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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Herbert Schandler
Conducted by Laura Calkins
September 28, 2004; September 29, 2004; May 25, 2005; June 8, 2005
Transcribed by Jessica Fontenot**

1 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at
2 Texas Tech University beginning an oral history interview with Col. Herbert Schandler,
3 U.S. Army retired. Today's date is the—what is today's date, sir? Do you know?

4 Herbert Schandler: I'd say it's the twenty-eighth, isn't it?

5 LC: I believe you're right. I'm sorry. I normally have this ready. It's the twenty-
6 eighth of September 2004. I am in the interview room in the Special Collections building
7 on the campus of Texas Tech. The colonel is speaking to me by telephone from Virginia.
8 Good morning, sir.

9 HS: Good morning.

10 LC: I want to thank you so much for participating in the Oral History Project
11 here. I'd like to begin by asking you some general biographical data. Would you tell us
12 where you were born, sir, and when?

13 HS: I was born in Ashville, North Carolina, on the second of January 1928.

14 LC: You were a New Year's baby.

15 HS: Yeah. It's been downhill ever since.

16 LC: Is that right?

17 HS: No.

18 LC: Well, we're gonna find out. Sir, if you would, tell me were there other
19 children in the other family besides yourself?

20 HS: Oh, sure I was the fifth of six, five boys and one girl.

1 LC: Let me know a little bit, if you can, about your mother. First of all what was
2 her name?

3 HS: Sarah Schandler, Sarah Salem Schandler. Salem was her maiden name.

4 LC: Tell me a little bit about her, sir. Where was she from?

5 HS: She was born in Metau, M-E-T-A-U, Latvia, which at that time was
6 occupied by Russia. She came to the United States in 1909. Her brother was a pharmacist
7 in Chicago and he brought her over. She settled down in Chicago. He was a pharmacist
8 and she was a housewife in Chicago. I guess his whole family was there.

9 LC: His whole family was already there?

10 HS: Yeah.

11 LC: Did she live with them then?

12 HS: As far as I know, sure.

13 LC: Did she work outside the home?

14 HS: No, she didn't.

15 LC: Okay. How did she meet your father?

16 HS: My father met her in Latvia. He came over after she did, sometime in 1909,
17 and hitchhiked his way out to Chicago since he knew no English and had no money. He
18 met her in Chicago. He was going after her, as a matter of fact. He knew her from the old
19 country and they were married in 1911. I got a picture of their wedding here, August the
20 eleventh 1911.

21 LC: So he had his cap set for her it sounds like.

22 HS: That's right. He came over to find her. He knew where she was.

23 LC: Were their families connected somehow in Europe?

24 HS: No. Not that I know of 'cause they came from the same hometown, Metau,
25 which is now called Jelgava, J-E-L-G-A-V-A. I visited there in about 1989, I think.

26 LC: I was gonna ask you. Had you been there?

27 HS: Oh, yeah. I had a long talk at a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)
28 symposium in Rome with a young man who said he was with the Ministry of Defense in
29 Lithuania. Then I got a nice letter from him saying he really enjoyed our conversation
30 and wanted to continue it. It turned out he was the Minister of Defense. I got an invitation
31 to speak at the *Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr* in Hamburg. So while I was in

1 Hamburg. My boss said, “Why don’t you go to Lithuania? It’s not very far.” So I went to
2 Lithuania to talk to him and then I called the Latvian Minister in Washington and said,
3 “Well, I’ll go to Latvia as long as I’m so close.” So I spent about three days in Lithuania
4 and three days in Latvia. They had me all set up to go to a tour of Jelgava with the
5 regional military commander and the border guard battalion commander.

6 LC: On your tours, then, you made time to visit your parents’ home city?

7 HS: Oh, yeah sure.

8 LC: What was your impression of it? What was going on there in 1989?

9 HS: Well, not very much. It was a bustling city. The Duke of Courland, it was
10 called Courland at that time. The Duke of Courland had a big castle on the hill, which the
11 Soviets had turned into an agriculture college. It was bound up with the agricultural
12 college. My parents called it Courland, C-O-U-R-L-A-N-D, and that was the Duke of
13 Courland, who was a Russian I guess. The regional military commander didn’t really
14 know much about it. We went to a museum there. They had a big map of Courland and
15 they had an effigy of the Duke of Courland. So I taught him a lot about it, too.

16 LC: That’s amazing. That’s amazing. Well, of course, this was right in the midst
17 of the ferment.

18 HS: Oh, yeah. It was the beginning of the ferment. We were shown where the
19 people in Latvia and Lithuania had to start going back to church. My guide showed us it
20 was mostly the old people who were going back to the church and they were beginning to
21 ferment a little bit.

22 LC: Yes, sir. Absolutely.

23 HS: ‘Cause they were very kind to me.

24 LC: Did pretty much everyone recognize you as an American?

25 HS: Not really. I guess they did once I talked to them it was really—I had a
26 Canadian lady who was my guide and interpreter. Then I had a driver and I had the
27 regional military commander and the border guard battalion commander. So there was
28 five of us riding around in this car. I remember going into—I bought them all dinner. We
29 had a big luncheon. We had borscht and we had a pot roast and we had drinks and all
30 that. I asked somebody, I said, “I only have American money. How much is it? I want to

1 pay for everybody.” She went into the corner and conferred with her husband, I guess.
2 She came back and said, “Well, all together it’s five dollars.”

3 LC: Yes. Astounding. Astounding.

4 HS: The dollar and the Deutschmark were the items of exchange there. As long
5 as you didn’t buy anything that came from outside—if you wanted French wine it was
6 very expensive, but just buying stuff that was produced there in Latvia, very cheap.

7 LC: That’s very reminiscent of my own experiences around the same time in
8 Czechoslovakia, same thing.

9 HS: Oh, yeah.

10 LC: Yes. Sir, going back to your own family, first of all, tell me your father’s
11 name. Let’s make sure we get that.

12 HS: Okay. David. David Sigmond Schandler, S-I-G-M-O-N-D.

13 LC: What had been his trade or occupation before he came over to the—?

14 HS: He was an apprentice baker.

15 LC: I’m sorry?

16 HS: He was an apprentice baker.

17 LC: Oh, I’m sorry. Yes, an apprentice baker. Did he do the same thing when he
18 came to Chicago?

19 HS: Oh, no. Since his brother-in-law was a pharmacist, he became a pharmacist.

20 LC: Really?

21 HS: Oh, yeah. They should’ve stayed together. They could’ve been the Johnson
22 & Johnson of the new generation.

23 LC: That’s right. That’s right.

24 HS: They invented a liniment called Salem’s Velvet Rub. Then we had some of
25 that when I was little, which was kind of a little relief like wintergreen leaf you put on
26 strained muscles to make them feel better. They invented that. Then after my father had
27 been in the States for about a year or two he decided to bring his mother, my
28 grandmother, and my wife’s mother, my mother’s mother over. One of them had some
29 kind of an eye disease or some story. He had to put up about a half of million dollars
30 bond that he would be responsible for them. So he did.

1 LC: That would be because there were some kind of restrictions on people
2 coming into the country who had a physical problem.

3 HS: That's right. He had to be responsible for them and see that she had a job and
4 she'd be taken care of and so on.

5 LC: How did he manage to put up such a bond?

6 HS: Well, it beats me, but they were very prosperous, apparently.

7 LC: That's incredible.

8 HS: It turns up just after he'd been here about a year. Then it turned out that, I
9 don't know, one of these grandmothers had some kind of a disease. It's probably
10 tuberculosis 'cause at that time you treated tuberculosis by going to a wholesome climate
11 for it.

12 LC: Yes. That's right.

13 HS: My father was gonna have to take my grandmother, his mother, to some
14 place. I think it was my mother's mother. He was looking to go to Montana. He said they
15 would give you free land if you'd be a sheepherder in Montana. The climate there was
16 good for what she had. Then somebody told him that well, the mountains of Asheville,
17 North Carolina, were very good for that, too. He lived in Montana and he lived here in
18 North Carolina. He thanked God decided to go to North Carolina. So that's how he ended
19 up in Asheville, North Carolina.

20 LC: Okay. About what year do you know did they move down there?

21 HS: Oh, boy, it was about 1915 or '16, I guess. I don't really know.

22 LC: They must've been some sight coming into Asheville, North Carolina.

23 HS: They only had one child at that time. They settled down there.

24 LC: Now who was the oldest child?

25 HS: Aaron was the oldest.

26 LC: That would be your brother, is that right?

27 HS: That's right.

28 LC: Okay. If you don't mind, Colonel, tell me what happened with Aaron. What
29 did he do as he grew up?

30 HS: As Aaron grew up he had a very sheltered life. My father was in the
31 wholesale cigar and newspaper business. He supplied all the other people around in the

1 trains that were coming through in Nashville with newspapers and candy bars and cigars
2 and cigarettes and so on. Aaron was a privileged kid to have a cigar named after him
3 called Schandler Junior.

4 LC: No kidding.

5 HS: Yeah. He was very prosperous. Then he met a man that who said he knew all
6 about the movie theater business. So they built a movie theater, which is still the largest
7 one in Ashville called the Plaza Theater. Then it turned out that this guy didn't know
8 anything about movies and then the Depression hit. So they lost the movie and they lost
9 about everything else. My father had one piece of property remaining and that was the
10 grocery store. So he was in the grocery business from then on. He was apparently the
11 only one, or one of the few, in Ashville that paid all his bills and got out of the
12 Depression that way because when he died I was going through his desk and I found a
13 note from the local banker, Charles Parker. The note said, "I've been watching you
14 through this financial crisis. You have the heart of a lion. It's people like you who made
15 this country great. If there's anything I can do for you, let me know."

16 LC: Wow.

17 HS: I wish I'd kept that.

18 LC: Yeah. That's quite a testimony to have something like that from a banker,
19 especially at that time.

20 HS: At that time, sure 'cause he paid all his bills. Then he was in the grocery
21 business.

22 LC: Did he then stay in Ashville or that area?

23 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Stayed in Ashville. Lived and died in Ashville.

24 LC: Is the Plaza Theater building still there?

25 HS: Oh, yeah.

26 LC: Is it still functioning?

27 HS: Yeah.

28 LC: No kidding?

29 HS: It's still the biggest theater in Ashville.

30 LC: That's amazing.

1 HS: They used to have stage shows when I was little. I don't think my father
2 owned it anymore, but they had stage shows and vaudeville acts and so on.

3 LC: Do you remember that?

4 HS: Oh, yeah. I remember we saw Ozzie and Harriet on the stage one time.
5 That's the only thing I remember about it.

6 LC: Wow.

7 HS: It had a big lobby and a big fountain in the lobby.

8 LC: It sounds quite ornate.

9 HS: Yeah, well, it was just big. It had a big lobby.

10 LC: Quite something for Ashville, I'm sure.

11 HS: Oh, yeah.

12 LC: Especially at that time. Wow. Quite amazing. Let me ask a little bit more
13 about your own childhood. You came along. There was a whole group of kids ahead of
14 you.

15 HS: Yeah. I came along in 1928 just in time to experience the Depression.

16 LC: Yeah. I was gonna say hit the Depression full force.

17 HS: Yeah.

18 LC: How did your father do? You talked about the grocery store, was that part of
19 how he got the family through during the Depression?

20 HS: Yeah, exactly.

21 LC: Tell me your memories of that time. Anything you remember. Do you
22 remember having to skimp and sort of—?

23 HS: No. I remember, though, that we lived above the grocery store, big house
24 and the second floor of the grocery store was our house. I remember we always got the
25 leftovers. The apples and potatoes that were no good, that were beginning to go bad, my
26 mother would cut the bad part off and we'd eat the rest of it. So we got through that way,
27 I guess. I remember that and I remember—that's about all. I remember we had a long
28 driveway at the side of the house. We lived above it and there was a big backyard.

29 LC: Is that where you kids played most of the time?

1 HS: Yeah, in the backyard. It was a big vacant lot next door to us in the rear and
2 it was owned by the city. They stored all kinds of water pipes and things there and we
3 played in there.

4 LC: That sounds ready made.

5 HS: Yeah. It was great.

6 LC: What kind of friends did you have growing up?

7 HS: Well, the best friend we had was Bobby Lewis. His father owned another
8 theater in town. His uncle was a funeral director. He used to take us to school 'cause he
9 lived right around the corner. He'd drive us to school every morning and then we would
10 always get in the movies free on Saturday to see the serials that they had then, the
11 cowboy movies, Zorro the Great.

12 LC: Which was your favorite? Do you remember?

13 HS: I just remember Zorro.

14 LC: Did you like Zorro?

15 HS: Oh, yeah. They would always end each session with Zorro about to get killed
16 and then you'd come back the next time and then go on for another time.

17 LC: That's right. That sounded pretty good, huh?

18 HS: Oh, yeah.

19 LC: Did you guys get into the movies for nothing?

20 HS: Oh, yeah, at that time with Bobby Lewis.

21 LC: Right. Tell me about the school that you were going to.

22 HS: Well, let's see. I went to Claxton Elementary School, which is quite a way
23 out. I remember my parents always used to send the truck driver to pick me up and take
24 me home, give me lunch, and then take me back to school.

25 LC: Who would do that?

26 HS: The truck driver, Don C. Martin was his name.

27 LC: Did he do odd jobs around the town, too?

28 HS: No, no, no. He was our truck driver.

29 LC: Oh, okay. Oh, I see.

30 HS: We delivered groceries.

31 LC: I see. I'm with you.

1 HS: Twice a day we had a delivery and then the north end of town in the
2 morning, and then out to the (unintelligible) in the afternoon.

3 LC: He had to work in there picking you up and—

4 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

5 LC: What, if anything, can you tell me about the school itself? What kind of a
6 building was it?

7 HS: It was a white building, sort of square, three stories tall. I guess it was a
8 primary school. Ashville was, of course, segregated in that time. So they had just a
9 regular, I don't know how they, up to the eighth grade, I guess. Then the eighth grade
10 was at Lee H. Edwards High School, which was a very modern high school on the other
11 side of town that they had built before the Depression when they had a lot of money. It
12 was a beautiful building with stone and a big football field out in the back.

13 LC: Where did the African American children go to school?

14 HS: They went to Stevens-Lee High School, which was closer to our house, but it
15 was in the Negro section of town.

16 LC: Did you have friends who were black? Did you know anybody who was
17 black or was it completely separate?

18 HS: Oh, yeah. Well, we had a maid who gave me baths until I was old enough be
19 embarrassed by it. We had gotten to do—the Martin family worked for us. Don C. Martin
20 was the truck driver. Sandy Martin was a clerk in the store. Her sister would come on
21 sometime. We had a washerwoman named—what was her name? Lulu. Lulu was the
22 washer when she'd come ever Monday and have big tubs and a washing board and do all
23 the washing. So yeah, we had a lot of friends. My father at his funeral, there were just as
24 many black people as there were white people, I suppose.

25 LC: When did he die?

26 HS: Let's see. 1954. I was at Ft. Leavenworth, the command general staff
27 college, yes. So that must've been '54, late '54.

28 LC: Under what circumstances?

29 HS: He had a stroke while he was in the bathroom. He fell down and hit his head
30 on the bathtub. So I don't know if the stroke killed him or whether hitting his head killed
31 him.

1 LC: You were mentioning that at his funeral, both white and black people came.

2 HS: Oh, yeah. Asheville was segregated, but it was a very friendly town. People,
3 there was no desegregation movement there. Everybody seemed to be happy and content.

4 LC: There weren't the animosities that we've seen.

5 HS: No animosities at all, absolutely. When the *Brown vs. Board of Education*
6 came through everybody said, "Well, it's about time. Hooray," and then went about their
7 business.

8 LC: Is that right? Wow. That's incredible. Tell me a little bit more about your
9 high school. Did all of your older brothers and sisters go there?

10 HS: I don't think the older—I don't think Aaron went there because it wasn't
11 built then. It was built in about 1928 when they had a lot of money going around. So I
12 don't think he went there, but everybody else went there.

13 LC: When you—?

14 HS: And—

15 LC: Go ahead, sir.

16 HS: Had a school bus pick us up and drive us down there, drive us right past the
17 Negro high school to Lee Edwards, which was on the far side of town.

18 LC: When you arrived there, the pattern probably had kind of been sat the
19 Schandlers showing up there. Were your older sisters and brother, had they been good
20 students?

21 HS: Well, I suppose so, yeah.

22 LC: What about you? What about you, sir?

23 HS: Yeah, I was pretty good.

24 LC: Uh-huh. I had a feeling.

25 HS: Yeah. Let's see. My older brother went to college for two years and then the
26 Depression hit and he dropped out of college. Then the second brother went and the third
27 brother went and then there was her turn. She went to a business school, didn't go to
28 college at all. Then my little brother, my brother and my younger brother, we both went
29 to college.

30 LC: When you were in high school did you play sports?

1 HS: I was on the track team until the war came. When the war came, World War
2 II, Don C. Martin, the truck driver, got drafted and then I became the truck driver.

3 LC: Did that mean you had to let go of—?

4 HS: Let go of everything after school. I'd rush home to take the afternoon's
5 delivery out.

6 LC: Okay. Tell me about what you remember about the war being declared?

7 HS: Well, I had all my brothers. Three brothers were in the war. Aaron was in
8 Europe. Jack was in the Pacific. What I remember about it was that we had gasoline
9 ration stamps and every once in a while the ration stamps would have to be renewed. So
10 they would take some of the best people out of high school who could miss a day to
11 renew the ration stamps. In my father's store they had red stamps and blue stamps. Red
12 stamps were for meat and the blue stamps were for everything else, I guess. I would
13 collect these stamps outside. Then every month they would change the value of what you
14 could buy with these stamps. I remember erasing all the cans and putting new points on
15 the can. I remember we had a bank account of red and blue stamps. We had thousands of
16 red and blue stamps to our credit. So it really didn't affect us very much. Our good
17 customers, we would give them anything they wanted. Take all their stamps. That was
18 my job on the delivery.

19 LC: Colonel, if you don't mind, can you tell me a little bit about your brothers'
20 service? What did you find out later they had done, starting perhaps with Aaron?

21 HS: Okay. With Aaron, Aaron joined the Army in '41 because he wanted to get
22 away from the grocery store. He went to officer candidate school at the Fuquay Arsenal
23 and was commissioned in the quartermaster corps. At that time, my father's persistence
24 in the Depression paid off because we'd have to get letters of recommendation to go to
25 the bank and the editor of the newspaper and all that. They'd all say, "Well, we don't
26 know you, but if you're Dave Schandler's son you oughta go to OCS (officer candidate
27 school)." So he went to OCS and then he was transferred to San Bernardino, California,
28 and he was the transportation officer for the 44th Division. He was in charge of
29 evacuating Japanese from the West Coast.

30 LC: Really?

1 HS: Yeah. Then he went overseas to Cardiff, England, where they were getting
2 ready for the invasion. Then when the invasion started, he was transferred to Mons,
3 Belgium, and his job was supplying Patton's 3rd Army with gasoline and oil. He ended
4 the war as a major. He really enjoyed it and wanted to stay in, but he decided not to stay
5 in. He was very active in the Reserves from that time on. He ended up as lieutenant
6 colonel in the Reserves. Every time I came home from West Point I'd have to address the
7 local Reserve meeting.

8 LC: He put you to work, huh?

9 HS: Yeah. Then Jack, the second one, he was in the Navy. He went to Navy OCS
10 somewhere in New York. He went to a destroyer-minesweeper, which has been an old
11 four-stacker destroyer in World War I. He was in the invasion of Casablanca. Then he
12 came home to New York and got married. Then he went to the Pacific for thirty-six
13 months and was in all the invasions there.

14 LC: Was he really?

15 HS: Yeah.

16 LC: What kind of craft was he on out in the Pacific?

17 HS: A destroyer-minesweeper. They go in first and the USS *Hamilton*, I think it
18 was. They'd go in first and sweep the mines and make paths for the other people, see? He
19 said after Iwo Jima they were patrolling the seas and picking up airplane pilots, B-29
20 pilots who had crashed at sea who got shot down there and they were picking them up.

21 LC: They were picking up pilots?

22 HS: Yeah, at the end. Then Ruth, let's see Seymour was a lieutenant in the Navy
23 also, but he was working at the Philadelphia Navy yard as a technician and laboratory
24 guy. So they made him a lieutenant in the Navy, he stayed there.

25 LC: Did he stay in the Navy?

26 HS: No. He stayed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

27 LC: Oh, okay. Uh-huh. I'm sorry.

28 HS: They all got out of the Navy as quick as they could.

29 LC: They did, huh?

30 HS: Especially Jack. He didn't like it. He was at sea the whole time. He said *The*
31 *Caine Mutiny* was written about his destroyer. They didn't like the commander. They

1 didn't have much fun. They were on every invasion. He hadn't seen his wife in thirty-two
2 months.

3 LC: He was ready to get out of there.

4 HS: Absolutely.

5 LC: Yeah.

6 HS: And settle down. Then, Ruth, my sister, went to Washington to be a
7 secretary. She met her future husband up there. He was in the Navy as a chief petty
8 officer. He knew about computers. They were just beginning to think about computers
9 and they had file cards and all that. He was good at that. He should've stayed with it, but
10 he didn't. Then there was my little brother and myself. We went around on Saturdays and
11 collected newspapers and grease and whatever else they were collecting at that time and
12 give it to the Boy Scouts.

13 LC: So you were involved in doing that? Did you make a little bit of money?

14 HS: I was in the Boy Scouts.

15 LC: Oh, I see.

16 HS: No, we didn't make any money. We just donated that stuff.

17 LC: Those were the drives to sort of recover materials?

18 HS: Yeah, recover materials, scrap iron, we didn't get much of that, but we got
19 newspapers.

20 LC: Colonel, can you tell me just thinking back about this, knowing that all these
21 members of your family, your brothers and sisters were serving the country, thinking
22 about that what kind of influence did that have on you?

23 HS: Well, I don't know. Maybe I saw a movie once that made me want to go to
24 West Point.

25 LC: What movie was that?

26 HS: I think it was—what was the name of it? *The Gentleman's West Point*, or
27 something like that. It was Leslie Howard was in it, if you remember him. You don't
28 remember.

29 LC: Yes, I do. I do remember him. He was a British actor, I think.

30 HS: Yeah, well, he was an American cadet in this movie.

31 LC: Oh, okay. He was a very smooth American cadet.

1 HS: He was the cadet and the movie was about a football player at West Point
2 who was gonna have to leave because his mother didn't have any money and needed him
3 at home. Leslie Howard was very rich and he sneaks off post once to send her some
4 money so this guy could play football and they caught him. He wouldn't admit anything
5 and so they silenced him. Nobody would talk to him. Then he would be lonely in his
6 room listening to the football game that this guy was a big hero and that he had saved.
7 Finally at the end it all came out and they all gathered around and shook his hand and
8 they were all sorry. So I thought that was nice.

9 LC: You thought, "What's this about West Point? What's this thing called West
10 Point?"

11 HS: Yeah. I thought they seemed to be pretty nice guys up there. So I wanted to
12 go there.

13 LC: Can you tell me how it came about that you did indeed get to go there?

14 HS: I went to the University of Cincinnati first. While I was there apparently I'd
15 spent a year there and then apparently the next summer someone who had been appointed
16 to West Point had flunked the exam. My senator was able to choose somebody else and it
17 was in the middle of July and it was pretty late. So he chose me 'cause that's the only
18 name he had. I went up to West Point in June to take my physical and all that. Then they
19 turned around in July and said, "Okay. You're in."

20 LC: What year did you start then?

21 HS: '47.

22 LC: Did you start as a freshman? I know they—

23 HS: Oh, yeah. Everybody does.

24 LC: Okay, regardless of the fact that you had already been a year at college.

25 HS: Well, yeah. That didn't matter, except it made a little bit easier for me first
26 year.

27 LC: Yes. I'm sure. How did you happen to go to University of Cincinnati?

28 HS: Well, my father had some friends there. They had a cooperative program
29 where you could go to school for a while and then work for a while and then go to school
30 for a while. They'd arrange all that and that's how I got ended up there, I guess.

31 LC: Okay. You mentioned that your senator had your name.

1 HS: Yeah. I was writing him all the time.

2 LC: Okay. Who was it?

3 HS: Senator Hoey, H-O-E-Y, from North Carolina.

4 LC: You just kept writing to him?

5 HS: Yeah, and also as a representative, he had been in Congress for about
6 twenty-five years. Just the year I wanted to go in, he didn't get reelected.

7 LC: Ouch. Who was that? Do you remember?

8 HS: I don't know. Zebulon Weaver, Congressman Zebulon Weaver, that's his
9 name. Yeah.

10 LC: Okay. Now your strategy then was to bombard the senator with letters?

11 HS: Yeah.

12 LC: Did you have any other, as they say now, pulls?

13 HS: Yeah. I had some—one of the guys in North Carolina, he knew my father a
14 lawyer, he became assistant attorney general. I don't know if they helped any of that. I
15 remember a big meeting we had in my house where all these guys were gonna write
16 letters and again we don't know who Herb Schandler is, but if he's Dave Schandler's boy
17 he oughta go to West Point and that was the attitude. So a lot of them got together and I
18 don't know if they used any influence or not, but they knew people in Washington and
19 that helped.

20 LC: Do you remember the day that you found out you were gonna be called to
21 have this opportunity?

22 HS: Oh, yeah. I had to go up to West Point to take my physical.

23 LC: Can you tell me about what went through you when you found out that you
24 were gonna have this chance?

25 HS: I was very happy.

26 LC: I'll bet.

27 HS: I had to start all over again as a freshman, but I was very happy. I got up
28 there to West Point and took my physical and went home. As soon as I got home they
29 called me back and said, "You're in. Come on up here." So they didn't have much time to
30 think about it.

31 LC: What was your parent's reaction, first your mom?

1 HS: She didn't like it.

2 LC: Why is that?

3 HS: Mother didn't want me to be a soldier. She wanted me to be a doctor or
4 somebody that's a professional so that when I graduated I could hang up my shingle any
5 place and have a job, wouldn't have to ask anybody for a job. They wanted me to be a
6 dentist or a doctor or something like that.

7 LC: Had she also had a hard time during the war with your brothers being gone?

8 HS: Well, yeah. I guess she didn't like it very much, especially the one in the
9 Pacific. He was in battles all the time.

10 LC: What about your dad?

11 HS: Well, I guess he was pretty proud. They came up to see me in the plebe year,
12 plebe Christmas, I guess. They were very proud of my being there.

13 LC: I'm sure they were. I can only imagine. Colonel, tell me about that first year.
14 How did you adjust?

15 HS: Well, I don't know. I had two good roommates. You just have to get used to
16 it, that's all. Once you got used to it, it was okay. I got used to the academics very easily
17 and getting hollered at. In Beast Barracks, which is what they called the summer before
18 the academics start, I was the eighth biggest screw up in my company.

19 LC: The eighth biggest screw up?

20 HS: Sometimes I was seventh 'cause they had a table in the dining hall, which
21 had three mean upperclassmen, and they had the seven biggest screw-ups with cadets.
22 When one of those cadets did something good, he would get taken off and then I became
23 the seventh and I'd get on that table. Then another plebe would screw up and they would
24 put him on the table and take me off. So then I was the eighth biggest screw up, not the
25 seventh. So that's how I could tell where I was.

26 LC: Okay. So they kept you in a pecking order pretty clearly from the beginning?

27 HS: Yeah. That's right.

28 LC: You mentioned that you had these two roommates. Can you tell me a little
29 bit about who they were?

1 HS: Let me think back. There was one from New Hampshire. There was one
2 from Wisconsin. Jim Check, was a Czech, and his name I remember was Czizanocec and
3 they changed it to Check.

4 LC: They just changed it?

5 HS: Yeah, well, his parents changed it. So I had Jim Check and I think this guy
6 was named Walker from New Hampshire. Jim Check was very serious and Walker was
7 not very strong. I don't know what happened to him 'cause after that we got sent to
8 different companies and I had different roommates.

9 LC: When you say he wasn't very strong do you mean that physically he wasn't
10 or—?

11 HS: Physically and also his dedication. So I don't know if he stayed at West
12 Point or not. Those were my two roommates in Beast Barracks.

13 LC: Were there other guys who were there at the time you were there who just
14 simply couldn't cut it?

15 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. That first year there was one guy, it was very amazing. In
16 the boxing class they put you according to your weight. There was one guy that I had
17 boxed that was the same weight as I was, only my arm length was bigger and I could
18 really beat him. He left at Christmas and then I got beat up a little more, just what I
19 remember. That's about all that I remember.

20 LC: Tell me about the academics. How did that go for you?

21 HS: It was pretty simple.

22 LC: Was it really?

23 HS: Yeah, 'cause I had already had most of that stuff in college. First year wasn't
24 very difficult.

25 LC: Is it the case, sir, that all of the West Point students are essentially taking the
26 same program?

27 HS: At that time it was, yes. I don't know if they do that now or not.

28 LC: It was pretty heavy with the math.

29 HS: Math in the first year, yeah.

30 LC: You rolled through that pretty well?

31 HS: Yeah. I didn't have any problem with that.

1 LC: Other guys not so much the case?

2 HS: Well, some did and some didn't. They would put you in sections according
3 to how well you did. The first section was the top fifteen guys and the second section was
4 the next fifteen and so on. So I was always in the second or third section.

