

## RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

of

### **RAYMOND CHANDLER CONROY, Major General**

**DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:** 17 January 1916, Chicago, Illinois

**YEARS OF ACTIVE SERVICE:** Over 30 years

**DATE OF RETIREMENT:** 30 April 1973

#### **MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED**

The Command and General Staff College  
The Armed Forces Staff College  
The Industrial College of the Armed Forces

#### **EDUCATIONAL DEGREES**

University of Oregon - BS Degree - Water Transportation  
University of Southern California - MBA Degree - Business Administration

#### **CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF DUTY ASSIGNMENTS (Last 10 Years)**

<b><u>FROM</u></b>	<b><u>TO</u></b>	<b><u>ASSIGNMENTS</u></b>
May 61	Jul 63	Spec Asst for Mil Affairs (Africa & Mid East), OJCS
Aug 63	Jul 66	CG, MTMC (Western Area)
Aug 66	Feb 69	ACSLOG for Plans & Doctrine, DCSLOG, DA
Mar 69	Oct 70	ACSLOG, J-4, MACV, USARV
Oct 70	Sep 72	DCSLOG, USAREUR
Sep 72	Mar 73	COS, USAREUR

#### **PROMOTIONS**

#### **DATES OF APPOINTMENT**

2LT	1 Sep 42
1LT	29 Apr 43
CPT	7 Feb 44

MAJ	23 Dec 44
LTC	7 Jul 51
COL	24 Aug 59
BG	1 Aug 63
MG	1 Oct 66

**MEDALS AND AWARDS**

Distinguished Service Medal w/2 Oak Leaf Clusters  
Legion of Merit w/Oak Leaf Cluster  
Bronze Star Medal  
Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Army Commendation Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster

**SOURCE OF COMMISSION** ROTC (University of Oregon)



## INTERVIEW ABSTRACT

### Interview with **MG (Ret) Raymond C. Conroy**

**MG Conroy** discussed airlift operations in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He discusses cargo size, aircraft size, refueling, terrain, distances, doctrine, costs, and alternatives to air movement. He also gives his views on the reliance of Army reserve combat service support units, Host Nation support, and the early training and association of Transportation Corps officers with the combat arms. He also stresses officer education and the need for field experience.

The Cambodian Operation of 1971 with its complex problems of dense jungle and tough terrain compounded logistics. The General discusses his job as the J-4 of MACV in dealing with the complex logistics with a cross-border operation. He tells of the close-hold planning with GEN Abrams, the buildup, execution, and later the withdrawal from the Cambodian Operation with elaboration on the mission's success. He also discusses the political ramification briefly.

**MG Conroy** spends a great deal of interview time stressing the need for young transporters to know their jobs, to be aware of combat arms requirements, and the necessity to develop keen management and leadership skills. He also discusses joint service problems and the need for coordination in transportation and logistical matters, such as ocean terminals.

MG Conroy covers numerous subjects in this interview with details of the history of Army Transportation, organization, officer requirements, and joint service cooperation. He discusses vividly how a transporter must perform to get supplies to the soldiers on the battlefield in a professional manner.

This is CPT Debbie B. Bazemore and I'm here in Burlingame, California interviewing MG Raymond C. Conroy on 4 December.1985.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, my first question is, would you describe the airlift operations during World War 11?

**MG Conroy:** Well, in the very early part of WWII, the air transport command, was basically built on the bone structure of the Pan American Airway. The part that I was associated with ran out into the Middle East and then through Pasa, Iraq and across North Africa, down to Asuncion, the Asuncion Island and the middle of the south Atlantic and across into North Africa and on into Iraq. And those generally were two engine aircraft. They were the DC-3, the old Goony bird that everybody remembers very well, there's been quite a bit written about them in the last several years. And the Dakota that was a heavier aircraft and had a lot more cargo capability replaced them. Air was used for specialty items. You know, the things that you ran out of: tires, medical supplies, and that type of thing. In our command, at least in the Middle East, we received about two to three airplane loads a week and those things, of course, increased as the war went on. Airlift was sparse; generally used for the movement of people, special people that had to get into a theater on into India across Indochina (French Indochina [Vietnam]) into China; and, primarily, the airlift that I at least recall, was very sparse, very slow in building up and depended on a number of key stations like Asra and Karachi, India, the islands (Asuncion island) and a few bases that we had across North Africa.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, were airlift operations utilized more extensively during the Korean War?

**MG Conroy:** Compared to World War II I would say yes because our air had developed into four engine aircraft--that's prejet time--into the big Boeing stratosphere air--raft and the Douglas which was a build-on of the Goony bird, an extension of that. But, yes, airlift was very essential to our support in Korea primarily into the airfield in Kimpo which was south of Seoul and occasionally under attack but not too frequently. A lot of people moved by that airlift both to and from and, of course, they were long over-the-water hauls. I recall it took four engine aircraft to get to Hawaii against the wind with about sometimes as long as 15 hours. So if you went across on a trip in one of those bucket seat jobs, you were landing in places like midway at midnight and heading on into Korea then of course you could also land in Japan for a rest stop. But, yes. The answer to that question is that airlift was used extensively in the Korean operation.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, it is commonly known that the helicopters were the predominant air assets used in Viet Nam. In your opinion, was this the most effective means to move men and equipment in that type of terrain?

**MG Conroy:** Well, if you're talking about the use and application of helicopters, its most important role was hitting hot spots in the battle zone. Moving men into the battle zones and expanding any particular point of control that we wanted to use or fight in. And they were indispensable for that role. But when it came to talking in terms about moving large amounts of material to support a major operation, you're talking in terms of bigger aircraft, like C-130s and, certainly, don't forget the trucks. Because when you get right down to it, your trucks are the cheapest way and probably the biggest and most reliable way of getting to a particular point if you control the battlefield. If you have to fly over the enemy into a hot spot then, of course, helicopters are quite essential. But helicopters also make you pretty lazy. It's easier to fly from point A to B than to clean out Charlie in

between and it's also safer. A lot of our operations in movement and support... I can remember carrying ice out to one unit during the Cambodian operation just to ice down some things for them.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, with the increased physical dimensions of weapon systems, will the size of air transport assets increase also or will aircraft larger than the C-5A Starlifter become too inefficient to put into operation?

**MG Conroy:** You can create a lot of controversy in discussing this subject. I can recall when the C-5A was to be used in Vietnam. They had a special team come over to Vietnam and make a survey of the fields. I talked to the lads and so forth. As they talked about the C-5A in the earlier days, they could convince you that it could land on a wet blade of grass. But when we got to Vietnam, there were a lot of things that they had to do to number the airfields before they could accommodate that aircraft. The diadrel or the overhang of wings, sweeping along those runways ... They had to take out a lot of the navigation lights. They had to take out obstructions and things of that type and they had to be very careful where they used that airplane. So, consequently, you have to make preparations to accommodate a big aircraft such as that. And the other thing is you might not always be able to control the airfield. And an airplane of that size is an enormous target coming in. So you have to bring that airplane in at pretty high altitudes and they could short dive the runway and hope that nobody is firing at you. So you can't argue the pros and cons... I suppose the best way to consider it is that it's an airplane that has a great potential for bringing material into the rear in large amounts. But then when you stop to consider, there's a limitation to how big you want to build these things because they are targets in the battlefield. Now, when you're talking about moving long distances in high altitudes where you are able to save fuel and move large amounts of material, then of course, they're a great advantage. But it still gets back when you talk in terms of what it cost you versus ocean transportation. Ocean transportation can't be disregarded for reaching a major battle area and so I think it's a matter of economics when you stop to figure it out. You can't eliminate the ship entirely and particularly in the latter stages in any war where you need a lot of support. So I would say that careful selection of your airfields over which you control and considering night operations and that type of thing that you have to do when you're coming into a major airfield when it's under attack but you need people especially trained for this type of thing and, in general, I think it's something that you have to be very selective and very careful in the employment of it.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, considering the amount of fuel consumed by aircraft, would a large scale airlift operation lead to emergency situations in the future or will they be utilized on a sustainment basis?

