

Barnaby, Adolph Interview 12-7-88

[Speaker 4]

I had mentioned briefly on Wednesday the Chancellor's Bill of Values. By some military historians, at least probably Lee's finest battle in terms of his use of the resources available. He is substantially outnumbered.

[Speaker 1]

He brings more power to bear at a crucial point and sends Jackson in on the Union right and dislodges it and drives the Union back with pretty heavy losses.

[Speaker 4]

I'll sort it out later.

[Speaker 1]

One was pre-World War II and one was World War II Army and one was post-World War II Army. So it was really three different groups as far as the United States Army is concerned. When did you get in the Army originally?

When? 1932. I retired in 1962.

My life is almost one-third civilian at the beginning, one-third in the Army, almost one-third retired. In 1992 I'll be retired 30 years. That's a long time.

I'm 82.

[Speaker 5]

You could have fooled me. That's why I was surprised when you said you joined in 1932.

[Speaker 1]

I was an old soldier. I'd been in business and went out to Detroit. When the Depression hit, every young person was laid off.

I could always seem to find a job during the Depression, but eventually they paid nothing. As a matter of fact, the last job I had before I joined the United States paid \$15 a week. Even in the Depression it's hard to live on that.

Where were you from originally? Were you from Michigan originally? No, I'm a New Yorker.

I was born in New York and raised in an upper New York state in the country. I spent about ten years of my life on a farm. I joined the Army in 1932 as an enlisted man.

Have you been in the service? I spent 13 years in the National Guard. I know a piece of it.

I went to Panama. Since I was one of the oldest, I was about 24 or 25 when I was enlisted, I knew how to work a little bit better than the young men who were enlisting in those days. I finally received a promotion to sergeant within two years of going in the Army.

I based this mainly on the fact that I had worked in civilian life, knew how to work, and knew some of the responsibilities that a young lad didn't. What unit were you in? What kind of an outfit?

I was with the Panama Pacific General Depot. That was a quartermaster outfit. I met a young lieutenant, his name was Edward Shepard, just out of West Point.

He took a little interest in me and he encouraged me to take what was called the 10 series. It was a reserve officer series. As the advertisement said, all my peers laughed when I sat down on the front locker to study, but it paid off.

Eventually, I came back to the United States and went to the quartermaster school at Philadelphia. That's where I met my wife. After that, of course, in 1940...

[Speaker 5]

You'd gotten your promotion by that time?

[Speaker 1]

By 1940, we'd gotten it. There was a little Army regulation that said an enlisted man could not be turned to active duty. It was only in about August of 1940 that President Roosevelt and the Army Chief of Staff, who in those days was a much more powerful man than the Army Chief of Staff.

In those days, when MacArthur said something or Charlie Summerall said something or John J. Pershing said something, it was headline news. Nowadays, ask anybody who the Army Chief of Staff is and...

[Speaker 6]

You're hard put to know.

[Speaker 1]

I don't know whether it's good for the country or not, but we've loaded this enormous civilian cap on the military. We don't seem to have had much success since that has happened. Practically everything we've gone into since then has turned to be a failure.

We really failed in Korea. We really failed in Vietnam. The attack on Granada, as I understand it, was ridiculous.

It was ridiculous. The business over in the Middle East, all the failures we've had there. I don't know.

It seems to me that we've overcomplicated the military. The military, as you well know, is a rather simple outfit. Not difficult.

You have your chain of command right down. That's the way it should be. But I looked at the organization chart of a small post.

Fort Harrison, Indiana. Who knows where Fort Harrison is? It's a nondescript little post.

Its main importance is the Army Finance Center. They have a couple of schools. The Adjutant General School, Public Relations School, maybe one or two others.

That's where I heard of it, in the schools. That organization chart is absolutely... The only word is ridiculous, I think.

They have a protocol office down here. And I said to them, I said, How many people? Well, we have two officers and two military men and three civilians.

Well, what do you do? Well, when visitors come, we arrange their schedule, we arrange their tour, we arrange things. I said, That's nice.

I used to have a little clerk at my Adjutant General's office. He did all that. Or she did all that.

It didn't take a whole damn set-up. And on top of that, that's the post. They only have a TRO on top of that.

Other little things over here. And on this little post, I looked in the telephone book, there's five general officers in the telephone book. Ridiculous.

At least, from an Army's viewpoint. Maybe they have some administrative duties that are so... But anyway, to get back on track.

I came... I returned to active duty then as quartermaster of the school. Went overseas in 1940, in January of 1944, which was the month that my youngest son was born.

I left him three days old. And served in North Africa, China, Burma, India, Theta. Came back to the United States and went to Fort Warren, Wyoming, which was a transportation center.

And from there, we went back to Fort Eustace. Went to Fort Eustace. I stayed there a couple years and went to Japan.

And it was in... This is 1949. This is April of 1941, I went to Japan.

Family followed in August of 1949. And it was here in Japan that the... that the President Truman had determined that we were going to desegregate the Army.

And at that time, I commanded the 49th Port Battalion. A port battalion has a number of functions, one of which is to unload ships. So we had...

But over there, we had Japanese stevedores. So we only had one port company in the Port Battalion. Now, a port company is a large company.

It's organized to unload a ship, and a ship normally has five hatches. So you have a... As you know, a company normally has three platoons.

This one had five. And they were extra-large platoons because each platoon had to work a hatch 24 hours a day. So it had three sections.

Three sections. And each section had, I think, 18 men. So you had to have men down the hold.

You had to have men up on deck. You had to have men down on a pier. It was a large company.

[Speaker 5]

So you had 50 to 60 men in a platoon?

[Speaker 1]

Oh, yes. Now, I was going to say, if you wanted to get the actual... You could probably go to the historical section of the U.S. Army and ask them what it was like in that period of time, and they'd probably send you...

Now, this was a black company. It was a colored company. All the other companies were white.