5 LC: Were there some standout guys in your year as you remember?

6 HS: Not as I remember, no. Nobody really stood out. The ones that I see now that
7 made lieutenant general and major general, nobody would've suspected it at the time.

8 LC: Is that right?

9 HS: Yeah.

10 LC: That's interesting.

11 HS: I think we have two lieutenant generals in our class and that's about all.

12 LC: That's interesting. Those two you just wouldn't have figured?

13 HS: No. I wouldn't have suspected them at all.

14 LC: You mentioned that your parents did come up that first Christmas.

15 HS: Oh, yeah.

16 LC: What did you do? Do you remember?

17 HS: Well, you didn't go out very much. So I don't remember much about it
18 except walking around with them and taking pictures.

19 LC: Okay. You were probably pretty clear they were proud of you?

20 HS: Oh, yeah.

21 LC: Did they come up again before graduation to visit you?

22 HS: I don't think they did before graduation. They came up for graduation, of
23 course.

24 LC: Oh, sure. Yeah.

25 HS: I don't think they came up—my brother. My oldest brother was living in
26 New York City at that time. They came up and stayed with him and all. He moved to
27 Ashville, too, after the war and after he got married.

28 LC: When did you graduate?

29 HS: In '52. It was the sesquicentennial class. They had a big celebration. It was
30 the 150th anniversary of the founding of West Point.

31 LC: That must've been a big deal.

1 HS: Oh, yeah. All the professors of other—all the presidents of the universities,
2 all the defense attaches from Washington. President Truman came up, I remember, and
3 gave a speech. We were the sesquicentennial class. On our class crest it has a little CL
4 under the eagle.

5 LC: Oh, is that right?

6 HS: Yeah. It had also—that meant that our fiftieth anniversary in 2002 was the
7 two hundredth anniversary military academy.

8 LC: Did you go back for that, sir?

9 HS: Oh, yeah. We had our fiftieth reunion.

10 LC: Oh, yeah. I bet you did. That must've been something, as well.

11 HS: Oh, yeah. Well, there were about six or seven hundred people there.
12 Everybody brought their wives and their children and their grandchildren. It was very
13 nice.

14 LC: Did they put on a good party for you?

15 HS: Oh, yeah. We had a review in our honor. The fiftieth anniversary is always a
16 big deal up there.

17 LC: Yes, sir. Absolutely. When you graduated then, was the graduation speech
18 given by the president or was that speech at a different time?

19 HS: I don't even remember. It was a different time. It was a little bit later.

20 LC: Some very keen historian in the future can look that up.

21 HS: I think it's listed in our graduate records. They publish a book every year
22 with all the graduates and a whole biography of their everybody. It listed when they died
23 and how old they were and all that. I think it's in there, who spoke.

24 LC: Did you hear the president speak? Were you actually there to hear President
25 Truman?

26 HS: Oh, yeah. He was in the mess hall and we were all eating together. He made
27 a speech.

28 LC: Do you remember anything about what he said?

29 HS: No, I'm afraid not.

30 LC: Did you have an impression of him?

1 HS: Well, he seemed to be very decisive and very proud, too. I didn't get to see
2 much of him except the speech.

3 LC: Sure. Sure. Of course, while you were there the Korean conflict—

4 HS: That was started, yeah.

5 LC: Started and really ramped up and the United States commitment expanded.

6 HS: Well, it was really funny because our class, we got to choose the branch we
7 wanted to go in and, of course, I didn't want to pick—I found out at West Point that I was
8 very good in social sciences, history, economics, government, and so on. I was oriented
9 toward engineering. I didn't like—I found I wasn't all that good at engineering. I didn't
10 like mechanics and science and all that kind of stuff. I liked the history and the softer
11 subjects better. So I decided to go into the infantry because I wanted to go to graduate
12 school in one of the social sciences. All of the people who went into the engineers and
13 signal corps and all that, they went to technical graduate schools. I didn't want to do that.
14 So I went into the infantry so that I could go to a graduate school in social sciences.

15 LC: After your graduation, is that what happened? You went straight on?

16 HS: Well, first of all in my graduating class you could choose to go to Korea or
17 not to Korea. You couldn't choose Korea, but if you chose Germany or if you chose one
18 of the airborne divisions in the South that meant you weren't going. So I chose Ft. Dix,
19 New Jersey, which meant that that's the training division and that I was going to Korea.
20 So I went to the infantry school. We went to the parachute school. Then right before
21 Christmas I went to Ft. Dix, New Jersey. At that time the Army had a rule that you had to
22 have ninety days worth of troop duty before you go to Korea. So I got my orders to go to
23 Korea within ninety days. I had two months of marching soldiers around and thirty days'
24 leave and that was my ninety days and I was off to Korea.

25 LC: When did you go over there, sir?

26 HS: Let's see. About April, March or April of, what year is that? '53. I was
27 assigned to the 38th Infantry and I was an infantry rifle platoon leader.

28 LC: Did you see actual combat deployment?

29 HS: Oh, yeah.

30 LC: Whereabouts?

1 HS: Well, we were on the front lines, where was it? Hill—there was a big
2 mountain there called Papasan 605. We were in Chorwon. I remember talking to some
3 Korean girl and she said, “Where are you stationed?” I said, “Chorwon.” She said, “No.
4 No. No. The Chinese are in Chorwon.” I said, “Yeah, that’s right. They’re in this part of
5 Chorwon and we’re in the other part and we’re trying to get in their part and they’re
6 trying to get in our part.” So there was Outpost Harry and the Hook, we were on the
7 Hook. That was April, May, June, July, and then the war ended in July, the twenty-
8 seventh of July 1953, which made me mad because that meant that in Korea, you got four
9 points a month or three points or two points. If you were in the rear you got two points a
10 month. You had to get thirty-six points to rotate. I think where I was in combat you got
11 four points a month, so you could rotate in nine months, but after the war was over
12 everybody did the same thing, a one-year tour. So I was there for a year.

13 LC: You were there until the next summer then?

14 HS: Yeah.

15 LC: Okay, until the middle of 1954?

16 HS: Yeah. I got promoted to the first lieutenant early. It was eighteen months, but
17 in Vietnam if you had twelve months in-grade then two months in-country you could do
18 it. So I just squeezed in. So the war ended on the twenty-third of July and my date of rank
19 was two August.

20 LC: Well, sir, let me ask you about that period when combat was still going on
21 and you had taken over the platoon, is that right?

22 HS: Platoon, yes. Yeah.

23 LC: What was the call number, the call sign for the platoon? Do you remember?

24 HS: Impale.

25 LC: Okay.

26 HS: Impale 1, I guess we were. It was 2nd Division, 38th Infantry, A Company, 1st
27 Platoon. That’s all that was getting me mad because every time they wanted an attack or
28 a patrol or something they’d say let the 38th Infantry do it. The 38th Infantry would say,
29 “A Company.” Then A Company would say, “1st Platoon.” Then I’d say, “Oh, gosh. Not
30 again.”

1 LC: Not again, yeah. You guys were always the first ones because you were the
2 first, right?

3 HS: Well, I told that to the battalion commander one time. “Why don’t you say B
4 Company, 3rd Platoon or C Company, 2nd Platoon.” He said, “No, it’s not because you’re
5 the 1st Platoon. It’s because we know you’ll get the job done.”

6 LC: Did you believe him?

7 HS: Yeah. Yeah, he was pretty straight.

8 LC: Tell me about this command experience that you had. This was the first time
9 you had men in charge under you.

10 HS: Well, at first I became the P&A platoon leader, the Pioneer and Ammunition
11 platoon leader. They had not had a platoon leader for a long time and they had a lot of
12 Koreans they called them KATUSAs, Korean Augmentation to the United States Army.
13 They had a very good first sergeant. I guess a platoon sergeant, Sergeant Pizarza. I’ll
14 never forget him. Had one guy and all he wanted was an officer to back him up, to tell
15 him he was doing good.

16 LC: He had it in hand already.

17 HS: Oh, yeah. He knew what he wanted to do. So I helped him get that platoon in
18 shape and they got in good shape. Once they had an officer to speak for them they
19 weren’t getting all the dirty jobs now.

20 LC: What kind of stuff had they been being assigned to, these dirty jobs? I mean
21 what kind of things?

22 HS: Cleaning up the motor pool, cleaning up the latrines, any job that needs
23 done. So I’d come in and say, “No, they’re not gonna clean up the motor pool. That’s the
24 motor pool’s job.” I relieved them of that duty and made sure that other units of the
25 Headquarters Company got their share of the dirty jobs. We didn’t do that anymore. We
26 did our work, which was supplying the front lines with ammunition and doing whatever
27 engineer work that needed to be done on the roads and so on.

28 LC: The work of supplying the front lines with ammunition for example,
29 Colonel, how did that actually work? Did your guys have to pull things out of stores?

30 HS: Oh, no, we had it all. There was an ammunition point near us and we’d pull
31 it out of there and take it. We had a regular routine to do that. We supplied them on a

1 routine basis. That was the easiest part of the job, the hardest part was little things that
2 came up like a culvert would wash out and wash the road out and have to get a lot of dirt
3 and put it in there and put a new culvert in and things like that.

4 LC: Okay. Did your men respond well, then, to you coming in?

5 HS: Oh, yeah. To me and Sergeant Pizarza they sure did. Sergeant Pizarza had it
6 all lined up. He knew what he wanted to do as long as I would back him up.

7 LC: Did the guys come up with a nickname or anything like that for you that you
8 know about?

9 HS: No. Not at that time.

10 LC: Okay. Tell me about any—

11 HS: I'll tell you one time the battalion commander called me in and he said,
12 "Lieutenant Schandler, you're an enigma me." I'll never forget this conversation. I said,
13 "Yes, sir." He said, "I tell you what to do and how high I want it and what I want you to
14 do and all this and you smile and you say, 'Yes, sir,' and you salute and you go back and
15 do exactly what you were doing before."

16 LC: And he called you an enigma?

17 HS: Yeah. Because I knew what I was doing and I was doing okay and he could
18 tell.

19 LC: You weren't in need of a lot of help either, really.

20 HS: No.

21 LC: That's what I'm picking up. Did your men ever, did they come under fire at
22 any time, sir?

23 HS: Not in the P&A platoon. No they didn't, not while I had them. Then I got
24 transferred to A Company, 1st Platoon. We came under fire then. About all we did was go
25 out on patrols. The war was coming to an end. We didn't know that, of course, but we'd
26 go on patrols at night, ambush patrols to ambush the Chinese who were also on patrols.
27 That's about all the combat you got was in the patrols. We attacked one hill, I think, at
28 one time, but I didn't lose any men. I had some wounded.

29 LC: Can you describe what those night patrols were like? Were there any one of
30 them or a kind of composite description, anything like that that you could share with us?

1 HS: Well, you usually went out after dark and found the place we thought the
2 Chinese would come. Then you would sit there and set up an ambush and sit there. There
3 was no smoking, no talking, no moving. You'd have to sit there and then the Chinese
4 would send their patrol out and they'd have to sit there. The first one that moves got shot.
5 So we were very patient and we waited for the Chinese to move and then we'd mow them
6 down. So most of the time our patrols were very quiet and calm and all the troops knew
7 they had to stay quiet. They couldn't smoke cigarettes. We had a lot of the patrols that
8 were very successful.

9 LC: Successful in terms of identifying a location of another, of a Chinese patrol,
10 and smoking them out?

11 HS: Yeah and wiping—attacking them when they moved.

12 LC: Could you be sure or how could you be sure that you would get all of them?

13 HS: Well, we never were sure you got all of them, but if you get some of them
14 the rest of them run away.

15 LC: Okay. After an incident of contact like that, would your men stay in the same
16 position or would they—?

17 HS: No. No. When we exposed ourselves then we'd go back and we'd have
18 flares and light up the battlefield so we could see them and they couldn't see us or they
19 didn't know what was coming. We were concealed. So we fired some flares and then we
20 got the hell out of there.

21 LC: You'd skedaddle on out of there.

22 HS: Yeah.

23 LC: Okay. Were you and your men also trying to keep track of how many enemy
24 you had eliminated?

25 HS: Oh, yeah. We'd search the bodies to see if there were documents or anything
26 else.

27 LC: Did that ever happen? Did you ever find any material?

28 HS: No, any documents, no. I don't know. We'd send them back. They were all
29 in Chinese.

30 LC: So you'd just send them back to intel or somebody back there?

31 HS: Yeah, that's right.

1 LC: Okay. About how many of the patrols that your guys were on actually had
2 contact? Was it every night? Was it every fourth night or can you describe?

3 HS: No. Every third night, I suppose, or fourth night. About four patrols we went
4 on had contact. The rest didn't. I wasn't the only one doing this. There were other platoon
5 leaders out there. We had a Dutch battalion attached to our regiment and they patrolled,
6 which were not as successful, of course, because they were good soldiers, but they
7 weren't as patient as we were.

8 LC: Now why was that?

9 HS: I don't know. A lot of Indonesians and Dutch battalions and they would lose
10 some people sometimes.

11 LC: They just—was it that they didn't have the skill level or they weren't as
12 stealthy or—?

13 HS: They didn't take it as seriously as we did, I think.

14 LC: Is that right?

15 HS: Yeah.

16 LC: Wow.

17 HS: They were soldiers and they were out there and they did what they wanted to
18 do.

19 LC: And paid the price, it sounds like.

20 HS: Yeah.

21 LC: Wow. Did the Dutch officers, I'm presuming that there were Dutch officers
22 in charge, similarly take some hits because of their—?

23 HS: Yeah. I didn't know very many of the Dutch officers. I knew the P&A
24 platoon leader and the Dutch were apparently buying all that they had they were paying
25 for. So if we ran out of things we could always go to the Dutch and get it, like paints and
26 things like that.

27 LC: Oh, really?

28 HS: Yeah. They had enough supplies. We would always take rice over because
29 they had a lot more Indonesians and they traded us other things for our rice.

30 LC: They wanted the rice?

31 HS: Yeah.

1 LC: What about other allies? Were there other allies?
2 HS: We didn't see any, just the Dutch in our battalion, in our regiment.
3 LC: In your regiment, uh-huh. Okay. You mentioned that—
4 HS: Each regiment had three American battalions and a foreign battalion. We had
5 the Dutch. The next division over had the French. The next division over had the
6 Ethiopians and so on. That's how they handled the command and control of the allied
7 units.
8 LC: And to some degree also the integration?
9 HS: Yeah. That's right.
10 LC: You mentioned earlier that there was maybe one operation where you
11 actually had to perform an assault of some kind on a hill. Can you describe that?
12 HS: Well, there was a little hill and we had to take the little hill that was in front
13 of us. The Chinese were on the far hill. They came over and got on the little hill and so
14 we just ran up the hill and shot them all.
15 LC: You just literally ran up the hill?
16 HS: Yeah.
17 LC: Wow.
18 HS: They were dug into the top of the hill, not very well, and we got them all.
19 LC: How many casualties?
20 HS: I had about ten men wounded. I didn't have any killed.
21 LC: Okay. When your platoon, your group, actually got into the position where
22 they could see the enemy emplacement, what kind of emplacement was it? You said it
23 wasn't very good.
24 HS: Little dugouts that they had dug, little foxholes.
25 LC: That was it?
26 HS: Yeah.
27 LC: No other reinforcement or anything?
28 HS: No. No. They hadn't planned it very well when we got up there. There were
29 more of us than there were of them.
30 LC: Is that right?
31 HS: Yeah.

1 LC: That didn't happen all the time so that was actually quite good. What was
2 your evaluation? I know in the heat of the moment this kind of reflection wasn't possible,
3 but as you thought back over it, I'm sure, over the years your evaluation of the Chinese as
4 an enemy in a land war.

5 HS: We found out they weren't very good. They weren't very persistent. There
6 were a lot of them, but they weren't very good. They didn't seem to be as dedicated as we
7 were and that was strange 'cause all of our people were draftees, of course. Even the
8 officers had gone to college. Everybody got drafted or went into the Army as an officer.
9 So yeah, our people were much more dedicated. They wanted to get it over with.

10 LC: The Chinese less so?

11 HS: Well, I don't know if they were less, but they weren't very persistent. There
12 were a lot of them, but they faded fast, I guess.

13 LC: What about their tactics?

14 HS: Well, the only thing we saw was there weren't as much tactics then except
15 the patrolling at night. They were on their hill and we were on our hill most of the time.
16 One time we tried to get on their hill and got it 'cause they had taken over a sort of a
17 neutral ground in between. So we didn't see much tactic except for their patrol tactics
18 weren't as good as ours. Maybe there was leadership, but they didn't have as much
19 patience as we did. They were noisier.

20 LC: What about weapons?

21 HS: Well, they had AK-47s. We didn't get into that very much. We didn't like
22 their weapons.

23 LC: Were their weapons as good as what the Americans had?

24 HS: No, I guess not. We had M-1 rifles and they were very accurate. They had
25 the AK-47s and they weren't too accurate, but they sprayed a lot of bullets. So we
26 weren't too much worried about their weapons.

27 LC: Did you have air support during any of these operations, especially the
28 assault?

29 HS: I don't think so.

30 LC: Not really?

31 HS: I never saw any. I never knew how to call in any.

1 LC: Okay. Of course, that is a huge difference with what happens later.

2 HS: In Vietnam, yeah, in Vietnam because they had performed very well in
3 Korea they were determined to perform well to justify their own independence, I guess.

4 LC: Not to mention budgets and funding and all that.

5 HS: Yeah and all that. I never saw an airplane in Korea.

6 LC: No kidding.

7 HS: Or how to call one in.

8 LC: Switching tack a little bit, what did the men do during their down time in
9 Korea?

10 HS: Well, basically as far as I can remember we trained.

11 LC: No kidding.

12 HS: Yeah. We trained. I guess, I don't even remember any down time. We kind
13 of relaxed.

14 LC: When you heard about the successful conclusion of the peace talks, which
15 had been going on and on for many, many months, you were a little bit disappointed. Is
16 that right? Is that fair?

17 HS: Well, no, I was happy.

18 LC: You were happy about the peace?

19 HS: Yeah. The Koreans would ask me, "Does that mean Joe Chink goes home
20 now?" That's what they called the Chinese, Joe Chink.

21 LC: What was the response?

22 HS: Yeah. No, they don't go home. You just quit trying to make them go home.

23 LC: Right. Was there a sense of relief amongst your men?

24 HS: Well, yeah, sure.

25 LC: That they were probably gonna get out of there or—

26 HS: Yeah. That they were gonna get out of there alive, I guess so. We trained—I
27 remember that Christmas we were notified—I was Headquarters Company commander. I
28 had been A Company commander and then I was Headquarters Company commander
29 and was notified at Christmas that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his party
30 were going to have Christmas with us. So they brought this big tent in. They brought
31 these space heaters in and we had to paint everything. We had to paint the rocks white

1 and the fire barrels red. We didn't have any paint and they got some. It was real
2 discouraging to my men because these guys flew in and then flew out and then they took
3 all this good stuff away from us (laughs).

4 LC: They cleaned it up and took it away real fast?

5 HS: Yeah.

6 LC: How long were the VIPs there?

7 HS: About half an hour.

8 LC: No kidding. Is that all?

9 HS: Yeah. I remember some Navy captain said, "Where's the enemy?" I said,
10 "See that range of hills up there? That's him." "Oh, God, I didn't know we were that
11 close." A lot of my men who had to paint the rocks and paint the barrels and all that
12 weren't too pleased to have this guy come in and have services at our battalion, yeah, at
13 our battalion.

14 LC: Who was it, sir? Do you remember?

15 HS: I think it was, what's that guy's name, starts with a—Rayford.

16 LC: Radford?

17 HS: Radford. Yeah.

18 LC: So he was there and gone?

19 HS: Yeah. He boasted that he had Christmas services with the troops at the front.

20 LC: Yeah, in the briefest possible time.

21 HS: Yeah, and as far away as possible.

22 LC: Well, were you sort of in the receiving line at all or just kind of observing?

23 HS: Well, way down in the line somewhere, yeah.

24 LC: How big was his entourage?

25 HS: He had about ten, twelve people with him, one big helicopter.

26 LC: Then he was out of there?

27 HS: Out of there. Exactly. The captain enjoyed it I'm sure.

28 LC: Oh, yeah. I'll bet. Did you have any other remembrances about that
29 Christmas?

30 HS: No, that's the only one.

1 LC: You were in Korea, I think you mentioned, until the middle of 1954, is that
2 right?

3 HS: Yeah.

4 LC: During that time period that you remained there, of course, there were big
5 events brewing down in Indochina, particularly Dien Bien Phu. Do you remember any
6 information coming to you about that?

7 HS: The only thing I remember about that was when the war ended on the
8 twenty-third of July, on the twenty-fourth we packed up all of our flak jackets that we
9 didn't need anymore and then they told us they were gonna drop them into Dien Bien
10 Phu.

11 LC: Is that right?

12 HS: Yeah.

13 LC: Did they take them away from you?

14 HS: Well, we didn't need them anymore. The war was over.

15 LC: So did they actually come and pick them up and—?

16 HS: I guess so. We turned them in some place and they were gone.

17 LC: Wow. That's interesting.

18 HS: We were told they were gonna drop them into Dien Bien Phu. So that was a
19 direct assault and after that we didn't hear very much about it.

20 LC: Okay. You spent the rest of your time in Korea stationed where?

21 HS: Well, it was 38th Infantry. They made me, I was the Headquarters Company
22 commander and let me tell you oranges were, fresh oranges were my worst problem.
23 Soldiers would get an orange and then once in a while come out and throw the orange
24 peels down on the ground. Then somebody would have to pick them up and they were
25 very noticeable. The battalion commander would come out and holler for me and say,
26 "Why are these oranges?" So I never issued oranges again.

27 LC: Well, you learned an important command lesson there.

28 HS: That's right, a little prevention there.

29 LC: That's right. Stand you in good stead for the rest of your career.

30 HS: No oranges to be issued.

31 LC: That's right. Yes, sir.

1 HS: They could give you apples 'cause the apple cores were biodegradable, I
2 guess.

3 LC: Not as visible.

4 HS: Not orange peels.

5 LC: Yes, sir. Yes, sir. At what point did you find out what your next arrangement
6 with the Army would be.

7 HS: I don't know, sometime before I left. I was going to Ft. Carson, Colorado, to
8 become a company commander out—I was still first lieutenant. At that time after the war
9 they started to give credit to medical and dental officers for their education. So they made
10 all the doctors captains and that meant that there were too many captains in the Army and
11 the first lieutenants in the Regular Army got behind. I'd stay the first lieutenant in fifty-
12 nine months.

13 LC: So essentially there was a kind of a bottleneck.

14 HS: Yeah, that's right.

15 LC: How long did that situation persist? I mean I know it affected you for a
16 while.

17 HS: Quite a while. I was a first lieutenant for fifty-nine months, that's about five
18 years.

19 LC: Oh, that's amazing.

20 HS: Yeah. I went to—I commanded a company at Ft. Carson's for a year. I
21 commanded the company in Korea for a year. I went to two years of graduate school and
22 I taught at West Point for a year and I was still a first lieutenant.

23 LC: How frustrating was that for you?

24 HS: It was pretty frustrating.

25 LC: Yes, sir, I'd imagine. That's absolutely incredible. This was because of that
26 rearrangement of the medical complement.

27 HS: That was the medical corps, right, and nobody changed the quotas. You're
28 allowed to have so many captains and so many majors. They took up all those spaces.

29 LC: Just overnight there were fleets of them probably.

30 HS: Yeah. Yeah.

31 LC: How long were you at Ft. Carson?

1 HS: One year because I was commanding a company there and I was getting kind
2 of tired of it. At that time you had to have a three-year commitment to the Army. I wrote
3 to West Point and said, “You told me when I had some four to six year service to write
4 and maybe I could be an instructor. I’ve only got three years of service, how about it?”
5 West Point wrote me back and said well, one guy that they had had programmed had not
6 panned out and they couldn’t use him and they had a vacancy. What college would I like
7 to go to? I’m still a first lieutenant and I didn’t know of any colleges. I said, “Well, send
8 me to Harvard.” They said, “Okay.” I got orders to Harvard.

9 LC: You spent how long there?

10 HS: Well, I was sent there for a year and then another guy extended so I stayed
11 there for two years.

12 LC: You earned a postgraduate degree?

13 HS: I got my masters degree in everything for the PhD except a dissertation.

14 LC: So you were ABD (all but dissertation), as they say.

15 HS: Yeah. That’s right.

16 LC: What was the master’s degree? What was the field?

17 HS: Masters in public administration. At that time they give you an MPA (Master
18 of Public Administration). You can use a year of government service and a year at
19 Harvard and you get your MPA.

20 LC: The public administration curriculum. Can you tell me about what it was like
21 then?

22 HS: We were taking—you could take anything you wanted, basically, from the
23 School of Arts and Sciences. Since there were three of us, one from the class of ’50 and
24 one of my classmates there and we were going for the PhD. So the PhD was a joint
25 degree in politics and economics. So we had to take three fields of politics, three fields of
26 economics. You could write one field off in each by getting A- or above. Then you had to
27 recite on two fields. So we took those courses and again found out I was pretty good in
28 political science and history and things like that, and not in engineering. At the end of the
29 two years you drew cites on your two fields in economics and two fields in politics. You
30 had four fields to recite on. Whether you passed or not meant you were eligible to go on
31 for a PhD before your dissertation.

1 LC: That was your plan at some point.

2 HS: Yeah.

3 LC: You were thinking about teaching?

4 HS: Well, yeah. West Point didn't care what you taught. They sent you up there
5 to acquaint you with the field, I guess, with graduate education. So we took the field so
6 we could write out some fields we wanted to recite on and we had a recitation at the end
7 of the second year.

8 LC: Now would I be right in thinking that the years that you were there would be
9 about 1955 to '57?

10 HS: '57, yeah, exactly.

11 LC: See, I'm keeping track. Where were you living?

12 HS: I was a bachelor then and I lived in an apartment in Cambridge near the
13 university. The first year I lived with Tim Gerhart, a classmate of mine, who was taking
14 the same course. The second year I decided to live alone in another apartment.

15 LC: Also in Cambridge?

16 HS: In Cambridge, right.

17 LC: Did you have any military duties during this time period?

18 HS: None at all.

19 LC: So you were just a graduate student hanging out?

20 HS: A graduate student. The two best years I spent in the Army. You got \$100
21 extra for buying books and that's about all. Then we went to summer school, too. We
22 went for two years and three summers.

23 LC: Can you characterize that time period in your life? I mean it sounds sort of
24 like salad days to me, a very, very nice time.

25 HS: It was delightful. All you had to do was go to school and study at night, of
26 course, and take the exams. So yeah it was great compared to what I'd been doing.

27 LC: Of course, Cambridge is a very nice environment.

28 HS: Nice social and we had good professors, too. There were three professors
29 there that were assistant professors and they were trying to make associate professor and
30 only one could make it. Their names were Samuel Huntington, Steve Brzezinski, and
31 Stanley Hoffman.

1 LC: Are you kidding me?

2 HS: No. No. We had all three. Stanley Hoffman was my thesis advisor and
3 Graham Allison was my second reader. The university chose Stanley Hoffman and
4 Brzezinski and Huntington went to Columbia. Then the next year they chose Huntington.
5 He came back and Brzezinski stayed at Columbia. So my orals board had—Brzezinski
6 was on it and Baldwin, who was another up and coming economist. Professor Garston
7 Krohn and the fourth one was Stan Cheever, who is an old friend.

8 LC: Obviously for anyone who's studied international relations, which includes
9 myself, these are some of the biggest names in the secondary literature now. You still
10 have to read Huntington if you want to know about social change.

11 HS: Social change.

12 LC: Yes.

13 HS: That was his dissertation.

14 LC: I mean that's just an astounding set of opportunities. Were they brilliant? I
15 man can you remember them?

16 HS: Yeah. Yeah. Huntington was very good, very hard to understand. Brzezinski
17 was very sharp and very encouraging. Oh, yeah. I remember them well. I'm still friends
18 with them. They know me when they see me, but I did my dissertation under Huntington.

19 LC: What was the topic that you worked on?

20 HS: Well, it took me fifteen years and we'll get to that later.

21 LC: Okay. Well, I'll make sure.

22 HS: So that was in Vietnam.

23 LC: Okay. I'm gonna make a note. That would be—that probably led, then, to the
24 publication of your first book, is that right?

25 HS: Not yet. My first book was my dissertation.

26 LC: Okay. That's what I thought. I just wanted to clarify and I'll come back to
27 those issues.

28 HS: Excuse me. Sharon? Sharon? Are we doing anything tomorrow afternoon?
29 (unintelligible) was teaching at West Point, of course.

30 LC: You were there for one year is that right?

31 HS: Three years.

1 LC: Oh, three years.

2 HS: Oh, yeah.

3 LC: Oh, okay. Tell me about going back.

4 HS: I liked it. I enjoyed it very much. I was still a first lieutenant.

5 LC: I know. That's a little hard to take.

6 HS: Yeah.

7 LC: You must've had some faith, though, that this situation was gonna work
8 itself out.

9 HS: Yeah. Well, we had a good department. I was teaching government,
10 comparative government, European government. I taught American History. The cadets
11 were great and football games were great and teaching wasn't hard.

