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**The Vietnam Archive  
Oral History Project  
Interview with Ann Smith  
Conducted by Laura M. Calkins, Ph.D.  
June 23, 29, 2004; March 31; June 21, 2005  
Transcribed by Mindy Moser**

**NOTE:** Any text included in brackets [ ] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

1           Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech  
2 University, beginning an oral history interview with Col. Ann Smith. Today's date is the  
3 twenty-third of June 2004. I am in the interview room in the Special Collections building  
4 on the campus of Texas Tech in Lubbock and Colonel Smith is speaking to me by  
5 telephone from Jacksonville, Alabama. Good morning, ma'am.

6           Ann Smith: Good morning.

7           LC: First of all, I'd like to begin, if you agree, with some general biographical  
8 information. Ann, where were you born and when?

9           AS: I was born in Valdosta, Georgia on the nineteenth of December of 1930.

10          LC: Can you tell me a little bit about your parents? First of all, your mother—  
11 what was her name?

12          AS: Her maiden name was Irma, with an I, Mathis.

13          LC: Is that M-a-double t-h-i-s?

14          AS: No, M-a-t-h-i-s.

15          LC: Okay, one t. And what was her family background?

16          AS: My grandparents died really before I got to know them. Her mother was a  
17 homemaker. Her father was apparently a town wit and barber and had a book and music  
18 shop and he was a musician.

19          LC: Now is this in Georgia as well?

20          AS: This was in a little town called Quitman, Q-u-i-t-m-a-n, Georgia.

21          LC: Now, where is that, Ann, relative to—?

1 AS: Well, if you have a good tail wind you can spit to Florida. It's just off I-75  
2 about probably twelve to fifteen miles from the Florida border.

3 LC: Okay. And your grandfather then was you said a musician among so many  
4 other things. What did he play?

5 AS: Well, there was an old fiddle in the house so I guess he fiddled.

6 LC: Do you know more about him? What was his name and how long had the  
7 family been in Georgia?

8 AS: His name was Hiram Mathis.

9 LC: And was this an old Quitman family?

10 AS: No, I think he came there from Florida.

11 LC: Oh, okay.

12 AS: I really know very little about them.

13 LC: Your mother, was she brought up by them?

14 AS: Yes. She was born in Quitman in the house she grew up in.

15 LC: Is that house still there, Ann?

16 AS: Yes.

17 LC: Do you go down and visit much?

18 AS: Seldom. I was down for my fiftieth college reunion in '01 and I haven't been  
19 back since.

20 LC: But Quitman must be just a small place.

21 AS: It's sort of a flyspeck on a map. It's not gotten any bigger since I left.  
22 (Laughs) It was a wonderful place to grow up.

23 LC: Right. My family comes from a little place like that but on both sides up in  
24 Michigan so I think I have a little bit of a fellow feeling about what you're talking about,  
25 about two thousand people or so.

26 AS: Yeah.

27 LC: Maybe not even that many. Ann, your mother, did she ever work outside the  
28 home?

29 AS: Yes.

30 LC: What did she do?

1 AS: My father was ill and my mother did anything she could to make an honest  
2 living. She worked in an office in a cotton mill and then she worked in a hosiery mill,  
3 sort of running their little outlet store and then she worked as an inspector in the mill  
4 itself. She was a choir director in the local Methodist church and then she got a job  
5 working for a Presbyterian home in our hometown for senior citizens. So she was doing  
6 that when she died.

7 LC: How old was she when she died?

8 AS: Fifty-six. She was killed in an accident.

9 LC: Oh, what kind of accident?

10 AS: Car. She was taking one of the residents to the doctor and ran a stop sign and  
11 got hit.

12 LC: About what year would that have been?

13 AS: Sixty-three. No, I'm sorry, '64.

14 LC: You said that your father had been ill. Had he had a career before he became  
15 ill?

16 AS: He was in the Navy in World War I and never got over it.

17 LC: Is that right? Where did he serve, do you know?

18 AS: He served on shipboard and he was on a troop ship as I recall between the  
19 Unites States and France. And during that time while on shipboard he had a kidney  
20 removed and after he got out of the Navy he taught at private schools. He only had two  
21 years of college and started to think a degree was important. So as I was growing up he  
22 did a lot of pick-up things. He was very frustrated because I think he was very smart but  
23 he couldn't use his smarts and he certainly couldn't help me with algebra. (Laughs)

24 LC: Did he make a valiant effort though?

25 AS: Oh yes.

26 LC: Okay. (Laughs)

27 AS: "Daddy, that's not what they said I should do." "Mumble, mumble."

28 LC: Right.

29 AS: During the war he was head of the OPA (Office of Price Administration)  
30 office in my hometown and that really was the most productive work he ever had.

31 LC: Of course this is the Second World War.

1 AS: Yes. And he tried terribly to get back in the Navy and he was too old and  
2 really was not well enough. He had heart trouble and with one kidney missing that didn't  
3 help. And he died in 1952. I think he was about fifty-eight.

4 LC: You said that he never pretty much got over World War I and his experience.  
5 Do you mean physically?

6 AS: No, not traumatic. It was the accomplishment of it. (Laughs)

7 LC: Oh, is that right?

8 AS: Yeah, he was happy in the Navy.

9 LC: And when he ran the OPA office during the forties that was also sort of a  
10 highlight for him?

11 AS: Well, it was the best paying job he ever had and it was of necessity that my  
12 mother went to work and during my freshman year of college, they told me at the end of  
13 that year they told me that they could not send me back to school. And I said, "I'm  
14 going." So I did.

15 LC: How did you plan to manage it?

16 AS: I didn't know at the time.

17 LC: You just set your face toward doing it and thought that things would fall into  
18 place?

19 AS: I applied for scholarships; I worked while I was in school. They didn't pay  
20 much but the best thing happened was when one of my former Sunday school teachers  
21 stopped by my house one day and said, "I understand you're having trouble. My sister  
22 and I have some money that we are not using. Would you like to borrow it?"

23 LC: No kidding.

24 AS: "Repay it at your leisure with no interest."

25 LC: Did this just come out of nowhere for you, Ann?

26 AS: Yes.

27 LC: You must have been extraordinarily moved.

28 AS: Oh, I was. See, some good things come from going to Sunday school.

29 (Laughs)

30 LC: Apparently they do.

31 AS: She had been my Sunday school teacher all through my high school years.

1 LC: Had she been friendly with your folks?

2 AS: In my town everybody knew everybody. She was a maiden lady who lived  
3 with her widowed sister in one of the nicest houses in town and she was totally  
4 unprepossessing.

5 LC: As you think back on it, Ann, why do you think she did that? Why do you  
6 think she and her sister decided to do that for you?

7 AS: Well, they knew me. They'd known me all along. She told me that I ought  
8 to be a lawyer because I'd argue with anybody on anything when she taught me in  
9 Sunday school. It was a small church family and they were good people and I needed  
10 something.

11 LC: Did you pay them back, Ann?

12 AS: Of course.

13 LC: How long did it take?

14 AS: I graduated from college in '51 and I think I paid it back in '55.

15 LC: No kidding.

16 AS: Now you must realize it cost absolutely almost nothing to go to a state school  
17 in south Georgia at that time but it was still a large amount of money for me.

18 LC: Yes, and cash. You had to have it up front.

19 AS: So I saved and saved so I could pay it off at one time.

20 LC: Let me ask you, Ann, a little bit about your youth because it seems in the  
21 material that you were quite an industrious gal as a youngster.

22 AS: I liked money.

23 LC: You liked money?

24 AS: And I wasn't going to get it at home. I tell children now my first allowance  
25 was a dime.

26 LC: Right. And they're going, "What?"

27 AS: "What is a dime?"

28 LC: Right. (Laughs) Yeah, you got to have at least a hundred dollars to go to the  
29 mall anymore.

30 AS: That's right.

1 LC: What kinds of things did you do, Ann, and how did you get set up with this  
2 selling bottles to the drug store?

3 AS: Well the word was just out. At that time the drug store used reusable glass  
4 bottles that had ounces marked on them and so the neighbors would give them to me.  
5 They knew I wanted them so I would take them to the drugstore every now and then and  
6 get a penny each and then you could sell newspapers to the fish market and you could sell  
7 coat hangers to the laundry, to the drycleaners.

