships to preserve order. The refugees are hungry and some of them are armed and it's a dangerous situation. We put Marines aboard those ships that are engaged in the refugee operation and another battalion has flown to the Philippines on a standby status.

QUESTION Somewhere in Okinawa? Or...?

CMC No

QUESTION Standby for what, Sir?

CMC I believe that they, too, will be afloat simply awaiting orders. I mean, if there's anything required, they should be at hand and that's the purpose of that.

QUESTION Do you look for evacuation or something like that? Is that one possibility?

CMC For humanitarian reasons, this is the only possibility that I know of.

QUESTION This BLT in the Gulf of Thailand is no longer in the Gulf of Thailand? It's gone to the South China Sea now?

CMC No

QUESTION It's still in the Gulf of Thailand?

CMC As far as I know.

QUESTION It had better be!

LAUGHTER

QUESTION We've been getting some followup questions on Vietnam and maybe there'll be some more, but I'd like to ask you a question on another area. I've read some of the reports and I realize that these might be individual observations or individual reactions to something that might be wrong. But I heard from a field grade officer, not directly, but through a very close associate who had recently spent some time at Pendleton he is absolutely shocked, he said, by the conditions out there. The numbers of murders on the base, other killings reported as accidents and his junior officers were afraid to go in to make

QUESTION (CONTD) checks at night in the barracks -- but what is the situation? Does this reflect the true picture and if so is it confined to Camp Pendleton? Just what is the situation in the Marine Corps?

CMC I don't think it is the true situation. We have had some problems in 1969, some racial problems. Racial tensions have not been removed anywhere in our society, but I think that in the Marine Corps we've done a pioneer and a number one job in reducing them to a, primarily, discussion matter and not a matter of violence. We have a program that can never stop as long as these things exist in our society and I think it's working. In addition, we've had some more practical programs besides those in education. We have had some programs for reducing discrimination in assignments, promotions and that sort of thing. So I think over the past 5 years or 6 years we've done a good job there. As I say, those tensions do exist because, after all, we are enlisting 50,000 people a year and when you bring them in from the outside, they bring the problems with them.

QUESTION Was this one of the problems the people you enlisted say that up until a year or two ago there was a high number of people below catagory III?

CMC Yes, I think so. I found out our tests were not giving us a true picture and I mentioned the problem on police records which is bad. I've been doing some work among the legislators trying to see if there is any chance of getting a law passed to make the police reveal records. Sometimes they will do it, sometimes they are forbidden to do it, particularly where minors are concerned. So if someone has trouble when they are 17, we have an awful time trying to find out about it when they are enlisting. I have mentioned racial tensions - this caused some problems in the barracks -- problems in the clubs -- problems in town. We're getting those in hand and we are getting it down out of the violence stage and into the talking stage and that's all to the good. We've had some problems, as I'm sure others have had, with mugging, thievery in the barracks. What I've done there is put it up to the commanders, I've told them this was not to be tolerated. There is no reason for this and I told them to put SNCO's in the barracks. At every base there are a lot of Staff Noncommissioned Officers, who for school reasons, or financial reasons can't bring their families with them. You'll find them living out in town, batching it together, some of them live in SNCO quarters - so I simply said, take some of those people and put them in the barracks, like they used to be.

QUESTION How did they like that?

CMC Most of them like it, they have their own room and they are there to give advice and counsel I know an amusing incident relating to this: When I was out in San Diego, I had a press conference and I said when I was a young Marine, I hardly ever found a married sergeant. You married when you were a SNCO usually. A sergeant didn't make sergeant probably until he had about 4 years in, so you always had some mature guys in the barracks and nobody got paid enough to go out except on payday or a couple times a month. They're in the barracks and playing cards or doing one thing or another and they're always there and nobody ever stole anything. Well, the headline that came out later said, Cushman Blames Crime On Marriage. (LAUGHTER) But, it's a fact, there's practically nobody but PFC's around the barracks now; in fact, even the privates get about $330.00 a month and that's a considerable amount when all your needs are taken care of. It's enough money to get into trouble, certainly. And so there is more UA and theft and so on than there used to be. I have told the Commanding Generals to put a stop to it, and put the SNCO's in the barracks. It has helped. We've also made studies on how the thefts occur. We found that the thefts occured when the MPs were all at lunch and so on so we made some changes there. If there is such a thing as a barracks where the officers are afraid to walk in, then we haven't got much in the way of leadership in that particular unit and somebody should do something about it. I put that directly on the local scene because there's no reason for it and no nead for it. It can develop if you let it develop and there are some birds who come into the Marine Corps with some real problems from both our inner cities and our outer suburbs. You don't get many rosy cheeked farm boys anymore; the farm is a big business, not a family affair and there are very few of those rugged farm boys, squirrel shooters who are physically fit and believe in God and Country before they start. So I think he's overdrawing it, but it could develop if a poor leader lets it develop that way. In any group of young men, if you've got a couple of bad eggs who are also natural leaders they're going to take over. This is true whether it's in reacial matters or breaking rules and regulations or taking drugs or any of these things that we fight against.