12 LC: Tell me how the football team was doing in those years.

13 HS: Oh, they were doing great. We had Pete Dawkins and Carpenter "The
14 Lonely End." We were undefeated, number one in the country. We beat Navy every year.
15 The best game I ever saw was we beat Navy thirty-eight to nothing one year.

16 LC: That was one of the years that you were teaching there?

17 HS: Yeah.

18 LC: So like about '59 maybe?

19 HS: It must've been somewhere around there, yeah.

20 LC: Okay. So that stands out in your mind?

21 HS: Oh, yeah.

22 LC: Was that at home?

23 HS: I think—well, no they always played in Philadelphia.

24 LC: Can you evaluate the students that you had in the classes?

25 HS: Well, the students were put in sections according to their class standing. I
26 always liked to teach. Nobody ever at West Point was dumb. They were all good
27 students. Some were slower than the others. That's the only difference. We went fast.

28 LC: You put them through paces, is that fair?

29 HS: Yeah. I always seemed to teach the upper sections because they were better
30 and I could go beyond the lesson with them.

31 LC: Were you thinking about future on the faculty there?

1 HS: Oh, no. No. I probably could've, but I didn't want to do that. I'd go down to
2 New York every weekend. I had a couple of friends from high school who were hot shots
3 in the advertising business in New York. I'd see them, but I didn't want to stay up at
4 West Point for the rest of my life.

5 LC: Because why?

6 HS: Well, I thought it was kind of dead. You were out of the mainstream. I
7 wanted to do something else. I knew I was scheduled to go overseas when West Point
8 was done. I wanted to go to Germany and see the sites.

9 LC: Colonel, is that what happened?

10 HS: Yeah. What happened—I was assigned to Germany. One of the professors at
11 West Point who sat right behind me was with the 10th Forces Group. He said, "Get him."
12 Well, let's see. Before I was assigned to Germany and I told the assignment officers who
13 came down from Washington to sign us off. From West Point I went to the advanced
14 course at Ft. Benning. That was it. West Point, I went to the advanced infantry officers'
15 course at Ft. Benning. Then they came down from Washington to tell us our assignments
16 and they said, "You're going to Germany." I said, "All right. I figured I was." But I said,
17 "Then I have a request, an emergency request, I'd like to—my parents' fiftieth
18 anniversary is gonna be on the fourth of August and here it is June. So I would like to go
19 to some school in the United States for six weeks 'cause they're gonna have a family
20 reunion then. If I were in Germany I'd have to come back. So I'd like to go to some
21 school for six weeks and then I'll happily go to Germany after the anniversary." They
22 said, "Well, that sounds reasonable enough." They looked through it and they said,
23 "Well, the only school we have starting at that time is the Special Forces Officers Course
24 at Ft. Bragg." I said, "Well, I'd like to learn more about that, but I don't want to get into
25 it." They said, "Well, don't worry about that. It's a bunch of ol' Airborne guys, a closed
26 society and all that." I said, "Okay, send me to the Special Forces school." Then one of
27 my professors at West Point was in the 10th Special—one of the guys I worked with but
28 who was a year ahead of me was in the 10th Special Forces Group. He saw my name on
29 the list and said, "Okay. We gotta get him." So I was assigned the 10th Special Forces
30 Group. Then he wrote me and said, "They're starting—after you finish the Special Forces
31 Officer School, they're starting a new counter-insurgency course. I want you to stay and

1 take that.” Well, that course didn’t begin until six weeks after the Special Forces school.
2 So I went to Special Forces school. Then I was on the faculty for six weeks preparing the
3 counter-insurgency course. Then I was assumed in the counter-insurgency course except
4 for those lessons that I was teaching. Then I finally got to Germany about December.

5 LC: So you helped design that first CI course?

6 HS: Counter insurgency course at Ft. Benning, yes.

7 LC: Okay. Wow.

8 HS: Was it Ft. Benning or Ft. Bragg? Ft. Bragg.

9 LC: At Ft. Bragg. Mm-hmm. Okay. Let’s take a break there.

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Interview with Herbert Schandler
Session [2] of [4]
Date: September 29, 2004

1 Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
2 University continuing the oral history interview with Col. Herbert Schandler. Today's
3 date is the twenty-ninth of September 2004. I again am in the Special Collections
4 building on the campus of Texas Tech. I'm speaking with the colonel by telephone and
5 you're in Virginia. Good morning, sir.

6 Herbert Schandler: Good morning.

7 LC: Yesterday we wound up with your work down at Ft. Bragg. That important
8 interval in 1960, I think.

9 HS: Right.

10 LC: You mentioned that you had helped to draft the new curriculum.

11 HS: Right, for the counter-insurgency course.

12 LC: On counter-insurgency, yeah. How did it come to you to do that job?

13 HS: Well, because I was told to take that course by my unit in Bad Tölsz and I
14 finished the Special Warfare course and the counter-insurgency course didn't start for six
15 weeks. So I was assigned to the—I was TDY (temporary duty) for the counter-insurgency
16 school to take that course and I had to help develop it.

17 LC: First of all, who were you working with to help develop it? Do you
18 remember?

19 HS: Oh, well, there were a whole bunch of people there. I don't remember.

20 LC: Okay.

21 HS: I just developed two or three of the lessons.

22 LC: What were they on or what materials did you use? Do you remember any of
23 that?

24 HS: Oh, no. I think I talked about Army aircraft and world aircraft at war. I used
25 that period also to get back into the Airborne business. I'd like as many parachute jumps
26 as I could. They have a lot of parachute jumps going on. It had been nine years between
27 my parachute school, between my fifth and my sixth parachute jump. So I was going out
28 and making as many jumps as I could.

1 LC: How many did you make? Do you remember?

2 HS: Oh, no. I made about six or seven, I'm sure. I made night jumps and all that.
3 Jumps were different because when I went through parachute school in '52 they used a
4 C-46. Now they're using the C-130 and there are many other people involved, many
5 other troopers so I just went out and did as many as they had to get to.

6 LC: That makes me wonder, too. Who was in charge of the school itself?

7 HS: Oh, boy. I don't know. It was a colonel who was in charge of it, I think.

8 LC: If I said a name to you I don't know if this rings a bell at all. Was it William
9 Yarborough in charge?

10 HS: He might've been there. Yeah, I think he was the head of the whole Special
11 Warfare Center. Then there was some colonel who was in charge of the course.

12 LC: Can you describe as much as you might remember about the new CI,
13 counter-insurgency course itself? To what degree for example did it focus on Southeast
14 Asia, or was it a more general course?

15 HS: It was more general. We had people in the course from Germany and Italy. I
16 made friends with a couple of the Italians and a German officer who was gonna go back
17 to Germany and that's where I was heading. So I made friends with them. It was more
18 general. We talked about the ink spot, where you'd develop a base, basically, and then
19 spread out from there. That's about all I remember about that.

20 LC: Okay. So you helped design a couple of modules, if you will, for the course
21 and then you actually also participated in taking the course?

22 HS: In taking the course except for the lessons that I gave.

23 LC: That you had to teach, right.

24 HS: Yeah.

25 LC: You were also doing your jumps. What else was going on at Ft. Bragg at that
26 time, anything else for you?

27 HS: No, not that I know of. I wasn't involved with anything there. I was just
28 TDY for a month from Bad Tölz.

29 LC: Where did you go when you left Fort Bragg?

30 HS: Well, I had leave and then I went to the—I guess it was at Ft. Dix, the people
31 that sent us to Germany, military transport system. I remember very well. My orders were

1 to report to there on the twenty-first of November. My very best friend, who was an
2 advertising man in New York, my friend from high school, was gonna get married on the
3 twenty-first of November and he asked me to be his best man. So I called up and told
4 them that I'd be there on the twenty-second of November. They said, "No. Your orders
5 say the twenty-first of November." I said, "Well, I'm gonna be busy on the twenty-first
6 and can't make it. So you can either do what you want to for one day, call me AWOL
7 (absent without leave) or—I will be there on the twenty-second." So as a reward for this,
8 instead of flying me over they put me on a ship going over.

9 LC: How long did it take?

10 HS: Oh, God. The weather was so bad in November that we couldn't go straight
11 into Bremerhaven. We couldn't go to the north of England. We had to go to south of
12 England and then up the English Channel. So it took a long time. I was given the detail of
13 waking up the people who were supposed to be on KP (kitchen police) and who had
14 details and so on. Fortunately, I had two warrant officers assigned to me to help me do
15 that. They took care of everything. I really love warrant officers. These guys were
16 wonderful. They'd get the people up and get the details organized. I didn't really have to
17 do anything on the ship. It was a very rough journey.

18 LC: That was a relief to have them with you.

19 HS: Oh, God, yes. They did everything. I love warrant officers. They're all
20 experienced, wonderful people.

21 LC: Do you remember either of their names?

22 HS: No, I sure don't.

23 LC: Did you ever come across them again?

24 HS: Never again. No.

25 LC: That's funny.

26 HS: They really helped me out on that ship.

27 LC: Tell me about your new assignment.

28 HS: I'll tell you when I first—I met one man on that ship who was going to Bad
29 Tölz with me. I had arranged to pick up a car in Wolfsburg in Northern Germany. I was
30 gonna pick up a Volkswagen. So he and I traveled together. We went to Wolfsburg and
31 picked up my Volkswagen and then began driving down to Bad Tölz. I remember we

1 didn't have any German money so we had to stop someplace and get some German
2 money. Then we took about two, three days to get down to Bad Tölz, which is south of
3 Munich.

4 LC: What was the unit that you were assigned to?

5 HS: 10th Special Forces Group.

6 LC: What was their overall mission?

7 HS: Well, the Special Forces was organized basically to parachute into Eastern
8 Europe and organize the partisans in case the Russians attacked. We were a Polish team,
9 basically, when I got there and they were studying Polish. We were supposed to go into
10 Poland when the war started and organize the partisans.

11 LC: Now did you have language training as well?

12 HS: A little bit. We were beginning to get it down there, a little bit of Polish
13 training. We had a couple Polish enlisted men in the unit. Our radioman was a sergeant,
14 Sergeant Klesyaks, who had come from Poland, was a Polish refugee. They had what
15 they call a lot of Lodge Act people there. I think the Lodge Act, I never found out what it
16 was, but I think it was something that allowed them to enlist former Eastern Europeans
17 into the U.S. Army and they put them all in Bad Tölz. So they would go back to where
18 they came from. Then we had a demonstration. President Kennedy came over and we had
19 a demonstration in Berlin for him. One of my sergeants, I remember Sergeant Lacey who
20 was a bow and arrow expert. He would give a demonstration of that and we had some
21 other demonstrations. President Kennedy, who had authorized our Green Berets while I
22 was at Ft. Bragg, said it was a shame to waste these people waiting for the war to begin
23 and why didn't they do valuable counter-insurgency work in the Middle East before the
24 war started. Everybody thought that was a good idea. So my team turned from a Polish
25 team to an Iranian team. We started studying Farsi.

26 LC: No kidding.

27 HS: I had one man on my team, Coy Melton. Sgt. Coy Melton who'd been to the
28 Army Language School for eighteen months studying Farsi. Then I sent my team
29 sergeant, Sergeant Lacey, up to Munich and he took a one-hundred-hour course in Farsi.
30 Then between the two of them they taught us Farsi four hours a day.

31 LC: This includes you. You were sitting in, too?

1 HS: Oh, sure.

2 LC: How big was the team?

3 HS: Twelve-man team like all Special Forces teams.

4 LC: It was just your team that was reoriented?

5 HS: To Farsi. No all the others were reoriented. They spoke Arabic and Turkish.

6 LC: How many teams altogether, Colonel? Do you remember?

7 HS: Oh, I don't remember.

8 LC: But a handful or?

9 HS: A company full.

10 LC: Did you attend the demonstrations for Kennedy that day?

11 HS: No, I didn't. I had seen the same demonstration or a similar demonstration

12 when he came down to Ft. Bragg. What was it, Ft. Bragg or Ft. Benning? Ft. Bragg. It

13 was Ft. Bragg and he came down and we gave him the same demonstrations down there,

14 similar demonstrations. So he was very familiar with the Gray Eagle concept. Oh, I'll tell

15 you one thing that happened at Ft. Bragg. This was my doing, too. They were talking

16 about starting a Special Forces Museum. So I told them that before they started the

17 Special Forces Museum they oughta go up to West Point and talk to the people up there

18 who had a big and beautiful museum and how to get started and so on. So they arranged a

19 plane to go up and I arranged to have that plane go up on Friday or Thursday so we could

20 see the football game at West Point. In the Special Warfare School there were a lot of

21 students, second lieutenants who had been my students at West Point. So I loaded up the

22 airplane with those students and we flew up to West Point to talk about setting up a

23 museum and also to see the football game.

24 LC: You worked the football game in there, though?

25 HS: Oh, yeah that had to be. What I do remember was that on Monday we were

26 authorized to wear green berets. So, all these second lieutenants wore their green berets

27 on Saturday to the football game.

28 LC: That would've been the first time, I'm sure.

29 HS: First time, well, the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff was watching the

30 football game, too, and he caught these guys and he didn't approve of the green berets.

31 So he had a bunch of them standing tall in front of him, asking why they wore their green

1 berets a day early. He asked this one guy, one second lieutenant what his name was and
2 he said, “Ben Savage, III, sir.” Ben Savage, II was the J-3. He was standing right behind
3 the chairman, his father.

4 LC: Now was the chairman at that time, was that Lemnitzer or?

5 HS: Oh, gee. I don’t know who it was. I think it was—not Lemnitzer.

6 LC: Earlier than that?

7 HS: I don’t know. It’s later than that.

8 LC: Oh, I’m sorry.

9 HS: It was the ’60s.

10 LC: You mentioned the—was the Gray Eagle concept.

11 HS: No, I thought that up later on.

12 LC: Can you tell me what that is, just since you mentioned it here?

13 HS: The Gray Eagles are organized, but that didn’t go very far because the
14 military didn’t endorse it. That was the use of retired people to carry out military training
15 missions overseas. It was modeled after the International Executive Service Corps, which
16 takes corporate officials, retired corporate officials, takes them overseas.

17 LC: When did that concept sort of arise?

18 HS: That was after I retired.

19 LC: That was sometime later?

20 HS: Yeah.

21 LC: Oh, okay. Had you seen the president when he came down to Ft. Bragg that
22 time?

23 HS: Oh, yeah. I had seen the demonstration they put on there.

24 LC: Were you actually around the president at all?

25 HS: No. No.

26 LC: I just wondered if you formed any impression of him.

27 HS: Oh, no.

28 LC: Not really.

29 HS: He liked the green berets.

30 LC: Yes, sir.

31 HS: He authorized our green berets.

1 LC: Yes, sir. As you noted, he was very interested in counter-insurgency
2 concepts.

3 HS: Yeah, that's right.

4 LC: Now tell—

5 HS: I'll tell you another—

6 LC: Yes, please.

7 HS: Funny story. When I was taking the counter-insurgency course there was a
8 captain from Taiwan sitting next to me and next to him was a colonel from Taiwan. It
9 turned out the reason the captain was in Taiwan was there was to make sure that the
10 colonel from Taiwan got good grades.

11 LC: Help him along?

12 HS: And pass the course, yeah. Consequently, they found sometime in the early
13 part of the course with the captain from Taiwan had TB (tuberculosis). So they got him
14 out of there, to the hospital I guess. I don't know. It turned out that the colonel from
15 Taiwan then moved one seat over and it became my responsibility to see that he got good
16 grades in the course.

17 LC: How would he have done without your help?

18 HS: I don't know.

19 LC: Not so good maybe?

20 HS: Not so good. Some of the language skills of some of these people weren't
21 very good.

22 LC: Did you ever come across him again?

23 HS: No. No.

24 LC: But you helped him out?

25 HS: Oh, yeah. I helped him pass the course. He copied from my paper.

26 LC: Do you think he got anything out of it?

27 HS: Oh, yeah, got something out of it.

28 LC: Probably a promotion I'm guessing.

29 HS: Yeah. I guess so.

30 LC: How long did you stay with the, back in Germany, how long did you stay
31 with the twelve-man team that was working on Iranian issues?

1 HS: Well, we went to Iran.

2 LC: When was that?

3 HS: Oh, let me see. It must've been '61. In April of '60—June probably of '61.
4 An American airplane had crashed in December. A mapping plane had crashed in
5 December, in December, yeah. They had five people aboard and they were under visual
6 flight rules and they couldn't see anything. So they figured they would let themselves
7 down through the clouds and see if they could find the base at Isfahan. They were flying
8 about fifteen thousand feet and a little lower than that. The mountain was the Zard-e Kuh-
9 e and it was 14,921 feet. The plane sort of hit the snow and flipped over. These guys,
10 three of them said, "We'll go get help." They got in their sleeping bags and started rolling
11 down the hill. The snow was about eighteen feet deep then and I don't know where they
12 were going 'cause it was a two-day journey to anyplace, probably more in the snow. The
13 next day the rescuers came and got two of them who had not gotten too far from the plane
14 and three guys were missing. They were declared dead and the wives said, "No. No.
15 They're not dead. You've gotta go find them. Some passing tribesman might've found
16 them." So there were three guys missing. It was decided that my team reinforced with six
17 mountain climbers would go down and speak Farsi and go into the area and get
18 familiarization and find the three bodies up in Zard-e Kuh-e. So we went and there was a
19 six-man, well a seven-man—my executive officer was one of them—who climbed the
20 mountain. We all climbed the mountain, set up a base camp there. They searched for a
21 week or so and found three bodies and we got out of there. In the meantime we set up a
22 hospital down at the base camp in a little village called Koh Rang, which was sort of off
23 the beaten path. We set up a hospital for the people there. Many of them were
24 shepherders. Many of them were farmers. Some of them were kids who were home for
25 Christmas, home for their vacation or whatever it was. They were all Muslims, I guess.
26 So we treated a lot of people there. My medics were kept very busy and Coy Melton who
27 spoke good Farsi was very helpful. He'd say, "Take two of those and see me in the
28 morning," in Farsi. It really impressed the people. So we gave some classes to most of
29 them on the common preventive medicine like don't keep the animals in the same house
30 as you're in. Get the water up the stream and pee down stream and things like that that
31 they weren't doing. I remember every time we went in to rent some mules to go to the

1 high camp the guy would go outside and just reach in the sewer there. There were two
2 little streets. He would boil the water and make tea. We had to have tea, but we made
3 sure he boiled it for a long, long time.

4 LC: Yes, sir. You were there for about a week or so?

5 HS: About two weeks. Then we got into Tehran. Then we went to our base camp.
6 We were in Bad Tölz first. Our C-130s were in Evreux, France. So we went to Evreux,
7 France, somehow or other. I don't remember how we got there. Probably if we flew up to
8 Evreux, France, and got a C-130 it was dedicated to us to take us down to Tehran.

9 LC: So the whole team would've parachuted in, is that—?

10 HS: No. No. We didn't parachute in at all. We went to Tehran and they gave us a
11 couple of trucks and an ambulance. We took that down to Koh Rang. We spent the night
12 in Isfahan at the American mission there, which was very nice. They had a movie and
13 very nice. We stayed in some hotel in Isfahan. Then the next day from Isfahan we drove
14 to, where was it? Not Najafabad. That's where the road to Koh Rang started, a little dirt
15 road. We drove into Koh Rang and set a base camp outside the village.

16 LC: Let me ask did any Iranian officials or experts accompany the team?

17 HS: Yeah.

18 LC: How many?

19 HS: Two of them. Well, we had two Iranians and one American from America,
20 Dr. Barclus was a doctor from the MAAG (Military Assistance Advisory Group) and
21 they sent him to keep an eye on us. Mr. Gilanpour was on the Olympic committee of Iran,
22 I think. There was a Sergeant Faratzi who was in their Special Forces. They were trying
23 to turn into a Special Forces. He was in their parachute unit. So Faratzi and Gilanpour
24 came along to be our guide and sort of just to keep tabs on us.

25 LC: Can I ask what the location was, the distance from the plane to where you
26 actually found the men?

27 HS: Oh, that. Well, we were down in Koh Rang and it took most of the day to
28 climb the mountains. The mountains were sort of covered with debris with rocks. Here
29 we got to the snow. We could take the mules. They ate—they grazed as we went along.
30 They ate this kind of, well, it was a very prickly plant. I don't know what it was. It looked
31 like holly, but it wasn't holly and the mules ate that. We took the mules until we got into

1 the snow and there was no grazing by then. So all the rest of the men carried what the
2 mules were carrying up to where the base camp was which was near the crash site. We
3 dropped it there and then came on back. So the six men stayed at the high camp had all
4 these supplies. Unfortunately though the snow was covered with locusts, locusts coming
5 from the west, I think, were getting up to fourteen thousand feet and dying. So the snow
6 was covered with a couple inches of dead locusts.

7 LC: Oh, that's incredible.

8 HS: Yeah.

9 LC: What a strange thing that must've been.

10 HS: Oh, yeah. I went up to the high camp one time and you wake up in the
11 morning. You get your little stove going and you boil some water and you put some
12 coffee in the water and you mix the cup of coffee and you're about ready to drink it and
13 flop, a big locust drops into it. So you throw it out and start again.

14 LC: You had to adapt pretty easily.

15 HS: Oh, yeah and those people that lived up there. I just went up for one day, two
16 days.

17 LC: That's right.

18 HS: People who lived up there had to adapt. They blew the plane up and they
19 found three bodies who were covered in the snow. One of them was pretty exposed. He
20 had been burned by the sun. One of them they found when the snow melted his knee was
21 sort of sticking up and they dug him out. Then the third one they found by probing
22 through the snow.

23 LC: Was this a military flight?

24 HS: Yes, an Otter, five people aboard, pilot, copilot, crew chief, and two
25 passengers. One of the passengers was a chief of the Army MAAG. They called it
26 gendarmerie. I don't know which of them were dead and which were alive and which
27 were rescued, but three of them were dead.

28 LC: Yeah. So your team transported the bodies out of there?

29 HS: We transported the bodies to Tehran where they had a graves registration
30 group from Turkey, I think, came in and took care of them. So then we got out of there.
31 It's really funny. They told us—we were going back to Bad Tölz and they told us they

1 were having an IT inspection that weekend and not to come back until Monday. We had a
2 C-130 there so we could either come back through Athens or we could come back
3 through Vienna. I let the team choose whether they wanted to go to Austria or the other
4 one, to Greece or to Vienna.

5 LC: What'd they choose?

6 HS: Most of them chose Vienna, or chose Athens because they'd been there
7 before on the way down. I think I was the only one that went through Vienna because I'd
8 never been there before. We all met in Munich on Monday morning, Monday afternoon.

9 LC: When you got back to Germany, then, did you continue to train and prepare
10 for that kind of operation still?

11 HS: That's right. We continued to train in Farsi. I think after I left they had two
12 more missions to Iran to train the Airborne brigade there to be a Special Forces brigade.
13 Then one time they went up to Kurdistan. I was transferred soon after that to be the
14 Special Warfare Plans Officer at U.S. Army Europe Headquarters in Heidelberg.

15 LC: Did you go on the Kurdistan mission, did you say?

16 HS: No. No. No. I didn't go back to Iran.

17 LC: Oh, okay. Do you know what any of those other missions that the team did?

18 HS: Yeah. They went down to turn the Airborne brigade into a Special Forces
19 brigade. Then they went up to Kurdistan up in the Iranian part of Kurdistan to see if they
20 could get the Iranian Army to get along with the Kurds better because that was up near
21 the Russian border. There wasn't much defense up there.

22 LC: Any idea how that went?

23 HS: Oh, they said that went very well. Yeah. The Shah took the only Kurdish
24 general and put him in charge of a division there and they used the facilities as a division
25 into upper east to go out to the west and build roads and patrol the area and become
26 friends with the Kurds.

27 LC: So they made some progress?

28 HS: Oh, yeah.

29 LC: Can you tell me a little bit before we go to your work at U.S. Army
30 Headquarters in Europe? Can you tell me a little bit about what Tehran was like when
31 you were there? What do you remember about it?

1 HS: Not really. We had a nice hotel right across from the American embassy.
2 They had good beer there. We only stayed in Tehran a couple of days because we came
3 back and turned the bodies over and went up the next day.

4 LC: How big was the U.S. embassy at that time?

5 HS: It was a fairly large embassy. We didn't have much to do with the embassy.
6 We dealt with the Army MAAG. That was a mission of—well, they were kind of
7 embarrassed by it.

8 LC: Why?

9 HS: We weren't allowed to wear green berets. We weren't allowed to make our
10 presence known in any way. I tried to get medals for my men, decorations,
11 accommodation medal at least and they wouldn't hear none of that. They didn't want us
12 down there. The United States had a treaty with the Russians when they got out of Iran
13 that no organized military crews would be sent to Iran. They considered us to be an
14 organized military group and the MAAG headquarters were sort of embarrassed by our
15 presence and by our success. They'd try to get these people out before. They were glad to
16 get rid of us. They didn't have any—we went swimming at the officer's club once, I
17 remember, but they wanted us out of the country fast. So they sent the C-130 down for us
18 and we took off and went to Athens.

19 LC: That's interesting that they needed you to keep a low profile.

20 HS: Oh, yeah.

21 LC: So they wouldn't look bad, really.

22 HS: That's right. So they gave us swift cooperation. They had to, but they didn't
23 want to be bothered with us. We did our job and we got out of there.

24 LC: You mentioned your next assignment U.S. Army Europe Headquarters and
25 what city was that in? I'm sorry.

26 HS: Heidelberg.

27 LC: Your assignment there began about when?

28 HS: Gosh, October, November, I was in Bad Tölz about a year and I was in
29 Heidelberg about a year.

30 LC: Okay. So late '61 sometime?

31 HS: Yeah. Late '61, was it? '62 maybe.

1 LC: Okay.

2 HS: I don't remember.

3 LC: That's okay, somewhere in there.

4 HS: Yeah. Well, I spent two years in Germany. Then I went back to the
5 Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth and I was there in '64 and '65.
6 So it must've been '62 that I went up to Heidelberg.

7 LC: Okay. Your duties were what? Can you give us an overview?

8 HS: First I worked in the War Plans branch until the Special Warfare planner left.
9 Then I was the Special Warfare Plans officer and I developed plans for all of Europe,
10 Special Warfare. I was amazed at how much we knew these people were going to Poland.
11 I knew exactly where they were going and who they were going to meet there and what
12 their motives were. So I was in charge of all the specific war plans for Eastern Europe if
13 the war started.

14 LC: How elaborate—you've given us a little sense of it, but how elaborate were
15 the plans? How detailed?

16 HS: They were very detailed. I was amazed at how much we knew. Every once in
17 a while somebody from Eastern Europe would come out and it was all very hush-hush.
18 The team that was going there never met him, but he'd take some rifle training and
19 weapons training with us and then we'd get rid of him. We never knew who these people
20 were. They would be sent to us by Heidelberg and we'd train them and send them back.

21 LC: One at a time or were there some kind of groups?

22 HS: One at a time.

23 LC: Okay. So they'd be there, they'd be trained, and then they'd be gone.

24 HS: Right and it was all very mysterious.

25 LC: I'm sure. I'm sure. What kind of complement of personnel worked with you,
26 or did you have a staff?

27 HS: When I was in Heidelberg?

28 LC: Mm-hmm.

29 HS: No. No. I was the staff.

30 LC: You were it?

1 HS: Yeah. There was one Special Warfare plans officer. There was a
2 Contingency plans officer and there were about two or three people in the War Plans
3 branch.

4 LC: Who did you report to?

5 HS: There was a colonel. He left and there was Colonel Seignious. He was the
6 director of G-3, I guess.

7 LC: Okay. So he would've been G-3 for U.S. Army Headquarters Europe?

8 HS: Yeah, in Europe.

9 LC: Okay.

10 HS: Eastern Europe.

11 LC: Is there more that you can tell us about this, Colonel, about the planning for
12 example?

13 HS: Well, no. General Seignious was very good. He got to be lieutenant general,
14 I guess. He was the colonel then. He was a very fine man from South Carolina and he
15 knew what was going on.

16 LC: He was a pretty bright spark, you'd say?

17 HS: Oh, yeah.

18 LC: Can you give us a sense of what the distribution of resources in the special
19 planning area would've been? For example, as between different countries, like, was
20 Poland crucial for planning?

21 HS: Oh, no. No. No. We had plans for all of the Eastern European countries. I
22 was assisted by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) agent in charge of USAREUR
23 (United States Army, Europe). He was basically assigned to Special Warfare branch. So
24 me and him, that was it.

25 LC: Where was he from? Do you remember?

26 HS: I have no idea. He retired in Florida.

27 LC: Did you stay in touch with him later in your career or?

28 HS: Later in my career, yeah. He was a very nice man. He had just gotten
29 married to a widow who had a couple of children and he invited me over to dinner and he
30 was very nice. We got along with him very well.

31 LC: Good. Where did you come across him again?

1 HS: I looked him up when I got back. He was here at CIA headquarters and then
2 he retired to Florida.

3 LC: Is there anything you can tell us about the sort of structure of the plans that
4 you had or that you were working on?

5 HS: Well, not much, no. They were all top secret. They're not anymore, of
6 course, but I don't remember much about them.