I haven't seen... Four of the company headquarters, I think there were four... The port company's headquarters.

The port company was black, all the rest were white. Well, the order came down to... Oh, one other thing.

Since it was a large company, it had a large number of noncommissioned officers. It had the first sergeant, and each one of these five had a master sergeant, and then tech sergeants and staff sergeants and so on. It was a good-sized company.

Very well manned with noncommissioned officers. There were a lot of EM rigs.

[Speaker 4]

Yeah, a lot of rigs.

[Speaker 1]

Yes, yes. Well, it had to be because these people were responsible. I mean, they had a responsible job.

You had to get the cargo out of there and get it down on the dock safely and move it to the reentrance and storage shed. And they were on their own, really. Just a normal complement of commissioned officers.

[Speaker 3]

Did the company have black officers or white officers?

[Speaker 1]

I knew you were going to ask that question. I can't exactly remember if they had any at all. I don't think they did.

I think they were all white. I think their officers were all white. Because a black officer was a rarity.

That's one of the reasons I asked. You see, you want to remember that this is during World War II there were any number of black officers. As a matter of fact, before the master school we had plenty of black enlisted men come through and go through the training.

And I knew a couple of them both before and after. So the order came down then that the port company colored was to be deactivated and the port company deactivated. The word colored, the print was taken off just now.

So we did, in a matter of two months by transfer and by completing your tour and new people coming in, we had arranged that blacks were to be out there and the colored company no longer existed. Well, as far as I was concerned, everything went well. Until about three months later, which is now the fall of 1949, maybe the late fall of 1949, a young major came in.

At that time I was a lieutenant colonel. A young major came down and came in and said, I'm from the Inspector General's Department, GHQ, and we've had a complaint about your battalion. I said, what's the matter?

Well, he said, it's in the area of promotion. So I said, okay, go ahead. Look the place over, where you want to go and who do you want to see and whatnot.

In those situations, there's no use fighting a city hall. You have to go home. So he went out and went through the battalion and went over to Yazd and whatnot.

What he wanted to do was look over our promotion process. It just so happened that we had put in install what I thought was a reasonably good one. In other words, corporals were recommended private first class for promotion, sergeants were recommended corporals for promotion, and so on and so on.

And those people who were recommended were interviewed by the company commander and then after that interview, we organized a couple of squads and platoons down on the playground and they did a little drill exercise and a little physical exercise. And then there was a board of officers and first sergeants, about five of them, three officers and two first sergeants. And they combined to recommend the group to me.

At that time, I could promote private first class and corporals. My boss, Colonel Ralph Sear, the full colonel, he could promote sergeants and staff sergeants. And the general, the central, he could promote them and include them after sergeants.

So after I got the list, I interviewed the people. In a battalion, you might have as many as, in a given month, you might have as many as ten. It wasn't this enormous thing.

My battalion had probably a thousand men in it, of which 40 to 45 percent was in this fourth company. It was a huge company. Then I would interview them and pick out those that I thought were appropriate to send them up to the old man.

He, in turn, would send them up to me. He would interview them and send the rest of them up to him. So it was a pretty well-organized outfit.

And so after he got through, he came back, the major came back, and reported, he reported and said, I've completed my investigation. Well, I said, what are we doing wrong? He said, nothing.

Well, I said, tell me the nature of the complaint. Well, he said, before we broke up the battalion, you had so many mafias sergeants, so many assailants. He said, now you've only got so many that, so many assailants, and then there's been a distinct decrease.

Well, I said, that's to be expected. I said, they're now in competition. I said, this is one of the fallouts of the integration.

It was obvious to me that that's what was happening. He said, yes, I think that's so. So he gave me a clean bill of health and went back up to headquarters, and I heard no more about it.

But what I'm relating to you, of course, is a microcosm of a thousand men and an army of a million, and I can almost forget that this was probably happening all over the U.S. Army. Reality finally struck, you see, as to what was happening. It might, when you think about it, it might not have been the complete panacea.

[Speaker 3]

It wasn't the panacea.

[Speaker 1]

That they were thinking they were going to get. Now, I will say this. Later on, over in Germany, I commanded a group, a transportation group, which was the same as a regiment.

I had four battalions and headquarters and a few other independent companies, and I had a number of black officers, a number of black enlisted men, and excellent people. Excellent people. As a matter of fact, I corresponded with some of them.

Richard, why don't you go over there.

[Speaker 2]

So you had kept in correspondence with some of those?

[Speaker 1]

Yes, for a while. I haven't for the last, you'll want to remember, I've been retired now for 27 years. Those things fade.

Most of them are dead. A couple of them. One fellow overcame a lung cancer.

He overcame it. But I haven't in the past, I should say, 10 years. We used to exchange Christmas cards.

Occasionally a note, but not in the last 10 years. But they were good men. Now I asked Richard, who was now in the service and whatnot, about how they were.

He said superior. He said the nukers are really outstanding in their performance of duty. I also asked him a new little rental, of course.

It took place mainly since I retired, but we had them during World War II. I said, how are the ladies doing? He said, outstanding.

They're really outstanding. Very little trouble with them on their performance of duty. He said, they'll do anything that they're asked to do, including changing the truck tire.

Because I used to complain, you know, when they started saying you don't have to have women in your truck group. What happens if you get out on the road and the tire's flat? I never got an answer, but you know how much a truck tire weighs.

A man can't handle it. So the Army went through a series of cycles. During President Carter's administration, the Army was probably, and I think when I use the term Army, I only use it because that's what I'm a little familiar with.

But I think you can extrapolate it to the rest of the military. The Army was at its lowest point in years. In terms of morale you mean?

Morale and training and preparedness. I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. A man by the name of Clifford, I think, Alexander Clifford, was Secretary of the Army.

Black lawyer from Philadelphia. And he set up a staff at the Department of the Army level. Some Lieutenant Colonel over in Europe put out an order saying all commands, all correspondence, and all orders will be issued in English.