8 LC: So you would go around?

9 AS: And collect stuff.

10 LC: And where did you keep your inventory? Did you have a little place in the  
11 garage or in your room?

12 AS: Oh no. When I got some I took it in. (Laughs)

13 LC: Oh, you didn't wait?

14 AS: No, I didn't. I didn't amass a fortune that way.

15 LC: (Laughs) You wanted to be liquid so you took those in right away and had  
16 cash.

17 AS: And then two of my friends and I that were a year ahead of me in school, and  
18 I guess this was probably when I was a freshman in high school or around that era, maybe  
19 a little younger, but on Saturday we would take our card table and go down to the part of  
20 town where people came in from the country. You remember how that happened?

21 LC: Sure, sure.

22 AS: And we would sell stuff.

23 LC: What kind of stuff?

24 AS: Clothes.

25 LC: Where did you get them?

26 AS: Begged them. (Laughs) People gave them to us. Some of them were things  
27 I'd outgrown but in those days it was called a rummage sale, the forerunner of garage  
28 sales.

29 LC: And you were pioneering in this?

30 AS: Oh no, we had some competition across the street that we didn't like at all.

31 (Laughs) We had one side of the street and they had the other side.

1 LC: Oh no. And were there price wars back and forth?  
2 AS: No, we sort of had a different sort of stuff.  
3 LC: Different lines.  
4 AS: One day I was trying to hawk my wares and this woman looked at me and  
5 said, “Us don’t buy rummage.”  
6 LC: (Laughs) Is that right?  
7 AS: A real put-down. (Laughs)  
8 LC: Yes, that’s cold. That’s cold. (Laughs) But you persevered, it seems.  
9 AS: Yes. And I would make a couple of dollars or so and then when I got a social  
10 security card I worked at the dime store for two dollars a Saturday.  
11 LC: Now you were quite young when you took your social security card.  
12 AS: I was twelve when I got a social security card.  
13 LC: Which is amazing. That would have been 1942.  
14 AS: Yeah. And then I got a better job slinging hamburgers in a local grocery  
15 store and my mother would not let me wear but one set of clothes because she didn’t  
16 want all of them smelling like grease.  
17 LC: Yeah, she was a smart lady, too. (Laughs) Were your parents proud of you  
18 with all your endeavors?  
19 AS: I think they were. They didn’t say much about it but usually when I came  
20 home from work I’d stop and pick something up for my mother. I made enough money  
21 one day to buy a pair of skates for me and that was—I used my money wisely.  
22 LC: Was that something you had kind of had your eye on, those skates?  
23 AS: Well, I’d always had skates. There wasn’t much to do in South Georgia but  
24 skate. And my mother, being a serious Christian—and I don’t mean that lightly—  
25 insisted that I tithed everything. So when she gave me my dime allowance I had to put a  
26 penny aside for church. That was instilled in me very early.  
27 LC: And your father, he was from a different denomination?  
28 AS: Yes, my mother was Presbyterian and my father was Methodist. His father  
29 was a Methodist preacher.  
30 LC: Oh, is that right?  
31 AS: Yes.

1 LC: Also down in Quitman?

2 AS: Granddaddy retired there. He had preached there twice but at that time in the  
3 Methodist church they moved preachers even more than they do today and he had been at  
4 one time a circuit rider. But pretty much all in South Georgia.

5 LC: Ann, tell me about yourself as a student. You mentioned the algebra before.  
6 Were there particular subjects that you did very well at? This is sometimes a tough one.

7 AS: I was quick. I did not know how to study until I was in graduate school. I  
8 didn't have to because I could get by with a quick memory and so I missed out on  
9 learning a lot but I guess English and history.

10 LC: Those attracted you?

11 AS: Those were my best subjects. I took four years of math in high school and  
12 because I had done that, when I got to college I didn't have to take freshman math.  
13 Enough had stuck that I could do well on the placement test.

14 LC: Was that unusual for the girls in high school to take all four years of math?

15 AS: My three best friends and I, we didn't have an academic track but we were  
16 about as academic as you could get. I took a couple of years of Latin and then pretty  
17 much—we didn't have very many electives. The only thing I really blew was chemistry  
18 and I have since realized I probably could have enjoyed it because I think it's so well  
19 organized. I mean, chemistry makes sense if you can get the fundamentals.

20 LC: Right. You've got to get A before you can get to B, C, and D.

21 AS: Yes.

22 LC: Did you have any teachers that were particularly memorable, either in a good  
23 way or in a bad way or influential for you?

24 AS: Thinking back, probably the one I enjoyed most was the school librarian who  
25 taught English. I had the same teacher for English and Latin and I had a math teacher  
26 who I thought a great deal of at the time. But one time she accused me of something I  
27 did not do and would not believe me when I told her and had proof. And that just colored  
28 my attitude. (Laughs)

29 LC: Right, it soured things for you.

30 AS: Oh yes.

1 LC: Ann, let me ask you a little bit about what was going on in Quitman, just in  
2 terms of social relations. Can you tell me anything about how race played out there?  
3 Were African-Americans living in town?

4 AS: Oh yes, almost at the end of every street there would be African-Americans  
5 living there. We knew them pretty much as maids, nurses for children. My father, I  
6 think, was an un-reconstructed Confederate.

7 LC: Was he really?

8 AS: Yeah, of course he was not involved in the war, he wasn't that old but he had,  
9 like many Southerners of that era; he was totally against African-Americans as a group  
10 and had wonderful friends as individuals. One time I came home from college and it was  
11 during bad times in Georgia when we had two governors and the school integration was  
12 beginning to be talked about and I said that I wouldn't mind going to school with an  
13 African-American. And Daddy hit the roof.

14 LC: Did he really?

15 AS: And I said, "I think everybody has a right to an education." So that sort of set  
16 some of the tone but he was a product of his time.

17 LC: What about your mom?

18 AS: My mother was more broad-minded I would say than Daddy and then the last  
19 job that she had, there were a number of African-Americans who worked there and  
20 obviously she treated them very well because when she died they went together and sent  
21 flowers to her funeral.

22 LC: So she had had some kind of pleasant or good, healthy interaction with them.

23 AS: My grandmother on my father's side always had a cook so I had a very  
24 personal relationship with individuals by just being around her cook. But things were as  
25 they were then. You took for granted the way things were until you got older, I believe,  
26 and got away.

27 LC: And you went up to Valdosta to college. Was that your idea or were your  
28 folks—

29 AS: Well, it's only eighteen miles from my hometown and it was a matter of go  
30 where I could go. I had no interest in going to a big school and I couldn't have anyway.

1 At the time I started it was Georgia State College for Women and it was made co-ed my  
2 senior year.

3 LC: Now what did you intend to study?

4 AS: I first thought I wanted to study secretarial science and then I hit  
5 bookkeeping. That did that.

6 LC: So bookkeeping became a love?

7 AS: Oh no. (Laughs)

8 LC: Oh, I see. It was the problem. It was the roadblock.

9 AS: It was an anathema.

10 LC: Okay, I've got you now. (Laughs)

11 AS: Being a not very conscientious homeworker, I let myself get behind way too  
12 early and couldn't catch up.

13 LC: So you shifted then to a different major?

14 AS: I took all of the courses to qualify for a teaching certificate. You know all the  
15 education and all that sort of stuff but I did not want a degree in education. I did not want  
16 that to be my major so I majored in English. I have a BS in English.

17 LC: Now why were you trying to avoid getting an education degree, per se?

18 AS: It just did not appeal to me. It seemed like—even at that time it did not seem  
19 a prestigious degree to me.

20 LC: And was it sort of that you didn't see yourself being a teacher?

21 AS: Oh no. I saw myself being a teacher. I just didn't want a degree in  
22 education. (Laughs)

23 LC: So you wanted a more traditional—

24 AS: A more liberal art. But I did not take any language because with the teaching  
25 you had to have a good bit of science so I was weighted that way so that's why I have a  
26 BS.