**MG Conroy:** I think this partly goes back to what I talked about before. Any long hauls, particularly if you think in terms of the Pacific, where you have a long haul and do not have a refueling station or you have refueling stations which have their limited capability, and they become what you call choke points. And if you have choke points, you have to control the flow of your airlift based on those choke points. And so you must

know what that flow capability is. And you also have to be extremely careful on what you put on those airplanes because they are costly in your resources and you don't want to just put anything that happens to come along on the airplane. So you've got to be very selective in the kinds of cargo that you put on those aircraft and as far as sustaining... The ability to continue to supply by air, that's a function of your air of control. Do you control the air? Are you going to be under attack? Are your airfields under attack? Are you able to actually sustain an operation? Now we had command of the airfields into Vietnam and the approaches into Vietnam so consequently we didn't have that problem to worry about. Had there been enemy air of any consequence we'd have had a whole different set of rules.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, what type of terrain best dictates the large-scale airlift operations?

**MG Conroy:** I think that terrain influences it, no question about that—primarily from the standpoint of your ability to protect your airfields. If you can protect your airfields, and you also are not worried about weather. For instance, going into Europe, you can get some real ghastly weather in Europe landing at Rhein Main or Ramstein or any of those big airfields. Also, you have to consider are your airfields within the range of enemy rocketry? Can they reach you or not. So I think it's a function of a lot of other things. That question is not a very easy question because you have to know what the enemy's capabilities are. You have to know what the airfield's capabilities are. You just can't put big aircraft into any airfield. And so that all has to be prepared and planned out ahead of time.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, what are aircraft distance limitations?

**MG Conroy:** Oh, I think it's a ... I mean with the aircraft they've got today they have enormous distances; of course, there's a trade off between the amount of fuel they have to carry. Where they get refueling stations and that type of thing. In recent months, working for the Bechtel Corporation, I've loaded a lot of stuff into Indonesia from the West Coast. We would pay for what it cost an aircraft to go out there and, of course, the aircraft would depend on how they could refuel as to how much of a load we could carry. That is, again, a function of how close the airfield is in, what our refueling points and that type of thing. But I would say that air has its limits. You're unwise to depend on a total support of a total operation totally by air if it's going to be a large operation. I think you have to definitely plan to supplement it other ways.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, during World War II in the Pacific theater, the US employed island hopping tactics thereby establishing bases at which aircraft could refuel and perform light maintenance. Will the US foreign policy dictate this same principal to utilize in the future to successfully conduct airlift operations like that of the Yom Kippur War?

**MG Conroy:** Well, in the first place aircraft's capabilities have been extended greatly now so that probably we could overfly a lot of those places that we used to need to support so I would say that there is probably with today's capabilities in air, the size of aircraft, their load capabilities, their efficiency in fuel utilization and certainly their ability

to fly at higher altitudes. You see, in World War II they were chugging along at 5,000 feet and if you've got any passengers aboard that didn't have masks, or oxygen, you get up around 10 or 11,000 feet they got a little bit woozy. Today you can go 40 or 45,000 feet and, of course, there's an enormous fuel economy if you fly in those altitudes. So I would say, I don't see that kind of thing as a problem. But what I do see in say going into some place like the Middle East is the control of the aircraft going into the airfields. Airfields have their limited capabilities like Dadhana. When we went into Lebanon the first time, years ago, in the 50s. We were stacking up aircraft miles high, as I understood trying to land at Dadhana cause everybody decided that that was the airport that would be used. A lesson learned there was that you had to control that air space going into Dadhana. Of course, that is not my expertise but I am knowledgeable under those operations.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, in your opinion, will air assault operations replace airborne operations in future battles?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I'm out of my league there. I would say it depends on our ability to control the airfields. To control the airfields you've got to get airborne operations into it, there's no question about that. You can assault an airfield and control it if you've got your hands on the airfield and, of course, you want to bring in or land an aircraft after that, airborne operations are a specialty and they're a very valuable resource. They're very scarce and you can't dissipate them by trying to, on a continuous basis, of trying to protect some airfield.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, considering the maneuverability and individual cost of rotary wing aircraft, will they replace fixed wing aircraft in future airlift operations at theater level?

**MG Conroy:** Years ago, when I was in research and development, I thought one of the most important things we could do would be put our money, if it was a billion dollars, into the research of heavy lift aircraft. I mean a helicopter that could pick up tons of material not just small lifts and we have done some research in that but we haven't got the choppers the size that I think that ... Maybe the state of the art in the future will allow for bigger choppers to pick up heavy lifts. If they do that then of course, for short hauls they will replace short haul aircraft. As the state of the art stands today, I think it's going to be very hard to replace the standard size aircraft. When we went in to Cambodia, we used every C-130 we could get our hands on. I think we had 36 or 38 of them in there operating on short fields bringing in ammunition, fuel, and re-supply items.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, will fixed wing aircraft play a large role in retrograde movement of men and equipment in future battles?

**MG Conroy:** Absolutely. Retrograde or... I'm just thinking a few years back. When we got out of Cambodia and it was a decision of our government that we would roll up in Vietnam, I was in my office one morning and General Abrams called me--wanted to see me a minute. So I went in and he's sitting at the end of the table with a cigar in his mouth and he said, sit down. We sat there for about two or three minutes and nobody

said anything. He was the only one in the room, myself. He said, "Could we move 50,000 men a month out of Vietnam starting within the next month?" I said, "Boy, that's a tough one. Let me think on that one. Give me about a half hour and I'll go back to my office and work on it." He said, "Don't you go anywhere. Just sit right there and I want an answer in ten minutes."

So I sat there and watched him puff on his cigar and blow smoke rings and I twiddled around a little bit and I reached in my pocket and got an old envelope and started figuring as best I could.

He asked, "Well, what do you think?"

I said, "I think we can do it."

He asked, "Do you see any problems in it?"

I replied, "I certainly do. Coming this summer, we're going to have these commercial aircraft, the stretch outs that we depend on so much. They're going to be running the European trade, taking tourists. If we haven't nailed those down in contracts for the support of this thing we might have some trouble there."

He asked, "Well, how do you solve that?"

I said, "Well, we solve that by going to MAC headquarters, at least in western areas, located at Travis Air Force Base and nail this thing down."

He asked, "What are you waiting for?"

So within five minutes, I was out of the office. I got over and got out of my combat jumpsuit and took off--and within 12 hours I was sitting down with the MAC people in Travis Air Force Base. They did some quick checking with the commercial people and they said they thought they could support. Incidentally, what General Abrams is up against was he had a call from General Wheeler, who was a chairman of the Joint of the Chiefs of Staff, who had a call from the President and said can you do that. The answer was either yes\_ or no. So when the answer became yes--of course I sweated out the first month--we got them out. We used about three airfields to do it and, of course, occasionally one would be under attack. But to pull in a checkerboard fashion, to pull a battalion out here and a battalion out there while the enemy is still under attack, it's a story that has never been written. And it's a story that deserves to be written about the great job that I think General Abrams did and a superior performance on the part of our transportation people.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, in view of the development of nuclear weapons and potential nuclear targets such as large concentration of troops and equipment, will port operations be as extensive as they were in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam?