7 LC: Right. Okay.

8 HS: I remember once the first day I took over and the other colonel, the CIA guy,
9 was explaining the plans to somebody over the phone. I said, "No, sir, that's not right,"
10 and he chews me out. "I've been with these plans for—how do you know? You just got
11 here yesterday." I said, "Well, I read the plans yesterday because that was my job." I was
12 right and he was wrong. He hadn't read them in years.

13 LC: It turned out you were up to speed.

14 HS: Yeah, well, I had to get that way.

15 LC: That's right. That's right. Were there any points during your time as the
16 plans officer when the U.S. in effect went on alert? I'm thinking about some of the crises
17 of the 1961, '62 period.

18 HS: Well, I guess so. My main function there—we had a, well, the main function
19 was doing the plans, but we also had at USAREUR at that time, a subordinate unified
20 command, MEAFSA (Middle East, Africa, and South Asia), Middle East Africa and
21 South. It's sort of what the Central Command does now. We were gonna have a
22 maneuver to exercise—because I was on the MEAFSA staff I had one of the twelve
23 airborne slots at USAREUR. So I was still a qualified parachutist and getting parachute
24 pay. Everybody wanted to get parachute pay and I'd have to hold them off.

25 LC: You had to get in line first.

26 HS: Yeah. We were gonna have a maneuver in Libya. We had an airbase in
27 Libya at the time, Wheelus Air Force Base. We were going to have a maneuver where a
28 battalion of Marines would come ashore and the Airborne brigades from Europe would
29 jump in and we'd capture this British airfield. Then we'd be evacuated from there. So one
30 of the things I did was go down to Libya on a recon with this with the Airborne people.
31 We flew into Wheelus and then we flew to Benghazi and we flew to Tobruk and there

1 was a big British airfield in Tobruk, at El Alamein, which was gonna be our target. We
2 explained all of this to the British who were down there and to the Libyans. We chose a
3 landing zone for the parachutists. They were going to parachute the brigade in and then
4 attack the British airbase. We had it all settled and we were gonna do it and then all of a
5 sudden the State Department said, “Oh, that looks too close to Egypt.” They were having
6 some problems with Egypt at the time. They didn’t want an American brigade on the
7 border. So we didn’t do the maneuver. It was a good chance to visit Libya for me.

8 LC: It was called off because of some crisis or apparent difficulty?

9 HS: Yeah, because the State Department didn’t want us to put an Airborne
10 brigade that close to the Egyptian-Libyan border.

11 LC: Did things like that happen along the way that sort of made it seem a little
12 futile or did you think the planning problem was still useful?

13 HS: Oh, the planning process was very good. I was impressed with how much we
14 knew about the people in these Eastern European countries.

15 LC: Yeah.

16 HS: Yeah. Oh, no. That was just that one maneuver. It was good planning there,
17 too. We knew exactly who was coming and where they were going and the way they
18 were going to do it and how we get them out of there, but the State Department objected
19 to that one.

20 LC: How close was the cooperation, for example, with the British?

21 HS: Oh, I’m sure they had a pol-ad—a political advisor—at the USAREUR
22 Headquarters. General Freeman was the USAREUR commander at that time and I’m sure
23 they had a pol-ad at his level. I never met him myself.

24 LC: How cooperative were the British during this time?

25 HS: Oh, very good. We called it a small maneuver, battalion of Marines and a
26 brigade of Airborne troops. They thought—that was bigger than their whole Army. We
27 just called it a small little maneuver and they were very impressed.

28 LC: I bet. They were going through a period of reducing their military operations.

29 HS: Yeah, we met the British colonel in charge of Southern Asia and he was in
30 Benghazi. We landed our plane there and we had a meeting. We parked the plane, the C-

1 130, so that the little tent that he had set up would be in the shade of the wings. We were
2 served gin and tonics and all of that.

3 LC: Of course.

4 HS: Yeah. We sat out in the shade of the airplane, which was the only shade
5 around.

6 LC: That sounds very British, actually.

7 HS: Oh, yeah. Well, I met a British intelligence officer there, Flight Officer
8 Jarvis. I remember this very well. He accompanied us all around and he knew every
9 Libyan from the king to the belly dancers. He told me, he said well he was gonna get that
10 up and go home next year 'cause his fiancé was getting tired. I asked, "How long have
11 you been engaged?" He said, "Eleven years."

12 LC: She was getting a bit bored with that, huh?

13 HS: Yeah, but she was in England and he was in Libya, but he'd been engaged
14 for eleven years.

15 LC: Did you think the U.S. had similarly good intelligence about Libya, for
16 example?

17 HS: Probably not as good as him. He'd been down there for eleven years and he
18 knew everybody.

19 LC: Who was the main liaison that you worked with in Libya, for the U.S. I
20 mean?

21 HS: Oh, gee. I don't remember.

22 LC: Was it State Department people or?

23 HS: Well, I think the military people 'cause we went into Wheelus Air Force
24 Base, which was an American base in Libya at the time.

25 LC: So you would've been working mostly with—?

26 HS: With the Libyan military and the British.

27 LC: Were there other war games or maneuvers in Europe that you recall?

28 HS: Well, there were some. Yeah, we had to go to USNAVEUR (United States
29 Naval Forces, Europe) was in London. We had to coordinate with them. I went to London
30 once. Then I remember somebody came up with the idea that we had no war plan that

1 covered the failure of the NATO concept. So I had to write a war plan, which featured the
2 failure of the NATO concept.

3 LC: What was the crucial failure that you had to plan around?

4 HS: Well, that the Russians overwhelmed them. I made some optimistic
5 assessments of where we could attack, where we could keep intact the allied forces and
6 advance or a retreat through France to the Pyrenees. Then I had to go to Washington to
7 brief that plan.

8 LC: How long would it take to study up something like that and actually produce
9 the kind of document in detail that you needed to make?

10 HS: Oh, a couple of weeks to write it and then you had to get it coordinated all
11 the way up to the top.

12 LC: Would that then have some ongoing purpose in the contingency planning
13 field?

14 HS: Well, in the contingency planning field absolutely.

15 LC: What would it become, like the paper that they would pull down if
16 something actually happened?

17 HS: Yeah, that's right. All the units would be aware of it and would write their
18 own plans to support it.

19 LC: So, Colonel, if I'm correct you're drafting a kind of overarching key
20 document that then other units to implement it had to—

21 HS: Yeah for the U.S. Army Europe and then it would go to all these units to
22 make their own plans supporting it.

23 LC: That's incredibly responsible work.

24 HS: They told me it was—they had to have a field grade officer, a Leavenworth
25 graduate in that spot and I was not a Leavenworth graduate and I was not a field grade
26 officer. I was a captain. I had a friend there who pulled me up to help him from Bad Tölz.
27 I didn't want to leave Bad Tölz, but he pulled me up to help him and then so I did.

28 LC: Were you aware while you were doing it of the strategic significance of the
29 contribution?

30 HS: Oh, sure. I had to go back to Washington. I was just a captain then. I had to
31 go back to Washington to brief this and everybody was saying, "Well, Captain Schandler

1 is just a captain. He can't go to Washington to brief this." I remember Colonel Seignious
2 saying, "He can brief this at the highest levels."

3 LC: Now, that was a great vote of confidence from your colonel.

4 HS: Yeah.

5 LC: Who did you actually speak to or where did you go when you were in
6 Washington?

7 HS: Well, I don't remember. I went to the Pentagon and I briefed some people
8 and then I took a little leave and went to my home in North Carolina to see my parents.
9 Then I went back to Germany.

10 LC: All told that trip was about how long? Any idea?

11 HS: About a week.

12 LC: Okay. How was the briefing that you gave received?

13 HS: Well, it went fine as far as I know.

14 LC: You don't know what they said after you left the room.

15 HS: That's right, but they adopted the plan.

16 LC: So it was actually integrated, then?

17 HS: Oh, yeah.

18 LC: You mentioned that up to this point you had not been to the General
19 Command—?

20 HS: Command and General Staff College, right?

21 LC: Staff College, right, but that was your next move?

22 HS: That's right.

23 LC: Okay. Tell me how your orders for that came about.

24 HS: Well, I got the orders in December. I was supposed to leave Germany in
25 December and I didn't want to leave in December because I was supposed to go to Ft.
26 Leavenworth and I knew I'd be sitting around for six months waiting for the course to
27 begin. So I put in for the final semester program, which means you can take one semester
28 off to do your dissertation and they approved. If you had a PhD going or to finish any
29 kind of degree that you had, and so I put in for that. They gave me six months to study
30 my dissertation, do my dissertation at Harvard. So I got to Harvard in January, I guess, of
31 '63 and stayed there till June of '63 and then went out to Leavenworth.

1 LC: Now in June—
2 HS: It must been '64.
3 LC: Was it '64, then, you think?
4 HS: '63 I got to Harvard in December of about '63 and went to Leavenworth in
5 June of '64.
6 LC: Sir, you did finish the dissertation, I take it?
7 HS: I did what?
8 LC: You did finish the dissertation?
9 HS: No, I didn't. Not at that time.
10 LC: Okay, but later you—?
11 HS: Yeah, I worked on it and I finished it later.
12 LC: When did you actually finish it, just so I have that as part of—?
13 HS: '74, but it was on a different subject completely. We'll get to that.
14 LC: Okay. Tell me what you were working on this time in the early '60s at
15 Harvard.
16 HS: I was working on the appropriations process and how it came about in the
17 Congress, but all that work was kind of wasted because I had a better subject later on.
18 LC: Oh, yeah. Yes, sir.
19 HS: '64, I graduated in '65.
20 LC: Tell me a little bit about your time at Ft. Leavenworth. First of all, where
21 were you living?
22 HS: I had an apartment in Leavenworth city.
23 LC: So you weren't living on the base at all?
24 HS: No. No.
25 LC: You're back to the life of a student, essentially. Is that accurate?
26 HS: That's right. I had a Porsche that I had bought before I left Germany.
27 LC: Oh, beautiful. What year was it?
28 HS: It was '64, I'm sure.
29 LC: Fabulous.
30 HS: Because I took my thirty days' leave in Germany before I left I went down to
31 Rome to see one of the Italian officers that had been in my counter-insurgency course.

1 We went around Rome and then, I guess, I don't know where I went. Then I guess I went
2 to Venice and then I went to Stuttgart to get the three-thousand-mile checkup on my
3 Porsche. Then I turned it in to the people who ship cars and flew home, I guess.

4 LC: How many 1964 Porsches were there in Leavenworth, Kansas, that year?

5 HS: Quite a few.

6 LC: I can't believe that. Is that really true?

7 HS: Well, there was a—there were a couple. There was a guy, a contemporary
8 man, Hernie Dettweiler, I think, and he and I joined the Kansas City Sports Car Club and
9 went on these rallies every weekend.

10 LC: That sounds like it was a lot of fun.

11 HS: Oh, yeah. Another friend of mine and I signed up with Kansas City Ski Club
12 and we went up to Winter Park, Colorado. The bus, I don't know, had an accident or
13 something broke and we were late getting back. So we had to call Leavenworth and tell
14 him we'd be late on Monday. We wouldn't be back in time for class. I'll never forget it.
15 It's Colonel Luthi, L-U-T-H-I. He said that every married man in that class has been to
16 see him to say that they had to have a day off to greet their wives or to get the furniture
17 that was arriving. He says, "If the two of you bastards want to take off and go skiing one
18 day, that's fine with me. Good luck."

19 LC: He sounds like a pretty good commander.

20 HS: Yeah.

21 LC: Colonel, tell me a little bit about the curriculum at the college. What were
22 you studying?

23 HS: Well, to some extent we were studying division tactics. We also studied
24 some political-military things, what countries were for us, what countries were against us,
25 and what they could contribute and so on. I was good at that. They wanted to keep me as
26 an instructor there for the strategics class, but I couldn't. I didn't want to stay in
27 Leavenworth. That was out in the middle of nowhere.

28 LC: It sure is. It still is.

29 HS: So I got out of being an instructor there.

30 LC: At this point, how large was the situation in Southeast Asia looming?

1 HS: It was just looming. It wasn't even there. It was in '65. So in June of '65
2 when we graduated from the Command and General Staff College, that really began my
3 career with Southeast Asia 'cause I was assigned to the 1st Brigade of the 5th Division at
4 Ft. Devens, Massachusetts. There were only two battalions in the 5th Division there, the
5 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry. When I got there I found out
6 that they were filling with men. People that we didn't have were being transferred in. We
7 were being filled up. What else happened? We were getting filled and, oh, yeah. The
8 president and the secretary of defense were meeting to find out what to do about
9 Southeast Asia. We knew exactly what they were gonna do because we were getting
10 ready to go. We were filling and the *Army Times* said, "Have you been ordered to dye
11 your underwear green? Then you're going to Vietnam." We had green underwear
12 hanging from all the windows drying out.

13 LC: No kidding.

14 HS: We were told to take our 5th Division patches off and put 1st Division patches
15 on. So we were part of the 1st Division. The 1st Division apparently had two mechanized
16 battalions who were not going anywhere and we were gonna take their place. So we
17 became members of 1st Division. We got maps and everything, but it was still classified. I
18 remember my battalion commander, I was a battalion executive officer with 2nd of the
19 2nd, Colonel Scheffer got the whole battalion in the theater and he said, "I can't tell you
20 where we're going. That's classified, but I'll tell you what we're gonna do when we get
21 there. We're gonna kill Viet Cong." They all roared and cheered.

22 LC: You already knew what was gonna happen?

23 HS: Oh, yeah. We had the maps and everything. We knew where we were going.

24 LC: You knew exactly where?

25 HS: We knew what decision the president was gonna make. He was going to
26 make the decision to send us and the 1st Cav over to Vietnam.

27 LC: You were pretty much already in the picture?

28 HS: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

29 LC: The maps that you had, can you tell me were they general South
30 Vietnamese—?

1 HS: No. No. They were one to fifty thousand specific area we were gonna be in,
2 Lai Khe.

3 LC: You had the tac maps of Lai Khe already?

4 HS: Oh, yeah. Lai Khe and Ben Cat and the area around the Michelin Plantation,
5 around there, III Corps. Yeah, we knew where we were going.

6 LC: That's amazing. When did you tell your family that you were gonna be
7 shipping out?

8 HS: When everybody else was gonna be told. I guess about a week before we
9 left.

10 LC: Which was—

11 HS: 'Cause these guys were calling us from all over, from Ft. Hood and "Should
12 we bring our families?" "Should we come up there prepared to stay?" We told them to
13 leave their families where they would be safe and don't be prepared to stay very long.
14 That's all we could tell them.

15 LC: When did you and the unit actually leave Massachusetts?

16 HS: Well, the first thing we did was take all of our heavy equipment like trucks
17 and kitchens and things down to the port of Boston and they'd loaded them up on a ship
18 and sent them off. Then we trained for a couple of weeks without that stuff. Then we took
19 our Army training test and Colonel Scheffer was a very smart man. He flew over to—oh,
20 we packed up some stuff that went by air and Colonel Scheffer went off on the advanced
21 party and left me to command the battalion out to Oakland, California, and we got on a
22 ship there.

23 LC: Did you meet back up with Colonel, is it Schepherd?

24 HS: Scheffer. I met back up with him when we got to Vietnam.

25 LC: Okay, but not before then?

26 HS: He didn't take the trip over. Heck no. It took us twenty-two days on that
27 miserable tug.

28 LC: He was on a plane over there in a day.

29 HS: Yeah. He was waiting for us.

30 LC: You spent the twenty-two days with the guys and you were in command
31 essentially.

1 HS: Yeah, exactly, the men on the ship.

2 LC: Your departure point on the West Coast?

3 HS: Oakland. We landed at Vung Tau. We stopped one day in Okinawa, one
4 night, basically.

5 LC: So you landed out at Vung Tau?

6 HS: Yeah. They had trucks there to take us up to, oh, where was it? Bien Hoa to
7 Saigon University. We sort of staged out of there, got together and met up with our
8 equipment.

9 LC: Meaning the South Vietnamese troops, is that right?

10 HS: No, meaning the trucks and things that we shipped out a month earlier or two
11 weeks earlier.

12 LC: Okay. So you met up with the heavy equipment?

13 HS: Yeah.

14 LC: Then deployed to—

15 HS: To Lai Khe.

16 LC: I want to ask you a little bit about that, the process of moving over there.
17 You said it was twenty-two days crossing. That's a pretty long time. What was the
18 morale of the guys?

19 HS: Well, it was pretty good because I kept training the whole time. We were a
20 well-trained unit before we got on the ship and I was determined we was gonna be a well-
21 trained unit when we got off the ship. The Navy had a lieutenant who was in command of
22 the troops. It was a MSCS (Mak Shui Cho & Sons) ship, a civilian ship. All it was, was to
23 transport us over there. I had an ongoing fight with the Navy lieutenant. He designated
24 one area that was a flat area up above the deck and he designated that as the officer's sun
25 deck. I designated it as the 2nd Battalion training area. I chased all the officers off when
26 we used it for training. He didn't like that too much. Then they had a barbershop. He had
27 two barbers in there and the troops were all lined up. I had three barbers of my own in the
28 battalion. I told him just to give me the barbershop for two days and I'll get everybody to
29 get a haircut. He wouldn't do that so I tried to find electrical outlets all over the ship so
30 we could give my troops haircuts. Every place I found he found some reason why we
31 couldn't do it. The tail was for the civilians who ran the ship. That was their area. One

1 place I plugged in, that was the officer's washroom. So finally I just quit asking and
2 plugged in anyplace I could and gave my troops haircuts. He made the trip miserable.

3 LC: It sounds like that was kind of an unnecessary fractious relationship there.

4 HS: That's right. I had a nice cabin for nine laid out for myself and the other
5 battalion commander. He made us live with our own officers and gave that to the
6 chaplains. So I had nine other people in my room and we all had to lie down if everybody
7 was in there.

8 LC: Cause you couldn't all stand up at the same time?

9 HS: No we couldn't. We couldn't all. There wasn't enough room.

10 LC: Now tell me about the chaplains that were going over with you.

11 HS: Well, I don't know much about them. They stayed in there. They were the
12 division chaplains, I guess.

13 LC: Okay. Okay. So these were the Army chaplains that were coming over with
14 you?

15 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I had one assigned when I got there and he was wonderful.
16 I'll tell you about him later.

17 LC: Okay. Sure. I'll make a note that I should ask you. Let me also inquire a little
18 bit about Vung Tau. When you actually disembarked—

19 HS: Yeah, we were the first ones. He wanted to get rid of us.

20 LC: I'll bet. He had you in line first to get off.

21 HS: Yeah.

22 LC: When you actually set foot down, what did you see? Do you remember what
23 it looked like?

24 HS: Not very much. We got immediately in the trucks and we went up to Saigon
25 University. I remember what that looked like.

26 LC: Tell me about that.

27 HS: Well, we got there. All this equipment was coming in and all the American
28 forces. You looked down the road and you had a big stack of beer. You looked a little
29 farther and you had a big stack of Coca-Cola. I was thinking if I was a little VC (Viet
30 Cong) sitting out in the jungle looking at all this, I'd say, "My God, we've lost all ready.
31 They've got more beer and Coca-Cola than we have ammunition." So I was impressed

1 with the great variety and the quantity of ammunition and beer and Coca-Cola we were
2 moving in and troops. So that was my first impression of Saigon University out in Bien
3 Hoa that we were really moving in with American abundance and the VC were dead.

4 LC: In a big way.

5 HS: Yeah.

6 LC: Wow. Did you have a sense of threat from VC?

7 HS: Not really. No, there were so many of us that there's no threat there. They
8 weren't gonna do anything. We were only there for a couple of days to marry up with our
9 equipment. It's really funny. My battalion commander went over to the officers' club. He
10 came back and he said, "They've got an extra ice making machine over there. If we can
11 use it, but it's only direct current like they have over here and all of our generators are
12 alternating current." I said, "Well, let's take it 'cause I'm sure there's some guy in the
13 battalion that has enough background to change it to direct current." So we took this ice-
14 making machine and we got to Lai Khe. We found that the buildings of Lai Khe, we were
15 assigned one room in one building to put all of our duffel bags and excess equipment in.
16 That place had a plug that was in direct current. So we just plugged the ice machine in
17 and it worked.

18 LC: Away it went.

19 HS: Away it went. Each company, I guess, got a big can of ice everyday.

20 LC: I'm sure that was very welcome.

21 HS: Oh, yeah. We used it.

22 LC: Yes, sir. On the move up to Lai Khe from Saigon, you're taking all the
23 equipment with you. What kind of a road—I think this is Highway 13, if I'm not
24 mistaken.

25 HS: I don't know what highway it was, but it was—might have been Highway 1
26 cause Highway 1 went—no, no. That was my second tour. I guess it was Highway 13 and
27 then up to Lai Khe and we flowed into Lai Khe.

28 LC: Was there an airbase there or what was—?

29 HS: Small airfield, yeah.

30 LC: Can you describe the camp as you remember it?

1 HS: There was a lot of rubber trees. We were in the rubber trees. There were
2 laterite mud roads going along and those roads were improved by the engineers when we
3 got in there. So it was all spread out. It was among the rubber trees.
4 LC: You were all spread out?
5 HS: Yeah. The companies were along the perimeter. I was in the interior, of
6 course, with the battalion staff.
7 LC: What kind of facilities did you have?
8 HS: Tents.
9 LC: You were in tents?
10 HS: Yeah.
11 LC: Did that change at all during the time you were there?
12 HS: No, not during the time I was at Lai Khe.
13 LC: How long were you there?
14 HS: Seven months.
15 LC: You were in tents. No prefabs the whole time?
16 HS: Oh, yeah.
17 LC: Holy wow. That's amazing.
18 HS: I guess later on they put up some prefabs, but yeah this was in September,
19 October of '65.
20 LC: Sir, let's take a break there.
21 HS: Okay.
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Interview with Herbert Schandler
Session [3] of [4]
May 25, 2005

1 Herbert Schandler: He was the only person we had who was a Vietnamese
2 nationalist and who satisfied American requirements. He spoke English. He wore nice
3 suits. He was a Catholic in a Buddhist country. The big thing about him was is he would
4 not accept American troops in Vietnam except for advisors. He didn't want American
5 troops in Vietnam. Consequently, we didn't send any. We felt that he was becoming
6 increasingly brutal and so did the North Vietnamese. They didn't like him very much. We
7 oughta get rid of him. He put his brother in a high position next to the second only to him
8 in charge of the Strategic Hamlets, and they weren't very well done. Buddhists more or
9 less had a little revolt in way and his brother took Army troops to put down the so-called
10 revolution. It wasn't a revolution. It was a protest by the Buddhists. The Buddhists didn't
11 like him very much, either, cause he was Catholic. So we thought that we had to get rid
12 of him in order to get American troops over there. Now, the North Vietnamese. They
13 thought he was pretty bad, too, and they wanted to defeat him. They liked him 'cause he
14 was a nationalist, but he wouldn't accept American troops and they thought they could
15 defeat him before any American troops arrived and that way we wouldn't have a war.

16 Laura Calkins: They wouldn't have to face American forces.

17 HS: Right. The Americans were feeling just the opposite. They had to get rid of
18 him and get in there.

19 LC: Let me just stop you just for a second and ask, Colonel, what do you think
20 about the controversy now embedded in the historical literature about whether President
21 Kennedy during the summer and late fall of 1963 was thinking about decreasing the U.S.
22 advisory commitment?

23 HS: I think he was.

24 LC: You do?

25 HS: Yeah. I'm not sure that he would've sent troops in. He had approved of a
26 coup against Diem. It was a great surprise to him when they were killed. He didn't want
27 them to be killed. They were offered safe passage by Ambassador Lodge, but they didn't
28 take it. So the generals killed them. From that time on, in my opinion, there was—what

1 little legitimacy there was to the South Vietnamese government disappeared. There was
2 no legitimacy there. Diem was the one and other than Diem there were just a bunch of
3 generals.

4 LC: At that point, of course, just a couple of weeks later, President Kennedy
5 himself was killed.

6 HS: Yeah. Yeah, a couple months later.

7 LC: Do you see that as a crucial turning point then?

8 HS: Absolutely.

9 LC: Can you talk about that a little bit?

10 HS: Yeah. The Vietnamese thought it was a crucial turning point because that
11 allowed American troops to come in. Kennedy and Diem didn't want American troops to
12 come in. The North Vietnamese didn't want 'em either because they thought they could
13 defeat Diem. Killing Diem upset all their plans.

14 LC: So actually both sides of the equation then changed.

15 HS: Both sides changed. Yeah.

16 LC: Such that American—

17 HS: Americans were eager to get any American—the command seemed more
18 eager to get American troops in to protect our airfields, if nothing else. The North
19 Vietnamese were anxious to defeat Diem to keep American troops out.

20 LC: Can you evaluate incoming-President Johnson's agenda for Vietnam, if he
21 had one, when he first took office?

22 HS: Well, he probably didn't, but he had the Great Society. He was gonna
23 implement the Great Society and get rid of poverty in the United States. He told the Joint
24 Chiefs of Staff, "Take care of that little pissy ant country over there. There's nothing
25 going on and we can beat them. You take care of that and I'll get on with the Great
26 Society." Well, the Joint Chiefs of Staff didn't know how to do that." How do you not
27 lose a war? Also, President Johnson, perhaps not at this time, but later on felt that he was
28 not going to be the Democratic president who lost another country to communism.
29 Truman had lost. He had lost it. Truman was in power when the Chinese communists
30 came in and he took hell from the Republicans for losing Communist China to the

1 communists. So Lyndon Johnson was not gonna be the president who lost another—the
2 Democratic president who lost another country to communism.

3 LC: Colonel, do you think that that specter of being tagged with being the next
4 Democrat who handed over an Asian country to communists, did that have a lot to do
5 with how he reacted when the Gulf of Tonkin incidents took place in August of 1964?

6 HS: Absolutely.

7 LC: That he was thinking, “I have to respond.”

8 HS: Oh, yes. Exactly.

9 LC: How much credence do you give to the standard, conventional interpretation
10 of what happened out there in the Gulf of Tonkin?

11 HS: Well, what the North Vietnamese told us was it was a local commander’s
12 prerogative to defend himself. The Politburo in Hanoi had nothing to do with it and were
13 quite surprised when they were bombed because of that. It was the local commander who
14 was defending himself.

15 LC: Now when did you find that out, sir?

16 HS: When I was over there in '98.

17 LC: With former Secretary McNamara?

18 HS: Yeah, well, McNamara didn't go.

19 LC: Oh, okay. This was your other trip.

20 HS: Yeah.

21 LC: Okay. That's interesting. Do you believe that?

22 HS: Probably, yeah.

23 LC: Sounds right?

24 HS: Yeah. Sounds right to me. They were just defending themselves. They said
25 because of the bombing they figured that more bombing would follow and so they
26 evacuated Hanoi at that time. They sent all their women and children out to the
27 countryside.

28 LC: Of course, because they didn't know how broadly the U.S. would respond.

29 HS: Yeah. That's right.

30 LC: But in fact, the reprisal air strikes by the United States were primarily along
31 the coast. Is that correct?

1 HS: That's right. Yes, exactly.

2 LC: Okay. I suppose just what were understood to be the launch points for those
3 patrol craft.

4 HS: Exactly, yes.

5 LC: Was it important in your thinking, as a strategist now thinking back on that
6 time, was it important that the U.S. established a precedent of being willing to use aerial
7 power against North Vietnam?

8 HS: No, it wasn't because it didn't do any good at all. You see, the North
9 Vietnamese saw the first war as the special war where U.S. advisors were trying to get
10 the Vietnamese to fight each other. Okay. So they were fighting each other. They saw the
11 bombing as an admission that that war had failed.

12 LC: Really?

13 HS: That we had to try something else. So we tried bombing and the bombing
14 didn't hurt them very much. Then we sent troops in after Diem died. That was the end of
15 the bombing. The bombing had failed. They never felt that they were on the verge of
16 losing. They were always ahead. Every change we made in our strategy was an admission
17 of the failure of the previous strategy.

18 LC: Interesting. Is this something that you sort of appreciated at the time or in
19 your own study or is this more based on your visits in 1998?

20 HS: Oh, my visits in 1998. Yeah.

21 LC: Very interesting. Who did you speak to in 1998? Do you remember?

22 HS: Yeah. I got it written down here. Let me—let's see. We spoke to a lot of
23 people.

24 LC: Oh, I'm sure.

25 HS: I spoke to one in particular—

26 LC: Who organized that trip, by the way?

27 HS: Oh, Brown University and the Rockefeller Foundation. They had taken a
28 similar trip or trips to Cuba, to talk about it, and to Russia to talk about the Russian and
29 Cuban Missile Crisis. They thought this would be a good idea to do the same thing about
30 Vietnam.

1 LC: How did they come to select you, sir? I mean obviously your preeminence in
2 the field, but do you know how your name surfaced?

3 HS: Yeah. I volunteered as—in the first visit with McNamara they took two
4 generals, Bill Smith, a general in the Air Force, and Dale Vesser, a lieutenant general in
5 the Army. Then the next time they planned a follow-up trip and the Vietnamese told
6 them, “Don’t bring McNamara and all those generals and historians.” They said, “Why?”
7 They said, “Because we want to talk and if you bring McNamara our side will appoint
8 someone of equal stature whose job will be to keep us from talking.”

9 LC: Right, that makes sense.

10 HS: I knew those two generals and I wrote to them and said, “Hey. If you’re
11 going back I know something about this.” Then they recommended me to McNamara and
12 had an interview with him and he agreed that I should replace the two generals.