And this came back and Alexander had that order revoked. And I said to him, what the hell is wrong with this man? Here's a bunch of people up on the front line facing the Russians right there.

And he has to be able to say to his battalion, do this or do that in English and be understood. So another thing came back. He had a lady in charge of personnel.

And somebody was asking her, this was a newspaper report, somebody was asking her, you're having trouble with, at that time drugs was coming into the Army, particularly in Europe. And to me this was unimaginable because in my time they had a fellow who was smoking marijuana or taking dope and he got his fanny kicked out of the service. And the theory then being that the military is not a social outfit.

We're not a social unit of being enemies. We're there to defend the country and every slot counts. But they were getting drugs and so they were discharging a number of men and at that time the men were not enlisting.

And so somebody said to her, what are you going to do about this? You're short for it. There are so many thousand men, shortfall of your ordnance or your allowed strength.

She said, we'll just get some more women in. We'll replace the men with women. And I thought, what a long view.

What a short view, right? And Richard, of course, was in the service and he tried hard to defend it. But I would go over to one of the forts and you'd see soldiers with long hair and unshaven, unkempt soldiers.

To me this is beyond it. You can't make an army work like that. Well, you can't make any unit work like that.

Well, in a sense it reminded me very much of the Holland Army. The Holland Army, Holland hasn't won a war in 300 years. They're not going to win a war because they don't have an army, they have a mob.

Every soldier is individual. We can do what each man pleases in Holland. And sometimes you happen to catch a glimpse of them on television, you'll see it.

There's no uniformity, there's nothing. They have beards, long hair, unkempt clothing, no uniform. There's no uniform uniform.

Everybody thinks you're the general officer can have his own uniform.

[Speaker 2]

One of the things that interested me when you started out, you said you had been in three armies, the pre-war and wartime.

[Speaker 1]

The pre-World War I army was an army of 112,000 officers and enlisted men more or less. And we had nothing. I was one of the young people who went up on a maneuver in 1938 at Plattsburgh Barracks where the First Army had its big maneuver.

The First Army came up from Governor's Island where Gorbachev is meeting today. And this was the kind of army that used a— well, one of the things they used was a baby carriage with a piece of stovepipe on it. This was a gun.

And another one had the front axle of a buggy. The front axle of a buggy. And it had a piece of pipe of some kind.

And it was a gun. This was the kind of equipment we had. This was the kind of training we had.

And this kind of thing went all through. For what they had, it was a very well knit and very—the men had a high morale. It always was a sort of amazement to me that they did because they didn't have the material they should have had.

I was in Panama from 1932 to 1937. And we would go out in the jungle on maneuvers. And if we wanted to erect some kind of a defense, we'd put up a piece of cloth, pack a piece of cloth to the tree.

And this would, depending on the color cloth, would depend on what kind of a defense it was, whether it was a trench or whether it was barbed wire or whatever it was. Then, of course, World War II was altogether a different army. It was a civilianized army because 112,000 men soon were lost in the 3, 4, 5 million—how many there were?

I don't know.

[Speaker 5]

8 million or whatever. 8 million, including the Air Force.

[Speaker 1]

They were soon lost there and became a civilianized army. And much more intelligent—enlisted men— much more intelligent than the average Army private was prior to World War II. And also not only much more intelligent but much more capable of doing different things, of using what we like to call initiative, doing something on its own, you know.

And then, of course, after World War II, the Army disbanded. And at the time the Korean War started, we almost didn't have an army. We only did not too many.

The WACs were still around. I had a couple of lieutenants with the WAC, a couple of enlisted WACs. Very good.

All of them excellent. But the Army changed in character and it was only by the fact that we had a few World War II officers left that were able to lead the men in battle that we made it in that war because we really got our—and, again, no equipment. We had our anti-tank guns over in Korea and the shells would bounce off the skin of the North Korean tanks.

You were in Japan then, so you were very close to the action. Yeah, I was in Japan and went over. I went over to Korea for a few weeks in January, February 1951.

But we had some remarkable leaders in the Korean War. Probably the best was Ridgway, who, as far as I'm concerned, was the outstanding combat general I served under. The outstanding peacetime general I served under was— I mean, it just went in and out of my brain.

I can almost see it go. It'll come back, you know. Bruce Clark, the outstanding administrative general that I served.

I had two. One of them was Walter Weibel in Japan, and the other one was Henry S. O'Ran in China.

Let me tell you about this man, Henry S. O'Ran. He was a lieutenant general, later retired.

I think he had his son, I think, probably. Henry came into China, such as on May 5th. The dates I use are examples.

I took over command of the depot in China on May 2nd. On May 7th, General O'Ran called a meeting of all his commanders and staff, and we went up there. And so the D-2 got up and said, now on the 339th of the year and the 27th of the year and so on, here and here and here and here, he went down to this list of about 100 and some odd units.

And General O'Ran was sitting there, very concentrated, watching. And finally the D-2 said, I think that's all, General. And he looked around and said, what happened to the 124th Engineer Group?

Oh, I forgot him. And boy, we woke up. Here was a fellow who in three days had memorized the entire command.

They'd flown over the entire command and memorized where they were and what they were doing. And so he was a little different than the general that had left. Well, then after I left Germany, I went up to Chicago.

I was on the staff up there, transportation officer for the Army. And we had supervision over the ten north-central states.

[Speaker 2]

Well, I know the 5th Army. I was in the 46th Division National Guard.

[Speaker 1]

You grew up to Camp McCoy?

[Speaker 2]

I was at Camp McCoy, Camp Grayling more. But I was with an anti-aircraft unit in the upper peninsula.

[Speaker 1]

So as far as I'm concerned, the Army's been good to me. I entered as a private, retired as a colonel. Other people have done much better.

One of my friends entered as a private, retired as a major general.