**MG Conroy:** I wouldn't think so. I would think... Well, it depends on what kind of enemy you're fighting. If you were fighting a guy that doesn't have those kinds of things, then we'd go back to our old way of doing things. But it seems to me, that you're vulnerable to nuclear weapons whether they're used or not. Even today, with conventional weapons, these new types of rocketry that they have--my gosh, they can come in and wipe out a port overnight. So I would say that we have a contradiction going on in this regard. You're building bigger ships, bigger targets, and bigger loads to go into deep-water ports. I just recently read an article, I think it was written by my old friend who is up in DSLOG now (I'll think of his name in just a second), but he said that our Merchant Marine are way behind and we're having serious problems in supporting our shipping and that type of thing. Anyhow, the answer to that is I think if there's a threat of nuclear war and the enemy has the capability of using nuclear weapons and is not using them, I think we'll still find that we'll have to be cautious about the concentration of our people in port to answer your question.

**CPT Bazemore:** Then sir, will future port operations be more spread out, smaller in size, and located in less accessible areas?

**MG Conroy:** For a long time the transportation corps did studies on this. You know, over-the-beach operations, LOTS operations, aerial tramways, the ship-to-shore, LARCS, BARCS, and whatever else you want to call and that was primarily for the purpose of spreading your port operations out and I would say yes. I don't think that that's ... I think that should be kept as a viable option to us to be able to do that. If you control the ports and control air, then obviously the economic way to do it is to go heavy concentration containers, all that other thing and don't worry about it. But if you have to worry about the enemy's capability to blow the hell out of you then you better be dispersed.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, in all likelihood, the next battlefield could very well be in the Middle East. Considering the success of the Yom Kippur airlift and the navigation problems ships faced passing through the Mediterranean Sea, Suez Canal, and Red Sea are large scale sealift operations feasible in that area?

**MG Conroy:** Well, to go into a second or third tier area ... You know we've talked a great deal about Diego Rivera, Diego Garcia (whatever that big station is down there now) and of course that's just an island but there are other islands and there are other approaches that you can bring materiel in and transship it forward. But I think operating right in the Gulf; it's another function of how much the enemy area is. If the enemy area is large and capable and devastating then it's a hell of a place to operate. Along the shores of Iran, both outside of the Straits of Hormuz as well, as inside the Iranian or Persian Gulf (or as the Arabs call it, the Arabian Gulf) on the north side of the Gulf, there's deep water. There are quite a few places you can get in there and work and operate. If you're going to go on the south side into the Arab side--Abu Dhabi, Oman, Kuwait, or Saudi Arabia itself--there are long, narrow shelves that go out for almost seven to eight kilometers where the water's only three or four feet deep. So you have a

major operating problem for any kind of port operations that you're doing into any virgin territory unless you go into a regular port.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, considering the advanced technology and target location and acquisition and modern weapon system, particularly those utilized in surface to surface and air-to-surface missiles, are seaborne operations feasible in future conflicts?

**MG Conroy:** Well, it gets back to my argument, not argument, my premise before. You have to ask the question, do you have control of enemy air? Do you have control of the air of the battlefield? And, if you don't, then large seaborne operations are going to take heavy losses. I mean, with the rocketry we have today you couldn't conceive what Omaha Beach had without enormous losses; I can't see. But if you're very early to knock out enemy air where it does not have that capability or the enemy rocketry then you can carry those operations on but it's a function of how tough that air is.

**CPT Bazemore:** Ok. Sir, how do you envision US Army Reserve transportation units employed in future battles?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I guess you know that we're all captive of our own experiences and captive of our own prejudice so I must say anything I'd say about that would be influenced by what I saw in World War II. You don't get anything cheap. People are competent, well trained, and active in the Army, highly motivated or they're not. And if you're trying to save money by reducing the regular Army units or the amount of training that people get so that you can save money by cutting down the active military forces and substituting part time reserves that are, at the best, sometimes marginal, although I might be very unfair to the people who run reserve units because they may work very hard and they may have some very capable units and I do know that they have had some very fine ones in the past and there have been some that have not been very good. But I think on an active operation, very early in the war, you should be depending on the hard hitting, capable, trained people that you know that you've got in the regular service supplemented by the reserves. And there are certain reserve units that are better than others are and you should really know which ones those are.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, should US Army personnel train more extensively on host nation transportation assets?

**MG Conroy:** Not so much on their assets because the host nation is not going to have any more surpluses than we do. You take Europe and certainly they've got a railroad there but they're trucks are like ours. They've got a lot of commercial trucks on the road; their military trucks are limited to their military units. In a time of war, they're going to be busy doing their own thing. I think what we ought to concentrate there is our liaison contacts with the railroads, airlines, and truck companies so that if we do need some supplementary help and they do have the capability to give it to us, then at least we know how to go about getting it and I would encourage training in that direction particularly in Europe.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, should the US rely heavily on personnel from host nation to move men and material, employ them as truck drivers and rail personnel?

**MG Conroy:** The word heavily is the one that gets me. I think they should rely some on it because it stands to reason... In Korea, for example, we had the KATUSAs (Korean Auxiliary to US Army) and they came and drove our trucks and they drove our vehicles and we had some very interesting experiences as a result of language difficulties as to where they lined up when we asked there to do something and what they'd do when they got it done. I mean, you'd hear some very humorous and funny stories. Whenever I had a driver that the only English he knew would be "eight o'clock" that would be when he was going to pick me up and he could get there at eight o'clock but that's all. From there on I couldn't depend on him doing anything. But I do think that they can be trained and they do relieve the US on a lot of the mundane jobs that release some of our soldiers to do other things. So I think there is some value in that. On the other hand, in Europe for example, Europeans are pretty selective in the people that they put in their units and their units are highly trained and if they do have capabilities and are willing to make those people available to us, then of course we should use them. Then, on the other hand, I don't think they're a substitute for our own people and supporting ourselves as long as we can do it. But I think there is some capability there available.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, during the Vietnam era, the United States devised teams and the appointed advisors to train South Vietnamese personnel to perform in many different areas among those was logistical transportation operation. The US found that the greatest obstacle was the lack of qualified leadership at all levels. Still, through training programs, the Vietnamese were eventually able to drastically decrease their dependence on US training support. Out of that, the US could appreciate the importance of well-trained, highly competent leaders. Sir, how do we ensure our US Transportation Officers remain prepared to lead in combat?

**MG Conroy:** Oh, boy. Well, I've always had a very strong feeling that the transportation people should identify themselves with combat arms as early as possible in their career, preferably due to direct assignments. If they could get some assignment where they're commanding an infantry platoon or working with the artillery or working on the division staff or any one of the key jobs, or working in a support unit, a unit to the infantry division, anything that identifies them with the infantry--principally from the standpoint of learning, understanding, developing the language and the contacts and the feeling of confidence of working with combat units and that is highly essential to: in the first place, to their own training and capability and, secondly, to their acceptability to the combat arms. I think this relationship--the transportation people have with the combat arms--is really, really essential to any successful transportation operation. You've got to have the respect of the combat arms and they have to place themselves in the position of strength that their recommendations, their ideas, and their abilities to carry on an operation are respected by the people that command those operations.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, the Transportation Officer Advanced Course today is five months in length. The first portion of the course we study leadership, combined arms

operations, written/oral communications, and logistics. The last portion of the course is considered the most technical. It includes marine terminal, aviation, rail and highway transportation. This involves minimal mathematics and primarily utilizes a rule-of-thumb method and does not include any hands-on computer experience. Yet it is estimated that the future battle will be more technical or computerized than battles in the past. Sir, in order to meet your expectations of the qualified transportation officer, should the course be lengthened, and, if so, should the increased time be spent in computer operations and involved in more detailed math oriented curriculum or should this be developed through job experience?