13 LC: So you had a meeting with McNamara?

14 HS: McNamara, oh, yeah, sure.

15 LC: Where did that take place? Was that in Washington?

16 HS: Yes, his office is in Washington and we met there. Then we also met at the
17 Cosmos Club in Washington before we left.

18 LC: That must have been an interesting couple of meetings.

19 HS: Oh, yeah.

20 LC: What did you and the former secretary talk about?

21 HS: We talked about the unlikelihood of military victory. He was gonna call his
22 book initially *Missed Opportunities*. I thought that was a good title but then they changed
23 it to, the press changed it to *Argument Without End*.

24 LC: So that was actually a publicity people’s decision?

25 HS: I guess so. They did that. I wrote a chapter there called “Illusions—“An
26 Illusion of Military Victory.” I’m writing another book now called *The War That*
27 *Couldn’t Be Won*, because I don’t think it ever could.

28 LC: Interesting. When are we gonna get to see that?

29 HS: I don’t know. I’m still talking to the Rutgers University Press.

30 LC: Oh, okay. Good.

31 HS: It’ll probably be in the winter sometime.

1 LC: Is the manuscript complete?

2 HS: Pretty much.

3 LC: Wow.

4 HS: I still have another chapter I still have to put in.

5 LC: I will look forward to that.

6 HS: Okay. Well, I'll call you and tell you when it's out.

7 LC: Okay. Good. I hope you will. I hope you will. Did you find the name of the
8 fellow that you primarily exchanged views with?

9 HS: Let me see.

10 LC: If not we can come back to that, of course.

11 HS: Oh. Colonel Quach, Q-U-A-C-H, H-A-I is the second name in Quach Hai
12 Luong, L-U-O-N-G.

13 LC: Quach Hai Luong.

14 HS: Yeah. He was an air defense commander and then he is now a historian and a
15 strategist at the Institute of International Relations in Hanoi. That's like our Foreign
16 Service institutes. They take their old retired diplomats and put them there to teach.

17 LC: He was an air defense commander during American period of the war.

18 HS: Right, during the war. Yeah and now he's my old buddy.

19 LC: How old is he? Do you have any idea?

20 HS: No. No idea.

21 LC: Do you continue to sort of exchange letters or emails with him?

22 HS: No, I don't. There was another one, Quach Hai Luong, that's a different guy.
23 I'll have to look at him. I exchanged letters with him, this funny little guy. I'd have to
24 look up his name, who was in India at the time was, has been a revolutionary since he's
25 fourteen. He wanted to know about what was good. I could send him some literature on a
26 draftee army versus a volunteer army. I sent that to him. What else did he want to know?
27 He wanted to know a couple things, but he's looking to the future.

28 LC: Interesting that they're considering those issues at the same time the United
29 States is, as well.

30 HS: Well, it is because they have so many people in the Army.

31 LC: And the cost is huge.

1 HS: The cost is bad, but the cost of letting them go into a poverty-stricken
2 country with no job is even worse, probably.

3 LC: The dislocation from demobilization is always difficult.

4 HS: Yeah.

5 LC: Let me ask you, going back to the 1964 then 1965 period, when President
6 Johnson ran for reelection, what impact do you think that had on thinking or planning for
7 perhaps gradually escalating U.S. commitments in South Vietnam?

8 HS: I think people thought that Johnson was a better choice than Goldwater.
9 Goldwater said that we should even nuke them and Johnson said, “No. No. Let’s be
10 reasonable. We can talk to them about it. I have big plans for the United States.” He
11 downgraded even though during the campaign there were a couple of attacks on
12 Americans in Bien Hoa Air Base and at the—what was the name of that? The Brinks
13 Hotel.

14 LC: Down in Saigon?

15 HS: Yeah, but Johnson even before the election set up a study group to study
16 what we should do about Vietnam. This was kind of a disaster because a lot of the
17 options weren’t given to him. I remember the CIA sent in a document that said that the
18 insurgency in South Vietnam was largely indigenous and bombing the North will
19 probably have no effect. A Navy admiral, whose name I won’t tell you, in the Joint
20 Chiefs of Staff said, “We can’t tell the president. That is too negative.” It was too
21 negative. It was absolutely correct, but Johnson never heard that.

22 LC: I think that this was one of the marked features of one of your papers that I
23 have in my hand that you wrote while you were at the Congressional Research Services
24 certainly based on your dissertation research, I’m sure, that the president didn’t get a
25 whole lot of alternative proposals as to how to move forward.

26 HS: No, the only thing we threw in was bomb now and bomb later. So they
27 started bombing.

28 LC: Do you think that Johnson was one who would have worked well with a
29 series of competing alternatives in front of him, like for example apparently President
30 Kennedy could evaluate different competing proposals or was Johnson more like a

1 President Nixon who wanted things to come to him kind of already set and then he would
2 bounce his own ideas off of it?

3 HS: Johnson had his Tuesday afternoon luncheons with Joint Chiefs of Staff and
4 secretary of defense. I think he liked things to come to him, but he didn't always accept
5 them when they came to him. He'd say, "Think of something else." I told McNamara one
6 time. He went to visit Westmoreland before U.S. troops came to Vietnam. Westmoreland
7 said, "There's only one option available to us, send in more troops." I told him,
8 "Whenever you heard that you should tell the commander go back and get me three more
9 options."

10 LC: Let me just clarify, you having mentioned that, Colonel, when did you first
11 have a chance to talk to Secretary McNamara? When was the first time you met him?

12 HS: Probably in his office when he was deciding whether I should replace these
13 two generals.

14 LC: So that discussion that you were having was in probably 1998?

15 HS: Yeah.

16 LC: Yeah.

17 HS: It was 1997 because I went over there in January of '98.

18 LC: Oh, okay. Thanks. That's 1997. In February '65 I think you were probably
19 still at—you were probably in Massachusetts, at that point, in Ft. Devens. Does that
20 sound right?

21 HS: January of '6—

22 LC: Or General Staff College. I can't remember which.

23 HS: No. It was probably Leavenworth. Then I went to Massachusetts after
24 Leavenworth in August of '64, '65.

25 LC: '65. Right.

26 HS: Then I went overseas in about October '65.

27 LC: Now certainly during that time period, early '65, the first couple three
28 months when the large Viet Cong attack at Pleiku took place and then the reply with
29 Flaming Dart runs against North Vietnam, you were no doubt watching those events
30 closely. What did you make of it? Did you think you were probably on your way to
31 Vietnam?

1 HS: We probably were, yeah, because we were again filling up. We were
2 transferred to the 1st Division. The *Army Times* had a big headline, “Have you been
3 ordered to dye your underwear green? That means you’re going to Vietnam.” We had
4 green underwear hanging out from every window.

5 LC: Was that at Ft. Devens?

6 HS: Yeah.

7 LC: You had green underwear everywhere, huh?

8 HS: Yeah.

9 LC: Oh, boy.

10 HS: We dyed it and every man had to come in and make out a will and all that
11 sort of stuff. We were filling with people. We’d get calls from Ft. Hood from sergeants
12 who were coming to us saying should they bring their families and we’d say, “Well, no.
13 Better leave them there for a while.”

14 LC: You also mentioned, I think, in our earlier session about that you were
15 actually given one-to-fifty thousand tac maps.

16 HS: Maps, yeah. Sure. Our battalion got to do the—got the whole battalion in the
17 auditorium and he said, “I can’t tell you where we’re going. That’s classified, but I’ll tell
18 you what we do when we get there. We’re gonna kill Viet Cong.”

19 LC: Did everybody pretty much go nuts? Was that inspiring? Was that an
20 inspiring talk?

21 HS: Oh, yeah. Everybody cheered. Hooray. That’s what we wanna do.

22 LC: Herb, let me ask you about the command structure when the battalion was
23 shifted into and made part of the 1st Division. What was your rank, first of all, and who
24 were you reporting to?

25 HS: I was a major, executive officer, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, and I reported to
26 the battalion commander. Now, there was a brigade commander that the battalion
27 commander reported to, but he didn’t go with us, I think. There were two battalions in a
28 brigade. So it was just this brigade. We weren’t really reporting to anybody. It got to be a
29 problem later on because the commander of the 1st Division was also the commander at
30 Ft. Riley. He said, “Oh, yes. Let’s take those mess hall tables with us.” Well, that didn’t
31 apply to Ft. Devens. So when we wound up with the division in Vietnam, we were

1 lacking on a lot of things that they had just taken with them because the command
2 general said so.

3 LC: So you were under-equipped when you first got there, would you say?

4 HS: Well, yeah. I think everybody was. They sent everybody over and we were
5 told to take six months' worth of equipment with us because there wouldn't be anything
6 until they built up an infrastructure.

7 LC: You told us last time about your trip over by ship and that you landed at
8 Vung Tau. Then you'd gone to Bien Hoa.

9 HS: We went to Bien Hoa to pick up our equipment, right.

10 LC: Right and then up to Lai Khe and that's sort of where we left it. Can you
11 describe—you'd told me that you had lived for the next seven months, from September
12 1965 you guys were living in tents. Can you describe the terrain? Where were you? How
13 close to, for example, the big plantations up there, the Michelin Plantation?

14 HS: We were right in the middle of a big plantation.

15 LC: Right in the middle?

16 HS: Oh, yeah. There were rubber trees all around.

17 LC: Why was that position chosen?

18 HS: I have no idea.

19 LC: Was it not a good decision?

20 HS: Well, it was a little city. It was the Rubber Research Institute of France, I
21 guess. We had electric lights and everything there, had water. So I guess that's why it
22 was chosen.

23 LC: Oh, okay. For the water—

24 HS: And the lights and the roadway in the area was very big. The road went right
25 past my tent, which was back in the rubber trees. It was a pretty well set up camp.

26 LC: How many men were up there when you first arrived when you first got
27 there? Were you among the first people there?

28 HS: Yeah, sure. There were two battalions, the 1st Battalion and the 2nd Battalion.
29 We set up perimeter. The 28th, the 2nd of the 28th, there was three or four. The whole 1st
30 Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division was there. That's where we met our 1st Brigade
31 commander because the brigade commander didn't come over. The brigade commander

1 at Ft. Devens did not come over on the ship, but the brigade commander from the 1st
2 Division was there. We were attached to him in the 1st Division.

3 LC: Did that arrangement stick through the time you were there?

4 HS: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

5 LC: Who was that commander?

6 HS: Broadback. Colonel Broadback was the brigade commander at Lai Khe.

7 LC: Did you have much interaction with him?

8 HS: I didn't personally until later, but some people did, yeah. The battalion
9 commander, did I'm sure.

10 LC: Who were you reporting to?

11 HS: The battalion commander.

12 LC: Who was?

13 HS: George M. Scheffer, Jr. Lieutenant colonel.

14 LC: Oh, yeah, I think you mentioned him before.

15 HS: Yeah.

16 LC: Yeah, I remember that you did.

17 HS: He was very good.

18 LC: He was a good guy, yeah.

19 HS: Uh-huh. Fantastic leader.

20 LC: What did you learn from him?

21 HS: Well, I learned a lot about how to run a battalion.

22 LC: Like what kinds of things, for somebody who doesn't have a clue what that
23 job would be. What kind of things could you learn from him?

24 HS: Well, he had a meeting every week with all the staff officers of the battalion.
25 What else did I learn from him? I learned about how to command a battalion, about radio
26 discipline. Didn't use that very much. We didn't use radios very much. I learned about,
27 well, in a helicopter what kind of communications you have, how to use these
28 communications.

29 LC: Would he operate a command post from a helicopter?

30 HS: Oh, yeah.

1 LC: Okay. Let me ask you, first of all, you mentioned radio discipline and that
2 you guys did not use radio communications very heavily. It's probably clear why not, but
3 could you explain why not?

4 HS: Well, because of the South Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese were very
5 good in picking up our signals.

6 LC: So they had a signals intelligence operation?

7 HS: Yes. I think they had a good one. I don't know if they spoke English or not,
8 but sure. Outside of Lai Khe one time we found a Viet Cong camp with a little radio and
9 they had the *Stars and Stripes* and the American schedule to broadcast.

10 LC: Really?

11 HS: Yeah.

12 LC: That must've been a little worrying.

13 HS: So yeah. Somebody from Lai Khe was bringing it out to them.

14 LC: Wow. When you arrived up there September '65—

15 HS: '65.

16 LC: Yep. How quickly did you come into contact with the enemy? I know you
17 guys were involved in a couple of big—

18 HS: Well, there was a little bit help from—we had some fire incidents. I don't
19 think it was anything. Then we went out in November we were attacked by this VC
20 regiment.

21 LC: This is a really important engagement. It emerges all over the place in the
22 secondary literature, as you know. Can you tell me what you remember and just take us
23 through what happened?

24 HS: Well, they were up there and they got into a night position, which is called a
25 laager, where they put a night division. We flew things into them at night that they
26 couldn't carry with them, like 4.2-inch mortars and a lot of picks and shovels and some
27 barbed wire. So they all dug holes and they had barbed wire around them. Early in the
28 morning they got attacked by the 242 Regiment.

29 LC: The 242 VC Regiment?

30 HS: VC regiment, right.

31 LC: About in what strength? Did you have any idea at the time?

1 HS: No idea. No, but pretty good strength. We had a battalion of armored
2 personnel carriers from the cavalry were up there with us.

3 LC: From the 1st Cav?

4 HS: No, from the—yeah, from the 1st—well, it wasn't the 1st Cavalry Division. It
5 was the first—it wasn't the 1st. It was the cavalry battalion in the 1st Division.

6 LC: From the 1st Infantry Division, the cavalry element.

7 HS: That's right. I was back in the base camp commanding it. I moved forward
8 with the reinforcing company. By that time the battle was over anyhow. We had fantastic
9 air support.

10 LC: Yeah, I want to ask you about that.

11 HS: There were planes coming from all over. We had within the battalion, they
12 changed it later on, but within the battalion we had an Air Force officer and an enlisted
13 man in a radio jeep. So they called people in right to us.

14 LC: Were they calling in Air Force or were they calling in guys from the
15 carriers?

16 HS: No. Air Force, Navy, everything, they were getting them all. We had so
17 many and then we had artillery from Lai Khe. So we had to draw a line and say, "Okay.
18 Artillery south of the line strikes north of the line," 'cause we couldn't have them both
19 together.

20 LC: Were you—

21 HS: I was back in the back listening to all this.

22 LC: What role did you play? I'm sure that you must have done some talking?

23 HS: I led the counter-attack in Lai Khe with the rescue. By the time we got there
24 it was all over anyhow.

25 LC: How long did it take to get the reinforcement element together and moving
26 forward?

27 HS: Oh, about fifteen, twenty minutes.

28 LC: Really? How long did the actual battle—?

29 HS: Last? Oh, let's see. The morning it started at dawn and then it lasted till
30 about eleven o'clock, in there, eleven o'clock.

31 LC: Somewhere in there a decision was made to bring up some reinforcements.

1 HS: Yeah.

2 LC: Okay. Then you were kind of put in charge of getting them up there?

3 HS: Yeah. That's right. They were from another battalion, but I just got up there

4 and—

5 LC: You moved them forward?

6 HS: Yeah.

7 LC: How did you actually advance? Were you in an armored personal carrier?

8 HS: No. No. No. We advanced on foot. We were riding in—it was over by that

9 time. We just helped.

10 LC: You guys probably didn't really know that?

11 HS: No. We didn't know it.

12 LC: That must've been, well, nerve wracking. Can you tell me what, if you

13 remember, Herb, what were you thinking as you were moving forward? You know

14 you're going forward to—

15 HS: It wasn't too nerve wracking. No. I—

16 LC: You were ready?

17 HS: I was ready to go, yeah.

18 LC: Were you disappointed, then, when—?

19 HS: Oh, sure.

20 LC: Really? Wow.

21 HS: Yeah. That's what the battalion commander told me one time. He said, well

22 he had nine kids. He says, "I've got nine kids." Maybe he had eleven—he had eleven

23 kids. He says, "You remind me of them. You want to go out the north gate waving your

24 pistols and win the Medal of Honor." I said, "Yes, sir."

25 LC: That wasn't the day for that, apparently.

26 HS: That's right. No.

27 LC: Tell me about the casualties on both sides, if you remember.

28 HS: We got about twenty-four killed and about eighty wounded. There must've

29 been hundreds of the others. We didn't get any men in the back of the woods where the

30 air strikes were going on. We must've killed about four hundred or so. That's what we

31 reported was about four hundred or so.

1 LC: That, of course, would've been an estimate.

2 HS: Yeah. Oh, sure.

3 LC: Was there any policy about going and trying to count?

4 HS: Oh, no. We had a policy the next day. We went up there and dug a big ditch
5 and dumped the ones we could find in it so it wouldn't smell so bad.

6 LC: Who would get that kind of duty?

7 HS: Oh, our men, the ones that killed them.

8 LC: Okay. How did the guys carry that out? Were they kind of—?

9 HS: Well, it was really just the bulldozer that did it all.

10 LC: Really?

11 HS: A bunch of bulldozers, I guess we had an engineer company up there.
12 They'd dig the whole and just pushed everybody in.

13 LC: Just scooted them in there?

14 HS: Yeah. You know it's really funny. When I was in Hanoi I went to the Army
15 Museum. The Army Museum had a big picture—well, the first building they had there
16 was the war against the French. Then they had firefight, the wreckage of a firefight in the
17 middle. Then you go into the next building and it's the war against the Americans. When
18 I went in there they had a big picture of American soldiers walking past a bunch of dead
19 bodies on the side. They said, "Americans walk past their dead on November the third,
20 1965." I told a little girl guide, I said, "That caption is wrong. That's my battalion, 2nd
21 Battalion, 2nd Infantry. Those aren't dead Americans. Those are dead Vietnamese they're
22 walking by. That was our first battle and our first victory." She said, "Well, you seem to
23 be awful proud of it." I said, "Yeah, we killed a lot of people that day." I don't think they
24 changed the caption any.

25 LC: That's a strange mistake for them to make, isn't it?

26 HS: No. It was propaganda. They weren't gonna—

27 LC: They weren't gonna acknowledge who had been killed.

28 HS: Yeah.

29 LC: Now when you say that was the first battle and the first victory, are you
30 talking about—can you say why you say that?

31 HS: Well, for us it was.

1 LC: For the United States?

2 HS: For the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry.

3 LC: Right. You guys went on to another battle.

4 HS: A month later, yeah.

5 LC: Was this about the fifth of December, does that sound right?

6 HS: Yeah, something like that, fifth of December. Third of November and the
7 fifth of December.

8 LC: What happened on that occasion?

9 HS: Well, on that occasion the Vietnamese, the South Vietnamese, regiment at
10 Dau Tieng had been attacked and defeated by a Viet Cong regiment who then
11 disappeared. So we were flown into Dau Tieng, which was a big Michelin rubber
12 plantation. We started ripping through the woods south and we came upon the base camp
13 of the 242 Regiment.

14 LC: So it was the same regiment as—?

15 HS: Yeah. We attacked them. We killed a lot of them. We had forty-two killed. It
16 was out of artillery range from both Vung Tau, both Lai Khe and Dau Tieng.
17 Consequently, we called in air strikes and air strikes did a lot. We found a whole bunch
18 of rice that they had stockpiled there. It's very hard to destroy rice. We threw some of it
19 in the river. We tried to burn some of it. It ended up at night and we got the dead out the
20 next day. We got the wounded out that night.

21 LC: You said you were flown in. Did you come in on helicopters?

22 HS: Yeah. Oh, sure.

23 LC: So how important at this point was the air mobile concept for the 1st Division
24 broadly or for the—?

25 HS: Well, the 1st Division it wasn't so much. We had twenty-four helicopters
26 which we could request when we needed them and then we can get the battalion in there.
27 We would fly things in at night like I said, which was good because we didn't have to
28 carry—including food and barbed wire and 4.2-inch mortars. We'd fly them out the next
29 day so they could continue on with their movement.

30 LC: I see. Your guys came in on those helicopters. How close were you to the,
31 what emerged as the base camp when you landed?

1 HS: We didn't know, but we were about three or four miles, I guess.

2 LC: Okay. Can you describe the camp? Did you actually walk around it once you
3 had secured the area? Did you actually look at—?

4 HS: Well, I didn't 'cause I was busy wound, getting the dead out that day.

5 LC: Oh, you were?

6 HS: Yeah. I stayed down at the helicopter landing site which was about four or
7 five hundred yards from the camp. All the dead were brought down there and I was
8 calling the helicopters and evacuating the dead. The night before I was evacuating the
9 wounded and sending some food up to them.

10 LC: So you were kind of a—is it fair to say a key person in managing the sort of
11 as it were the aftermath of the battle?

12 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I was the battalion executive officer. That's what I did. I put
13 in for medals for those guys and all that kind of stuff.

14 LC: So was there a lot of paperwork involved with that?

15 HS: Oh, yeah. At that time in Vietnam the Army was still in a peacetime mode. It
16 changed later on to every citation had to be done in five copies with witness statements
17 and so on. Later on it didn't get to be so complicated.

18 LC: But at that point, were you actually taking witness statements?

19 HS: Oh, yeah. I told everybody to write down, not at that point, but later when
20 we got back to write down what they had seen and who they wanted to set up in, what the
21 witness statements would be and then I'd decide what kind of medal they would get and
22 turn it in.

23 LC: That sounds like a lot of busy work after the engagement.

24 HS: It was, after the battle, yeah.

25 LC: Yeah. So that engagement, how long would you say that there was actually
26 firing by U.S. troops?

27 HS: Oh, they were about four hours there and they stayed out that night and then
28 the next day we all went—well, that night we all went back to Lai Khe. I remember that
29 night 'cause I was bringing up the rear with my jeep. So we went back to Lai Khe that
30 day. Then the next day we came back to bury the dead, the Vietnamese dead.

31 LC: Again with the bulldozer type approach?

1 HS: Yeah. Same thing.

2 LC: After those two battles how did you assess the VC? You're seeing large-unit
3 Viet Cong. How were you assessing them as an enemy at that point?

4 HS: At that point, it was very well done. They were all well organized. They all
5 had little bags of rice and little bags of nuoc man, which was the sauce they put on it.
6 They were good fighters. They came right up to the wire before we killed them. They had
7 good mortars on us. They were very good, but they had no air power and no artillery.

8 LC: What kind of tactics were they using? You said they were coming up on the
9 wire. Were they just essentially throwing themselves onto the wire?

10 HS: Yeah, they just essentially came up and attacked.

11 LC: Is it fair to say they were using—?

12 HS: Human wave tactics.

13 LC: That's what I was going to say, but is that really what they were doing?

14 HS: Sure. That's all they had.

15 LC: Gosh.

16 HS: I remember talking to a Vietnamese in Lai Khe that day. He wanted to—I
17 mean in Bau Bang that day. The battle was in Bau Bang. He wanted to know if they
18 could eat the cow that was killed, the bull. I looked at him and told him, "Yeah." He said,
19 "It's very dangerous for Americans to come out here." I said, "Not anymore. Those are
20 dead Vietnamese not dead Americans."

21 LC: Did you feel that the 2/2 had basically cleared this area of VC?

22 HS: No. No. No.

23 LC: It wasn't that simple?

24 HS: No. We went back to Lai Khe and every once in a while we'd look out a
25 helicopter. We'd fly over and we'd see all the trucks and busses stopped and the VC were
26 up there. God, it's like seeing Texas, I guess. That's when I wanted to go out and get
27 them. We wouldn't.

28 LC: Tell me a little bit about that. How frustrating was that for you guys?

29 HS: It was very frustrating for me 'cause I got to see them out there and I wanted
30 to go stop them. We had a village, Bau Bang, to the north of us, and a village to the east

1 of us whom I don't even know the name, but we never went in those villages. Whatever
2 was going on out there, we didn't know that that was Indian country, you know?

3 LC: Where did those orders that you guys could not pursue the enemy—you
4 could see where you could not go into these villages—?

5 HS: I don't think we had any orders. We just weren't ordered to do it. Now there
6 was Ben Cat was south of us and that's where the Vietnamese province administration
7 was, or district administration was. So that was our town, but the two others outlying, I
8 don't know.

9 LC: Did you ever make it up to An Loc?

10 HS: No.

11 LC: How far—?

12 HS: No. The division headquarters moved to An Loc, but I never got there.

13 LC: Oh, Okay. So you then—is it fair to say that you then just remained in Lai
14 Khe?

15 HS: For seven months, yeah.

16 LC: Were you building up the base during this period?

17 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. They were putting artillery in and they were building up
18 roads and so on. I stayed there seven months and I got a new battalion commander.

19 LC: Who was that?

20 HS: His name was—I don't know. Let me remember.

21 LC: Okay.

22 HS: I served for about a month under him. Then I decided to get out of there
23 because he was learning all the lessons we had learned, but he was losing people doing it
24 and the worst thing you could say to him was “This is the way we used to do it.”

25 LC: That would set him off?

26 HS: Yeah. He wanted to do it his way and he got people killed doing it his way
27 and learning the things we had already learned.

28 LC: Was he just not taking advice?

29 HS: Well, yeah. He was learning himself. He was a lieutenant colonel. He was
30 gonna do it his own way.

31 LC: So somebody like you didn't really—?

1 HS: I didn't like him very much.

2 LC: How did you arrange to get out of Lai Khe then?

3 HS: Well, I went down to division headquarters and they said, "Well, gee if you
4 come down here one of us has to go out there." They weren't too pleased about that. So I
5 went down to Saigon. I had a friend who was working for AID (United States Agency for
6 International Development) and he got me into Saigon into J-33, the Revolutionary
7 Development Division, which he thought I should be in. So I got transferred to Saigon.

8 LC: Now that was in July 1966?

9 HS: Yes.

10 LC: Before I ask you more questions about that, Herb, let me ask you about the
11 broader picture that I know you've spent a lot of time looking at and particularly the
12 development of the strategy of attrition. What can you tell me about how that sort of
13 came into being as the Army's strategy in Vietnam?

14 HS: Well, I think it came out of Westmoreland's mind that we could beat them
15 and we were beating them. We lost twenty-three killed and we killed four or five hundred
16 of them. So I think Westmoreland thought that we could attrit them.

17 LC: That we could just bleed them and essentially they would collapse
18 eventually?

19 HS: Yeah. That's right.

20 LC: That was such a different strategy from what the Army had pursued and
21 practiced in the two previous major wars, World War II and Korea.

22 HS: Right. Well, what the Joint Chiefs of Staff were always advocating to the
23 president is that we go in forcefully. We have a forceful bombing campaign. We have a
24 forceful entry into the land war in the South, but the problem was, first of all, the
25 president didn't want to bomb Hai Phong, Hanoi because the Russians and the Chinese
26 had ships and had embassies there. He didn't want to bomb close to the border with
27 China because they were shipping stuff in that way, but there were still Chinese and
28 Russians. The Joint Chiefs of Staff never agreed with that. Also, in the South we had to
29 build up gradually because there was no facilities there. Even Westmoreland said we got
30 to build up gradually, but they wanted a big campaign and we get in there and fight. The
31 war was fought in the South. Unfortunately, the North Vietnamese had sanctuaries they

1 could go to and the president was not gonna have the war spread to Laos or Cambodia.
2 We bombed in Cambodia on the Ho Chi Minh Trail, but didn't send any troops in 'til
3 Nixon's time. The president wanted a small, limited war using limited resources in a
4 limited area. The Joint Chiefs of Staff never agreed with that. So Westmoreland adopted
5 an attrition strategy, which would never work under the president's limitations.

6 LC: So he continued to come back with more requests?

7 HS: With more requests, that's right. It always got to be the same. Westmoreland
8 wants this many men. Well, that's a lot of men. How many can we give him without
9 calling up the Reserves? So we can give him this many. Okay. Well, have him request
10 that many. He requested twenty-five thousand. Twenty five thousand's approved. Let's
11 give the field commander everything he ever asked for.

12 LC: Wow. Let me ask about the distinction that you're drawing between the
13 president and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. You know, of course, Herb, that imbedded in the
14 secondary literature and in a lot of Vietnam veterans' minds is the idea that LBJ (Lyndon
15 Baines Johnson) handcuffed the military by putting these political restrictions on the war.

16 HS: It was a political war. The use of the military was for political reasons. What
17 we teach our people at the Industrial College and the War College is that the military is
18 an instrument of policy. There must be some objective that the military is being used for.

19 LC: That's a politically determined objective.

20 HS: That's right. So that's the way it was. That's the way the military refused to
21 accept.

22 LC: Among the Air Force veterans that I've talked to particularly there's a
23 feeling of resentment that they weren't allowed to go to Hanoi until later. They weren't
24 allowed to bomb up near the Chinese border. That they were really handcuffed in North
25 Vietnam whereas the Marines and the Army land forces in South Vietnam got to go out
26 and basically kick butt. Does that distinction sound right to you?

27 HS: No.

28 LC: That there were more political controls on the air war than there were—

29 HS: There were political controls on the air war. There certainly were. Even with
30 the political controls they didn't do any good.

31 LC: Right.

1 HS: Okay? Didn't do anything good. So more air power always meant more
2 prisoners for the United States. It didn't do any good. They expected it. The Vietnamese
3 friend, the air defense commander, said the typical picture of the time was the factory
4 worker or a farmer in the field with a gun slung over his shoulder. Every time the
5 bombers would come over they would all go out and they'd shoot up in the air. The
6 thinking is they put up a billion bullets up there that one or two of them might hit an
7 airplane. They were right. They didn't do anything.