[Speaker 2]

That's pretty rare.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, it is, yeah. But he had some things going for him.

[Speaker 2]

When you got in in 1932, was the Army pretty demanding in terms of physicals and the rest of it in order to get in?

[Speaker 1]

Yes, yes. We had to go through the normal. We went the morning after I got my uniform.

We were up at 5 o'clock in the morning and out on the hill field and doing KP and all this sort of thing. And that may be one of the advantages that I had being in the service. There were a lot of people who graduated from West Point who never made it to colonel.

I mean, I think it was mainly personality classes. I don't think it was intelligence or personality classes. But I not only, as I grew up, I not only knew, you see, what a company or a battalion or even a person, individual could do.

I also knew what you couldn't do and what you couldn't expect of them. And many people who aren't down at the ground level don't realize that. They look at the map and they say, well, we moved us up from here to here tomorrow or tonight, not realizing it's beyond physical capability.

Yeah, beyond human capacity to do it. So I think that always helped me because I always looked at the problem, whatever it was, from two viewpoints. What can we do?

What could I do if I were there? Because I'd been there. For instance, General Clark one time said to me, well, he didn't say to me, he said to his G-4, and the G-4 called me and said, the old man wants, and that's the same thing.

I want 20,000 tons of ammunition moved from point A to B and C to point D and E. And this was like a Thursday night, Thursday afternoon. And I said, and then he threw the curve and said, by Monday morning, this is Thursday afternoon.

And I said, all right. So I got my S-3 and S-4 on the job, brought the MPs in for road control, brought the engineers in for bridge control and what not, told the ordnance what was going to happen, but they'd already heard it, their ammunition. And so we got it done.

But it kept working from Thursday through Monday, with very little sleep. And I had the kitchen to cook a pair of food and get it out there on the various dumps where we were going. And looking at it from the truck driver viewpoint, what did the truck driver need?

What did the ammunition handler need to get this job done? And having looked at a few boxes myself in time, I could understand some of the things we needed. And we got the job done without problems.

[Speaker 2]

When you were in China, what sort of obstacles and handicaps?

[Speaker 1]

I was a depot commander there. We had a depot that was in Kunming. And we had several sub-depots out about 100 miles out.

Now, you have to realize that China in this area is a mountainous country. Kunming in China, are you familiar with China? Kunming in China is something like maybe Tucson in the United States, in that part of the country, southwestern part of the country.

And mountains. Kunming, the airfield was 6,000 feet, and the mountains around them another 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000 feet. And then just a few miles to the south of us, of course, was the Himalaya Mountains and Mount Everest and those other things.

And when you flew the hump, you flew a narrow valley between the mountain ranges. And when you flew the hump, you flew about 15,000, 14,000 feet.

[Speaker 3]

I did an interview not too long ago with a Mr. Stan Tinsley from Tinsley Tire. He was a pilot and flew down there.

[Speaker 1]

He could tell you about it. Anyway, of course, in a depot, you have a quartermaster section, engineer section, chemical section, signal section, and all the other services. And each one has a commanding officer, and each one had its own little compound.

You'll want to remember land in China is very scarce, so most of these compounds were built on hills and parts of hills and whatnot. One of the things I learned is how to really put up a safe ordnance depot. We had about 28,000 tons of ammunition the ordnance had.

And you have to remember, in those days, we supplied the Army Air Corps. They don't like to have you mention that. But anyway, I didn't do this.

My predecessor did it, but I enlarged on it. What he did was he built his ammunition depot on a huge hill, a big mound of earth, and so he put a quarter of it here, a quarter of it over there, a quarter of it here, and a quarter of it here, so that if any part of it blew, it wouldn't bother us because the hill would protect us. Excellent idea.

Good thinking. Excellent idea. I've never forgotten it.

I have no particular obstacles there. One of the little statistics that you might gather in here is that we estimated that it cost the United States taxpayer \$7 a pound to deliver goods in Kunming from point of origin to point of destination. Now, just multiply that by the pound of a gallon of gas, and you can see what it cost to move a gallon of gasoline.

\$56, something like that, \$55, \$56. Just one gallon. Yeah, one gallon.

That's what it cost. Did you use Chinese labor? Yes, lots of it, lots of it.

And those poor rascals, of course, had nothing. They would steal. I don't want to use the word steal because they just had nothing.

Did you see the picture patent? Yes. The opening scene, Dawn coming, and the Arabs coming in and grabbing everything, you know?

Everything. Well, you ask yourself, is this stealing? Because these people have nothing.

It's there, so they're not protecting it. And their philosophy is a little bit different than ours, too, because if it's there unguarded, it's yours. If you go to the railway station in India, you put your suitcase down and walk over there and go to the ticket station, it's gone.

If you take it with you, hang on to it, nobody will touch it. But if you leave it there, it's gone because it's unprotected. Nobody needs to share it.

Whoever finds it there, that's their philosophy. Yes. One of the very strange things that you notice when you come back to the United States after a long tour overseas is to see white men working.

[Speaker 7]

Interesting.

[Speaker 1]

See white men working. Because in India, I never saw white men working. Indians worked.

In China, the yellow men worked. We worked in the sense that we took care of the paperwork and we took care of seeing to it that it was done right, supervised and whatnot. But to actually, if I wanted to unload, I'll give an example.

If I wanted to unload three carloads of ammunition, I would call a Chinese regimental commander and say, I have three carloads of ammunition unloaded and somebody else would arrange for rice for these people. Now, we'd have soldiers there, seeing that it was unloaded and put in the right places, but we didn't actually put the ammunition on our shoulders there. And in Japan, the same way with stevedore.

When I was director of operations at the second major port, we went from a medium port to a major port when the Korean War started because we went from 100,000 tons to a million tons a month. What port were you in? Yokohama.

Yokohama. And at that time, a foreign laborer did everything.

[Speaker 3]

When you were in Japan, did you get much of a sense of MacArthur's command?