QUESTION General, new subject before we're out of time Did you write a letter to the Commanding Generals in the Marine Corps asking their views on the selection of a new Commandant?

CMC

Yes, I did - in fact, I wrote two. This has been done -- Oh, I've been a general for 17 years and that covers the last 4 Commandants and they all sent such a letter. I sent one letter and had it arranged so I could tell, on a geographical area basis, how many people answered it from that area. I'm thinking of where we have 2, 3 or even 4 generals. It was brought to my attention that if somebody wanted to write anonymously from a couple of places in the Marine Corps where they have only one Marine General, then the geographical business would give his name away. I don't think that amounts to a hill of beans because I don't show them to anybody anyhow. However, I decided the guy had a point, I thought it through and decided I was wrong so I sent out a second one which was simply a sheet of my paper, it had my 4-stars with the little flag on top, and it's not too easy to duplicate, and I sent that out. It was a blank piece of paper. All I was doing was getting a feel and getting a pulse. I was mainly interested in finding out whether there are about 5 or 6 guys that were all regarded about equally as far as their peers were concerned or whether one guy is way ahead or whether there are a couple of guys neck and neck so to speak. But in any event, it is not a popularity contest and it is not a decisive factor. It's not a vote in determining things. It simply enabled me, in making my recommendations, to know whether I'm going against or with what a majority of the generals think, or whether I'm not. I find out, however, that because one of the guys in the running is the man I made Assistant Commandant and fought with me in Vietnam as my Chief of Staff, General Anderson, because he's an aviator, it's really the surfacing of the old "an aviator will never be Commandant" business. Some people are fighting this, but although I guess Washington is pretty used to this sort of dirty leak method - I can't say I appreciate it. But that's what's happening. Should General Anderson make Commandant, it would be tradition shattering. Aviation has always supported the ground troops, but I draw a line between the weapons system and people who happen to have the physical attributes and desire to drive an airplane. I'd rather select people for their abilities than whether they wear wings. To me, flying a plane is like being Ted Williams, you have to have the eye-sight and the muscular coordination to be able to do it - it's a physical skill. Now if a guy also has the brain power, the leadership and so on to do

other things then he becomes an all around leader. Now there are some aviators who take the opposite view and believe that the only good aviator is the one who has his hand on that joy stick all the time. There are ground officers who think that the aviators should be a second class citizen so there is rather a bitter set of feelings stirred up by the possibility of an aviator making CMC.

QUESTION These were not coded, then, in any other way than in that first letter?

CMC I identified them by geographical area in the first letter, but I did nothing to the second letter when I found out that it was bothering some people. I admit I hadn't thought it through as well as I should. If you've got 4 generals at Lejeune, it's helpful to know you only should get 4 answers. Since people don't have to sign their names, that would be OK. However, as I said, I overlooked the fact that we've got a couple of places with only one general. As it turned out, practically everybody signed their names, it was a voluntary thing.

QUESTION In the context of the letters there was no inklings or statements such as "what do you think of General Anderson as the next Commandant of the Marine Corps? Or, was any other person named?

CMC Right, I listed, as I recall, the criteria that were required in terms of how you work with the JCS in the tank, how you work with Congress, how you have to work with the Navy, and how you would lead or handle the affairs of the Marine Corps. I said - Please give this some thought and give me your views - I didn't care whether they named one or five which a couple did. As I say this thing has been blown out of all proportion as far as I'm concerned. The fact is I don't show them to anybody, they are simply for my information.