**MG Conroy:** Well, the best way for me to get shot out of the sky by anybody that's in the advanced course is to suggest that we lengthen the course. I'm sure that most of them that are in that course about now, halfway through, are wishing that it were shorter. I don't believe that sitting in school for any extended length of time really does much for anybody. I think that you're infinitely better off to get out into the field. Let me give you an example. When I was a student at the University of Oregon, we had a Major who had been in World War I and was a very, very competent guy. He had umpteen thousand decorations and had been right in the thick of the battle and he really knew his, he knew how to conduct combat troops at the infantry level. He used to talk about the care of the men, and the simple things in the field--whether their shoes were repaired or whether their socks had holes in them or whether they were getting fed properly, whether they were ill and how you have to check on it. I used to look back at that and say, what are we talking about? Here we're all supposed to be Generals and we're planning big staff things and everything. But I never forgot that guy and one day he took us up on a hillside and he said; "Now we're going to be an infantry company in defense. Here are the materials you have." He issued the machine guns, rifles and everything. And he says, "Now deploy them." So each of us worked out a sketch of where we were going to put these things. And we deployed them. He would look over each one and he'd say, "Why did you put that machine gun there?" Well, hell I didn't have a good idea of why we did it. It kind of looked pretty good there. And then he started talking about fields of fire, approaches, avenues of approaches and firing in defilade--all the things that went into combat and security of your rear areas. He started to bring this thing alive--the relationship of the terrain and the physical placement of the guns, getting out there and dig a damn hole and put them in there so that you don't stick something beside or next to a tree where you can't dig because you can't get into the ground. And over the years since I've thought about it, that exercise was the most practical thing to me. Hell, I mean I finally said, started thinking in terms of you've got a group of men in the field and they're going to have to dig in some places and protect themselves. It was the most valuable lesson because it was sort of a "What are you doing with that thing in a hands-on situation". I think that's pretty much true about learning about computers. Now, no company officer has to learn everything about computers. You've got programmers that they love the stuff. You've got people that are technicians who can tell you every byte from every bit on them. But you have to know the general knowledge of how to employ them and so you have to get your sort of hands-on and feel them and find out what their feet of clay are. Example: we put a five million dollar unit, big Beryls (sic but suggest Burroughs) computer in Oakland,

California to control the flow of material to the West Coast--built a new building, air conditioning, the whole grand shmear. And I used to call it the House of the Ill Compute because the blasted thing never could tell what you had in the ports. And so what we used to do, pardon the expression, we used the old rule-of-thumb method. We took a ruler and went out and stood a hundred yards away from the stack of cargo and measured it to get an idea how many measurement tons we had in port. We could not depend on that computer working right because we had all the individuals that had no respect for the computer throwing poor information into it and we were not getting people dropping this thing after the stuff was shipped. So we had enormous amounts of cargo in that damn computer which had already been shipped and stuff in there that didn't belong in there. So I would say that the practical aspect of any of the advanced officers getting and working on the computer and getting a general knowledge of hands-on is a heck of a lot better than sitting taking theory in a class--sure a little theory to give them an introduction. The other thing that applies to air terminal operations, to staff planning, to anything giving them actual problems that they're working on under staff conditions.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, the objective to the Cambodian operation as expressed by former President Nixon was that US forces in cooperation with the Armed Forces of South Vietnam, attacks would be launched to clean out major enemy sanctuaries along the Cambodian/Vietnam border. His reasoning was that the North Vietnamese and Vietcong had occupied this key control center for five years in violation of Cambodian neutrality. Sir, was the Cambodian operation necessary to accomplish the objective?

**MG Conroy:** Absolutely. It was absolutely necessary. To give you an example, a couple of days after we went into Cambodia, I went in there and choppered into the jungle and what we would do is we would drop a round down into the jungle and it would explode. It would blow all the trees fourteen different directions and allow an elevator trench to go down through the trees and allow you to lower your chopper down in there and get out and walk around the jungle. I saw within a couple of days in Rock Island East and some of these other nicknames they put on some of these dumps, block after block after block of stacks of ammunitions, rockets, weapons, repair centers, signal centers, small hospitals, blacksmith shops, every conceivable thing you could think of up near the Paris beach and up in that region. And there was no question that all that material was moved up there to get ready to blow our heads off again. So from that standpoint, it was absolutely essential.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, was the operation successful in the accomplishment of the objective?

**MG Conroy:** Absolutely. It was successful in the fact that we blew the enemy out of the water, totally surprised. He got on his trucks and turned his lights on and started moving north, which he never did before. They were just wild. They left all kinds of material; they didn't take the trouble to load out. He was generally, totally, completely surprised. My personal feeling, of course this was national policy and there were a lot of reasons why you probably couldn't do it considering the situation at home, but when we had that

guy on the run and his socks were flying off, we should have kept after him instead of announcing to him that within 30 days or whatever number of period of days we gave him, that we were going to leave. So all he did was put on his brakes, skidded a little bit, turned around, dug a foxhole, and waited for us to leave. And he drew his phase lines and started to resist us as we came north. Well, you can't say to an attacking force, "Look fellows, we I re going to go home in a few weeks so keep your hat on. Don't get your head blown off." That was the bad part about it. I understand politically that Mr. Nixon had his limitations and he had to get out of there. From the standpoint though of the success of that operation, it was outstanding. I could tell you a story later on about going over and visiting Lon Nol, then President and former Chief of Staff of the Cambodian Army. Incidentally, he died a few weeks ago down here in Fullerton, California.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, were you, as the logistician, called in for the initial planning of the Cambodian operation?

**MG Conroy:** Oh, yes sir. We'd had a number of operations in the past that hadn't been particularly successful ... Well, they weren't unsuccessful but we lost a little edge and then we didn't have the surprise. So General Abrams, who was then the commander, had replaced General Westmoreland, made up his mind that this was going to surprise everybody including us. So he called in I think called in the G3, the Chief of Staff, the J4 (I was the J4), J Staff in MACV and sat us around. I think there were four of us. Now, he says, we're going to go into Cambodia very shortly. And he said, "I want you to get prepared for it. But if there is a leak, it's going to be from somebody in this room. So therefore, I don't want you to discuss this with your staff and I don't want you to show any vibrations of any kind." Not using his words, but what his intent was is that I don't want you to show any change in what you do that would lead anyone to believe something is going on. "Is that clear?" "Yes, sir." "Well, I'll let you know."

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, from a logistical standpoint, what was the major problem encountered during the planning of the operation?