27 LC: Okay, that's why it's a BS?

28 AS: Yeah.

29 LC: Okay. While you were there you indicated that in the first several years you  
30 were there, the first three years it was a women's college.

31 AS: Yes.

1 LC: Okay. Tell me about the tenor of being on campus. What was it like? Was  
2 the faculty both male and female?

3 AS: Oh yes. It was a very small school. I guess we had three hundred students.  
4 I'm not sure of the mix of town students and dormitory. Our president was a man and I  
5 had several male professors.

6 LC: Did you have any really good professors while you were there?

7 AS: The one who meant the most to me and did the most for me was a physical  
8 education professor who taught dance. She broadened my horizons more than anyone.

9 LC: What was her name? Do you remember, Ann?

10 AS: Phyllis Valenti, V-a-l-e-n-t-i.

11 LC: Tell me about her.

12 AS: Well, she was fascinating because she had studied with Martha Graham and I  
13 think she had graduated from LSU with a degree in English and had gone to the  
14 Bennington Dance Era which doesn't mean anything but it meant something. (Laughs)  
15 And she introduced me to books like Thomas Wolfe and she was a crossword puzzle  
16 worker, which I am also. I had never danced before and I found that that was my great  
17 love.

18 LC: Is that right?

19 AS: One of my piano teacher said, "Well, you can't play music but you can sure  
20 move to it." (Laughs)

21 LC: Is that right?

22 AS: Yeah. Modern dance.

23 LC: Describe if you can for somebody who wouldn't be familiar with that period.  
24 What was the sort of thinking behind modern dance at the time you were studying it?

25 AS: Well, it was a breakaway from the traditional ballet of course and it was not  
26 necessarily pretty as ballet is. You're usually barefooted and you're offered angles and  
27 use of the body in strange ways. I never could have been a ballet dancer because I'm so  
28 long and gangly. (Laughs)

29 LC: Too tall.

1 AS: Everybody, I think, needs something at which he or she excels in his little  
2 pond and in my little pond at that time, I was the best there was—in that little pond at that  
3 thing. And it was sort of like finding yourself.

4 LC: And she took a particular interest in you, not just in terms of dance but also it  
5 seems in terms of what you were reading?

6 AS: Yes, and ideas.

7 LC: Ideas, exactly.

8 AS: She was a very smart woman and she wasn't your average physical education  
9 teacher. She didn't teach swimming or tennis or golf or anything else. She taught dance.

10 LC: She was a specialist.

11 AS: Yes.

12 LC: How did she come to be there? Did you ever find that out? How had she  
13 come to be at Valdosta?

14 AS: I have no idea. If I ever knew, I don't remember. They probably advertised  
15 for somebody and she answered.

16 LC: Yeah. I wonder, what kind of things did you wear when you were dancing?

17 AS: Leotards.

18 LC: Did you wear black or whatever you could lay your hands on?

19 AS: Yeah.

20 LC: Really?

21 AS: Of course when we danced in public we had various costumes. They had  
22 never had a dance recital or a program there and during my sophomore year we did one  
23 and she choreographed it and she danced, too.

24 LC: No kidding?

25 AS: Yeah.

26 LC: That must have been a thrill.

27 AS: It was. The thrill was that she asked me to work with her the summer after  
28 my freshman year so she could have somebody to choreograph on.

29 LC: So you were sort of the model for her to work the movements out and sort of  
30 visualize it?

1 AS: Yes, to see how they looked on somebody else. As I progressed, if she was  
2 not there she would have me hold her classes but that was all freshmen and stuff.

3 LC: Which was no problem for you at that point.

4 AS: No.

5 LC: What kind of training did you do? You know, ballet people work many,  
6 many hours every day and they can't eat certain things and there are all these regiments.  
7 Did you have anything like that?

8 AS: No. I probably was practicing every day. The school had a lot of various  
9 clubs and we had a dance club that met twice a week and so we got a lot of practice there.  
10 I must say, my studies probably suffered. (Laughs)

11 LC: Because you loved doing this.

12 AS: Yes. And I was also active in the drama club and one day I was going to be  
13 cast in a play and the drama professor said, "Well, you can dance if it doesn't interfere  
14 with the play." And the dance instructor said, "You can be in the play if it doesn't  
15 interfere with your dance." (Laughs)

16 LC: And I'm sure both of them were very keen that you choose their area.

17 AS: The drama professor was also one of my absolute favorites. She was  
18 dramatic and had been on Broadway and looked sort of like a taller version of the  
19 Duchess of Windsor.

20 LC: Do you remember her name at all, Ann?

21 AS: Louise Sawyer.

22 LC: Tell me a little bit about her. She sounds like quite an intriguing person.

23 AS: I don't know how she got to South Georgia, either.

24 LC: That's very interesting. Someone will have to look into this.

25 AS: After she retired she was living in Illinois, Monmouth, Illinois and I was  
26 stationed at Fort Sheridan, Illinois and I was having a party and I invited her to come and  
27 she couldn't because she was in the hospital having her feet operated on so asked her  
28 what she drank and so I showed up at the hospital with her drink. (Laughs)

29 LC: What did she drink?

30 AS: Bourbon. (Laughs)

31 LC: There you go. (Laughs)

1 AS: And then years later, since I've been here and retired, a couple moved to our  
2 university. She's in English. I call her Dr. Word and him Dr. Number and she  
3 mentioned one night that they had lived there when she taught at Monmouth and I said,  
4 "Did you know Louise Sawyer?" She said, "Yes." Tremendous small world.

5 LC: Oh, things like that just give me the chills practically. How had she known  
6 her?

7 AS: Well, Miss Sawyer lived there and they were teaching there and their paths  
8 crossed some way.

9 LC: Did she give you kind of an update?

10 AS: Yes. I think she had died by then.

11 LC: Those professors sound extraordinarily influential and important. Were you  
12 sad to leave college? You graduated in what, 1951?

13 AS: Yes.

14 LC: Were you kind of saddened by having to leave or where you ready?

15 AS: Yes, yes, I was saddened because I knew—for one thing, I knew I was never  
16 going to be able to dance again, really dance as I had there. You have to realize, as I said,  
17 it was a small pond but I was in it and I didn't really know what I was going to do. Now,  
18 I was delighted to get out of high school because I knew I was going to college and that  
19 makes a difference and I was determined I was going to live on campus because that was  
20 part of college to me. And I did. I never commuted. So yeah, I was sad to leave the  
21 college. I had good friends and a close-knit group.

22 LC: Had there been sororities on campus?

23 AS: No.

24 LC: Not at all?

25 AS: No.

26 LC: I wondered about that. Why were there no sororities?

27 AS: Well, probably—I don't know. Really, I never thought about it but most of  
28 us probably couldn't have afforded to be in sororities anyway if they had had them. And  
29 sometimes the poor can be awfully snobbish. (Laughs)

30 LC: Had the decision by the administration to take the college co-ed changed  
31 things substantially for you? You would have been a senior that year, I guess.

1 AS: They didn't really change substantially but we had to make room for these  
2 young men who had not been part of the system before. One of them had to be "Who's  
3 Who" just because one of them had to be. Some of were older. There were veterans  
4 going to school then. We adapted.

5 LC: Was that, do you think, part of why the administration decided to accept men,  
6 because there were guys with GI Bill money following them and they needed the money?  
7 Was that part of the discussion or do you remember at all?

8 AS: We weren't privy to the decision-making discussions. (Laughs)

9 LC: And none of that sort of leaked out to—

10 AS: No. And they changed the name of the college while I was there. It was  
11 Georgia State Women's College. It became Valdosta State College and now it's  
12 Valdosta State University and it's huge.