QUESTION Are they kept on the record?

CMC They are not around the headquarters from any past Commandant. They are destroyed after he's seen them, and they have served their purpose.

QUESTION General, can you give us your comments on the Systems Analysts Plan to use LHA's as carriers from time to time. What affect this would have on the Marine Corps?

CMC I think -- it's an attempt of course to get the most out of every ship and I'm wholeheartedly in favor of it and so is the CNO, we've talked about this. The trouble is - it's not a substitute for carriers. A carrier projects air power and the LHA projects ground power. The two really should work together, but you don't have enough ships and we don't want crews and Marines out all that length of time. An LHA could establish a presence and it has a helicopter capable deck and it's got Marines aboard and you can have the AV8 aboard, which supports air support capability from month to month.

QUESTION Yes, you're talking about the...

CMC Well, yeah. The systems analysts seemed to have the idea that the LHA was a replacement for the carrier... The CNO made the point that's not correct. But it's a way to establish a presence of a big ship without keeping a - - - it's just a way of rotating those carriers, you know.

QUESTION A little shell-game around, I guess, to the public, isn't it?

CMC Well, it won't affect - - - The people you're sending the message to may know better. You send a somewhat different kind of message with one ship to...

QUESTION General, this may be a silly question after the hard news questions you've been asked so far, but what is your emotional reaction to Vietnam...to what has happened to them today? Do you have any personal...

CMC Well, I think of course that all of us who were there have emotions about it. I spent two years in DaNang and I liked the Vietnamese people and the officers I worked with and got to know, not only in a military way but as friends and I felt considerable emotion, of course, when all that we struggled for was lost.

QUESTION General, Secretary Schlesinger indicated in his testimony on the sea lift that the picture isn't too bright right now. Would you give us your views on the sea lift?

CMC Yes. The amphibious shipping picture is this, the Joint Chiefs, if they had their druthers, would like to see the ability to lift a division/wing team in each ocean. We're not trying to get that because the money -- the cost would be tremendous

and the Navy has other ships they have to build and they're behind in other ship types in the fleet. So, if we can get to 1 1/3 MAF lift, this enables us to keep 1/2 of that, more or less, in each ocean which permits the continuing deployment afloat of 2 battalions and their relief each 6 months, staying home twice that long, both for the ships and the crews and of course the Marines. We never, in my opinion, particularly in these days of inflation, we never will in peace time get up to two division/wing team lift so we have to put up with the fact that if there is a contingency in one ocean or the other, you've got to bring the ships around the canal to get the whole bag together.

QUESTION How long would that take, Sir?

CMC A couple of weeks or about 15 days.

QUESTION General, you were emphasizing a little while ago about your eastward look and particularly you mentioned Europe and NATO. How about the sandy territory? Are you looking more toward training in desert warfare?

CMC No, we always have done desert training just as we have always done jungle training and a limited amount of cold weather training. We haven't emphasized that any more than anything else. I'd say the worst affair is this darn arctic cold weather. It's expensive, the clothing is expensive, the stuff wears out and deteriorates so we have to keep replacing it. Desert warfare -- there are some things you have to do on tactics, protective covering and so on but it really gets to you primarily in spare parts for engines and this sort of thing. Jungle gives you more trouble in tactics because you've got no visibility and you're up to your ass in alligators all the time. I would say that we try to keep an expertise in all those areas. We have the hardest time with the arctic.

QUESTION Where do you send your people for that kind of training?

CMC We borrow from the Army and we go up to Camp Drum in New York in the winter. We have a place of our own that we have borrowed for years from the park service out in the High Sierras about 400 miles north of Camp Pendleton. We occasionally get some people up to Alaska, if we can bum a ride on a National Guard plane or something of that sort and we train at the Army's place up there. We have made landings in Norway, we made one in Maine, to the utter horror

of the conservationists and we left the place cleaner than it has ever been. They sued me to stop it, but finally we won the suit and when we went in there, we cleaned it up like it's never been cleaned up before. But, no we don't get up there too often. We go to the west coast because we've got the High Sierras and there's no need to go further. But once in a while, particularly with some reserve units, we get them up to Alaska just for the adventure of the thing, training is good.