**MG Conroy:** Well, in the first place, I had been gathering information for quite a long time on the level of our ammunition. Now, each one of the services kept their own level but part of *my* job, in addition to worrying about our own services so I could inform the commander, was to keep track of what the Vietnamese did and the Koreans. And the Koreans were always playing like the shell game. You never could find out where the pea was. They moved things around and always told you they were running short of ammunition and so forth and they always wanted to overload their gun positions for whatever their reasons were which I will not disclose here but they were nefarious to be sure. Anyhow, they insisted on increasing their levels of ammunition and that type of thing so you never could really be sure where they stood. Now, of course, they didn't participate heavily in the Cambodian operation but they did in others. The ones that we worried about the most, of course, were the Vietnamese in the third region, I guess, around Saigon where you had General Tree who gave himself the title of the "Patton" of the area. They used a lot of ammunition in that operation so getting (we didn't know that

was going to happen) knowledgeable on where we had all our material. Where was our briefing material for crossing small streams? And how were our fuel stocks? And was our aircraft available, our C-130s? Getting everything positioned. And I found myself in such a ridiculous position, I'd go down to my ammunition officer who was a very good guy and he really knew the business. He'd fly out to the gun positions and out to the depots and take some Kentucky windage on things. I'd say to him, "What's cooking? How are things going?" I used to come down and have a cup of coffee with him and say, "You know, are we ever going to get this ammunition business straightened out so we really know what those guys have?" "Oh yeah, we're doing all right." "Well, how you doing up in I Corps? How are you doing up in so forth?" And that way I would sort of reinforce myself with knowledge without telling him anything. But when we got ready to jump off and actually went, and of course, we all breathed with great difficulty because other than ... We held out pretty well on our ammunition except 50 caliber ammunition and man we almost ran out of gun positions and for a J4 or any kind of four in anybody's army to run out of ammunition at gun positions is dooms day for them. But I found myself up at nights on the telephone with Japan and with the United States and every place running down 50-caliber ammunition. Because 50 caliber ammunition was used on the M48 tanks that they had and some of their weaponry. I don't think we used it at all of any consequence at that time.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, before we leave the Cambodian operation discussion, let me ask you. Were there any major problems encountered during the operation itself? Not necessarily during the planning?

**MG Conroy:** Well, there are two or three things come to mind. In the first place, there was a great amount of rice found. Humongous piles of bags of rice in 50 or 100 ton packages. And we would have loved to get that rice out of there. But we'd have had to spend chopper time to do it and so, consequently, if you've ever destroyed rice, you've got yourself a tough job because rice ... You can pour water onto it; you can pour gasoline onto it; you can do anything you want to it. Rice doesn't burn very well and so you can scatter it around and so forth. You can contaminate it but destroying the rice took quite a bit of time and that was one major problem. We were sorry we couldn't get it out to help feed the South Vietnamese. But there was a lot of rice in there that would lead one to believe that they were certainly getting ready to attack. The other thing is, and probably the single most thing that stands out in my mind is, we captured a lot--or our troops rather captured a lot--of AK47 rifles, that is the bread and butter rifle of the enemy. We're talking about 4, 5 or 6 thousand. The Vietnamese had a lot of them; we had a lot of them. So there was enormous pressure on the command by the Joint Staff and everybody else to issue those rifles to the Cambodians because we did have access to AK47 ammunition. Why didn't we do it? Real simple: the enemy simply did not oblige us. When they left, they took the magazines. Now the magazines were light, I know, a couple of ounces in your hand but if you don't have a magazine, you don't have an AK47. And we tried all over. A number of factories in Japan; we made several attempts to get those things manufactured and we couldn't find anybody who'd be willing to do it except the Koreans. And if I remember, there were some 23 electric welds on them and they had to have the right followers inside the magazine. Had to

have the right tense strength and there was so many little things that had to be designed into that magazine ... That wasn't a simple thing to build. So we were unable to effectively issue all of those AK47s to the Cambodian troops until we got the magazines but it took us quite a while. And that was a bit of pressure on us about that. But the evacuation of material we could use like the AK47s and of course the destruction of all the rocketry and the rice, and items like that. Those depots were enormous; there's no question about. You could fly over them and you hadn't the slightest idea what was down there because there were three layers of canopy. They were well developed and I might say why I dwell on this point is that shortly after this time I'm talking about, General Abrams sent me over to talk to Lon Nol. Lon Nil was the President of Cambodia and had been the Chief of Staff of their Army. I landed there and I got greeted by their staff, went and sat around their staff. And they had a bunch of little apple-cheeked boys that were running the Army over there. I just said, "Holy smoke, if these guys are going to be doing all the fighting..." They were little guys with not too much experience and the future of the world was with them. In my conferences with the President, I said, "How do you expect to feed your troops when they're in combat?" He said, "We don't have any trouble in food in this country." And he used the old cliché, "I can stick my finger in the ground, it will grow." I said, "Sir, it won't grow very well if you've got people up in combat up there and you can't get food to them." And three months later, we were airlifting and airdropping food into some of those isolated spots in Cambodia.

But he told me, that there were a lot of base depots around there that were filled with material that were brought in by the Vietnamese. He said, "The best thing for you to do is to go look at them yourself." So I went and looked at a number of depots and I found Chinese items, enemy uniforms... So there isn't any question about the idea of going into Cambodia. It was a good one and I think it allowed us, ultimately, to get out of Vietnam without a heavy loss of life. These guys had had all those rockets and ammunition, all that equipment to come after us when we were leaving there and they made like a party for us.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, how do you envision the roles of transporters, logisticians in war planning?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I think this comes back to a few things that I had said earlier to you that I felt that our people are not given enough opportunity (our transportation people) to get in some of these key staff jobs and get into some of the early planning of the infantry divisions, corps; of course, corps is the mobile tactical type of thing that at Army headquarters where you participate in these plans. Where you can participate in the design of a campaign plan or a... You should definitely go to Armed Forces Staff College where they work on these kinds of plans or overall war plan, a campaign plan and finally the execution of air operations and that type of thing. That's invaluable. It helped me a lot. When I got into MACV, I could understand how that jungle operated and how to get things from the Air Force. You take ... Let me give you an example. We're talking about Cambodia earlier. Before we went into Cambodia, we ran what we called (and I wouldn't want to be quoted on this officially) but what we called "The

Underground Airline". The Vietnamese had C-119s, the old flying boxcars, and we moved material into Cambodia to help the Cambodians before we went into Cambodia. We had to work very closely with the US Air Force who controlled what the Vietnamese did and these kind of flights and we had to certainly work very closely with the Vietnamese Air Force. And going in there, they had to go in... They took off say like one o'clock in the morning from Ton San Nut, landed at about two o'clock in the morning at Phnom Penh and then unloaded their stuff in the dark hoping they gave it to the right guys. But I've got to tell you, we sent 50,000 uniforms in there and I went over there later on ... I never saw a single soul wearing them so I don't know what the hell they did with the stuff when they got it. Anyhow, to make a long story short, you definitely had to have people who were capable of working with the Air Forces and with the other services in their planning. Because if they don't have that experience and they're lost and the minute that you get on a staff and they don't think you know what you're doing, you might as well pack up your stuff and go home because nobody's going to tell you anything or nobody's going to give anything to you. You've got to have the aggressiveness to go out after it yourself.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, during your time in the Army, how were transporters/logisticians viewed by tacticians?