[Speaker 1]

Well, I'm a little ambivalent about MacArthur. He apparently was a tremendous soldier, World War I. And after that, he was a very political animal.

And he got to be chief of staff and if he didn't know what to do, he'd send him over to the Philippines. And then I thought he did poorly with his troops over there. I thought he did poorly to be surprised.

I thought he did poorly with his men. I couldn't see why he should back himself into this hole on what was the name of the island? Corregidor.

Corregidor. I would have sent the men out in the country. Hell, he had 15,000, 20,000 men there.

They could have, and they had the Philippine group, and he could have passed out the ammunition and said, you know, stay as long as you can out there. Do all the damage you can. And they could have raised hell with the Japanese.

As it was, they lost in one fell swoop. In Japan, he held himself up as an aloof, elder-faithful person. He only showed himself in public one time a day, and that was when he left.

He liked to work late. He liked to come in the office around 10 o'clock, and then he liked to have a lunch, and then he liked to home and nap, and then he would come back and work the staff until 10 o'clock at night. It was pretty hard to be a member of the staff.

Excuse me, I have to go to the bathroom. I'll be back. Getting reinforcements.

[Speaker 4]

General Bragg weakens his own force by sending Longstreet and 15,000 good troops up to Knoxville to try to recapture Knoxville. Ambrose Burnside has come down with the Army to Ohio and taken Knoxville not too long before. At best a dangerous move.

I'll pick it up there on Monday. And again, if you haven't signed up for a paper topic on the Chickamauga thing, come on up front and do that. The Chickamauga Chattanooga campaign, I'm talking about the war in East Tennessee and North Georgia.

[Speaker 3]

I had mentioned briefly on Wednesday the Chancellor's will vow, by some military historians at least, probably least by this vow, in terms of his use of the resources available.

[Speaker 1]

He is substantially outnumbered. He brings more power to bear at a crucial point and sends Jackson in on the Union right and dislodges it and drives the Union back with pretty heavy losses.

[Speaker 4]

I'll sort it out later.

[Speaker 1]

One was pre-World War II. And then one was World War II Army. And then of course post-World War II Army.

So it was really three.

[Speaker 5]

When did you get in the Army originally?

[Speaker 1]

When? Yeah. In 1932.

I retired in 62. So my life is almost one-third civilian in the beginning, one-third in the Army, almost one-third retired in 92, I'll be retired in 30 years. That's a long time.

I'm 82. You could have fooled me. So that's why I was surprised when you said you joined in 32.

And that I was an old soldier. I'd been in business and went out to Detroit and when the Depression hit, every young person was laid off. I could always seem to find a job during the Depression, but eventually they paid nothing.

As a matter of fact, the last job I had before joining I paid \$15 a week. Even in the Depression it's hard to live on that. Where were you from originally?

Were you from Michigan originally? No, I'm a New Yorker. Oh.

I'm a New Yorker. Born in New York, raised in an upper New York state. I spent about ten years of my life in New York.

So I joined the Army in 32 and I was an enlisted man and went through the usual process. Were you in the service? I spent 13 years in the National Guard.

I know a piece of it. Okay, you know the service now. Since I was one of the oldest, I was about 24, 25 when I enlisted, I knew how to work a little bit better than the young men who were enlisting in those days.

And so I finally received a promotion to sergeant within two years of going in the Army. And I based this mainly on the fact that I had worked in civilian life, knew how to work and knew some of the responsibilities that I was dealing with as a young man. What unit were you in?

What kind of an outfit? Well, I was with the Panama Pacific gun on depot. I was a quartermaster officer.

I met a young lieutenant, his name was Edward Shepard, just out of West Point, and he took a little interest in me and he encouraged me to take what was called a 10th series, which was a reserve officer series to Panama. And as the advertisement said, all my peers laughed when I sat down on the footlocker and studied, but it paid off. So eventually I came back to the United States and went to the quartermaster school at Philadelphia.

And that's where I met my wife. And then, of course, in 1940— You'd gotten your promotion by 1942? Oh, by 1940 we'd gotten it.

There was a little Army regulation that said an enlisted man could not be turned to active duty, and it was only in about August of 1940 that President Roosevelt and the Army Chief of Staff, who in those days was a much more powerful man than the Army Chief of Staff. In those days, when MacArthur said something or Charlie Summerall said something or John J. Pershing said something, it was headline news.

Nowadays, ask anybody who the Army Chief of Staff is, they're hard-picked. I don't know whether it's been good for the country or not, but we've loaded this enormous division cap on the military. We don't think we've had much success since that was happening.

Practically everything we've gone into since then has turned to be a failure. We really failed in Korea. We really failed in Vietnam.

And the attack on Grenada, as I understand it, was ridiculous. And the business over in the Middle East, all the failures we've had there. I don't know.

It seems to me that we've overcomplicated the military. The military, as you well know, is a rather simple outfit. Not difficult.

They have the chain of command back down. That's the way it should be. But I looked at the organization chart of a small post, Fort Harrison, Indiana.

Who knows where Fort Harrison is? It's a nondescript little post. Its main importance is the Army Finance Center.

[Speaker 4]

Okay.

[Speaker 1]

And they have a couple of schools. Public relations school and maybe one or two others. That's where I heard of it, for the schools.

That organization chart is absolutely, in other words, ridiculous. They have a protocol office down here. And I said to somebody, I said, I said, well, how many people?

Well, we have two officers and two military men and three civilians. I said, well, what do you do? Well, when visitors come, we arrange their schedule, we arrange their tour, and we arrange them.

I said, that's nice. I used to have a little clerk in my adjunct general's office. He did all that.

Or she did all that. It didn't take the whole damn setup. And on top of that, that's the program.

They have a TRO on top of that. And other little things over here. And on this little post, I looked in the telephone book, there's five general officers in the telephone book.

Ridiculous. At least from an Army view. Maybe they have some administrative duties that are so vital.