QUESTION You don't try to set up a special unit then?

CMC No, we take regular units, we try to take a battalion at a time. We try to keep an arctic regimental clothing bag on hand.

QUESTION General, back to my subject. Sir, is this the normal time for the Commandant to send out these requests to general officers asking their...?

CMC Oh, yes, it is. It is early for this reason. I guess you all know the horrible problems of pay inversion where the longer you stay the less you make on retirement. This, by the way, is not just for generals, it's for the enlisted and everybody -- the longer you stay, the less your retired pay. Now, you have to retire on the 1st of September or you lose money.

QUESTION In your case, about $300.00 a month?

CMC Yes, I've already lost $450.00 a month by taking this job and not retiring 3 years ago and it will be another $336.00 a month... Also, your wife, if she becomes a widow, if you have the survivors' benefits tied in, it goes into a percentage of your retired pay. So, if that's less, your wife gets less. Oh, its some way to run a railroad, I tell you. All generals get the same money and the longer you stay, the less you make, in pension, so I think the early decision should be made so that people who are waiting to see who the new Commandant will be can guage whether they have a chance to get promoted or not, (to 3-stars since those are the only promotions that are affected) -- I think they should have the opportunity to beat that deadline if they want to and not be penalized by waiting to see who the new Commandant will be.

QUESTION General, are you planning on retiring in January?

CMC That's my present plan. I'm getting some opposition from my wife though.

QUESTION That means you lose another $300.00 plus by staying that long.

CMC For the rest of my life, yes. By the actuarial tables that comes out to about $100,000.00.

QUESTION Now, General. That's just for the $336.00, how about the $450.00 you've already lost?

CMC I've not bothered to figure that out!

QUESTION Where do you get your figures?

CMC Well, I was on a different pay scale at CIA, I was paid $40,000.00 a year instead of $36,000.00. But you can't get many people to cry about the losses of those who make 36 thousand...

QUESTION Is there any chance in your opinion of Congress correcting this condition?

CMC I think there is -- the situation is indefensible, of course. It is a Comptroller's ruling. There are all kinds of out-cry about it, but it's finally getting through that it's not just a general's problem but also affects the enlisted -- career enlisted, first sergeants, sergeants major and so on.

QUESTION Is it your aim, Sir, to get a new CMC decision if possible prior to September 1?

CMC Yes, I have requested that personally, but it's not up to me. All I can do is recommend.

QUESTION The President has to appoint?

CMC It has to go to the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of Defense and they may each have their own nominee.

QUESTION But you would like the man to be known before 1 September and give the other senior generals a chance to make up their minds.

CMC Yes, there are always a few generals who will retire when the commandant is selected. There have been a

lot of generals who have served with me for over 30 years and have not made 3-stars. They know if there is a change of scenery, maybe they stand a chance.

QUESTION General, how does that list go to the President? You make your selections and send it to the Secretary of the Navy, he either adds or deletes or changes and sends it to the Secretary of Defense - he does the same thing, do you see it again anymore? Or does it go right over to the White House?

CMC It goes to the White House.

QUESTION Without your seeing it?

CMC That's up to the Secretary.

QUESTION So, he could have an entirely different list than you had sent to the Secretary of the Navy, is that correct?

CMC Yes -- you see, the Secretary of the Navy hasn't known these guys for 30 years like I have. He's done a lot of interviewing and telephoning and so on and that's his method of conducting a poll, so to speak. Here's the thing, each opinion has some weight and a lot depends on how much interest is taken by the individual authority. I guess there are some people who have been personally interested, for example as Roosevelt was in all things Naval, and he took a personal hand in the selection of the CNO and the Commandant. A lot depends on the person.

QUESTION Do you think you would be able to dampen the usual campaigning for Commandant at this time or are you going to have the same...

CMC Well, it's going on right now!

QUESTION It seems to be unique to the Marine Corps.

CMC Well, the media loves to write about it. I don't know, you're certainly right and I can't explain it.

QUESTION I don't mean to cut off discussion here at all, But the hour is up and I don't know how much time you have General.

CMC Well, have I answered most of everything?

QUESTION Thank you very much General.

CMC And thank you all.

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