8 LC: That's not a very efficient way to defend a country against—

9 HS: The CINCPAC (commander-in-chief-Pacific) after action report for 1966
10 there. Maybe it was '67. I forget. It said we spent—we had so many missions. We had so
11 many bombs dropped. He said we destroyed so many roads. We destroyed so many
12 boxcars. We destroyed so many trucks. He said with a prodigious effort at the end of
13 1967 the Vietnamese transportation system was slightly improved over the way it was in
14 the beginning. How can a stupid man say a thing like that? He wanted to improve the
15 North Vietnamese transportation system because then a lot more efficiently some of other
16 way.

17 LC: It's a little counterintuitive, isn't it?

18 HS: Yeah.

19 LC: Did you feel as a major that there were political controls on what you in the
20 1st Division were doing, as well?

21 HS: No 'cause every time we went out we met a battalion of Viet Cong and then
22 we had a big fight.

23 LC: Certainly those, the two instances that you've recounted for us, those
24 certainly were considered victories, were they not?

25 HS: Oh, yeah. We killed a lot of them.

26 LC: Let me ask, what impact or what did you know about the battles that were
27 taking place in the Ia Drang Valley at the same time, a little earlier, in fact, than your
28 encounter?

29 HS: We didn't know anything about it.

30 LC: You had no idea?

31 HS: No.

1 LC: Laterally as a scholar, now, thinking about those encounters, were those
2 battles essentially the same as what you were fighting in III Corps?
3 HS: No. No. In III Corps we were fighting Viet Cong.
4 LC: Not NVA (North Vietnamese Army), sure.
5 HS: Not NVA and the NVA say that their first action was in the Ia Drang Valley
6 with regular Vietnamese forces, North Vietnamese forces.
7 LC: But tactically, these were both big-unit actions?
8 HS: Yeah. Well, they had more publicity than we did because they had more
9 newsmen with them.
10 LC: That's true. I actually looked. I could only find one *New York Times* article
11 about the fight in November '65 that you were involved in. Charles Mohr was the
12 reporter. I don't know if you ever saw him.
13 HS: Oh, M-O-H-R. Yeah. I saw him. Yeah, I met him one time.
14 LC: Yes. Did you?
15 HS: Yeah. Beverly Watson was up there. She was a reporter for *The Christian*
16 *Science Monitor*.
17 LC: So you had a female reporter up there?
18 HS: Yeah.
19 LC: I'll be darned.
20 HS: Beverly Deppe she was called. D-E-P-P-E.
21 LC: Why'd they call her that?
22 HS: That was her name.
23 LC: Oh, that was her name?
24 HS: Yeah. Beverly Deppe or Deppe or something like that.
25 LC: Oh, okay. Did you meet her as well?
26 HS: Oh, sure.
27 LC: What was your impression of her? Was she a tough cookie or—?
28 HS: Yeah, she was very nice. She was a tough cookie, but everybody was
29 looking for an ambush. You see they'd come in. I remember our second battle.
30 Newspaper reporter was there the second day and he said, "Was this an ambush?" I said,
31 "No. It wasn't an ambush. It was a meeting engagement and we found their base camp

1 and we destroyed it.” So he wrote it up as an ambush. Everybody was looking for an
2 ambush.

3 LC: It was interesting. The article I saw by Charles Mohr used exactly that
4 language. He used the word ambush and then he said that someone in the American
5 command told him it was actually an “advance toward contact.” So does that sound like
6 something you would’ve said?

7 HS: I might’ve said that. I told him it was a meeting engagement. We were
8 advancing to find them and when we found them we killed them.

9 LC: I think that might’ve been you who was the source there.

10 HS: Might’ve been. (Both laugh)

11 LC: Were you already a little bit suspicious about the press and how they were
12 gonna present things?

13 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

14 LC: Did that just kind of come with the territory or was there something specific?

15 HS: I think so. They kept asking about ambushes. They weren’t trying to find out
16 what happened. They had their own answers.

17 LC: Did that apply to everybody or were there any exceptions as you went
18 through?

19 HS: No. That was most of them. I remember Dan Rather was there and helped us
20 take some of the bodies out in the jungle that day, but I don’t guess he wrote up anything
21 about it.

22 LC: This was one of those two battles, November or December.

23 HS: That was December, yeah.

24 LC: No kidding. Was he filming? Did he have a crew with him or—?

25 HS: Apparently he did. There was a German crew there. I remember them very
26 well because they said, “Okay. They’re ready to go back now.” I was there evacuating the
27 dead and I said, “Well, the last helicopter’s left for the night.” They were panicked.

28 LC: I’ll believe that. What happened to them?

29 HS: I got them back. I was just kidding.

30 LC: You sort of took pity on them and let them know that there was another
31 helicopter for them?

1 HS: Yeah.

2 LC: What about Dan Rather? You know, he's—

3 HS: He got out of there. I didn't spend any time with him.

4 LC: Did you know that he was a network news guy?

5 HS: No. At that time they had a picture of him in their advertisements over here.

6 It wasn't until I got back over here and I saw that picture of him carrying bodies out of

7 the jungle. You know, there's four guys to a body bag. He was on the right hand side.

8 LC: Then you realized, "Oh, he's a star."

9 HS: Yeah. He's a big power.

10 LC: At the time he was just another guy out there.

11 HS: Yeah, out in the way, helping me get the bodies out.

12 LC: Interesting. Well, during that spring of 1966 when you were up at Lai Khe

13 and the buildup was going on, can you tell me what your additional duties as the

14 executive officer consisted of?

15 HS: Well, basically awards and decorations, I had to do that. Let's see, I was just

16 trying to think of what else I did during that time.

17 LC: Was that something that was important to you personally or was it just a

18 duty? I'm just trying to get at how you would go about that.

19 HS: It was probably a duty, but it was important to me personally 'cause I told

20 the guys to just write up what they had seen. One guy wrote a thing and said he was

21 sitting in his foxhole and got wounded and he fought until he died. I remember that one.

22 LC: Just personally, did you have a sense of sadness or pride or some of all of

23 that?

24 HS: Oh, some pride 'cause I wanted to give them something, yeah. Absolutely.

25 LC: Yeah. When you managed to arrange your transfer out of Lai Khe, were you

26 glad to be able to go to Saigon?

27 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I wanted to see what was going on down there and it was a

28 nice city. Good restaurants.

29 LC: I'm sure.

30 HS: My friend in AID, he had a big apartment. I was in a little hotel room with

31 another guy.

1 LC: Is that where you lived for a while or—?

2 HS: Yeah, for seven months.

3 LC: For seven months, in Saigon in a hotel?

4 HS: Yeah.

5 LC: Where was it? What street was it on?

6 HS: Oh, it was the New Brinks Hotel, they called it. The regular Brinks Hotel

7 was a luxurious thing. I was riding back, I don't know what street, it was two blocks from

8 Tu Do and one block across, in back of the National Assembly. It had a Chinese

9 restaurant on the first floor, which we called Chief Charlie's. Then I was on the—the

10 hotel was the (unintelligible). My roommate was a Korean Navy Chaplain.

11 LC: How did that come about that you two hooked up?

12 HS: I don't know. I was just assigned that room. He used to chew this dried

13 squid. That was his sort of chewing gum. So I chewed dried squid so I could stand the

14 smell.

15 LC: You had no choice really.

16 HS: That's right.

17 LC: Was he then a—am I right in thinking, a Catholic chaplain?

18 HS: I guess so. I had no idea what he did.

19 LC: How was his English?

20 HS: Very good. I remember he had a son who had died in Korea, but they don't

21 have emergency leave in the Korean Navy, apparently, so he stayed right on.

22 LC: Do you think he was actually a chaplain or did you think he was probably

23 something else, too?

24 HS: No, he was probably a chaplain. I really didn't have much contact with him.

25 LC: Let me ask about your job down there. You're with J-33. For somebody who

26 doesn't know what that would mean can you go ahead and explain that?

27 HS: Okay. Well, the military has four staff sections, J-1 or G-1. J-1 is joint, G-1

28 is what we have in the brigade. It's personnel. G-2 or J-2 is intelligence. J-3 is operations

29 and J-4 is logistics. So this was the operations division of MACV (Military Assistance

30 Command, Vietnam) and they did all the operating, sending the troops out and writing

31 the plans and so on.

1 LC: What was subsection, then, three of—?

2 HS: Okay. Well, that was the Revolutionary Development. We were J-3 and they
3 numbered all of them 3-1, 3-1, 3-2, 3-3. We were the Revolutionary Development
4 Division J-33.

5 LC: Did you know what that meant when you—?

6 HS: No. I never heard it before.

7 LC: What did you find out it did mean?

8 HS: It meant the Revolutionary Development Division. We wrote an Annex B of
9 the Combined Campaign Plan. Well, I say we had three major functions. We served as
10 the Revolutionary Development Division of MACV J-3. We wrote the Revolutionary
11 Development Annex to the Combined Campaign Plan. So we were supposed to know
12 about what was going on down there. We served as advisors to the Vietnamese Ministry
13 of Revolutionary Development. Actually, our whole staff section was right there in the
14 ministry. Then we served as the staff of the deputy ambassador who was charged with
15 supervising U.S. Revolutionary Development Program.

16 LC: Now the Revolutionary Development Program—

17 HS: That's another word for pacification, although the Vietnamese didn't like to
18 use the word pacification because that's what the French were doing to them.

19 LC: So there was a question, a little upset about the terminology.

20 HS: Yeah.

21 LC: So it was switched to Revolutionary Development?

22 HS: Exactly.

23 LC: Let me ask you, first of all, about the relations with the South Vietnamese
24 Ministry.

25 HS: Yeah.

26 LC: Who did you work with in that ministry? Did you have an opposite number?

27 HS: Not really. We worked with the deputy administer. I think he was Mr.—I
28 don't even know his name. The Revolutionary Development Minister was General
29 Taung. I don't know who his deputy was. We worked for him. He was a very nice man.
30 We would—well, for instance, we would write our Annex B for the Command Campaign
31 Plan. Then we would send it out to the Joint General Staff for approval. The Joint

1 General Staff being very glad they gave it to the ministry and say, “What’s your opinion
2 of this?” They say, “It’s fine.” They send it to the Joint General Staff. The Joint General
3 Staff would say, “It’s fine,” and send it back to us. Then we give it to the ministry for—
4 or give it to MACV for our entry.

5 LC: So the paperwork flow was quite a trail and the plans and drafts—?

6 HS: Which it is. We could advise the ministry, but we did it very surreptitiously
7 by having our advice come through the Joint General Staff.

8 LC: That was for protocol reasons largely?

9 HS: Well, no. It was for effectiveness. It was for getting the Joint General Staff to
10 approve of our stuff before the ministry did. The ministry thought they were right on the
11 ball.

12 LC: Okay. Makes sense. If you can, put us into the picture as far as the plans that
13 you would work out. What kinds of things would you address?

14 HS: Okay. We were given the task of coordinating the American effort, come up
15 with a plan to coordinate the American civil and military effort in Vietnam. Every district
16 and every province in Vietnam had a military advisor, had a CIA advisor, they call them
17 cadre advisor, had a HS power advisor which was USIA (United States Information
18 Agency) known to you as public affairs. Let’s see, they had an AID advisor and nobody
19 was in charge. When I was battalion commander they would work not together. So our
20 task was to combine with developing an organization for a combined American effort in
21 South Vietnam that integrated the military and the civilian effort because they all had
22 their own chains of command and funding and so on. So we were supposed to come up
23 with a plan where somebody would be in charge.

24 LC: Just bureaucratically that sounds like a pretty sticky mission to get in the
25 middle of.

26 HS: Yeah, it was. That’s right. Oh, I remember when I briefed Ambassador
27 Lodge on that and told him what our purpose was, the AID guy said, “Well, we’ve been
28 (unintelligible) that as the highest level cause we didn’t think it was important.” The
29 ambassador said to him, “Well, John”—it was John Vann who said that. The ambassador
30 said, “Well, John, I don’t see how anybody can be opposed to that.” So I gave my
31 briefing anyhow.

1 LC: About when was that? Do you have an idea of roughly the time?
2 HS: Yeah, that was about October of '66.
3 LC: Well, let me—
4 HS: Because then McNamara and Katzenbach and Komer came over and we
5 were trying to find out what was going on. They were very dissatisfied, I was told, with
6 the State Department and AID briefing so they came over to the military and they got this
7 briefing and how to put things together. I briefed McNamara, Katzenbach, and
8 Ambassador Komer, it says here, in November of 1966. I briefed them and they decided
9 to do it.
10 LC: Let me slow you down a little bit, Herb, because I want to ask about that
11 time you had John Vann and Ambassador Lodge both in the room. What did you know
12 about John Vann at that point?
13 HS: Not very much except that he was with AID and he didn't like to coordinate
14 with the rest of us.
15 LC: He was kind of flying on his own?
16 HS: Yeah.
17 LC: Uh-huh. Did you have an—?
18 HS: I never talked to him. I talked to another guy at AID who was there and who
19 reported to Vann, I guess.
20 LC: You don't remember his name, though?
21 HS: No. No.
22 LC: Did you have an impression of John Vann first, just he was in the room with
23 you? Did you form any impression about him?
24 HS: Just that he was hard to get along with and he didn't want to cooperate.
25 LC: He was kind of a loner?
26 HS: Yeah. Yeah. That was it. He was a loner. He wasn't gonna subordinate
27 himself to the military of somebody else, which we were advocating.
28 LC: Of course. Was this the first time that you had worked directly under
29 Ambassador Lodge or worked directly with him when you gave that briefing?
30 HS: Yeah.

1 LC: What can you say about him as a—he's a historical figure, of course, now,
2 but at that time you were a hotshot young major.

3 HS: Yeah. I found him very willing to listen.

4 LC: Is that right?

5 HS: Absolutely, for ideas willing to listen. He said, "John, I can't see how
6 anybody can be against that."

7 LC: So he wasn't trying to take you apart or—?

8 HS: No. No. He thought it was great.

9 LC: You mentioned then that Secretary McNamara appeared with Robert Komer.

10 HS: And Katzenbach.

11 LC: And Katzenbach. Let's take them one at a time. Katzenbach, did you spend
12 much time speaking to him at all?

13 HS: No. No. I just gave a briefing to all three of them.

14 LC: Okay. So they are the three guys in the room and you're standing up at the
15 front?

16 HS: Yeah.

17 LC: Okay.

18 HS: I had three budgets, really. I had the budget and I had the military plan and I
19 had the pacification plan. I remember Komer saying, "We don't have much time 'til we
20 start the last one. That's the most important." I said, "No, sir. We think the second one's
21 the most important. I'll brief you on that."

22 LC: You thought the military plan was the most important.

23 HS: No. The civil plan.

24 LC: Oh, the civil plan, uh-huh.

25 HS: Putting them both together.

26 LC: He pretty much had to—did he just accept what you said then?

27 HS: Yeah. My boss pretty much had to slip it in there. I gave them all three.

28 LC: You kind of slipped it in there?

29 HS: Yeah. What happened was that Katzenbach said, "Well, let me get the
30 civilian side organized first." He set up the Office of Civil Operations. Then we knew

1 that wouldn't work and then six months later they set up the CORDS (Civil Operations
2 and Revolutionary Development Support) under Komer. By that time I was back home.

3 LC: Right. Did you form an impression of Komer, though, when you met him?

4 HS: Well, not very much. When I met him he said he was trying to give me what
5 was important about my briefing and I didn't accept it.

6 LC: You had your own idea.

7 HS: Yeah.

8 LC: Did you realize just stepping back and thinking about that encounter, did you
9 realize the importance of, you know on the bigger screen—?

10 HS: No. I didn't.

11 LC: I mean you've got the secretary of defense sitting there.

12 HS: Yeah. I didn't recognize it.

13 LC: You just were doing your—

14 HS: Just did my briefing. We thought it was a pretty good briefing.

15 LC: I'm sure that it was, actually.

16 HS: McNamara said he didn't remember it, but Komer remembered it because
17 you see what Katzenbach said was, "Well, give me six months to get the civilians
18 organized." They gave him that six months, but we knew that wasn't going to work. So
19 then they formed CORDS with Komer over there. By that time I was back in the States
20 working in the operations division of the Army staff.

21 LC: The CORDS operation was much more closely on military—

22 HS: Yeah. Well, they were setting it up and I was one of the few people in the
23 Army that could explain to General Johnson, the Chief of Staff, what was happening.

24 LC: What kinds of—in an explanation like that, can you relay the sorts of things
25 that you would want to emphasize?

26 HS: Oh, yeah. Well, I'd emphasize that we were making progress. We were
27 getting civilians and the military to follow the same path. Really, I remember I'd walk
28 into the Pentagon every morning about seven-thirty and somebody would say,
29 "Schandler. Schandler, the Chief of Staff wants to see you." I'd say, "Well, somebody get
30 me a copy of the *New York Times* so I can see what he wants to talk about today."

1 LC: Before we go to Washington, let me ask a little bit more about your work in
2 the Revolutionary Development Division. Who else was on the staff?

3 HS: Two guys. There were two Army and Air Force majors. Jerry Britton was
4 the Army major and Charlie Cook was the Air Force major. We're the ones who put
5 together, I think Jerry Britton had most to do with it. They chose me to give the briefings
6 'cause I was better at briefing, I guess.

7 LC: The plans were a joint effort?

8 HS: Oh, yeah. They were all a joint effort.

9 LC: Who were you reporting to?

10 HS: It was the chief of the Revolutionary Division. Well, it was the colonel who
11 was chief of the Revolutionary Development Division, Colonel—I can see him right
12 there.

13 LC: You can see him?

14 HS: Yeah.

15 LC: Yeah. Well, it might come to you.

16 HS: Yeah.

17 LC: It might come to you.

18 HS: I'm thinking about it. We report to him and he was happy to have it. He's the
19 one that got the briefings set up, I believe.

20 LC: Let's talk a little bit about your life outside the office.

21 HS: There wasn't any.

22 LC: You didn't have much?

23 HS: No. We worked twelve hours a day. Go get something to eat and go to bed.
24 On Sundays we would take off and maybe get a jeep and go to the PX (Post Exchange)
25 and see what they had.

26 LC: Just for fun? Just sort of go shopping?

27 HS: Yeah. Just for relaxation. Some days we would take off the afternoon to get a
28 haircut. When you get a haircut you get a massage and a nail clipped and all that kind of
29 stuff, mud packs, the whole thing.

30 LC: This sounds pretty sedate.

31 HS: Yeah, it was. Believe me.

1 LC: How would you assess the security situation in Saigon itself?

2 HS: There wasn't much.

3 LC: Not much going on?

4 HS: No, I didn't see any. I wasn't worried about it. We had a curfew at twelve
5 o'clock. Sometimes you come out of the restaurant at eleven o'clock, eleven-thirty and
6 these, they were mostly government employees with motorbikes. They would be taxis for
7 you. You'd jump on the taxi and you'd think it was a taxi. He would take you to your
8 hotel or wherever you lived. That worked out fine. One time I got a guy who didn't know
9 where he was going so I—I was on the back. I put my arms around his neck and said,
10 "Take me to my hotel or I'll kill you."

11 LC: Really?

12 HS: So he found the place. He dropped me off somewhere.

13 LC: Did you have—you must've felt slightly threatened or something going on?

14 HS: Oh, yeah. He didn't know. He wasn't going to where I wanted to go. You
15 didn't have weapons in Saigon.

16 LC: I just want to be clear. So you leaned forward and put your hands around his
17 neck?

18 HS: Yeah.

19 LC: I would've taken you wherever you wanted to go.

20 HS: He dropped me off somewhere. I don't know.

21 LC: Now I just want to clarify, Herb, that your offices were on the MACV
22 compound, is that right?

23 HS: No. No. No. We were in the office of Revolutionary Development in the
24 Ministry of Revolutionary Development.

25 LC: Okay. So you were going into the ministry everyday?

26 HS: Yeah.

27 LC: How often would you go over to MACV?

28 HS: Very seldom.

29 LC: Was that because you didn't really need to or?

30 HS: We didn't really need to, right.

31 LC: Did you have someone in MACV that you would relay?

1 HS: Not below the J-3, no.

2 LC: So the J-3 was the point of contact?

3 HS: Yeah, for us.

4 LC: Okay. Is it the case that—is it fair to say that while you were with the
5 Revolutionary Development Division that you were sort of laying the groundwork, at
6 least in conceptual terms, for what emerged as the CORDS operation?

7 HS: Absolutely. We wrote the whole thing. We were replaced by an ambassador,
8 the majors.

9 LC: By Ambassador—

10 HS: Komer.

11 LC: Komer. Uh-huh. He essentially picked up the threads that you guys had put
12 in place?

13 HS: Absolutely. He got it organized. He put people with the places they
14 should've been.

15 LC: Have you written much about your work, this work of the Revolutionary
16 Development Division?

17 HS: No. I don't think I've written anything.

18 LC: Obviously, people are very interested in the origins of CORDS and it's early
19 workings and then it's eventual development.

20 HS: Yeah. Well, I don't know about its early workings, but we gave them the
21 idea.

22 LC: You gave them the idea?

23 HS: Yeah.

24 LC: What would you say to someone who wanted to know what those principle
25 ideas were? How would you capsulize those?

26 HS: Well, we said that somebody oughta be in charge of these four guys in the
27 district. They oughta have a plan for that district or province. We also said that—well,
28 let's see. Somebody oughta be in—we said that fifty percent of American battalions in
29 Vietnam should be engaged in pacification and revolutionary development.

30 LC: Really? I was gonna ask if you introduced any targets or ideas.

1 HS: Yeah. That was it, fifty percent should be. When I got over there in 1970,
2 two battalions out of nine in the 101st Division were so involved.

3 LC: So that wasn't even close?

4 HS: Yeah, that's right.

5 LC: Do you think things might've gone somewhat differently out in the
6 provinces or in any particular region of South Vietnam if that kind of commitment to
7 pacification had been made earlier?

8 HS: It might've been. The North Vietnamese made the commitment. By 1965
9 when we first came there they had already won out in the countryside.

10 LC: You think they had already won?

11 HS: Sure. They were in every hamlet and village in Vietnam.

12 LC: That's quite a tall order to try to undo.

13 HS: That's right. That's what the Harrington, Colonel Harrington and his book.
14 He wrote the VC would come in at night and the American or the Vietnamese, South
15 Vietnamese, would come in the daytime and all the village wanted to do was be left alone
16 because the VC would kill the guys that helped the Americans in the daytime and the
17 South Vietnamese would kill the villagers and help the VC in the evening time. So they
18 were caught in between. They couldn't do anything.

19 LC: Given that you think that essentially the communists had already won the
20 countryside in 1965, sitting back from it now, was there really anything the United States
21 could do?

22 HS: Not very much. No.

23 LC: I mean, militarily it's an extremely difficult—

24 HS: Militarily we found them when they wanted to be found. All combat was
25 initiated by the North Vietnamese, or the VC.

26 LC: Did they control the tempo and timing of interaction?

27 HS: Yeah, exactly.

28 LC: Obviously, we controlled the air and we had all the technology.

29 HS: Yeah. Sure. We go out and if they wanted us to find them we'd find them. If
30 they didn't want us to we wouldn't.

1 LC: Is it fair to say that for the North Vietnamese that was sort of the lesson that
2 they learned from the Ia Drang engagement was that—

3 HS: Yeah, I would hope so.

4 LC: They better not—it's not a good idea for them to come up to American
5 forces face to face.

6 HS: That's right. Sure. They learned that in November.

7 LC: November '65.

8 HS: Yeah '65 and in December '65 in our battles. Coming against us we'd kill
9 them, but they didn't care. They'd lose a few and replace them and we would lose a few
10 and not replace them. The American public got tired of it. Westmoreland said was we
11 were gonna do attrition until they got tired of it and didn't try to conquer the South. Well,
12 guess what? We got tired of it before they did.

13 LC: Do you think that Westmoreland could've or should've been savvy enough
14 to foresee that the American public would get tired of a foreign war before the
15 Vietnamese would get tired of a—?

16 HS: I don't see how he could. No.

17 LC: No?

18 HS: He was trained to operate on the planes of Northern Europe and take Berlin.
19 So when you told him to come up with a political decision plan for the pacification of
20 South Vietnam, he did Berlin.

21 LC: He did Berlin?

22 HS: Yeah.

23 LC: You had already participated some five years earlier in developing some of
24 the curriculum for counter-insurgency training. Did you see that as having an impact on
25 thinking, Army thinking, about the war in Vietnam?

26 HS: No. The Army tried to ignore it. We came up with this idea for the oil spot
27 and finally after our briefing McNamara and so on, we decided to set up a priority
28 province for each corps area. We would fly out and examine these areas. We set up a
29 priority province and then we would try to pacify it and then spread out from there.
30 That's what we wanted these fifty battalions to do and using our CORDS people, of
31 course.

1 LC: So sort of following in some way, that British idea of the ink spot in Malaya.
2 Did that thinking enter?

3 HS: Yeah. Well, the ink spot in Malaya was easier because they were different
4 races, Chinese versus Malay. It was sort of like the ink spot we tried to form in Europe.
5 The same thing with Special Forces we were doing there. So it was Special Forces
6 doctrine to some extent, but it wasn't American Army doctrine. The American Army
7 didn't like it very much.

8 LC: Especially, maybe you would agree, at the upper echelons where those guys
9 were set in their ways.

10 HS: Yeah, that's right.

11 LC: You kind of, if I'm right, Herb, represented sort of the new brand.

12 HS: I hope so yeah.

13 LC: Your voice is it was hard to get across, your point?

14 HS: Yeah, that's right.

15 LC: To what extent—I mean, you're an old West Point grad. To what extent do
16 you think the Army has functioned then or even now as a bureaucracy and had that inertia
17 problem?

18 HS: Yeah, well then it did. Now it's a little bit less because they're learning the
19 lessons in Iraq.

20 LC: Did some of that have to do with lessons learned from Vietnam?

21 HS: Well, I doubt it. Everybody wants to try and forget about Vietnam.

22 LC: You think so?

23 HS: Yeah.

24 LC: Wow. Well, that's interesting.

25 HS: They're learning the lessons all over again in Iraq because they're faced with
26 insurgency there.

27 LC: Yeah. I know the same things do seem to appear.

28 HS: I think they are learning more how to deal with it in Iraq than they did in
29 Vietnam.

30 LC: So more lessons are being integrated?

1 HS: Yeah. In Vietnam we got to do everything we did in Germany and that's
2 what we were trained to do, but in Iraq it's a lot different.

3 LC: It's an interesting problem, isn't it? This whole idea of a huge organization
4 like the U.S. Army trying to—

5 HS: That's right. Having all these separate little constituencies within it.

6 LC: Right and trying to kind of integrate new information on the go.

7 HS: Yeah. Yeah. They didn't. They had a bunch of meatheads. You know they
8 had a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Commander in Chief of MACV who want
9 to do it their way.

10 LC: Did you have or—well, I ask you this as a scholar rather than in your role as
11 a participant, but as a scholar what's your appreciation of General Wheeler?

12 HS: Well, I didn't think he had much knowledge. He wanted to do everything
13 Westmoreland wanted. He didn't have any ideas of his own. I interviewed him and he
14 said, "Well, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, all we can do is pass on the request
15 of the field commander." That's all he did.

16 LC: Is that what he told you?

17 HS: Yeah.

18 LC: You interviewed him in the '70s, is that—?

19 HS: Yeah. I wrote in my book in '74.

20 LC: So it was part of the dissertation research?

21 HS: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

22 LC: What else did he have to offer? Do you remember?

23 HS: Not very much. He said, "All we do is pass on the requests of the field
24 commander. We don't do any planning ourselves." They do now a little bit, of course.

25 LC: Again, that may be one of the course corrections.

26 HS: Yeah.

27 LC: Well, Colonel, let's take a break for today.

28

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1 **Interview with Herbert Schandler**

2 **Session [4] of [4]**

3 **Date: June 8, 2005**

4
5 Laura Calkins: This is Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech
6 University continuing the oral history interview with Dr. Herbert Schandler. Today's date
7 is the eighth of June 2005. I am on the campus of Texas Tech in the Special Collections
8 building. Dr. Schandler is speaking with me by telephone from Virginia. Good afternoon,
9 sir.

10 Herbert Schandler: Good afternoon. How are you?

11 LC: I am very good. Thank you. I've looked forward to resuming our talk, as I'm
12 sure you know.

13 HS: Okay.

14 LC: In January 1967, Herb, you went back to Washington.

15 HS: Right. Around December of '66, but I didn't get any work done until '67.

16 LC: Okay. Did you have a home in the Washington area?

17 HS: Oh, no. I rented an apartment.

18 LC: Okay, just an apartment. Tell me about the position that you took at the
19 Pentagon.

20 HS: Okay. I was in the Plans and Policy Directorate of the Deputy Chief of Staff
21 for Military Operations. I had the Vietnam desk.