**MG Conroy:** Well, not with a lot of respect. It's not a very popular thing for me to make a negative comment like that because it would be much better for me to say, "Oh, they loved them. They thought they were outstanding and did a beautiful job." But I always had a feeling that they didn't really accept them, as they should have, and I saw this at several levels. And I saw it by talking to some of the people in the infantry divisions and so forth about their old friends. Ol' Willy Jones he finally got into the Transportation Corps and got himself a star, and he would never have made it where we were and that kind of thing. But I think the thing that made *many* things in transportation successful (and I don't know how many people really know this) but when the transportation corps was first formed by General Levy, he went down to the engineering school, the engineer school at Belvoir, and he picked about 8 or 10 of the best young captains that he could get his hands on. Now the engineers, most of them were West Pointers, and they had to perform very well in their school and their work at West Point or they wouldn't have been where they were. They had people like Bill Tank, Paul Yount, Frank Besson, Bunker, and I can go on and name a lot of others who were from this early elk of this engineering group that formed the basis of the Transportation Corps. Most of these fellows who were captains then became rather successful and went on and got two, three or four stars. But that gave a start and then the balance of it was made up of kind of mustangs like myself who had come in from some other branch and had some transportation background--Jack Fuson as an example, Jack Klenninhagen and many others that I could think of--Lane, Lang who came in from other parts of the business and worked hard and were very successful. If you performed in combat arms and did well, they couldn't do enough for you. They really took care of you but some of our lads had problems and were not as successful as they should have been. But I think as a general... I'm reminded of a story that happened to me when I went to Purdue. Purdue at that time, I was going to teach there as assistant PMS. Purdue had the second

largest auditorium in the world. It was out Rockefeller Center, the Rockefeller Theater was the largest (by two or three seats, I guess they put them in special), but anyhow we were to go to give a lecture to the freshman class which had about 1500 students in it and I can remember my colonel was an old salty dog, classmate of Eisenhower and later became a Brigadier General. My boss, the big cheese, got up and said, "Now we got this transportation stuff here that's (he's artillery by the way) and those guys handle your baggages and your bus tickets and stuff like that." I was so infuriated by that experience and I had him eating crow before this three years was over with him but anyhow... To answer your question, I think we have a lot to do to stay up on the ladder, to be respected and to put ourselves in the position of authority and responsibility so that our opinions and recommendations are accepted. I think it's just the kind of thing you have to work like a beaver and I think the access to that kind of experience is primarily through getting yourself a job on the staff with them or in a command with them where you are actually part of their operation. I think that we should continually work towards that.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, in terms of war planning, were transporters/logisticians as heavily involved considered as important as tacticians during a time of war and if not, what would it have taken to change the beliefs of tactical oriented commanders?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I think you have to think that tactical commanders, good ones, smart ones who thought in terms of just not only fighting on the battlefield but how do I get it. Now, Abrams is certainly a guy like that. Abrams never had a meeting on any operational subject that while I worked with him I wasn't a part of it. I kept my mouth shut. I listened. And if I was asked a question, I answered it. I was prepared to state whether we could or couldn't support something. But I think this has got to be part of our early officer's training that you have three legs on a stool and you've got your tactical and your support and, of course, your command group and everyone of these people has to have some knowledge and voice in the operation or it gets screwed up. You don't call your G4 in three days before the operation and ask him if he can support you and you've had your staff working on it for five months. You get him in the game early and that is the only way.

**CPT Bazemore:** Ok, sir what are some key lessons learned in war planning?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I have to preface anything I say emphasizing the point it's a personal opinion based upon as I've said earlier *my* own experiences and prejudices, but I would say that transportation has to position itself more I strongly with operating people in the war plans division and areas like that to assure that we get the allowances and spaces and the troop lists and necessary equipment to carry out our job. And, certainly, the budget to carry out our training in peacetime. If you don't get your proper place at the table, you're simply not going to be able to execute in time of war. Now, I can go back to several incidents to empathize what I'm talking about. First, you want to talk about World War I, as a kid I read a lot about how we stacked up railcars behind the ports for miles and miles and miles until we finally developed a system of what was going to port. It was a very difficult time as far as the use of transportation in the United States was

concerned. In World War II, there's no question about that we had problems all over the world in handling our movement of our supplies. The transportation people did it in spite of themselves and did a very creditable job against a lot of problems that they shouldn't have had. I can narrow it into one area like Iran where we were unloading 30 ships a month and sending the stuff into south Russia. I served at that time as the liaison officer with the Russians and then I was on the planning committee that planned the routing of materials into south Russia so that we would get, you know, the consumables like meats and things like that that the Russians used into the forward areas so that they'd go forward by truck those are truck routes in Iran and barbed wire and that type of thing. We didn't like to move barbed wire on the truck so we had to make sure that we put them on railcars so that we wouldn't tear the beds of the trucks up. But we had to balance that up because we had to use the various ways and lists that we had. We had the truck route; we had the rail route; we had a little air, it didn't amount to much; and we had a couple of small barge routes that went out part way. And all of those transportation facilities had to be used to a maximum amount to accommodate the movement of stuff into south Russia so we could reach our targets. If we didn't balance these routings properly ... Let's just say very quickly, there was an enormous dump called the Russian Dump in Quaram Shar area in south Iran. When we couldn't figure out what to do with anything, we put it in the Russian Dump until we got something beyond our control. And then in the northern parts of Russia, people have gone up into the northern areas where we were moving steel billets and metal products and things like that. The Russians just piled those in a big pile and they knocked the markings off these things so that we couldn't tell what was in them: steel, or whatever, steel hardened by certain additives, alloys, and so forth. That turned out probably to be the biggest mess. But these were all partially due to the fact that there was no way to control it and we didn't have a marking system and that type of thing. But then we can go to the Korean War very quickly and remember that down in Pusan we had an enormous pile of stuff in Pusan and the Pusan perimeter which is partly due to the effects of the war but also due to the fact that we didn't set up controls and the proper people to run it in the beginning. Then if you want to go onto Vietnam, we had 110 ships in the estuary when President Johnson asked Mr. McNamara, "Why?" And Mr. McNamara asked MACV why and MACV said it was because the western terminals were not controlling the amount of material they were flowing into Vietnam and, of course, is not so when we had daily telecom with them and everything they asked for they got, and anything they didn't want wasn't shipped. But I think they basically were using those ships for warehouses because on shoreside they had one hell of a mess and didn't know what to do with it. Anyhow, I had to go back and report to Mr. McNamara's office to explain why this happened but anyhow I escaped that because General Abrams did all the talking and we finally concluded we'd do a better job than what was set up then under CINCPAC. The commander of the Pacific came to visit me, an old friend from California at the Oakland Terminal there, and said what should we do about this and we mutually agreed that we would set up what was called the Pacific Area Movement Control Organization called nicknamed PAMPUS for some reason or other. He had about six or seven people, half of them Navy, half of them Army, all senior officers, and we set up the control system and nothing went into Vietnam that the local commanders didn't endorse. That, of course, cut back the amount of flow that