13 LC: Yeah, it's huge now.

14 AS: They have football and all that and fraternities and sororities.

15 LC: They sure do, yes ma'am. Yeah, I used to live in Georgia so I know where—

16 AS: They have doctoral programs.

17 LC: Yes, it's a doctoral-run research university now.

18 AS: Where did you live?

19 LC: I actually lived up in the Atlanta area.

20 AS: Well where else?

21 LC: Yeah, I know. But I taught at a very small private school up there in Atlanta  
22 and we were very aware of where our students, most of whom were from Georgia, were  
23 going to graduate school and a number of them from South Georgia went back to  
24 Valdosta State to graduate school.

25 AS: When I was growing up in South Georgia, I was convinced that when you  
26 died you went to Atlanta. And at that time in my life there was only one Rich's. It was  
27 downtown and it was *the* store. And if you were really good you spent eternity in Rich's.

28 LC: Had you had much opportunity to get up to Atlanta?

29 AS: Well, during the course of my checkered career I've lived there twice. My  
30 brother lives in Buckhead and I was there Monday and I'll go back next Monday. My  
31 dentist has been in Atlanta and I just get there. I like Atlanta. I don't want to live there.

1 LC: Yeah, it's hard to live there.

2 AS: I like eating there and being there so I'm probably there on average of once  
3 or twice a month for some reason. It's only two hours.

4 LC: Yes, that's right. It's straight across I-20 there. Were you able to get up  
5 there much when you were young, say before you graduated from college? Did you go to  
6 Atlanta at all?

7 AS: No. I had an aunt and uncle who lived in Decatur and we got there every  
8 now and then but the only reason I went to Atlanta, pretty much, my brother had a knee  
9 problem and he was going to an orthopedic doctor up there and occasionally Daddy and I  
10 would take him up. Atlanta was not—it was a two-day trip.

11 LC: Sure. Absolutely. Did your folks have a car most of the time?

12 AS: Yeah. It didn't always run. (Laughs)

13 LC: Yeah, I can believe that. I can absolutely believe that. But your dad was well  
14 enough to have a car and use it?

15 AS: Yes. Before he died he was—I don't know whether he might have had  
16 what's Alzheimer's but he had hardening of the arteries and it just affected a lot of us. It  
17 was very sad because Daddy was very smart, very quick, and I think that was one of his  
18 frustrations. He couldn't do what his mind wanted to do. I mean, even as a younger  
19 man.

20 LC: You've mentioned your brother. He's quite a bit younger than you.

21 AS: Nine years.

22 LC: Okay. Did you have to pretty much take care of him along the way or did  
23 your mom handle that and you were free to—

24 AS: Well I thought I did inside.

25 LC: (Laughs) Did he go to college?

26 AS: Yes.

27 LC: Where did he go?

28 AS: Georgia State.

29 LC: Okay. Up in Atlanta?

30 AS: Yes.

31 LC: Okay. And has he lived there always?

1 AS: He left Quitman and moved to Atlanta.

2 LC: And that was the end of that?

3 AS: And that was that.

4 LC: Okay. (Laughs) I can see that. He lives in Buckhead now so he sounds quite  
5 firmly entrenched there.

6 AS: He worked for several years writing for *Atlanta Magazine* and then he got a  
7 job at Channel 5, WAGA in Atlanta and was there for eighteen years and then he worked  
8 for CNN.

9 LC: Is that right? Does he still work there?

10 AS: No. CNN—they had a reorganization.

11 LC: They sure did.

12 AS: Somebody didn't like his boss, fired his boss and then it was obvious. He  
13 knew it was coming because he was very associated with her and it was sort of like a  
14 football coach. Somebody new that comes in wants his people. But he had a good run  
15 there. He was there almost ten years and in fact it happened this last year.

16 LC: Oh, is that right?

17 AS: Did you ever see "Talkback Live?"

18 LC: Yeah. It used to be on in the middle of the day.

19 AS: Yeah, he was the original producer of that. That's the level at which he was  
20 working there. And every time his boss got a—he worked for a woman considerable  
21 younger than he and every time she got a promotion he wound up moving. (Laughs)

22 LC: So was fairly closely linked in the organization to her.

23 AS: Yes. And he has no bitterness about it.

24 LC: And is he then retired basically at this point?

25 AS: Yeah. He does some freelancing and he's enjoying being able to travel and  
26 do what he wants to do.

27 LC: And as you say, Atlanta is a perfectly gorgeous place to be. A little hard, I  
28 think, to live there because of the crowds, but a beautiful place to be, certainly

29 AS: Well, they tried to get him to move to Washington one time and he said no.  
30 All his contacts are in Atlanta. Everybody he knows is in Atlanta.

1 LC: Sure. He's been there so long. Ann, let me ask you a little bit more about  
2 your time as you were leaving college. And this would be in like 1951. What did you  
3 have in mind to do? Did you think that you were going to get a teaching position?

4 AS: I did.

5 LC: Where did you end up getting a job?

6 AS: Atlanta.

7 LC: No kidding. That was your first job? Whereabouts?

8 AS: It was a little school that was a county school and they brought it into the city  
9 system and it was off Bankhead Highway somewhere. It was a grammar school. It had  
10 probably two first, second, third and fourth grades. I'm not sure it had two of fifth and  
11 sixth. It was in a blue-collar area where a lot of the people worked in mills and had lost  
12 their jobs so—I had maybe one child whose father had something that remotely  
13 resembled a white-collar job.

14 LC: But those were some hard times for mill people.

15 AS: Yes they were. And I was twenty and I thought I knew more than the  
16 principal and I let her know it, which was not a smart thing to do. I was not nearly as  
17 smart as I thought I was.

18 LC: But were you still smarter than she was? I mean, looking back, were you  
19 still—

20 AS: Oh yes. Maybe not about her job but basically I thought I was smarter than  
21 she was. After one year they did not invite me back. They didn't fire me mid-year.

22 LC: Right. They just didn't renew your contract, as they say.

23 AS: Yes.

24 LC: Now this was her little kingdom then and she could pretty much control who  
25 worked there?

26 AS: Well, I don't know that—I'm certain her recommendation mattered. So then  
27 I was at sort of loose ends and I worked at Davison's a while. Macy's now, and they had  
28 me working in middle-age women's housedresses and I was not very successful.

29 LC: Now were you not successful because of where they placed you or was retail  
30 just not going to be your thing?

1 AS: Well, I should not at been—I, at twenty-one and skinny, ought not to have  
2 been trying to sell housedresses. (Laughs)

3 LC: Were you on commission?

4 AS: Yes, and I didn't make anything. Then they decided to put me on straight  
5 salary and I worked in the shoe department selling handbags.

6 LC: How did that go?

7 AS: That was much better.

8 LC: That was better?

9 AS: Yeah, because I could see a pair of shoes and go down there and say, "Can I  
10 find you a pocketbook to go with that?" And the head of that department asked me if I  
11 would be interested in going into a retail training program and I said, "No, I want to be in  
12 the Army." I had already—as soon as I got out of college I tried to go in the Army but I  
13 wasn't old enough. You had to be twenty-one.

14 LC: Now, Ann, why were you pursuing that? How did that come up your head as  
15 something that you could do?

16 AS: It started back in high school when I read a book about a woman who was in  
17 the Navy and it fascinated me. It was the first I had seen. And then my senior year in  
18 college the Army sent a recruiter to talk to college students. The Army decided they  
19 were going to keep women then and they needed more officers and they were offering  
20 direct commission to college graduates.

21 LC: So someone came to Valdosta?

22 AS: Somebody came to Valdosta. She was a woman from Georgia anyway and  
23 she was a major. Her name was—why I remember this, I don't know—Marion Rhine, R-  
24 h-i-n-e and she fascinated me because one, she had been a dancer.

25 LC: No kidding?

26 AS: Yes. And two, she had these beautiful long, red fingernails.

27 LC: She sounds like a dreamboat.

28 AS: And what she had to say was interesting to me. So as soon as I graduated I  
29 applied and they said, "You've got to wait until you're twenty-one." So I went off to  
30 work.

1 LC: I see. So you weren't then completely heartbroken when your position  
2 wasn't renewed at the school there in Atlanta?