22 LC: You were the principal officer on the desk?

23 HS: That's right.

24 LC: How many people did you have working with you?

25 HS: With me, I had about four or five different areas of the world.

26 LC: Just to confirm, your rank at this time was major, is that accurate?

27 HS: I was a captain. I think I got promoted to major just as soon as I got back.

28 LC: Okay. Well, that was a good thing. Herb, let me ask you to clarify the
29 position of the Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate within the Pentagon. Can you kind
30 of sketch out how it lay within the organization?

1 HS: Yeah. Well, we were on the Army staff, of course. We worked for the
2 Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, which was similar to a G-3, three-star
3 Lieutenant General Lemley.

4 LC: E-M—is that E-M-L-E-E?

5 HS: L-E-M-L-E-Y.

6 LC: Okay.

7 HS: Or L-I?

8 LC: L-E-Y I think, uh-huh.

9 HS: Yeah. I think so. We were in the Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate
10 where we made up plans and policies for different Army units all over the world. I had
11 the Vietnam desk, which meant that I looked out for Army units in Vietnam.

12 LC: Herb, this is obviously an extremely important juncture in the conflict itself,
13 late '66 early '67. Can you recall for listeners your sense of how the conflict in Vietnam
14 was developing at that time? We talked about your own experience on the ground, but
15 more broadly what was the picture?

16 HS: Well, the picture was that we were sending more people over there all the
17 time and every time General Westmoreland requested additional men we'd find out how
18 many Army people he wanted and how many we were able to send through the draft and
19 through the training of draftees. So we were building up most of the time.

20 LC: For example, how much of the burden was being borne by the United States
21 and how much by our other allies, including the South Vietnamese, at that point?

22 HS: Well, there was very little being borne by the—other than the United States,
23 we finally got the South Vietnamese to draft eighteen year olds. Up until then they had
24 not done that. So we were forcing, or at least encouraging, the Vietnamese to build up
25 their forces while we build up our own.

26 LC: Would the work of the U.S. Army in helping guide the South Vietnamese
27 forces, would that have come under your purview, as well?

28 HS: Well, to some extent. I wrote papers for the Chief of Staff on how we should
29 use land reform. I wrote papers for him on, and I tried to get American advisors to get
30 certain privileges that other American officers didn't have. For instance, we told anybody

1 who volunteered for an advisory role if they would serve eighteen months instead of a
2 year and they would be guaranteed to go to a war college after they finished their tour.

3 LC: That was a new development?

4 HS: That was a new development, yeah.

5 LC: What was the thinking behind it?

6 HS: The thinking behind it was that we had to encourage advisors so that we
7 could make the Vietnamese more efficient by using more American advisors, by getting
8 more people to volunteer.

9 LC: So essentially this was a way to recruit people into the advising business, in
10 a way.

11 HS: Yeah, to make advisory more important than being with American units.
12 Everybody wanted to be with an American unit and get its combat badges and so on. We
13 wanted more advisors or General Johnson, the Chief of Staff of the Army, wanted more
14 advisors to help the Vietnamese become more efficient.

15 LC: Did you work with General Johnson directly?

16 HS: Yeah. Well—

17 LC: Can you—well, I get that you would have been under him to some degree.

18 HS: Well, it was in the chain of command. I worked for General Lemley directly
19 and he worked for General Johnson, so it worked out the same way.

20 LC: Herb, can you tell me first of all about General Lemley? Can you give me a
21 sketch of his, anything you know about his background and then what he was like to
22 work for?

23 HS: Well, he was the commander at Ft. Leavenworth before. He became
24 DESOPS (Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations) and he was an easy man to work for
25 because he was listening to what General Johnson said. He worked for General Johnson
26 and so did we. Whenever there was a paper that was going to the Joint Staff that General
27 Johnson had to defend that afternoon, we would have a conference and I would be on the
28 head of the table. I was just following that paper. General Johnson would be on my left
29 and General Lemley would be on my right and all the other generals who had looked at
30 the paper or had an interest in it were on down the line. When General Johnson said,

1 “Why did you put that in the paper?” You couldn’t say, “Well, that dumbass brigadier
2 general down there told me to do it.” He had to defend it.

3 LC: Right. Was it almost like a debating session?

4 HS: Yeah, it was with General Johnson ‘cause he gave me one paper to write.
5 Our counsel general in Hong Kong had written to say that—had sent a telegram to say
6 that our bombing was not productive and that it was pissing other people off, other
7 countries. General Johnson gave me the test of replying to that and so I replied to it. Then
8 I added a paragraph in there that said, “Well, in actuality he’s right.” So General Johnson
9 said, “Let’s debate that,” and pushed back from the table and we debated it for a while.
10 He accepted it, but he was a man you could do that with.

11 LC: Interesting. Herb, how much discussion, if you remember, how much of the
12 discussion either that day or in general during the year that you were in this position
13 concerned China?

14 HS: Very little.

15 LC: Is that right?

16 HS: Yeah. No, that wasn’t my purview and I didn’t know much about it. So we
17 just talked about American forces in Vietnam and how to make them more efficient and
18 how to make the Vietnamese more efficient.

19 LC: Were you also concerned with—did you have any brief for dealing with
20 causalities, as well? How many American troops were being lost through—?

21 HS: Not very much. No.

22 LC: Who would be dealing with that? You were in plans, I know.

23 HS: I don’t know, probably the G-1.

24 LC: What kinds of efficiencies were you hoping to achieve? What kind of goals
25 did you have in mind?

26 HS: Well, to make the Vietnamese Army more efficient and to make the
27 Vietnamese government more efficient. I wrote a paper on land reform in South Vietnam
28 and the advisors, how to make them more efficient, make their jobs more desirable.
29 Those were the two things I remember most.

30 LC: On the land reform question, can you remember much about the kinds of
31 arguments that you would’ve put forward?

1 HS: Well, yeah. We wanted to give land to the tillers. That became the official
2 policy. The people who are tilling the land as sharecroppers should own it. That's the sort
3 of the gist of the paper that the Viet Cong would come in and give people the land they
4 were tilling and they'd get their own, the Vietnamese would collect back taxes and back
5 rents from the peasants. That didn't please the peasants very much.

6 LC: Right. So their political loyalties were at risk?

7 HS: Yeah. Exactly.

8 LC: If not more.

9 HS: Yeah. So we were trying to build up the government and build up the ARVN
10 (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) at the same time.

11 LC: Who were you in communication with in Vietnam itself? Did you have an
12 open line to—?

13 HS: A counterpart? No, I did not. I did not. I called a couple times, but I just
14 really don't remember who.

15 LC: Let me ask about the tools, the analytical tools that you would be using in
16 this position. When you're writing papers on land reform or other issues like that, what
17 information sources did you have?

18 HS: Well, we had what was going on there before when I was in the Ministry of
19 Revolutionary Development. Basically, just my knowledge of Vietnam and what was
20 going on there. I don't really remember any specific references.

21 LC: Were you getting—?

22 HS: One—

23 LC: Go ahead, Herb.

24 HS: One good thing for being where I was is that I knew the organization in
25 Vietnam and that we had recommended the CORDS operation was being implemented
26 and I was the one that could explain that to General Johnson very easily 'cause I was
27 involved in it.

28 LC: Did you ever have occasion during this year to meet with anyone from the
29 National Security Council?

30 HS: Not that year. No.

1 LC: So your reporting was basically going up the chain inside the Army
2 structure?

3 HS: The Army, that's right.

4 LC: Okay. Did you feel that you had kind of an open door to put forward the
5 ideas that you wanted to express?

6 HS: Absolutely. General Johnson wanted to hear anything and he called upon me
7 to do certain things like land reform. He had somebody from the civil affairs section write
8 it and he didn't like him, he'd send it over to me. He liked mine better. So, yeah, I had an
9 open door. I remember one time the University of Minnesota was gonna have a series of
10 broadcasts with the prominent people. They were gonna have General Johnson talk to
11 people about why we have a draft and why are we in Vietnam. He was gonna be with
12 Komer on that. So we rehearsed it one day, one Saturday in the Pentagon. I guess General
13 Johnson was kind of nonplussed when I argued with him 'cause I was supposed to
14 represent Komer. Then he changed it into, "Well, let's just have this as an afternoon in
15 the Pentagon with some of my staff officers and have me and change the introduction."
16 And I argued with him.

17 LC: You argued with him?

18 HS: Yeah, well, that was my role.

19 LC: That's right.

20 HS: They published that and they said, "Let that go out. Change the heading to be
21 'Afternoon Chat with One of My Officers'."

22 LC: Let me probe a little bit about the manpower problems. How much
23 consideration were you giving to continued escalation? Were there plans afoot already in
24 1967 for the kinds of escalations that the United States actually put into play later?

25 HS: Well, we were going—1967 we were doing it. We were escalating and that
26 was more of the G-1, how many people we could send over. That was really the only
27 thing that they were looking in. Now we were more of a policy nature. What should we
28 do with these men? What should we do with the advisors, with the land reform, and so
29 on? We didn't get into how many men do we need or should we have.

30 LC: Did you then discuss things like what percentage of the military force that
31 we have over there should be devoted to pacification operations?

1 HS: Well, no. I did that when I was in Vietnam. We recommended fifty percent,
2 but when we got back to the Pentagon that wasn't my area.

3 LC: Okay. How effective do you think you were in pushing for the ideas that you
4 had been tasked with explaining?

5 HS: I think I was pretty effective because General Johnson was the person who
6 would listen. He would take into account the things you said and especially in the
7 organizational role because I was involved in that in Vietnam and also I was with it when
8 I talked to him. I could explain it to him and why we were doing it.

9 LC: Did you ever attend briefings with senior officers from the other branches
10 where General Johnson was speaking with them?

11 HS: Well, yeah. Every time we had—he had a paper that was going through the
12 Joint Staff, as I said, General Johnson would be on the left General Lemley would be on
13 the right and all the other generals would be spread out on the table.

14 LC: From the other branches?

15 HS: Yeah, and I had to be at the head of the table. We had to coordinate all these
16 other people, of course.

17 LC: Right. How long did you stay in this position?

18 HS: About a year.

19 LC: Were you happy to move on or?

20 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

21 LC: Tell me about where your next assignment took you.

22 HS: My next assignment took me upstairs in the Pentagon to the Office of the
23 Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs. I was in the Policy
24 Planning Staff and I was the assistant for Southeast Asia. So I was Assistant for Southeast
25 Asia in the Policy Planning Staff of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International
26 Security Affairs.

27 LC: Now this is somewhat different organizationally, isn't it, because now you're
28 reporting directly to a civilian administrator?

29 HS: Right to the Assistant Secretary. Right.

30 LC: Who was the Assistant Secretary?

1 HS: Just a second—Paul Warnke was because—well, on the first of March, I
2 went up there on the first of January. On the first of March, McNamara was replaced by
3 Clark Clifford. I don't know who was the Assistant Secretary of Defense before that, but
4 Paul Warnke came in on the first of March. Mort Halperin was the Deputy Assistant
5 Secretary for the Policy Planning Staff.

6 LC: Can you tell me a little bit about Paul Warnke? What was your impression of
7 him?

8 HS: Oh, yeah. He was a very nice man. He would listen and he would learn from
9 his people. I didn't have much association with him. I associated mostly with Mort
10 Halperin who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary and with Les Gelb, who was the head
11 of the Policy Planning Staff.

12 LC: Tell me, then, your impressions of Morton Halperin.

13 HS: He was a very bright guy. He was a young fella who had written a couple of
14 books at Harvard. I had known him up there vaguely and he was a smart guy. You could
15 talk to him. Les Gelb was also a real smart guy. He was a protégé of Halperin's, I guess.
16 You could talk to him very easily.

17 LC: Now, Herb, of course this time period when you first began in the Southeast
18 Asian Affairs office was the one that included the Tet period—

19 HS: Yeah. The Tet Offensive started in January, right?

20 LC: Yeah. Can you tell me what impact it had on your work?

21 HS: Well, sure. First thing that happened was that General Westmoreland and
22 General Weaver asked for two hundred and eight thousand men, I think it was. So we had
23 to evaluate that. Clark Clifford said he wanted an A-to-Z reassessment. We gave him an
24 A-to-Z reassessment. We asked everybody what they thought of it. I thought it was a
25 terrible idea. We weren't gonna get two hundred and eight thousand men.

26 LC: You thought it was a bad idea?

27 HS: Yeah.

28 LC: Can you say why or what you argued you then?

29 HS: 'Cause we didn't have two hundred and eight thousand men. Most of it was
30 going to Europe in any case. We just didn't have the people and the war wasn't that
31 important. The objectives weren't that important.

1 LC: Did you argue that?

2 HS: Yeah.

3 LC: That the objectives—

4 HS: Well, yeah. We had five hundred and fifty thousand men and that's all we
5 were gonna have—I think they sent about thirteen or fourteen thousand more over that
6 we didn't have. So we wrote papers for the Assistant Secretary of Defense warning
7 people, which we passed through Halperin and Gelb, which said that that was ridiculous.
8 It wouldn't make any difference.

9 LC: Really?

10 HS: Yeah. Clark Clifford agreed with that.

11 LC: Herb, were you thinking about possible other engagements that the United
12 States might have to commit troops—?

13 HS: Well, the Joint Staff was.

14 LC: So with five hundred thousand men already in Vietnam—

15 HS: Yeah. The most of the two hundred and eight thousand were going to back
16 up as the strategic reserve. We're gonna reconstitute the strategic reserve. They weren't
17 going to Vietnam at all. So we made that known. We also made known that we didn't
18 have two hundred and eight thousand. Lyndon Johnson, well, he wasn't president. Yeah,
19 he was president at the time in 1968. He wasn't gonna be a wartime president. He wasn't
20 gonna send that many men over. Clark Clifford was more of a dove. He wanted to know
21 how much difference it would make and the Joint Staff notified him it wasn't gonna
22 make any difference. We were gonna pursue the war just the same way we did. The
23 Vietnamese, the North Vietnamese, would send down two hundred more thousand and
24 we'd still have a stalemate.

25 LC: So the thinking was that the North Vietnamese could match that increase?

26 HS: Exactly. So Clark Clifford was the new Secretary of Defense and he couldn't
27 get any answers from the Joint Staff. So he looked to us and we said there were no
28 answers. We should send about thirty thousand more over and negotiate.

29 LC: When President Johnson announced later in the month—

30 HS: Thirty-first of March.

1 LC: That's right. That he was not going to run again. What did you think about
2 the future of the war? How did that make you feel? Do you remember?

3 HS: Well, he said that he wasn't gonna run again. He was gonna send twenty
4 thousand men and Clifford interpreted that to mean that that was the limit and no more
5 Americans were going. We were gonna negotiate an ending to the war. The Vietnamese
6 came back on the fourth of April saying they would negotiate, but the only thing they
7 would negotiate was the stopping of the bombing and all the other acts of war against
8 North Vietnam and then we could get substantive. So we negotiated that. I was a member
9 of a—I guess it was a National Security Council group. We had some people from the
10 Joint Staff from the CIA was led by Bill Bundy. I represented DOD (Department of
11 Defense) because Mort Halperin didn't want to go and Warnke didn't want to go. So we
12 were developing negotiating positions for the U.S. during the remainder of '68.

13 LC: So that work for you started in the late spring?

14 HS: Yeah, well, in April, early spring.

15 LC: Can you tell me about some of the early thinking in those meetings?

16 HS: Well, the earliest thinking was that we would have a withdrawal of U.S.
17 forces and North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam. That was our thinking. We
18 would stop the bombing if the North Vietnamese stopped attacking South Vietnamese
19 cities. So we sent all these forward and there was a lot of coordination with the State
20 Department and the Joint Staff and the CIA to get these things done. We would argue
21 over every word, really.

22 LC: Every word?

23 HS: Yeah.

24 LC: Who was the State Department point person for this?

25 HS: Oh, Bill Bundy, the Assistant Secretary. He was the chairman of each of the
26 meetings. There were also a bunch of other people in there. Heyward Isham from State
27 Department. He's the only one I remember.

28 LC: Was there anyone from AID or were they represented by State?

29 HS: Well, they weren't involved.

30 LC: They weren't important enough in this?

31 HS: No.

1 LC: You mentioned the CIA. Was there a point person there?
2 HS: Yeah. George Carver who was Deputy Director of the CIA.
3 LC: Okay. Do you have a sense of what role Bill Colby was playing at this point?
4 HS: I have no idea. No.
5 LC: Did you ever meet Bill Colby?
6 HS: Never did. I met him at a conference at North Carolina University several
7 years later.
8 LC: Okay, but not at this point?
9 HS: Not during the war.
10 LC: Were you also paying attention, Herb, to in 1968 the political developments
11 in the United States domestically?
12 HS: Oh, yeah.
13 LC: For example, that spring in April 1968 Dr. King was shot. Do you remember
14 anything about what happened in Washington when that occurred?
15 HS: Well, I remember from—the riots. I think I drove right through them. I was
16 having lunch with someone and I drove through 14th Street to get back to the Pentagon
17 and it seemed like there was a lot of fires and things burning, but it didn't affect me 'til I
18 got home that night and saw it on the news. I was really coming right on the fringes of it.
19 LC: You were skirting around the edge of it.
20 HS: Right. It didn't affect the Pentagon very much.
21 LC: Were there protestors out on the Pentagon steps in the morning when you
22 would arrive?
23 HS: Not that I remember, no.
24 LC: No. You never saw that?
25 HS: No.
26 LC: Okay. I know that it wouldn't have deterred you at all, but I just wonder if
27 the sense of the growing protests in Washington—
28 HS: Well, we knew that there were growing protests, but it didn't affect our
29 thinking. We were thinking of the United States ought to get out of there in the first
30 place.
31 LC: When you say we were thinking that, can you tell me who else?

1 HS: Well, me and Les Gelb and Mort Halperin, I guess, and perhaps Warnke and
2 Clark Clifford himself.

3 LC: Did you meet with Secretary Clifford?

4 HS: No. I don't think I ever did.

5 LC: No? Okay. Certainly he was coming from that same direction.

6 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. He was saying we gotta get our friend out of this because
7 the Joint Staff had no plan to get out and there was no two hundred and eight thousand
8 men. What are we gonna do with them? Their pile of bodies that's gonna get higher and
9 our pile of bodies is gonna get higher.

10 LC: You know this couldn't have been a very easy position for him to be in
11 going to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

12 HS: That's right. Read my book. I wrote all about it.

13 LC: Yes, sir. Can you tell a little bit for someone who might not have access to
14 your book right away that what you saw in terms of the stresses that the secretary was
15 under?

16 HS: Well, he was under a great deal of stress because the president and the
17 secretary of state wanted to go ahead and he—and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of course—
18 and he didn't want to go ahead. He thought we should negotiate and get our friend out of
19 there, that's what he said. So there was hawks and doves within the administration, so-
20 called, and he was a dove. He was trying to get the president to modify his speeches.
21 Instead of talking about war, talking about peace and he was under a great deal of stress.
22 He said he felt the president didn't like him anymore. That they had crossed paths and the
23 president didn't like his style, but he finally prevailed. We were lucky because the North
24 Vietnamese on the fourth of April came back and said they wanted to negotiate. That was
25 hard for us, too, because the president said "I will go anywhere to negotiate," and the
26 North Vietnamese kept suggesting these places that weren't satisfactory.

27 LC: Like?

28 HS: Like Phnom Penh or like an Indonesian cruiser or Warsaw. So we finally
29 held out for it and got Paris, which was a much better venue.

30 LC: When was that decision actually arrived at?

31 HS: Oh, I don't know. Sometime in April, May of '68.

1 LC: The plans that you were working on for negotiating positions, can you tell
2 me anything more about those? Of course, you wanted the withdrawal of foreign troops
3 from South Vietnam.

4 HS: Yeah. It was withdrawn foreign troops, return of prisoners of war, things like
5 that, negotiating positions that we would take.

6 LC: How much pressure did you feel around the issue of American POWs
7 (prisoners of war)?

8 HS: I didn't feel very much, no. We were wanting to get our troops out of there
9 and coming to a peace so I didn't feel much pressure there at all.

10 LC: What about the post-withdrawal preservation of South Vietnam? How
11 important was that, Herb?

12 HS: That was very important. That's the objective we were fighting for. We were
13 trying to make them more efficient, more effective. It didn't seem like they were efficient
14 or effective and would not survive long if we left. So they didn't want us to leave.

15 LC: You, of course, understanding that had to develop plans that were best for
16 the United States, if not best for South Vietnam.

17 HS: That's right.

18 LC: Was there any attempt, either through the State Department or through this
19 planning group that you were on, to, I don't know, take the temperature of the South
20 Vietnamese government?

21 HS: Well, no. We felt it to be inefficient and we would provide advisors, but the
22 government wasn't the military's problem effectively. It was the State Department's
23 problem. They didn't say much about it.

24 LC: So Bill Bundy was essentially not putting that forward as a—?

25 HS: I remember one time Bill Bundy, he must've liked me because we were
26 sitting in his office and he was looking at me and he's saying, "We've gotta do this and
27 we've gotta do that and we've gotta send a cable here." I was nodding my head and
28 thinking to myself, "I hope you State Department types are taking notes because they're
29 all your actions."

30 LC: I'm not responsible for any of those?

31 HS: Yeah.

1 LC: At this point, in say the middle of 1968 with the new secretary in place, what
2 if you can remember, Herb, what were you thinking about the likely course of the war
3 over the next couple of years? Did you think that your group would prevail?

4 HS: No. I thought that we would still be there and it'd be much of a stalemate.

5 LC: Really?

6 HS: Yeah.

7 LC: Well, that must've been pretty discouraging.

8 HS: Well, yeah. There was a war going on and it was discouraging because we
9 had no plan for winning the war and they didn't either. They couldn't with five hundred
10 thousand American soldiers over there. So I was looking forward to getting out of the
11 Pentagon and going to Vietnam and commanding a battalion, which was the next thing
12 up the line that I should do.

13 LC: You knew that because of just career path planning?

14 HS: That's right, yeah.

15 LC: Let me ask before we take you back to Vietnam, let me ask a little bit about
16 broader Southeast Asian issues. How much concern did you have about the situations in
17 Laos and Cambodia during this time period?

18 HS: Well, very little because there was nothing we could do about it. We weren't
19 in Cambodia and we were bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos, I suppose. Those were
20 the president's policies. So what we were considering was bombing North Vietnam,
21 which was never very useful.

22 LC: Did you ever think that you would see a time when U.S. troops would
23 actually invade Cambodia?

24 HS: No. Not really. We had enough to do in Vietnam.

25 LC: Well, you're right.

26 HS: We couldn't handle that very well.

27 LC: Still in 1968 what did you make of President Nixon's talk?

28 HS: He didn't come in till '69.

29 LC: No, that's right, but as he was running for office over that summer, what did
30 you make of his plans for the war? He was already talking, I think, about scaling back
31 and Vietnamization and those kinds of things.

1 HS: Yeah. Well, Lyndon Johnson wouldn't scale back because he wouldn't
2 withdraw troops because he didn't want to tie the hands of his successor, whether it be
3 Humphrey or Nixon. But he also wouldn't come to an agreement with the Vietnamese
4 until the thirty-first of October, four or five days before the election. He didn't help
5 Humphrey any. The South Vietnamese were opposed to any stopping of the bombing. In
6 fact, the South Vietnamese it seems were in touch with Nixon's campaign and were
7 trying to do everything we could to help Nixon.

8 LC: Do you know anything more about that?

9 HS: Well, only what my research has given that the South Vietnamese were in
10 touch with Nixon. A couple of his advisors, Madame Chenault. No, we didn't know
11 anything about it in the Pentagon. In the Pentagon, when Nixon came in we were all
12 suddenly—whether we were military officers or not—were suddenly not trusted.

13 LC: Why do you say that?

14 HS: Well, they had brought new people in who didn't think that we were
15 according to their way of thinking. They just didn't know who we were.

16 LC: Was there an assumption, too, that you guys were all kind of tarred with the
17 LBJ brush?

18 HS: Yeah, to some extent that was it, I guess. We got a new Assistant Secretary
19 and new Deputy Assistant Secretaries.

20 LC: So the timing for you was pretty good to actually kind of move out of there?

21 HS: Yeah. Move out of there.

22 LC: How did it come about that you got the assignment back to Vietnam? You
23 must have requested this.

24 HS: I did, yeah.

25 LC: How did it happen? Can you tell me?

26 HS: Well, they were looking for a battalion for me and there was a battalion in
27 the 101st. I was assigned to the 101st.

28 LC: What was the location in South Vietnam?

29 HS: Oh, we were in north South Vietnam in Thua Thien province, which is the
30 second province below—the first province below Quang Tri, which was the northernmost
31 province.

1 LC: Yes, and Quang Tri had for years been an extremely difficult place.

2 HS: Yeah. We were south of Quang Tri. I was there for ten months because I was
3 selected to go to the Air War College. The first four months I was the inspector general.
4 The last six months I got my battalion, which was the 3rd Battalion of the 187th Infantry.
5 There were two battalions in the 101st that were involved in pacification operations that
6 their provinces or their districts were pretty well pacified and they were training
7 Vietnamese. I got one of those. 3rd of the 187th was in Phong Dien District along the
8 “Street without Joy.”

9 LC: This is, the 3rd of the 187th was involved in the training primarily?

10 HS: Right. Yeah, who were a pacification battalion. There weren't very many VC
11 in our area. There were a lot of Vietnamese refugees. What we did was build a couple of
12 roads and clear the vines and move the refugees from the refugee camp back to their little
13 hamlets.

14 LC: Did you have a full strength battalion?

15 HS: Oh, yeah, battalion, sure.

16 LC: Okay. As command—

17 HS: But also, let me tell you that we were the, in 1970, I was battalion
18 commander January of '70 to June of '70. We were withdrawing by that time and the
19 only thing we had not been withdrawn was the 101st Airborne Division. Consequently my
20 men knew that we weren't trying to win and that they were there for a year and their
21 biggest issue was not to be the last man killed in Vietnam.

22 LC: So how was morale then?

23 HS: The morale was good, but they weren't very aggressive.

24 LC: What did you do about that? What could you do about it?

25 HS: Not very much. I tried to—well, they all understood what they were doing
26 was good and training the Vietnamese and all that, but we had some problems because
27 the Vietnamese had nothing, of course. Our men were with them and they had cameras
28 and portable radios and all that sort of stuff. So we had some pilfering at first, but when
29 our guys laid those things aside and tried to help them and move the refugees back to
30 their hamlets it worked out very well.

1 LC: What about other disciplinary issues like, hmm, let's say alcohol use or drug
2 use?

3 HS: Marijuana, no, I didn't have any of that.

4 LC: You didn't have any of that. You didn't have—

5 HS: I kept my troops out in the field and divided it up into small units and so we
6 didn't have much of that.

7 LC: Do you remember anything about difficulties amongst the soldiers of
8 different races?

9 HS: No. No. We didn't have any of that.

10 LC: None of that came to your attention?

11 HS: No. My executive officer was an African American and he commanded the
12 rear and everything was copacetic. No, we didn't have any problems about that.

13 LC: What was his name, Herb?

14 HS: Jake Watson.

15 LC: How do you spell it? Do you know?

16 HS: W-A-T-S-O-N. Jacob, J-A-C-O-B.

17 LC: Was he an efficient officer, a good XO (executive officer)?

18 HS: Oh, yeah. He had been my deputy when I was IG (inspector general) so I
19 took him along with me.

20 LC: That was good for him, then.

21 HS: Oh, yeah.

22 LC: You two worked together very well?

23 HS: Very well.

24 LC: What happened with the rest of his career? Do you know?

25 HS: I have no idea, never saw him since.

26 LC: Is that right?

27 HS: Yeah.

28 LC: But he was a good officer for you to have?

29 HS: Oh, yeah. Well, I had my first S-3, my first operations officer was John
30 Hillen. I devised this—we didn't have any VC that we could see except they were
31 sneaking at night. So we had a rule that all the villagers would be in before dusk. Then

1 our patrols would go out after dark. In that period of dusk to dark, that's when the VC
2 would move around. So we had a bunch of eagle flights, I call them, with three
3 helicopters and I'd be in one. Then we'd have two helicopters full of troops and we'd
4 bounce around from place to place trying to find the VC. We did. We found them quite
5 often in little bunches of threes and fours. We were going on an eagle flight one night.
6 Somebody tapped me on the shoulder and said, "The brigade commander wants to see
7 you." So I told my S-3, John Hillen, to take the flight. That's the flight that John Hillen
8 got his femur broken and one guy got killed.

9 LC: Did they crash?

10 HS: No, I don't think so, but they took John Hillen right to the aid station. So I
11 lost him.

12 LC: That was a tough night.

13 HS: Yeah. It should've been me, but it was John Hillen instead. So then that's
14 when I brought Jake Watson up.

15 LC: When you would locate a small group of VC on one of these eagle flights,
16 what action did you order?

17 HS: Oh, my two helicopters with troops would go down and attack them.

18 LC: From the air, like assault helicopters?

19 HS: No. No. They'd come down and jump out of the helicopters and go get them.

20 LC: Wow. You or the other commanding officer would stay airborne?

21 HS: Up above and tell them what—

22 LC: Watching the whole situation?

23 HS: And bring some support in if they needed it.

24 LC: Did you ever have to call in air support?

25 HS: No, not on that.

26 LC: No? Okay. So the concentrations of VC that you were seeing were very
27 small?

28 HS: Very small, just like the mafia operating in a big city.

29 LC: Wow. Okay. What about NVA in this area?

30 HS: None.

31 LC: Really?

1 HS: We never saw any.

2 LC: So then was your understanding, your intelligence, that they were further
3 north up in Quang Tri?

4 HS: Yeah. They were in Quang Tri. We got a message one time that they were
5 planning on attacking Quang Tri and that we were their reinforcements. We were
6 supposed to go up and help them. So I went up and met the battalion commander up there
7 in Quang Tri and devised what his positions were and what I would do to help him. They
8 didn't attack so we didn't have much to do up there.