was going into there both by sea and by air. But we made those same mistakes over and over again in Korea and Vietnam and World War 11 and Iran and certainly in World War I that means that there's something that we don't do right. I suppose the lessons learned here will be that we need some very strong, key people in this war planning to make sure we set up the right kind of individuals and we set up individuals who are able to step in at their level. For instance, in the British Army they have what they call the "Q" movement and the "Q" movement guy sits right next to the commanding general and he has the authority to chop anybody's head off who doesn't comply. He swings a big stick in "Q" movement, highly respected in the British Army. We've got to have something similar in between where when we get into one of these situations, we've set up these controls very early and we nip it in the bud.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, can you summarize a closer relationship of the Navy and Air Force in the utilization of sealift and airlift operations?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I only know from very early, say around 1965, I was assigned to Mr. McNamara's office to do a study on essentially why didn't our war plan work out properly in the matter of movement of our materials into the battlefield and Mr. McNamara was disturbed by these reports that we had more ships out there than we needed and we had piles of stuff in the areas not properly identified and why didn't our material into the battlefield with wisdom and good order? I was assigned to make this study until I had an equal number of Air Force/Navy/Army officers on it. We made a number of findings and probably the most serious finding was that Mr. McNamara influenced a lot of this by his direct intervention in some of the things that I tried to accomplish and in some of the secrecy that surrounded President Johnson's desire not to announce that we had any new infantry division arriving in Vietnam until it was going across the beach. A combination of all these things made it very hard to operate within the Army. Each of the services, that is Navy and Air Force each had their own little private airlifts whether they would care to admit that or not I would doubt. But if they had to move something out to the Pacific by air, they managed to get it out there. We went up to Travis AFB and to Norton, I think in the Southern part of California, Air Force Base and we'd pile our stuff up there and wait until an airlift became available. A lot of times we got things on those airplanes that just simply shouldn't have been on there. They weren't as urgent as they appeared. We developed this Redball system. The whole experience was that I think that there was a group in the Department of Defense that felt that airlift ought to be controlled and sealift ought to be controlled out of their office. It was a general feeling, among the military at least, that the airlift/sealift ought to be controlled by the uniform side of the house. So we finally compromised and came up with an organization that was called SASM, the special assistant for strategic mobility, that chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. An office was set up and it worked out of the director of the Joint Staff's office which put it up high enough so that it was not going through all the staff levels and suffering through some of the issues that you do when you're down in the subordinate staff. I understand that has now been moved back into J4 where it was in the first place. But the general feeling on the part of the Department of Defense people was that it wasn't working right where it was so therefore, they wanted to see some change and that's where the change came about. I think it goes

back to the original point that getting close to the Navy and the operating people in the Navy, as well as the operating people in the Air Force, to get our requirements on the table in the general war plan as early as possible and then have people working with them, with whom they have the confidence in so that we don't have any of these pile ups and problems that we've had in the past. That may be for apple pie and motherhood but, at least so far, we've had these problems almost every time we've turned around and I think there's no reason to believe we couldn't have them again unless we take some very definite steps. Maybe we have. I haven't been in the Army for quite a few years. They may have set in motion the various controls necessary to assure that this kind of thing doesn't happen again.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, what about the lessons learned in a broader assignment of personnel?

**MG Conroy:** Well, I think the more that our transportation people can serve on Joint Staff with infantry divisions, or with other services in a Joint Staff capacity, the better able we are to understand the other services and they can understand what our problems are. And it assures our transportation people that additional training, get the experience that allows them to be respected in the work that they are doing. Principally, experience, position in these organizations should get them a better opportunity to assert themselves when it comes to war planning or trying to execute some action that they've been assigned.

**CPT Bazemore:** Sir, is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

**MG Conroy:** Well, there are two or three things that stand out in my mind that were interesting from an historical point of view on transportation also throw a little light on why we do things the way we do. The first one was in research and development. The years I was in research and development, we were working on the BARC, the LARC, the landing craft beach lighter (I guess we called it, PAGE was the real name of it), small ship-to-shore operation type of thing so we could roll vehicles off, roll-on/roll-off ships, rolling deck ships, and certainly the trackless training. I had a project called Trackless Training that meant that you would develop a vehicle that would go across the dessert and/or the Arctic which would carry large amounts of material. And in the years of the early 50's, we went up to Greenland, northern Greenland, and operated in there, the transportation corps there. And the reason to do that was, the Pearyland is a north and eastern part of Greenland and Pearyland is a kind of low, depressed area that you'll find lacking in moss and so forth in warmer weather up there and that is on the approaches of the line between Russia and the United States. So that, if in those days, you know, intercontinental ballistic missiles that could reach the United States could be tracked up in the Arctic before it had a chance to reach us. Well, we had to have some way to get over there because except for just a month or so in the summertime and maybe even not then, you couldn't get into that area. So what we had to do was to go up in to Thule, Greenland, climb up the ice cap which is anywhere from 400 feet to 6000 feet thick and then go across that icecap into northern Greenland passing Alpha and some of those points that were within 300 or 400 miles of the North Pole and finding

vehicles that could carry large amounts of material across there through maybe two months of the summer where you had constant daylight where you could move large amounts of supplies into say Pearyland and build up a base camp there so it could support us so we could operate during the wintertime and then re-supply during the summer. In that time, we developed, we extended the capabilities of the Tucker snowcap which is very common in use now. We worked on the Rolligone with Bill Alby at the center of it and developed that which later on was bought and owned by the Bechtel Corporation I work for and they used it up in the Arctic and a number of other different types of transporters that were used to move material. We never did too much with that after that period. From that came the rolling liquid fluid transporter that was a big rubber bag with treads on the tires that you dragged behind tanks for carrying fuel to refuel tanks in the battle zone. But we never did too much with all this afterwards because the requirement for establishing an Arctic station disappeared because of the types of intercontinental ballistic missiles that were developed and the state of the art kind of pushed us out of there. That was a very, very interesting period and I just wanted to mention that. Another section that stands out in my mind is, and I may have mentioned this earlier is, forward pre-positioning of stocks. If we contemplate a war or an action of any kind of any numbers of people, you certainly have to think in terms of what you need in the battle area. And I would think that it's a mistake to say, "Oh, we're only going to fight 30 days." You know, the next war is only going to be fought 30 days. I think if you have the responsibility of committing a lot of these fine young men to battle, then you have this responsibility of supporting them as long as they're in the battlefield. And it's not just sufficient to say look how much money we can save if we take all those stacks of stocks in Europe and put them in depots in eastern United States and then we'll fly those over at time of war or ship them over by water. Because we don't know what the submarine threat would be, how long it would last, or how we would cope with it, and we certainly don't know if we could control those airfields, the forward airfields, as I may have mentioned earlier. So, consequently, the one insurance policy you've got in your pocket is having enough stocks forward in proper revetments and proper protection that you've got them on the ground when you need them and they're not going to be standing around hoping that somebody's going to get something to you sometime. I have a strong feeling about that and I noticed in a paper here the other day, I was reading in one of the journals where General Rodgers, Bernie Rodgers who was a NATO commander for the last seven years--former Chief of Staff of the Army, had said essentially the same thing. He said that we don't have enough logistical support to support what we've got over here right now. And I think that's an eroded position over the last quite a few years since I've been in Europe because our position was, we wanted to have 90 days if we could have it. It seems to be working away from that. I'm going to tell you this, you've got troops on the ground, and they're going to fight. Don't sit back and say how long they're going to be there. It's a mistake. You've got to get enough to support them for an extended period of time until you can re-supply them. It's an insurance policy and you might save a lot of money by moving the stuff back to the east coast and hope that you can get it there but that's not very reliable.

I'd like to also mention one of the major areas that we sometimes in transportation run across. We don't find it very pleasant to deal with and we really don't give it too much

attention in any of our troop training and that is surplus. Surplus can become a major pain in the neck for anybody that has anything to do with large amounts of material. In the battlefield, you get scrap. You pick up brass. You pick up damaged vehicles. You build big stockpiles and those things are always a target if people want to make money. You have to have some way to deal with that. Also, we had build up surplus stocks in Europe. We had stuff left over from World War II--medical supplies, things like that, deadpans and rubber sheets and things that had long reached their state of obsolescence and nobody wanted to buy them so we had them all stacked up. We had to figure ways to dispose of it and there's always a class of people who sit outside and say there's just millions of dollars worth of surplus that the Army's disposing of and why don't they take care of it. Why do they order so much and why isn't this managed properly? So I think our people should have in their training should have some knowledge of this to recognize, this is a real pitfall in peace or war. You find that the people who worked with it in Europe could tell you that it was a big pain in the neck to them and you will find in Vietnam, we had enormous piles of this stuff and we left a lot of it behind which represents the life and blood of our good country.