But anyway, to get back on track, I returned to active duty at the end of the quartermaster school, went overseas in January of 1944, which was the month that my youngest son was born. I left him three days old. And served in North Africa, China, Burma, India, theater.

Came back to the United States and went to Fort Moore, Wyoming, which was a transportation center. And from there, we went back to Fort Eustace. Went back to Fort Eustace.

I stayed there a couple years and went to Japan. And it was in, this is 1949. This is April of 1949, I went to Japan.

Family followed in August of 1949. And it was here in Japan that the President Truman had determined that we were going to desegregate the Army. And at that time, I commanded the 49th Port Battalion.

A port battalion has a number of functions, one of which is to unload ships. But over there, we had Japanese stevedores. We only had one port company in the port battalion.

Now, a port company is a large company. But it's organized to unload a ship. And a ship normally has five hatches.

Where you have a, as you know, a company normally has three platoons. This one had five. And they were extra large platoons because each platoon had to work a hatch 24 hours a day.

So it had three sections. And each section had, I guess, 15 men. So you had to have men down the hole, you had to have men up on deck, and you had men down on the pier.

It was a large company.

[Speaker 5]

So you had 50 to 60 men in a platoon there.

[Speaker 1]

Oh, yes. Now, I was going to say, if you wanted to get the actual, you could probably go to the historical section of the U.S. Army and ask them what it was like in that period of time, and they'd probably send you a copy at the table of orders. Now, this was a black company, a colored company.

All the other companies were white. I had, let's see, four other company headquarters. I think there were four, the port company, four company headquarters.

The port company was black. All the rest were white. So the order came down to, oh, one other thing.

Since it was a large company, it had a large number of noncommissioned officers. It had first sergeants, and each one of these guys, and then tech sergeants and staff sergeants and so on. It was a good-sized company and very well manned with noncommissioned officers.

There were a lot of EM rigs.

[Speaker 4]

Yes, a lot of rigs.

[Speaker 1]

Yes, yes. Well, it had to be because these people were responsible. I mean, they had a responsible job.

Get the cargo out of there and get it down on the dock safely and move it to the entrance of storage shed. And they were on their own, really. Just a normal complement of commissioned officers, company commander, executive officer, maybe a platoon leader.

[Speaker 3]

Did the company have black officers or white officers?

[Speaker 1]

I knew you were going to ask that question. I can't exactly remember if they had any at all. I don't think they did.

I think they were all white. Oh, well, I think their officers were all white because a black officer was a rarity. That's one of the reasons I asked.

You want to remember that during World War II there were any number of black officers. At school we had plenty of black enlisted men come through and give them training. As a matter of fact, I knew a couple of them both before and after.

So the order came down then to that the port company colored was to be deactivated and the port company deactivated were colored fences taken off just there. So we did. In a

matter of two months I transferred and I was completing their tour and new people coming in.

We had arranged that the watch was put through the outset and the colored company no longer existed. Well, as far as I was concerned, everything went well until about three months later, which is now the fall of 1949, but maybe the late fall of 1949, a young major came up. At that time I was a lieutenant colonel.

A young major came down and came in and said, I'm from the Inspector General's Department of the GHQ and we've had a complaint about your battalion. I said, what's it to me? Well, he said, it's in the area of promotion.

So I said, okay, go ahead. Look the place over. Where do you want to go and who do you want to see and whatnot.

In those situations there's no use fighting the city halls when you have to go in. So he went out and went to the battalion and went over to the adjutant and whatnot. What he wanted to do was look over our promotion process.

It just so happened that we had put in install what I thought was a reasonably good thing. In other words, corporals recommended private first class to promotion, sergeants recommended corporals to promotion, and so on and so on. And those people who were recommended were interviewed by the company commander.

And then after that interview, we organized a couple of squads and platoons out on the playground and they did a little drill exercise and a little physical exercise. And then I entered the board of officers and first sergeants. About five of them, three officers and two first sergeants.

And they combined to recommend the group to me. At that time I could promote private first class and corporals. My boss, Colonel Ralph Sear, full colonel, he could promote sergeants and staff sergeants.

And the general, the central, he could promote us to include master sergeants. So after I got the list, I interviewed the people. In a battalion, you might have as many as, at any given month, you might have as many as ten.

It wasn't this enormous thing. My battalion had probably a thousand men in it, of which 40-45% was in the sports company. It was a huge company.

Then I would interview them and pick out those that I thought were appropriate and send them up to the old man. He in turn would send them up to me. He would interview them and send the rest of them up there.

So it was a pretty well-organized outfit. So after he got through, he came back, the major came back and reported, he reported and said, I've completed my investigation. Well, I said, what are we doing wrong?

He said, nothing. Well, I said, tell me the nature of the complaint. Well, he said, before we broke up the 4th Battalion, you had so many back-to-sides and so many this-and-that.

He said, now you've only got so many that and so many this-and-that. There's been a distinct decrease in the number of colored non-commissioned officers. Well, I said, that's to be expected.

I said, they're now in competition. I said, this is one of the fallouts of the integration. It was obvious to me that that's what was happening.

He said, yes, I think that's so. So he gave me a clean bill of health and went back to the headquarters, and I heard no more about it. But what I'm relating to you, of course, is a microcosm of a thousand men and an army of a million, and I can almost project that this is probably happening all over the U.S. Army. Reality finally struck, you see, as to what was happening. It might, when you think about it, it might not have been the complete panacea that... It wasn't the panacea that they were thinking they were going to get.

Now, I will say this. Later on, over in Germany, I commanded a group, a transportation group, which is the same as a regiment. As a side, I had four battalions and headquarters and a few other independent companies.

And I had a number of black officers, a number of black enlisted men. And as far as I was concerned, they were excellent people. Excellent people.

As a matter of fact, I corresponded with some of them. Richard, I want you to go over there.