3 AS: No.

4 LC: Because you had this other plan kind of brewing in the background.

5 AS: And after I left Davison's I was looking for something that I could make  
6 enough money to eat. And I called the phone company. Everybody worked at the phone  
7 company sooner or later and they would have hired me but they wanted me for a training  
8 program and I said, "That's not fair. I don't want to waste your money being trained  
9 when I want to go into the Army." So then I went to everybody else's place, Retail  
10 Credit Company, and worked there until the Army thing got straightened out.

11 LC: And that was—

12 AS: Fifty-three.

13 LC: Okay. And that was pending—by then of course you were twenty-one,  
14 twenty-two.

15 AS: As soon as I got to be twenty-one, this isn't the grammar. As soon as I was  
16 twenty-one I re-applied and filled out all the paperwork and had a physical and didn't  
17 hear anything and went back again and they said the physical was more—they'd lost my  
18 physical. It was more than a hundred and twenty days old so I had to have another one.  
19 It kept delaying and delaying.

20 LC: Right, paperwork problems.

21 AS: I called my mother one time and I said, "I bet if I tried to enlist they would  
22 take me tomorrow." And she said, "Don't you dare. You worked too hard to get through  
23 college not to take advantage of what college offers." And then when I finally got the  
24 papers they had been dated months before. They just hadn't mailed them to me.

25 LC: No kidding.

26 AS: And I called her and I said, "This is Lieutenant Smith if she wants to be."  
27 "What do you mean, 'If she wants to be?'" So I went off to the Army.

28 LC: Your first choice, though, had been the Navy.

29 AS: My first choice had been the Navy and I was living in Atlanta. The Navy  
30 recruiting office was in Macon and you had to pay your own way. And the Air Force and  
31 the Army were in Atlanta and the Navy required a four-year commitment and said, "You

1 may be promoted after two years.” The Air Force required three; the Army required two  
2 and said, “You will be promoted.” I heard those nuances.

3 LC: Yes. And so you went for what looked like the best deal.

4 AS: Yes. And then this mental process said, “If you don’t do it and your life  
5 doesn’t go well, you will always wonder. And if you do it and you don’t like it, it’s only  
6 two years.”

7 LC: And you actually thought that out at the time?

8 AS: Oh yeah.

9 LC: Wow. So many people kind of stumble into things. It sounds like this was  
10 very much a rational decision you had in front of you and you evaluated everything.

11 AS: Well I figured I’d been in college four years. That wasn’t long.

12 LC: Yeah, that went by pretty quickly. (Laughs) Do you remember your first  
13 orders, getting your orders to report?

14 AS: Yeah. I didn’t know a thing they said. (Laughs) They had these strange  
15 abbreviations and E-D-C-S-A and things like that. I couldn’t say them so I didn’t know  
16 what they meant.

17 LC: Did you get the idea, though, that they wanted you to show up somewhere?

18 AS: Yes, Fort Lee.

19 LC: Okay, Fort Lee.

20 AS: And I had never been on an overnight train. I did not know what to wear and  
21 so I got there dressed the way I’d dress to go somewhere in Atlanta and I was quite the  
22 talk. I had on a black plain dress and a hat and I was known as, “the one in the hat.”

23 LC: There weren’t a lot of other incoming women that were dressing as nicely as  
24 you did?

25 AS: Wearing a hat. It was a little pillbox, a black pillbox.

26 LC: Cute. (Laughs) Tell me about arriving at Fort Lee. How did you get from  
27 the train station out to the post?

28 AS: A taxi.

29 LC: Do you remember those first few days, Ann?

30 AS: Oh yes. I definitely remember those first days.

31 LC: Can you tell me about them?

1 AS: Before uniforms, even?

2 LC: Yeah.

3 AS: Well, I remember one day I was out fully breathed by this orderly room when  
4 the commander, who was a major, came out. That woman scared me to death for a while  
5 and I didn't know to get up and salute. I didn't know how to do any of that and there  
6 were—in my particular class we had several people who got direct commissions to be  
7 NCOs (Non-Commissioned Officers) and then we had some like me who were just off  
8 the street. At the same time there was an OCS (Officer Candidate School) class going  
9 through with us and we had to be in two separate barracks and we weren't supposed to  
10 talk to each other because we were officers and they were enlisted people.

11 LC: No kidding. Even though they were in OCS?

12 AS: Yes. And finally it dawned on people that we were going to have to work  
13 together two months from now so they better let us talk to each other.

14 LC: So they kind of broke the barrier a little bit?

15 AS: Yes. And the uniforms were dreadful tan chambray dresses that had to be  
16 starched. The first time I put that thing on—and I've been reminded of this in since  
17 years—I stood in the mirror and looked at myself in the mirror and admired myself and  
18 said, "Look at me. I'm a soldier." Now, based on old World War II movies, I had some  
19 serious misconceptions about being in the Army. I thought everybody had a jeep sitting  
20 outside the door and you just got in it and ran off somewhere. And our commander took  
21 us in one of the first orientations we had. She said, "And you, ladies, can also wash out."  
22 That was the first time that I had heard that I could wash out and it hadn't dawned on me  
23 that I was going to go through twenty weeks of training. I thought I was just going to  
24 walk in and walk out. (Laughs)

25 LC: And be there and be in it without kind of breaking—so you started to get the  
26 sense of the structure that was going to be at the post?

27 AS: Yes. They had a course there called a WAC Company Officers Course and it  
28 was designed for us to go out and learn how to work in a WAC (Women's Army Corps)  
29 detachment. We learned supply and personnel and all had to take a class in teaching and  
30 public speaking and those types of things. The only thing we didn't do that enlisted  
31 people do was KP (Kitchen Police).

1 LC: Is that right?

2 AS: We picked up cigarette butts by flashlight. (Laughs)

3 LC: Did you really?

4 AS: Sure.

5 LC: Did you have weapons training at all?

6 AS: Not then.

7 LC: Later on?

8 AS: Yes. At one time it was voluntary and then when I commanded the training  
9 battalion it was mandatory. Everybody took weapons training.

10 LC: But when you first came in that wasn't immediately on the agenda, the  
11 training agenda?

12 AS: I can't remember whether we had a familiarization or not. Probably not. I  
13 can't be definite about that.

14 LC: Now Ann, while you were in the basic training period, did you have any  
15 outdoor skills being taught to you like orientation, bivouac and all that?

16 AS: No. We studied map reading but it wasn't practical. We learned how to read  
17 a map and all that sort of thing. We had physical training and we marched. We marched  
18 everywhere.

19 LC: I was going to say, how much marching did you do? A lot?

20 AS: Any time we went anywhere as a group we were marching. We could walk  
21 to the PX (Post Exchange) but every week the whole training center marched down the  
22 street in front of the commander. It was called march-out and so we did that. We had  
23 some swimming.

24 LC: Really?

25 AS: Yeah, it was a pool—well of course it was summer. I don't recall there being  
26 an indoor pool there. Most people could swim but there were a few of them who had  
27 some instruction. The rest of us just swam.

28 LC: How big was the class?

29 AS: Twenty-three.

30 LC: No kidding. Did you make friends?

31 AS: Yeah.

1 LC: Do you remember any of those gals—where they were from or did you see  
2 them later on as your career went on?

3 AS: Well, we crossed paths a lot because we stayed in the WAC pond. We had a  
4 reunion here when the museum was here at Fort. McClellan. We had a big reunion and  
5 several of my classmates came back and I got to see them. One time I was in San  
6 Antonio and two of them were there and we had lunch together.

7 LC: Was that part of another reunion?

8 AS: No. I was out at a conference with a friend of mine.

9 LC: No kidding.

10 AS: Yeah.

11 LC: And you saw them?

12 AS: Well, one of them had been at the reunion and I told her I was coming and  
13 then she brought the other one. The other one was one who had not completed training.  
14 She had washed out.

15 LC: Washed out as they say

16 AS: She couldn't march.

17 LC: No kidding.

18 AS: Yeah. She just could not stay in step. (Laughs) She just was, in essence, a  
19 motor moron. She couldn't help it.