The next general area I'd like to mention to you which is the joint Army/Navy ocean terminal. Not too many people know exactly how that was conceived. I've read articles about it that sort of talk about it but they don't really deal with the real facts. The joint Army/Navy Ocean terminals came about as a result of a study that was made on a DOD through the Navy--Navy supply corps. They sent a man out to Oakland, California at the beginning of the Vietnamese War who came with a very fine recommendation that they could save a lot of money and get rid of Oakland Army Base and do just these wonderful things by closing up that and giving all its mission to the Navy. Very little consultation with the Army or the people in the field or any real knowledge of what we did. Before they put the final chop on it, the Department of Defense sent Tom Morris, who was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Ken Ballou, General Besson and a number of other people came out to decide on how this was going to be disposed of and I had the good fortune during that period of time of having a lot of cargo in the base, oh, an enormous amount. We had a truck out there about a mile long. We had cargo in every conceivable storage area. Every berth in that port was stacked with cargo and all ships were working. We were loading an aircraft carrier; we were very busy. I instructed my people to wear all their decorations and stand out in front looking bright and smart. But remember, you've got a job to do and if somebody comes up in a vehicle, don't drop everything you're doing and throw everything out of the way and let him or her go through. Let them go around you. You're busy. You're doing a job. When they went around and visited that port area for two days that's the only impression they could have got. These guys are just standing on their head getting this job done. Then they went over to see the Navy people that were going to take over this mission. There were no ships over there; there was no cargo in sight. All the doors to all the warehouses were closed and it looked like a sleepy village. Well, without getting into the minutiae of who said what to whom because it's controversial and could be embarrassing to some people, they got on the airplane and went back to Washington. The following day I got a call from General Besson saying, "I don't know how it happened but the decision has been reversed. You're going to run the joint

Army/Navy Ocean terminal." So the Navy folks did everything but commit hara-kiri because it didn't work out to their advantage. Rather it worked to what they considered their disadvantage. So what I did was to leave the Navy alone. When a ship came in, it was designed to be loaded for replenishment for the Navy while underway. That simply means that you're going to have a destroyer come alongside or a supply ship come alongside and you're going to supply from the big ship like Mars, you're going to run this stuff across the high line and drop it into the ship next to you while you're going at 20 or 30 knots or whatever speed they travel. You might be loading it at night too because of enemy air so we never touched that. The Army never touched that. We made the commander of the whole port, we took a Naval officer, and we kept the Navy loading intact and, as a consequence, we finally worked our way through a year, year and a half of this struggle. It was kind of a traumatic thing because I think that there was a move afoot to take over the ocean terminals. As a consequence, the real damage to the Army probably would have been sure, people can get your ships loaded. The world's not going to come to an end. You can load them at commercial terminals and they said just load them at commercial terminals but some commercial terminals had people laying down in the front of them and wouldn't let the trucks come through. When you've got an Army/Navy ocean terminal and it's secured by the federal law, gates and things like that, you can put people all around there to protect the access to that place. And you'd come in with your trucks and your discharges and keep those kinds of people out so you have some control of it. But the real thing, to get back to the point I wanted to make, you have to have a training base for people overseas. Where do you get these people who can run a port? Well, the port is not a common thing for a person to learn in the Army. It has its specialty; you have to have people that know what the heck they're doing. You get them from the base training that your young people get at the ports when they're down on the waterfront watching these super cargoes and the people who plan the loading of the ships and the discharging of retrograde cargo and that type of thing. So you must have a basis for that and I'm glad to see that at least that it still seems to be so that both the Navy and the Army are both participating in these three major ports in the United States: in New York, New Orleans, and Oakland and some of the subports. Because they're still all getting trained. They're all getting a piece of the action that way.

**CPT Bazemore:** Ok, sir. If there is nothing else you have to add, on behalf of the Commander of Fort Eustis and the Command Historian, I would like to thank you for your participation in the Oral History Program.

**MG Conroy:** Well, I just want to make one point. First, I love the Transportation Corps; I cut my eyeteeth on it. It was my home and I don't dismiss any of the great things they've done because they have done an enormous job--no question about it. Their work in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam is outstanding and they have some very outstanding men. I'm just sort of proud to belong to it. But when you talk about lessons learned and say some of the things I've said here, I don't think it would be of any value to anybody to just give a big fluffed out about how great we were. We're talking about what we want to be in the future. What we want to be and we want to be a little higher on that ladder than we've been in the past. We want to get our foot in the door in planning. We want to get our foot in the door in major operations. And we don't want to be called to the table

when there's nothing left to be served and say, "What are you going to do about it?" You don't want to get called up and say, "How are you going to handle this matter?" We're going to handle this matter. We're short on barbed wire on the forward area, what are you going to do about it and you find out that's the first time anybody's mentioned barbed wire in the last six months. You might like to know that they were getting short on barbed wire three months ago. Then you could do something about getting it into them. I find that if you properly ... You see, transportation is another leg of supply. If you don't order things properly and soon enough, then you're going to use airlift as a crutch to patch up all the holes that you've dug for yourself because you failed to act properly. Then it's costing you ... I know in civilian life today, at least our planning in Bechtel Corporation, we figured it takes about 12 times the cost of sending something around the world by air than it does putting it on a ship. So you figure this way, from the time you order something until the time you deliver it (if it takes 90 days, say, from the day you order it until the day it gets delivered) and you're going to sit around and wait until the last 30 days to order something and then you're going to ship, as we do in industry, base plates, supply wood, and it costs you \$150,000 an airplane load to send an airplane load of plywood to Indonesia. You're going to say to yourself, who can afford this kind of thing? You can translate those into the economy as a force and material into the military. The military isn't going to transport anything to the battlefield any cheaper than anybody else does. And you say all right, what do we need the earliest in this battlefield? And what should we take with us and what are our follow on spares that we need, repair parts? Do we get these things moving early enough in best shape? I saw out here at Oakland, the biggest mess of stuff you have ever seen coming out of the depot. As a consequence, I got General Angler to have all the depot commanders come out here and we had a walk through. Everybody had a little piece of the action. I'd say this comes from this depot under your command. This comes from that depot ... And they'd look at the stuff--it's deplorable. Who ever did this? I asked, "Did you guys tailgate this stuff?" A truck comes by and you throw it on. It gets off your hands and onto mine. And I throw it on a ship and it gets off of my hands and poor guys in Vietnam get it. Consequently, it comes back to very careful ordering in the beginning and the care and concern about how they ship things out. Certainly, in all parts, the transportation has to be knowledgeable of the planning decisions.

Your planning for ordering things is timely and controlled. And your controls and your airlift are careful and you recognize, if you've got sealift, then get it there by sealift. It's going to be cheaper in the long run for you because, is there any question that movement by air is more expensive? The Air Force will tell that's not so; you can move brooms just as cheap on one timing as the other but I don't believe that. Particularly if you have limitations in your airport airfields where you've got choke points and re-supply by fuel problems and that type of thing. I guess I'm repeating myself to say that there is a relationship with all this. It's necessary for our transportation people to find themselves on these staffs with enough knowledge on their behalf to be able to participate in the planning and say, "Hey, fellows, it doesn't work that way." You've got to do this, this and this and to get their oars in at a time when the war plan is being put together. There's a contingency plan for every conceivable type of thing that we might do and say, the next two or three years. And transportation people should be knowledgeable of those plans.

They should be participating in them and if there's something that's not right they ought to be able to assert themselves and say, look. That's difficult to do.