[Speaker 2]

So you had kept in correspondence with some of those...

[Speaker 1]

Yes, for a while. I haven't for the last... You'll want to remember, I've been retired now 27 years.

Those things fade. Most of them are dead. A couple of them are still alive.

One fellow overcame a lung cancer. He overcame it. I haven't in the past, I'd say, ten years.

We used to exchange Christmas cards. Occasionally a note, but not in the last ten years. But they were good men.

Now I asked Richard, who was now in the service and whatnot, about how they were. He said, superior. He said, the Negroes are really outstanding in their forms of duty.

I also asked him a new little rank, of course, that took place mainly since I retired, but we had them during World War II. I said, how are the ladies doing? He said, outstanding.

They're really outstanding. Very little trouble with them. He said, they'll do anything that they're asked to do, including changing a truck tire.

Because I used to complain, you know, when they started saying you don't have to have women in your truck group. What happens if you get out on the road and a tire is flat? I never got an answer, but you know how much a truck tire weighs.

A man can't handle it. So, the Army went through a series of cycles. During President Carter's administration, the Army was probably, and I think when I use the term Army, I only use it because that's what I'm a little familiar with, but I think you can extrapolate it to the rest of the military.

The Army was at its lowest point. In terms of morale, you mean? Morale and training and preparedness.

I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. A man by the name of Clifford, I think, Alexander Clifford, was Secretary of the Army. Black man, black lawyer from Philadelphia.

And he set up a staff at the Department of the Army level. And some lieutenant colonel over in Europe said to his, put out an order saying all commands, all correspondence, and all orders will be issued in English. And this came back and Alexander had that order revoked.

And I said to him, what the hell's wrong with this man? Here's a bunch of people up on the front line facing the Russians right there, and he has to be able to say to his battalion, do this or do that, in English and be understood. And so another thing came back.

He had a lady in charge of personnel, and somebody was asking, it was a newspaper report, somebody was asking her, you're having trouble with, at that time drugs was coming into the Army, and particularly in Europe. And to me this was unimaginable, because in my time they had a fellow who was smoking marijuana or taking dope, and got his finger kicked out of the service. And the theory then being that the military is not a social outfit.

We're not a social unit of being, entity. We're there to defend the country and every slot counts. But they were getting drugs, and so they were discharging a number of men, and at that time the men were not enlisting.

And so somebody said to her, what are you going to do about this? You're short for it. So many thousand men shortfall, you have your organ out of your allowed strength.

So I said, we'll just get some more women in. We'll replace the men with women. And I thought, you know, what a long view.

What a short view, right? And Richard, of course, was in the service, and he tried hard to defend it, but I would go over to one of the forts, and, you know, you'd see soldiers, disreputable, long hair, unshaven, unkempt soldiers. To me, this is beyond it.

You can't make an army work like that. Well, you can't make any unit work like that. Well, in a sense, it reminded me very much of the Holland Army.

The Holland Army, Holland hasn't won a war in 300 years. They're not going to win a war because they don't have an army. They have a mob.

Every soldier's individual. He can do what he damn pleases in Holland. And sometimes you happen to catch a glimpse of them on television, you'll see it.

There's no uniformity, there's nothing. They have beards, long hair, unkempt clothing, no uniform, no uniform uniform. Everybody thinks that a general officer can have his own uniform.

[Speaker 3]

One of the things that interested me when you started out, you said you had been in three armies, the pre-war and wartime.

[Speaker 1]

The pre-World War I army was an army of 112,000 officers and enlisted men, more or less. And we had nothing. I was one of the young people who went up on a maneuver in 1938 at Plattsburgh Barracks where the 1st Army had its big maneuver.

The 1st Army came up from Douglas Island where Gorbachev would be in today. And this was the kind of army that used a, well, one of the things they used was a baby carriage with a piece of stovepipe on it. This was a gun.

And another one had the front axle of a buggy. The front axle of a buggy. And it had a piece of pipe of some kind.

It was a gun. This is the kind of equipment we have. This is the kind of training we've been in.

And this kind of thing went all through. For what they had, for what they had, it was a very well-knit and very, very, the men had a high morale. And it was always a sort of amazement to me that they did because they didn't have the material they should have had.

I was in Panama from 1932 to 1937. And we would go out in the jungle on maneuvers. If we wanted to erect some kind of a defense, we'd put up a piece of cloth.

We'd tack a piece of cloth to the tree. And this would, depending on the color cloth, it would depend on what kind of a defense it was, whether it was a trench or whether it was barbed wire or whatever it was. And then, of course, World War II was altogether a different army.

It was a civilianized army because 112,000 men soon were lost in the 3, 4, 5 million, how many there ever were, 8 million, whatever it was. 8 million between the years. They were soon lost there and became a civilianized army.

Much more intelligent, enlisted men, much more intelligent than the average Army private was prior to World War II. And also not only much more intelligent, but much more capable of doing different things, of using what we like to call initiative, doing something on its own. And then, of course, after World War II, the Army disbanded.

And at the time the Korean War started, we almost didn't have an Army. We only just had not too many. The WACs were still around.

I had a couple of lieutenants with a WAC, a couple of enlisted WACs. Very good. All of them excellent.

But the Army changed in character. And it was only by the fact that we had a few World War II officers left that we were able to lead the men in battle that we made it. And, again, no equipment.

We had our anti-tank guns over in Korea, and the shells would bounce off the skin of the North Korean tanks.

[Speaker 3]

You were in Japan then, so you were very close to the action.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, I was in Japan and went over. I went over to Korea for a few weeks in January, February, 1951. But we had some remarkable leaders in the Korean War.

Probably the best was Claude Rankenfeuer, who was the Outstanding Combat General I served under. The Outstanding Peace Time General I served under was... I mean, it just went in and out of my brain.

I can almost see it go. It'll come back, you know. Bruce Clark.