20 LC: And was that the basis of her—

21 AS: I think it was.

22 LC: No kidding.

23 AS: Marching was very important. If you were going to train troops, you had to  
24 be able to do the things that you were training the troops to do.

25 LC: Right and she couldn't get a hold of that part.

26 AS: Uh-uh. We tried.

27 LC: You probably had absolutely no problem, though, with all the dance and all  
28 the discipline that you had from that.

29 AS: Marching was my best thing in the Army. (Laughs)

30 LC: For your whole career?

31 AS: For my whole career.

1 LC: I'm certain that we're going to find evidence that there were other things you  
2 were very good at, Ann.

3 AS: Well, it was probably my favorite thing. To get out on the parade grounds  
4 and lead a parade is just great fun.

5 LC: You had a good time with that?

6 AS: Yes.

7 LC: Wow. When you would do the march-out, would different classes all march  
8 together?

9 AS: No. The officers marched in one group and each company of basic trainees  
10 marched together.

11 LC: How many WAC companies of trainees? Any idea?

12 AS: Three companies of basic trainees, I believe, and a leadership company. Who  
13 were people who had been identified during basic training as potential leaders.

14 LC: How were they identified? Do you know or did you know at the time?

15 AS: By their trainers.

16 LC: Okay. So they just recognized something in the individual?

17 AS: Yes. It was somebody who obviously had leadership abilities and who stood  
18 out for various reasons.

19 LC: Did you get picked for any of that, Ann?

20 AS: No, leaders were picked from the enlistees.

21 LC: Oh, I see. I'm sorry. And your experience then with basic was overall a  
22 good one?

23 AS: Yeah. It was good.

24 LC: Did you have fun?

25 AS: Well, yes, in looking back on it.

26 LC: Right. But at the time?

27 AS: I didn't hate it. There were very few days I was unhappy.

28 LC: Okay. So most of the time you thought, "Well, this isn't too bad."

29 AS: The only thing that really bothered me is they gave us a map reading test and  
30 I was one of two people who passed it. And I made a ninety-eight and they made us

1     retake the test and they wouldn't let my ninety-eight stand and I made a lower on the  
2     second one than I did on the first one. (Laughs)

3             LC: That seems hardly fair.

4             AS: That's right.

5             LC: There's something a little wrong there.

6             AS: Who said the Army's fair? (Laughs)

7             LC: That's right, nobody. (Laughs) Well, did you learn a lesson from that, Ann,  
8     or did you just kind of think, "Well, that's a little bump in the road?"

9             AS: It was a bump in the road. I couldn't change it.

10            LC: No. How did you come out of basic? Were you, did you think, prepared for  
11     an assignment? Were you anxious to get on with it?

12            AS: Yes, I was, and I stayed at Fort Lee so you were in a very nurturing  
13     environment because I was second lieutenant in a world of second lieutenants and  
14     everybody there, almost all of them, had been through what we had been through. And  
15     all the time we were there we were seeing them around. Of course we were the pariahs  
16     of the bunch. (Laughs)

17            LC: Now why do you say that?

18            AS: Well, because we were students. When I moved into my first assignment  
19     which was training basic trainees, the people I had been seeing all the time were there as  
20     the other officers and they helped us.

21            LC: So it was, would you say, almost collegial in the sense that people were  
22     helping each other rather than adversarial?

23            AS: Yes. And the three companies of basic trainees were not particularly  
24     competitive with each other. We were all friends who knew each other.

25            LC: And your first assignment then was to join sort of the staff, if you will, of the  
26     training faculty?

27            AS: Well, each company had a company commander and several platoons. Each  
28     platoon had a platoon officer. That's what I was. So I was responsible—I taught them a  
29     lot, went to drill with them, inspected them—they were mine.

30            LC: And how many classes did you have in that post, do you remember?

1 AS: Well, we probably had about twenty-five or thirty in a platoon. I don't  
2 remember. But I taught them all their military courtesy and was always involved with  
3 drills. The enlisted people were the drill instructors at the time but they weren't drill  
4 sergeants as we know them today. We were always with those trainees. If somebody  
5 else was teaching them, I was sitting in the back of the room.

6 LC: No kidding.

7 AS: Yes, I was the constant presence. (Laughs) Not I, all of us were.

8 LC: Sure. How many others had this kind of assignment that you worked with on  
9 a daily basis? Was it a group of four or five who would handle everything?

10 AS: Yeah. Three, four, or five. I don't remember.

11 LC: And was this something you like doing? It sounds like you fit right into that.

12 AS: Yes, I liked it. I did it for a year and during that time we moved from Fort  
13 Lee to Fort McClellan and things just expanded at Fort McClellan. Many, many more  
14 people. By that time we had more troops coming in and it was a big thing. We got a new  
15 training center and they recruited a great number of people. So it was a big change.

16 LC: Now that change happened—am I right in thinking '54?

17 AS: Yes, '54.

18 LC: Okay. And what was driving that change in expansion? Was it because of  
19 the Korean involvement?

20 AS: No, Korea was over by then. I think all along the Army had looked at, "Can  
21 we use more women?" And I don't remember—when you're a second lieutenant you  
22 don't know a lot about what's going on. You see the end result and we just had a flood  
23 of trainees coming in.

24 LC: When you made that move from Virginia down to Alabama, did things  
25 change for you in terms of the assignment or were you still doing the same kind of work?

26 AS: I was doing the same kind of work in a different environment, a much, much  
27 different—we had open bay barracks, old World War II barracks at Fort Lee. We came  
28 down and had new barracks that had partitions in them and we had new buildings a big  
29 mess hall. So there were definite changes.

30 LC: And all to the good, it sounds.

31 AS: Yeah. Well, we didn't think so at the time.

1 LC: Why was that?

2 AS: Well, because we couldn't stand those partitions in the barracks because we  
3 couldn't go in and look and see everything at one time and we thought it would be  
4 spoiling the trainees. (Laughs)

5 LC: Did it turn out that it softened them up too much or did it turn out to be okay?

6 AS: No, it was fine.

7 LC: Was that the only thing that was problematical for you in making that  
8 transition down to Fort. McClellan?

9 AS: The worst thing that happened was that I was moved from my original  
10 company to another company and that was not a happy time for me.

11 LC: Why was that?

12 AS: Well, I didn't care for the commander. She had been the commander of the  
13 leader's company and now she was commanding a basic training company and it was  
14 somewhat beneath her, I think.

15 LC: Did she act as if it was beneath her?

16 AS: I don't know. I thought she did. You know, memories.

17 LC: Yeah, sometimes you just get the impression.

18 AS: And when I was first assigned—I had lived in the BOQ (Bachelor Officers'  
19 Quarters) with her before and in the BOQ almost everybody was first name. She was  
20 captain, I was still a second lieutenant I think, and she called me in and she said, "I hope  
21 you won't take advantage of having known me as Mary Ann." And I wanted to throw  
22 up. I knew I was supposed to call her ma'am, I knew she was a captain.

23 LC: But she was just kind of laying the wood to you a little bit there?

24 AS: I didn't appreciate her assumption that I would.

25 LC: Right, and her correcting you in advance.

26 AS: Yes. Total pre-emptive strike.

27 LC: Exactly. I mean, after all, you had been teaching military courtesy. You  
28 knew the regs. (Laughs) Well, other than that little rough patch with her, did you settle  
29 into the new company all right?