9 LC: But you came close it sounds like?

10 HS: Yeah. We were alerted for something to go on.

11 LC: This command of the 3rd of the 187th lasted for just the six-month period?

12 HS: Six months, right.

13 LC: Because you got another assignment?

14 HS: Well, because I had been selected to go to the Air War College and it started
15 in August, I guess. So I had to leave in August instead of November or December.

16 LC: Were you reluctant to leave Vietnam at that point?

17 HS: Oh, yeah.

18 LC: Why?

19 HS: My battalion was doing well. We were a fine battalion. We had good,
20 competent leaders and we had a good mission. The troops enjoyed the mission and could
21 see what they were doing. It was a good battalion.

22 LC: Did your guys give you a send off?

23 HS: Yeah. They did. We had a party.

24 LC: They had a party for you?

25 HS: Yeah.

26 LC: Okay. So it sounds like they returned your affection.

27 HS: Well, we had a lot of good time with them, yeah. Like I said, I had one
28 platoon and I always like to say this. The platoon was going to an area, which they were
29 supposed to clear, and a bomb went off. The first sergeant, not the first sergeant, the
30 platoon sergeant and company commander got killed. The rest of the platoon sat down
31 and said, "Okay. That's it. We're not gonna go anywhere. We just—it's not worth it

1 anymore. Throw us all in jail. We'd rather be there than in here." So I had to go out and
2 talk to them. I talked to them and I got them moving again.

3 LC: Herb, can you remember what kinds of things you said because that's a
4 pretty tough situation?

5 HS: Yeah I'd say. I told them, "You can't sit here all day. You gotta move and do
6 something. That's what happens in war." I didn't threaten them. I didn't holler at them,
7 but in the meantime I brought another couple of platoons in on top of them. I appointed a
8 new platoon sergeant who was the first sergeant for them. This was 1970. Moved them
9 all out together. So I made them a small part of a bigger organization that was moving
10 out. They moved out all right.

11 LC: That was one of your—I mean was that kind of a designed move?

12 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. Sure was. I had to get them going.

13 LC: So both by persuasion and sort of carrot-and-stick, a little bit, bringing in the
14 other troops?

15 HS: Yeah. That's right. Yeah. The stick wasn't very useful.

16 LC: Wasn't too heavy, sounds like.

17 HS: Yeah. That's right.

18 LC: As a commanding officer, of course, this falls on your shoulders whether this
19 goes well or not.

20 HS: That's right.

21 LC: I wonder if you can say something more about what it took kind of internally
22 for you to get them moving.

23 HS: I had to tell them that they weren't gonna sit there. Threatening them didn't
24 do any good cause they didn't care.

25 LC: Right. They were beyond that.

26 HS: Yeah. So you had to make them part of a bigger whole. You had to appoint a
27 leader that they respected, which was the first sergeant. You had to get a lot of other men
28 who would be the example for them.

29 LC: Did you hand pick the guy that you wanted to—?

30 HS: To be the platoon sergeant? Yeah.

31 LC: Yeah.

1 HS: Oh, sure.

2 LC: You already had him in mind?

3 HS: Yeah. We didn't have very many NCOs (noncommissioned officers) at that
4 time anyhow.

5 LC: Right, 'cause there was a shortage of those guys.

6 HS: Yeah, well, there was a shortage because most of them were on their third
7 tours and a lot of them had gotten killed. Oh, yeah.

8 LC: Do you remember the name of the guy that you selected?

9 HS: Oh, no. He was an old first sergeant with a moustache and he was—I had
10 known him before. I don't remember his name.

11 LC: But you'd already had a star next to his name as somebody you could rely
12 on.

13 HS: Oh, yeah. Well, I did that night. I didn't think I'd need it, but I did need it.

14 LC: Yeah, you did. It sounds like it. He got things moving and no more trouble
15 after that?

16 HS: Oh, yeah. That's right.

17 LC: Let me ask you about the Air War College. You were attending as a student,
18 essentially.

19 HS: Yeah.

20 LC: What was life like there?

21 HS: Life was very soft.

22 LC: Very soft.

23 HS: You had classes in the morning and then you'd play golf or handball in the
24 afternoon. You didn't have to study very much. It was pretty easy.

25 LC: Now is this down in Alabama.

26 HS: In Maxwell Field, Alabama.

27 LC: Let me ask about how much influence the ongoing conflict in Vietnam had
28 on the curriculum.

29 HS: Well, I don't know. I wrote a paper about my experiences with the 187th.

30 LC: Do we have a copy of that, sir?

31 HS: Yeah, I think you do.

1 LC: I think we probably do.

2 HS: I think you do. I wrote an article in the December issue of *Vietnam Magazine*
3 about it.

4 LC: I saw that, actually.

5 HS: Okay.

6 LC: For somebody who wouldn't have access to that though, can you just recount
7 some of the points in the article, some of the points you made?

8 HS: Well, let me see. The points were that we were a pacification battalion, one
9 of two in the 82nd, in the 101st Airborne and that we had moved the refugees back to their
10 hamlets and villages. Since the last we talked—the Self Defense Forces had to fend for
11 themselves and there were five hamlets, I think. The last week I was there the district
12 chief asked me if he could borrow my helicopter. I said, "What for?" He said, "Well, VC
13 tried to re-infiltrate these villages. They've got three prisoners and three bodies I've got
14 to get out of there." So they were beginning to take care of themselves. That was very
15 good. It was a real affirmation of our success.

16 LC: Right, and that the efforts you put in were paying off.

17 HS: Yeah. Exactly.

18 LC: At the Air War College, what kinds of things were you studying, you and the
19 others? How big was your class?

20 HS: I don't really know. We had fifteen in the seminar and I guess there were
21 about twenty seminars. So that'd be about three hundred. We studied—well, they had the
22 class, the faculty from the Air Force Academy, teach us about economics. Most of the
23 rest of the time we studied U.S. diplomacy overseas, U.S.—we studied about NATO and
24 we studied about SEATO (Southeast Treaty Organization) and that's about it. The Air
25 Force's idea was that they didn't need all these big forces. You just nuke them with the
26 dirty bombs.

27 LC: Did they actually kind of come out—I mean that was the point that you got
28 from the—?

29 HS: Yeah.

30 LC: That doesn't sound much like what you—

31 HS: Not what I was doing.

1 LC: Had in mind as a useful way of conducting U.S. foreign policy.

2 HS: Yeah. That's right. I'd argue with them. I was a distinguished graduate and I
3 don't really know how because I would argue with them a lot.

4 LC: You played some golf, too, probably.

5 HS: Some handball. I didn't have the time to play golf.

6 LC: Oh, handball. Okay. You're not a golfer?

7 HS: No.

8 LC: Okay. So would you find somebody of like mind to play handball with or
9 somebody that you could argue with?

10 HS: Oh, somebody I could argue with. They were all very pleasant. Had a lot of
11 good Air Force friends in there.

12 LC: I suspected that. How long did the course last?

13 HS: Oh, about ten months.

14 LC: Now did you have a final project of some kind?

15 HS: No. Just the paper that I wrote on a *Street without Joy*.

16 LC: When you were moving on from this to your next assignment, do you
17 remember how it came about?

18 HS: Well, I don't know. I think I went to the Chief of Staff's office and I think
19 somebody up there requested me. Col. Volney Warner was the executive officer to the
20 Chief of Staff of the Army. He probably requested me.

21 LC: Warner?

22 HS: Warner, Volney Warner, V-O-L-N-E-Y. He ended up with four stars.

23 LC: Yes, sir. I remember that. He was the executive officer to the COS (Chief of
24 Staff)?

25 HS: To the Chief of Staff, right.

26 LC: Did you know him before?

27 HS: Oh, yeah. I had relieved him in DES Ops as the Vietnam desk officer two
28 years before. So he went over to the White House to be the executive to Komer, Mr.
29 Komer.

30 LC: Of course, you knew Komer as well from the olden days.

31 HS: Yeah, from—

1 LC: Go ahead, Herb.

2 HS: Well, that's it from the time I briefed him in Vietnam from the time he set up
3 the CORDS organization.

4 LC: So it's your thinking that Warner had something to do with—

5 HS: Getting me in the Chief of Staff's office. Right.

6 LC: What position did you hold there?

7 HS: Well, they had what they called the Seven Dwarves. There were seven of us
8 in the, what was it? Well, some branch there that whenever papers came up signed by a
9 general from down below we would investigate it to make sure that it conformed with
10 Army policy that it was something the Chief of Staff could sign that it was a well done
11 paper.

12 LC: The Chief of Staff was General Westmoreland, is that right?

13 HS: Yeah. Right.

14 LC: So did you see him, then, on a regular basis?

15 HS: Oh, yeah. We were the, what was called the Coordination Division. That was
16 it. We coordinated all these papers and then we would write what he should do with it.
17 He should sign it or he should send it back or whatever.

18 LC: Are we talking about '72 at this point, 197—?

19 HS: '71, '72 yeah. Sure.

20 LC: Give me, Herb, your appraisal of General Westmoreland at this point in his
21 career.

22 HS: Well, he was very good as a Chief of Staff. He depended on his staff a great
23 deal and he would say, "Should I sign this, Herb?" I'd say, "Yeah. You should've signed
24 this a long time ago." It was strictly Army stuff. We were going through the beginning of
25 the volunteer Army at the time, had a lot of those issues were coming up before him. It
26 was the Coordination Division. That's what it was, the Coordination Division of the
27 Secretary of the General Staff. We found it rather difficult when a paper came up that we
28 didn't like or that didn't exceed two other papers we'd have a hard time sending it back.
29 We had to be very subtle because some general had approved it.

30 LC: Sure. So this was a little touchy, some of this?

1 HS: Yeah. Yeah, some of them were. So we had to go back to the officer that
2 wrote it and say, “Hey, you’re going to get your boss in trouble with this.” There were
3 very few like that. Most of them were easy to approve.

4 LC: You mentioned that it was the, really looking toward the beginning of the
5 volunteer Army at this point. I wonder what other, were the principle issues coming to
6 the Chief of Staff. Was there much Vietnam business at this point?

7 HS: No, very little.

8 LC: Really?

9 HS: Vietnam had already been solved by the president. He had begun to
10 withdraw.

11 LC: Yes, and during 1972 also the president opened discussions with People’s
12 Republic of China and that sort of changed the context.

13 HS: That’s right. Yeah. So we didn’t get involved in that in the Coordination
14 Division.

15 LC: The year before, I think if I’m not mistaken, *The Pentagon Papers*, so called,
16 had been published. Do you remember that?

17 HS: Oh, I sure do.

18 LC: What can you tell me about your reaction or the reaction of others?

19 HS: Well, you see I wrote the last two chapters when I was in ISA (International
20 Security Affairs). The Democrats lost the election. Les Gelb came to me and said,
21 “Okay. We’ve written *The Pentagon Papers*.” It wasn’t called that then, though. “What
22 we haven’t done is try and written the last two chapters of the Tet Offensive. So you take
23 November and December off and you write it.” So I wrote the last two chapters of *The*
24 *Pentagon Papers*. When everybody, when the administration changed, I had the only
25 copy, all forty-nine volumes, in a file cabinet in my office. I guess I’m the only one that’s
26 read the whole forty-nine issues at that time.

27 LC: I think you might be right.

28 HS: Yeah.

29 LC: So it was forty-nine volumes?

30 HS: Volumes, and they finally—somebody higher than me decided they would
31 make twenty copies, I guess, and send them out to the LBJ Library and to the RAND

1 corporation and so on. So I had them and I gave them to the Navy. They made the copies
2 and sent them out. So when they were published I had a very long discussion with the
3 FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) who was trying to find out who knew about them
4 and I knew about them. Then when they came out, my friend Ernie May from Harvard. I
5 had nothing left to do for my PhD except a dissertation. Ernie May at the American
6 Historical Association criticized *The Pentagon Papers* as history. He said they were all
7 done with documents and a lot of the documents weren't very important. They never
8 interviewed the people and so on. He said—how'd he say it? He said there was one
9 volume that was far superior to the others in the use of the author's, author's use of the
10 documents. That was mine.

11 LC: He said this publicly?

12 HS: Yeah at the American Historical Association. He didn't know who wrote it,
13 of course. I did.

14 LC: He had picked it out by its quality?

15 HS: Yeah. So I wrote him and said, "I've only got a dissertation to do and if this
16 meets Harvard's standards if I did all the things you said were wrong." He said, "Yes, it
17 would. Hurry up. Other people will be writing on it." So I had a friend, a former student
18 of mine, a Maj. Paul Miles in General Westmoreland's office. General Westmoreland—
19 well, Paul Miles had been a student of mine at West Point. So I talked to Paul Miles. He
20 was General Westmoreland's historian, sort of. He ended up as the deputy director of the
21 Department of History at West Point. He was General Westmoreland's historian.
22 Anytime anybody talks to General Westmoreland about the war, Paul Miles would keep
23 them straight. He knew all about it. So I talked to him and said, "Look, I've got this
24 opportunity to write my dissertation." He said, "Well, put in for six months leave of
25 absence from the Army." I said, "Well, can you do that? Is that all right?" He said,
26 "Don't worry about it." He took my application in to General Westmoreland and said,
27 "Look. You're part in this period of history has been misunderstood. Why don't you give
28 Schandler access to your papers and he can straighten them out for your book when you
29 write it and give him six months off to do his dissertation?" So I got six months off.

30 LC: So Westmoreland said, "Yeah, that sounds like a good idea."

31 HS: Yeah.

1 LC: So what papers did you actually have access to?

2 HS: Well, all of his back channels.

3 LC: Meaning?

4 HS: Meaning the correspondence between him and General Wheeler and the
5 president.

6 LC: Do you know, Herb, where those papers are now?

7 HS: Well, they're probably with Westmoreland's collection.

8 LC: With his personal papers?

9 HS: Yeah, sure. So I had six months off and I wrote my dissertation.

10 LC: We might as well I think include in the record that Princeton University
11 Press picked it up.

12 HS: Oh, yeah.

13 LC: And published it in '77, is that right?

14 HS: '77. Yeah, I got my PhD in '74 and they published it in '77. It was called
15 *The Unmaking of a President: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam*.

16 LC: It's emerged as a standard work in the field now.

17 HS: Oh, yeah. Yeah. 'Cause I was right there in the middle of it. I interviewed all
18 the people, Clark Clifford, Maxwell Taylor, Fowler. I was just going over some of it with
19 Fowler who was Secretary of the Treasury.

20 LC: Now did you do these interviews during that six month period or—?

21 HS: Oh, yeah, during the six month period. Walt Rostow, interviewed him down
22 in Texas. Dean Rusk, interviewed him down in Georgia. So, yeah, I did all of it.

23 LC: I think in the introduction, too, you mention although in a different capacity
24 Secretary Rusk and did you meet with him at all, Herb?

25 HS: In Georgia, yes, indeed.

26 LC: That's when he was at the University of Georgia?

27 HS: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

28 LC: You interviewed him there?

29 HS: Oh, yeah.

30 LC: What kind of impression did he make on you?

1 HS: Well, the impression that I got. It's very interesting 'cause the day that I sat
2 down and interviewed him when we were sitting in his office, he got the word that the
3 President Johnson had just died.

4 LC: Oh, is that right?

5 HS: The impression I got from him was that he was very loyal and was willing to
6 continue on if the president said so.

7 LC: He had become quite loyal to LBJ?

8 HS: Yeah. Everybody was, actually, but they had different points of view. His
9 point of view was we should continue on the war and negotiate.

10 LC: Right. It's interesting the distinction that you draw between being loyal to
11 someone and disagreeing with them and it's possible to do both.

12 HS: Yeah, exactly.

13 LC: Did you at any point meet with Phillip Habib?

14 HS: No. I never did.

15 LC: Never did? Okay.

16 HS: I think he was gone by that time. He was in the Middle East I want to say.

17 LC: That's probably—well, yeah off in the Middle East. Yeah he had other fish
18 to fry by that point. Well, let me go back to your return to the Army after being awarded
19 the doctorate degree. What happened on your return?

20 HS: Well, I didn't have a home anymore. The Coordination Division, they had a
21 guy in charge and he said, "Well, you've been gone and you don't know what's going
22 on." So I had to find a home. I was assigned to the National War College for about six
23 months and then I came to the Joint Staff. Because of my great background in Vietnam
24 they put me in the NATO policy branch.

25 LC: Where was the office located?

26 HS: In the Joint Staff, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

27 LC: How long were you there?

28 HS: About a year and then I retired from the Army from there.

29 LC: Tell me about the work at the NATO policy unit.

30 HS: Well, we have to go to NATO once every three months or so. We were
31 doing a comparison of the Russians and the NATO staff to see who was ahead. It was

1 pretty interesting. We got the—oh, what was it, specialization rationalization, what's
2 going to happen by that time and we had to say what we were prepared to do. I had the
3 DPQ, the defense policy questionnaire, which I gave to U.S.—what things in Europe
4 were supposed to be NATO and which were not NATO and that's about it. It was
5 interesting.

6 LC: Now your decision to retire. Was that driven by personal motives or had you
7 kind of run out of places to go in the Army and wanted to try something else?

8 HS: Well, yeah, mine personal. I wanted to go somewhere else really. I had done
9 all I could do on Vietnam and there weren't any place else to go. Sure, I'd done Special
10 Forces.

11 LC: You sure had. You had done quite a lot, sir. Herb, let me ask you, as you left
12 the Army in 1975, right? When you retired, how in your view had the Vietnam
13 experience changed the Army?

14 HS: Well, we were now going to a volunteer Army. That was one thing that was
15 a ploy that Nixon used to lower casualties and lower the draft call and so on. So it
16 changed in that way that we had a volunteer Army. As far as the officers were concerned,
17 a lot of good officers had gotten out because of that. I really hadn't been with the Army
18 after my second tour in Vietnam. I came back with the Chief of Staff's office. He was
19 very cool toward the volunteer Army. He was told to do it so he did it. He didn't like it
20 very much, didn't think it would work. He had one guy on the staff who was in charge of
21 things like that and he would ask us for things to do, things that we thought were useful. I
22 don't know. I really never got back to the Army. I was—

23 LC: Were you—?

24 HS: I was—

25 LC: Were you—go ahead, Herb.

26 HS: I was in the Pentagon.

27 LC: Yes, that's right. Were you thinking of yourself at this point more as a
28 scholar than as an Army commander?

29 HS: Well, both, I guess. I didn't come up on the brigade command list. They
30 have a group that selects people to be brigade commanders and I didn't make that list. So

1 apparently my options in future were limited. I decided to get out then when I got my
2 PhD and pursue scholarly things. Yeah, I guess so.

3 LC: You did it with some success, too, I will just say. You went to the Industrial
4 College of the Armed Forces, is that right?

5 HS: Well, first I went to the Library of Congress.

6 LC: How long were you there? That's right, the Congressional Research Service?

7 HS: Congressional Research Service. They were trying to build a military branch.
8 They had the Foreign Affairs Division and they made the Foreign Affairs and National
9 Defense Division because there wasn't anything to do in foreign affairs really. The
10 foreign affairs committee just didn't have a great deal of responsibility.

11 LC: What did they give you to do?

12 HS: Oh, I would ask them about "Why don't we have a home port in Haifa?" I
13 would have to investigate that. "How do we sell ships to foreign countries? Are there
14 U.S. men-of-war?" Let's see, I would report to Congress, arm sales. I got involved in arm
15 sales a great deal and then that led me to meet President Jimmy Carter, who had a PD-14.
16 He put limitations on arm sales. U.S. embassies couldn't push it and couldn't help people.
17 We couldn't develop weapons specifically for sale to other countries and so on. Anything
18 over twenty-five million in major defense equipment had to be done through the
19 government. That really made people mad, manufacturers mad, because they could do it
20 so much more efficiently, they felt, than the government could. So after four years at the
21 Library of Congress I joined this lobby, the American League for International Security
22 Assistance, which had been formed by these people, forty companies and four
23 international unions. We worked with them.

24 LC: What was the mission of the mission?

25 HS: To remove the restrictions on arm sales. Basically, we removed them and
26 actually when Reagan came into the presidency and he was appointing Al Haig as
27 Secretary of State and Al Haig's assistant or deputy or personal assistant was Woody
28 Goldberg who had been a student of mine at West Point. Woody had been Al Haig's
29 headquarters company commander in Vietnam when he had a brigade. So Woody called
30 me up and said, "Al Haig's looking for some things to read while he's waiting
31 conformation. Do you have anything?" I sent him all our position papers. As soon as

1 Reagan got in Woody asked us who we wanted to talk to and we told him. We talked to
2 him and they removed some of the restrictions. We won. My boss, who was a member of
3 Congress, a former member of Congress, went out to play golf in Arizona and said,
4 “Good luck to the rest of you.” So the worst thing you can do as a Washington lobbyist is
5 we basically solved the problem. Then I went to ICAF (Industrial College of the Armed
6 Forces).

7 LC: Got yourself out of a job?

8 HS: Yeah. Exactly. Then I went to ICAF.

9 LC: Now tell me about being at ICAF.

10 HS: Well, I taught for a while in the political science department. Then, I became
11 the director of the strategy department, which was all the whole first semester. We had in
12 there, we had a history and political science and leadership and economics and what was
13 that? Oh, and war fighting. Held that position for six years and sort of got the school
14 organized, got the curriculum authorized and then spent the next five or six years
15 building up a history department. Then I became just a professor and I taught. That was a
16 lot of fun cause these guys and girls were lieutenant colonels, most of them on the road to
17 colonel and general, who were very interested. Unlike most schools, you have a lot of
18 competition. You had a lot of smart people.

19 LC: Yeah. This would be an ideal teaching situation, I would think.

20 HS: Exactly.

21 LC: Everyone’s motivated. Everybody wants to be there.

22 HS: Yeah, everybody’s mature. Everybody’s serious.

23 LC: Were you primarily focusing on teaching Vietnam lessons?

24 HS: Oh, no. I just gave one lecture on Vietnam and I had an elective on Vietnam,
25 but most of the time I was teaching, well, political science for thirteen years and history
26 for about seven.

27 LC: American history or military history?

28 HS: History of the world. We called it Historic Case Studies in Grand Strategy.
29 We would skip around the wars. We didn’t teach wars. We taught what led to the wars,
30 what caused them. We’d have a lesson on leading up to World War I and the period

1 between the wars and what led up to World War II and then something on the Cold War.
2 Not the wars in general, we talked about the diplomacy of leading up to the wars.

3 LC: So the grander strategic issues rather than operations?

4 HS: That's right. In fact, they called it the strategy department, but the official
5 title was Case Studies in Grand Strategy.

6 LC: How many faculty members did you have in the department at the time you
7 left in '91, is that right?

8 HS: About ten, ten or twelve. Yeah, I left. I retired—no I retired—

9 LC: No. After that, yeah.

10 HS: I retired in '9—I retired in 2004.

11 LC: Did ICAF remain—did it change its name or were there other changes?

12 HS: No. No. No. The Eisenhowers said they would never change the name. It
13 was given to them by the—

14 LC: Actually where is it located? Where is the—

15 HS: Ft. McNair, right next to the War College. The National Defense University
16 consists of the National War College, the ICAF, and the Joint Services Staff College in
17 Norfolk.

18 LC: Now, let me ask you a couple of big picture questions for—how much do
19 you think the Vietnam War has influenced subsequent foreign policymaking debates at
20 the highest levels in the U.S. government?

21 HS: Very much so. After Vietnam for a long period of time, our policy was no
22 more Vietnams. We wouldn't get involved. Our Secretary Weinberger, when he was
23 Secretary of Defense, put out six principles that the United States would apply. First of
24 all, that the war was important to the United States. Secondly, that we would go for
25 victory and things like that which made it sort of impossible for us to go to war. Then we
26 had the Persian Gulf War, the first one. We showed how good the Army was. It was just
27 for a period of time there the use of military force to achieve public policy objectives was
28 not acceptable. Congress and El Salvador put a limitation of fifty American advisors on
29 and that was that. We were just not going to use military force. The Army was getting
30 better and better because it was all volunteer, and the officers knew what to do, but we
31 weren't going to use it very much.

1 LC: So would you say that the thing that has changed between the period that
2 you're talking about and currently, our willingness, in effect, it seems a national
3 enthusiasm for using troops overseas. Is that because of 9/11?

4 HS: I think it is, yes.

5 LC: Can you talk about the impact that you see that having on us, on the United
6 States?

7 HS: The impact it's having is it makes much more difficult to maintain a
8 volunteer Army because people don't want to join when they can be killed. So I think
9 we're having a hard time maintaining the Army over there now. If we had a draft you
10 could say we need fifty thousand more and you get fifty thousand more whether they
11 were motivated or competent or not. Before that we had—after that we had very
12 competent people. We had restrictions on enlistments. You couldn't enlist if you had
13 smoked marijuana, if you hadn't graduated from high school and so on. So we had a very
14 good Army. Now it's being flattened out again.

15 LC: Do you suspect that we're going to be moved, whether there's popular
16 support for it or not, toward some kind of a national service or even a draft?

17 HS: Oh, I don't think so. No. Nobody in Congress wants that. The Army may
18 move to it.

19 LC: The Army might like to have it.

20 HS: Yeah.

21 LC: But your thinking is they might not get their way?

22 HS: Yeah, but the Army's better when people are in it that want to be, especially
23 the combat arms branches.

24 LC: Can you offer any observations on the current situation in Iraq?

25 HS: No. There ought to be somewhere solving these, whatever they call them,
26 IABs, intermediate bombs or something. I think they can solve that pretty easily with
27 patrols up and down the side of the convoys. I don't know what they can do about
28 insurgents. I think we have to build up the Iraqi armed forces in order to handle them.
29 That's not our problem. It shouldn't be.

30 LC: Does it seem to you to have any—is there any analytical value in the
31 parallels that are being drawn between this conflict and the one in Vietnam?

1 HS: Not very much because Vietnam, it was a nationalist war and the North
2 Vietnamese had always wanted the South. It was a civil war, basically. They say they had
3 no term for that. In fact I'm working on a book now that says we could never have won
4 that because no matter how many people it took they were going to fight for South
5 Vietnam. It was part of their heritage. They'd been fighting for two thousand years and
6 we knew nothing about that and they weren't gonna give up. By 1965 the VC in the little
7 hamlets and villages had already won that part of the war.

8 LC: The book that you're working on, can you tell me a little bit about it? Who's
9 going to bring it out do you know?

10 HS: I think the Rutgers's University Press. I don't know. I'm still talking to them.

11 LC: Okay. But you're thinking in the next year or so?

12 HS: Oh, yeah. And it's gonna be entitled *The War that Couldn't be Won*. I don't
13 think we could've ever won. We'd still be fighting. We were sort of stalemated at the
14 time.

15 LC: You think we could still—I mean, if—

16 HS: We'd still be fighting if we left anybody over there and they'd still have our
17 prisoners. Yeah.

18 LC: Right. Well, Herb, first of all I want to thank you for your time. You've
19 invested quite a bit of time in this interview and I appreciate it, as do my colleagues here
20 at the Vietnam Archive. Let me just close by asking you if there's any additional
21 observations that you would like to offer at this point that perhaps I haven't asked you
22 about or other contributions that you might like to put, place on the record.

23 HS: Well, we should always be careful when we get into these wars as to what's
24 going to happen. The Vietnamese, we could never win. We had an artificial government
25 that was set up there and was not very efficient. We never should've gotten in there. I
26 think John Kennedy knew that and, of course, he was executed and Lyndon Johnson sent
27 a lot of people over. There was no reason for us to get involved. The North Vietnamese,
28 although they said they were communists, were not interested in going into Laos and
29 Cambodia and the rest. They weren't interested in doing the Chinese bidding or the
30 Soviet bidding. So before we get into something like that we oughta know. In Iraq,
31 General Shinseki told them that we didn't have enough men there and they said he didn't

1 know what he was talking about. Well, he did know what he was talking about. We don't
2 have enough men. It'll take a long time to have peace over there. When some people
3 don't—it's an artificial country, really.

4 LC: Yes. It's a colonially-drawn country.

5 HS: Yeah. With Sunnis and all others and Kurds and—

6 LC: And all the problems that come with that.

7 HS: That's right.

8 LC: Do you think that like we didn't have a good analytical sense of the political
9 traditions and backgrounds in Vietnam, similarly we don't have that for the Middle East?

10 HS: That's right. We don't have that and we didn't try. We're trying to get the
11 Sunnis and the Shiites together and they don't want to be together. The Kurds are happy
12 being separate. We have to form a civil government and we're not very good at that.

13 LC: It's difficult to do that with troops occupying.

14 HS: Yeah. It's very difficult to do that with incompetent people who've never
15 done that before. Not necessarily incompetent, but they're not used to it.

16 LC: They're not experienced in this. Well, Herb, thank you for those
17 observations and for all your time. I appreciate your participation.

18 HS: You're very welcome.