The Outstanding Administrative General that I served under, I had two. One of them was Walter Weibel in Japan, and the other one was Henry S. O'Ran in China.

Let me tell you about this man, Henry S. O'Ran. He was a lieutenant general later retired.

His son, I think, probably also. Henry came into China, such as on May 5th. The dates I use are examples.

I took over command of the depot in China on May 2nd. On May 7th, General O'Ran called a meeting of all his commanders and staff. And so the SG-2 got up and said, Now, on the 339th, the 27th is here, and so on, here, and here, and here.

We went down to this list of about 100 and some odd units, and General O'Ran was sitting there, very concentrated, watching what we were doing. And finally, the G-2 says, I think that's all, General. What happened to the 124th Engineer Group?

Oh, I forgot him. And boy, we woke up. Here was a fellow who in three days had memorized the entire command.

They'd flown over the entire command and memorized where they were and what they were doing. And so he was a little different than the general that had left. Well, then after I left Germany, I went up to Chicago.

I was on the staff of the Transportation Office of the Army. And we had supervision over the ten north-central states. And my service was pretty good.

[Speaker 2]

Well, I know the Fifth Army. I was in the 46th Division National Guard.

[Speaker 5]

So you were in the Fifth Army.

[Speaker 1]

Right. Did you go up to Camp McCoy?

[Speaker 2]

I was at Camp McCoy, Camp Grayling, more or less.

[Speaker 1]

Camp Grayling, yeah. I was with the Second Army. But I was with an anti-aircraft unit in the Upper Peninsula.

So as far as I'm concerned, the Army's been good to me. I entered as a private, retired as a colonel. Other people have done much better.

One of my friends entered as a private, retired as a major general.

[Speaker 2]

That's pretty rare.

[Speaker 1]

Yeah, it is, yeah. But he had some things going for him.

[Speaker 2]

When you got in in 1932, was the Army pretty demanding in terms of physicals and the rest of it in order to get in?

[Speaker 1]

Yes, yes. We had the physical entry. The morning after I got my uniform, we were up at 5 o'clock in the morning and we were out on the hill field and doing KP and all this sort of thing.

And that may be one of the advantages that I had being in the service. There were a lot of people who graduated from West Point who never made it to colonel. I think it was mainly personality classes.

I don't think it was intelligence or personality classes. But as I grew up, I not only knew what a company or a battalion or even an individual could do, I also knew what they couldn't do and what you couldn't expect of them. And many people who aren't down at the ground level don't realize that.

They look at the map and say, well, we move this off of here to here tomorrow or tonight, not realizing it's beyond physical capability. Yeah, beyond human capacity to do it. I think that always helped me because I always looked at the problem, whatever it was, from two viewpoints.

What can we do? What could I do if I were there, if I had been there? For instance, General Clark one time said to me, well, he didn't say to me, he said to his G-4.

The G-4 called me and said the old man wants, and that's the same thing. I want 20,000 tons of ammunition moved from point A to B and C to point D and E. And this was like a Thursday night, Thursday afternoon.

And I said, all right. And then he threw the curve and said, by Monday morning. This was Thursday afternoon.

And I said, all right. So I got my S-3 and S-4 on the job, brought the MPs in for road control, brought the engineers in for bridge control and whatnot, told the ordnance what was going to happen, because they'd already heard that they're ammunition. And so we got it done.

But it kept working from Thursday through Monday with very little sleep. And I had, you know, the kitchens, the cooks prepare food, get it out there on the various dumps where we were going. And looking at it from the truck driver viewpoint, what did the truck driver need and what did the ammunition handler need to get this job done?

And having looked at a few boxes myself, you know, I could understand why some of the things were needed.

[Speaker 2]

When you were in China, what sort of obstacles and handicaps?

[Speaker 1]

I was a depot commander there. We had a depot that was in Kunming. Okay.

And we had several subdepots out about a hundred miles out. You have to realize that China in this area is a mountainous country. Kunming in China, are you familiar with China?

[Speaker 6]

Some, yeah.

[Speaker 1]

Kunming in China is something like maybe Tucson in the United States, in that part of the country, southwestern part of the country, and mountains. Kunming, the airfield was 6,000 feet, and the mountains around ran another 3,000, 4,000, 5,000, 6,000 feet. And then just a few miles south of us, of course, was the Himalaya Mountains and Mount Everest and those other things.

And when you flew the hump, you flew a narrow valley between the mountain ranges. And when you flew the hump, you flew about 15,000, 14,000 feet.

[Speaker 3]

I did an interview not too long ago with a Mr. Stan Tinsley from Tinsley Tire. He was a pilot and flew down there.

[Speaker 1]

He can tell you about it. Anyway, of course, in a depot, you have a quartermaster section, engineer section, chemical section, signal section, and all the other services for different things. And each one has its commanding officer, and each one had its own little compound.

You might take one of them. The land in China is very scarce, so most of these compounds were built on hills and parched hills and whatnot. One thing I learned is how to really put up a safe ordnance depot.

We had about 28,000 tons of ammunition the ordnance had. And you have to remember, in those days, we supplied the Army Air Corps. They don't like to have you mention that.

But anyway, I didn't do this. My predecessor did it, but I enlarged on it. What he did was he built his ammunition depot on a hill, on a huge hill, a big mound of earth.

And so he put a quarter of it here, a quarter of it over there, a quarter of it here, and a quarter of it here, so that if any part of it blew, it wouldn't bother the rest, because the hill would protect it. Excellent idea. Excellent idea.

I have no particular obstacles there. One of the little statistics that you might gather in here is that we estimated that it cost the United States taxpayer \$7 a pound to deliver goods in Kunming from point of origin, point of destination. Now, just multiply that by a gallon, by the pound of a gallon of gas, and you can see what it cost to move a gallon of gasoline.

\$56, something like that, \$55, \$56. Just one gallon. Yeah, one gallon, right.

That's what it cost.