30 AS: Oh yes. I settled into the new company and a great day happened when she  
31 was replaced by my best friend.

1 LC: Oh, how did that happen? Who was your best friend?  
2 AS: Her name's Lorraine Rossi and she was my best friend in the company.  
3 Sometimes best friends are situational. She is still a very good friend.  
4 LC: Now, how do you spell her last name?  
5 AS: R-o-s-s-i.  
6 LC: And you had obviously already known her?  
7 AS: We had been in the first company together. She was there when I got there  
8 and she stayed in the company. I was gone away to Atlanta for the weekend and when I  
9 came home somebody I knew said, "If you could pick your own company commander,  
10 who would it be?" I said, "Sissy." And she said, "That's who it is." And I could not  
11 have been more delighted.  
12 LC: And you thought, "Yes!" (Laughs)  
13 AS: "Yes!" And the thing is that all of us knew her and knew her well, all of us  
14 in the company, and she did not have one minute's problem. Some of the people—one of  
15 the other officers in the company was one of her truly best friends. They had gone to  
16 high school together and we were all so happy to have her.  
17 LC: Now was she also given an advance in rank?  
18 AS: No, she was a first lieutenant.  
19 LC: Okay.  
20 AS: She already was one.  
21 LC: And at what point were you looking toward first lieutenant?  
22 AS: Eighteen months after I went in the Army was the time limit.  
23 LC: You would have been coming up on that.  
24 AS: Yeah.  
25 LC: And were you also giving thought to your two-year commitment and whether  
26 you would stay in?  
27 AS: Oh, by that time I had already asked to be regular Army.  
28 LC: You wanted to get off of this contract thing.  
29 AS: And they had a system by which you had a year of probation before they  
30 would let you be regular Army so as soon as I could, I applied for it. I was happy in the  
31 Army.

1 LC: And you couldn't think of anything that would suit you any better outside the  
2 Army?

3 AS: No. And in retrospect, I know it was the best thing for me. It gave me  
4 opportunities that no little girl from South Georgia would expect—for promotion, for  
5 education, for travel, for doing work.

6 LC: It fit you.

7 AS: Yes. And people who knew me said—well, at first people said, “What’s your  
8 mother say about your joining the Army?” I said, “She knows how she raised me.” She  
9 was very happy with my being in the Army.

10 LC: Was she really?

11 AS: Oh yes.

12 LC: Was she proud of you?

13 AS: Oh yes, very much.

14 LC: I'll bet she was.

15 AS: She died just a few weeks before I found out I was being promoted to major.  
16 People said, “Well, she didn't doubt it. She wouldn't question it.” But one of the things  
17 I've found in the Army that suits me is you know your limits. It's as if you're in a box  
18 and you can ramble around in that box all you want to and when you run up against the  
19 edge, you know it. And if you go outside that box you know what's going to happen to  
20 you. So there is a discipline I like but there is also freedom.

21 LC: But those defined parameters sort of help structure the way.

22 AS: Oh yes.

23 LC: Ann, let's take a break.

**Interview with Ann Smith**  
**Session 2 of 4**  
**June 29, 2004**

1           Laura Calkins: This is Dr. Laura Calkins with the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech  
2 University, continuing the oral history interview with Col. Ann B. Smith of the US Army.  
3 Today's date is the twenty-ninth of June 2004. I am in the interview room of the Special  
4 Collections building on the campus of Texas Tech in Lubbock and I am speaking with  
5 Colonel Smith by telephone. She is in Alabama. Good morning.

6           Ann Smith: Good morning.

7           LC: I just want to resume with the place that we left off last session, which  
8 involves your posting as a recruiting officer in Virginia, in I think, 1954. Can you tell me  
9 how that came about?

10          AS: Well, at that time there were separate WAC recruiting offices and they had  
11 one of us at every one of the recruiting stations across the United States. And it was just  
12 a part of the assignment. Everybody did it.

13          LC: Really?

14          AS: I can't think of anybody I knew who didn't have an assignment on recruiting.  
15 And so from Fort McClellan, Alabama I went to Roanoke, Virginia. It's a beautiful area.

16          LC: Yes it is.

17          AS: But not the best recruiting area for young women, particularly at that time.

18          LC: Now, why do you say that, Ann?

19          AS: Well, the Army was not a job of choice for a lot of people then, especially for  
20 young women in a fairly conservative area. We were given a quota of women to recruit.  
21 I don't think I ever made the quota and it wasn't big but we were supposed to try to  
22 recruit that many.

23          LC: Now, how would you actually go about this? Would you rely on people,  
24 women, actually walking in to the office?

25          AS: Well, the majority of the contacts were made with the male recruiters. Back  
26 up a minute. There was one officer and one woman NCO assigned to every one—at  
27 least—assigned to every one of the major recruiting stations and so the major contacts  
28 were by the male recruiters who were out in the various regions. We covered the whole

1 western part of Virginia so it was set up into districts of sections with a male recruiter.  
2 They were the ones who went into the high schools and contacted the people and then  
3 frequently they would call and ask me to go somewhere and talk to a high school group.  
4 It was sort of interesting because at that time we were into the taupe uniforms. The  
5 young women were usually interested in what I wore underneath.

6 LC: No kidding.

7 AS: So I had a bright red slip with lace on the bottom and I would hike my skirt a  
8 little bit and show them what I wore underneath. (Laughs)

9 LC: Now, this was part of your unique recruiting approach?

10 AS: Yes, that was part of it—my attention getter. (Laughs)

11 LC: (Laughs) Now how effective was this put together with the other things?

12 AS: It didn't make any recruits but I got their interest. (Laughs)

13 LC: So you never made your quota, Ann?

14 AS: Never. And I remember one time I was up really in the mountains of West  
15 Virginia in the coal mining area and I was talking to a young high school graduate that  
16 one of the recruiters had found and I asked, "If you don't go in the Army, what will you  
17 do?" She said, "Oh, I'll probably teach school." So that says something at that time  
18 about the society. Plus, another was at that time the Army had higher enlistment  
19 standards for women than for men on the various placement tests and they had to be  
20 older. They couldn't have any type of police records and it was hard for a lot of the  
21 young men and the young women to make the minimum score. And I frustrated the male  
22 sergeants because I wouldn't give points. They would say, "Well, she doesn't need but  
23 two points." I said, "If she can't make the minimum, I just can't do it." So that  
24 discouraged them. (Laughs)

25 LC: Right. You weren't fluffing up the numbers.

26 AS: No. If the minimum cut-off score was thirty-one and if it was twenty-nine or  
27 thirty, I just wouldn't fudge it.

28 LC: Now, tell me a little bit about this differential in the standards for men and  
29 women. What did that arise from? What was the thinking behind it?

30 AS: Well, one, they needed more men than women.

31 LC: So the floodgates were opened a little bit wider for the guys.

1 AS: Yes. I can't remember what the scores were but I know there was a decent  
2 differential between the men and the women. I remember the women was thirty-one. So  
3 that did make a difference and it depends on the education level of the people where you  
4 were. Also the job market, even then, but the Army was not the most attractive thing to  
5 young women then.

6 LC: Right, in terms of socially and in terms of—

7 AS: Well, it was such a foreign notion to them, I think. The publicity was not  
8 what it is today, the gimmicks were not as good, there weren't as many good things to  
9 come like education and some of the enlistment commitments that they have now. It's a  
10 different world.

11 LC: Were there also some discrepancy between rural areas and the more urban  
12 areas in terms of educational standards, that students broadly, both men and women were  
13 expected to meet, such that that had some impact, too, on success in meeting that thirty-  
14 one minimum standard?

15 AS: Yes. Well, it's just quality. That's not to say that rural schools are always  
16 bad.

17 LC: True, very true.

18 AS: Because some of them are better than the city schools, at least today.

19 LC: Yes, absolutely that's certainly the case and it always has been. I think there  
20 are always exceptions to understood or observed results.

21 AS: Yes.

22 LC: Ann, did you have success with particular groups? Those women that you  
23 were successful in recruiting—did you have, for example, more whites than blacks or  
24 more older women in their early twenties?

25 AS: That escapes me.

26 LC: Okay. Did you have any success?

27 AS: Very little. (Laughs)

28 LC: Okay. (Laughs) Now, this posting did not lead to another recruiting  
29 assignment for you?

30 AS: Definitely not.

31 LC: Okay, okay. (Laughs)

1 AS: And usually we didn't get but one.

2 LC: Is that right?

3 AS: Yes, because there was always a new bunch coming in to do it.

4 LC: And everybody in the Corps pretty much had to do this at least once?

5 AS: Well, in my era. I don't know—if you go back to the early days I doubt that  
6 that was so, and certainly it ceased later on. But it was pretty much just part of the career  
7 path. You train trainees and you went on recruiting and then you did something else.

8 LC: Okay. And was the Corps, at this point, after you're having the recruiting  
9 assignment, beginning then to shape what area you had specialized in, since you had done  
10 the things that pretty much each junior officer had to do?

11 AS: Well, there were a lot of other steps that we had to take like serving in a  
12 WAC detachment. For a lot of us that was the next step.

13 LC: And that in fact is what happened with you, is that right?

14 AS: Yes.

15 LC: Okay. Tell me about that.

16 AS: Well, when I left recruiting I was sent to Fort Sheridan, Illinois to be the  
17 executive officer in a WAC detachment at Fort Sheridan. When the commander left, I  
18 became the commander. And that was a path, too. You served time as exec as sort of on-  
19 the-job training and then normally somewhere you were assigned as a WAC detachment  
20 commander.

21 LC: And you filled both of those roles, both XO (Executive Officer) and  
22 commander at Fort Sheridan?

23 AS: Yeah, and I was WAC detachment commander a couple of other places, too.

24 LC: And those would be which places, Ann?

25 AS: I left Sheridan and went to Fort Riley, Kansas for a short time and then went  
26 to Bremerhaven, Germany.

27 LC: Okay. Let's talk first of all about Fort Sheridan. What was the personnel  
28 compliment of the WAC detachment? How big was it and what responsibilities did you  
29 have directly with them?

30 AS: I would guess—I don't remember, but probably between sixty and eighty.

31 LC: Okay.

1 AS: As the exec, I did everything the commander didn't want to do, that's one  
2 thing. And we had people who worked in different areas of the post. We had a post  
3 hospital and there were enlisted women who worked there. We had a processing, I can't  
4 remember the name of it, but a great number of women worked there. We had an air  
5 defense command on post so they were scattered all around. And my next-door neighbor  
6 was the male headquarters company and I ran their mess hall. Now why they set it up  
7 that way, I don't know, but all the troops ate in that mess hall. All the cooks belonged to  
8 the male company commander but they worked for me. And at that time, women could  
9 not command men. They could only command women.

10 LC: Right. And so—

11 AS: I'm remembering things I thought I'd forgotten.

12 LC: (Laughs) But this exercise is explaining it to someone who may not have any  
13 reference points. It's quite good because it lays things out in a very clean way. You had  
14 then women who were in the detachment who were serving all across the base.

15 AS: Yes.

16 LC: And in lots of different capacities.

17 AS: I was responsible for their discipline and upkeep. I housed them and fed  
18 them and I had some disciplinary authority over them.

19 LC: Now what kinds of disciplinary issues might come up?

20 AS: Oh, I'm trying to think of a good example.

21 LC: For example, were there hours that had to be observed and curfews?

22 AS: Well, they had to sign in and out, for example, and really, women were very  
23 little problem. Every now and then you might have somebody who might go AWOL  
24 (Absent Without Leave). The biggest problem probably at that time was pregnancy.  
25 That wasn't a discipline problem, I don't mean that, but it was an administrative problem  
26 because married or single, if you were pregnant you could not stay in the Army.

27 LC: Right. So you had to process those women out?

28 AS: Yeah. First we had to realize they were pregnant, then we had to get them to  
29 admit it. Then, if they were single, we worked very hard to find a place for them to go.

30 LC: Now by, "a place for them to go," what do you mean?

1 AS: Like a shelter, like a home for unwed mothers so they could have the baby.  
2 And there was a lot of that sort of thing that went on that we were supposed to take care  
3 of.

4 LC: And did you, or when you were the detachment commander, your XO, have  
5 to have sort of networks in the communities around the post such that you knew where  
6 they would be say a Crittenden home or something like that?

7 AS: The Red Cross was a big help in that.

8 LC: Okay.

9 AS: We were, at that time, very close to Chicago so there were assets there. You  
10 made the initial contact and directed the people there. That was probably the biggest  
11 problem we had to deal with.

12 LC: Now, obviously the women who were in the Corps would know that if they  
13 became pregnant, that would be the end of their military career. And I don't know  
14 whether you might know this or not, Ann, but were women seeking some other way to  
15 resolve the issue of their pregnancy before being "found out?" In other words, were they  
16 having abortions and things?

17 AS: Not that I know of.

18 LC: Okay. It probably was very difficult to sort of work with these women who  
19 were in a position that was very difficult in terms of continuing their career.

20 AS: It was. And several of them married and then got out but some of them just  
21 had no other recourse.

22 LC: Now were there any gals who had other disciplinary issues? You mentioned  
23 one or two times maybe finding women who were absent without leave.

24 AS: Well, not only did I house the women who were assigned to Fort McClellan,  
25 but if anybody got picked up in the Chicago area and was pending some type of  
26 disciplinary action or anything like that, I got them for them to sleep and stay in my place  
27 in my detachment. So I had one who would just go in to Waukegan and get drunk. The  
28 police would call me (laughs) and the MPs (Military Police) on post and the police in  
29 Waukegan learned the first thing I would say when they woke me up at night is, "What  
30 time is it?" So they would usually start off, "Lieutenant Smith, it's two o'clock."

1 (Laughs) Whatever. So several times I went in to Waukegan to get people out of jail  
2 because they would release them to me.

3 LC: I see.

4 AS: But they never were the women assigned to me, they were the ones who were  
5 already in trouble and were pending some type of either administrative discharge—they  
6 were just different but it was interesting.

7 LC: Yes, because you became sort of the troubleshooter then for other  
8 commanders whose people these actually were.

9 AS: These people could have been from Fort Hood, Texas, for all I knew. They  
10 just wound up in the Chicago area and we were the holding area.

11 LC: Now if you would get a woman out of jail under these kinds of  
12 circumstances, how would you pass her—how would she pass out of your authority or  
13 control?

14 AS: When she was discharged.

15 LC: So you would hold onto her until then?

16 AS: Yeah.

17 LC: Okay.

18 AS: But usually it was in the process to begin with.

19 LC: It was already in trained.

20 AS: Yes, because that's the only reason I had her, was she was there to be put out  
21 of the Army.

22 LC: That sounds a little fraught with you getting up at two o'clock in the morning  
23 and driving in. Did you go alone on these missions?

24 AS: Sometimes I went alone. One time I took one of the male sergeants with me  
25 because—and when we got to the jail, I decided I never wanted to be in jail, looking at  
26 the conditions and I was about to get her out and take her back with me. And she told the  
27 sergeant he could go to hell so I told her could stay in jail and get herself out.

28 LC: Bad move.

29 AS: Uh-huh. (Laughs)

30 LC: That was a bad move. (Laughs) Any idea whatever happened with her?

31 AS: She got out.

1 LC: Eventually. (Laughs)

2 AS: I think she got bail some way. She got sober, too. I don't make light of this,  
3 really.

4 LC: I know. I'm sure that each one of these was trying in some way. And Ann, I  
5 wonder if there were also circumstances where you had any lesbian activity inside either  
6 the detachment or up in Chicago that you had to handle that situation, too?

7 AS: Yes, but really, it was at that time, that was in the days of the witch hunts and  
8 the witch hunts were just terrible because anybody who got mad at somebody could make  
9 an accusation, like any witch hunt. I found that the best thing to do, and the woman who  
10 was the commander when I was exec gave me some good advice. She said, "Get to know  
11 the people in the CID (Criminal Investigation Division) because they can help because  
12 they have contacts and can say that this probably is going on." But it wasn't rampant the  
13 way people would think.

14 LC: And the CID people would be handling investigations that might be ongoing?

15 AS: Yes. And sometimes they were handling ones that we didn't even know  
16 about and I would say, "Do you know anything about this?" And they would say, "Yes,"  
17 and then you knew it.

18 LC: So the advice that you had was to sort of work as a team with the CID  
19 people?

20 AS: Yes. It could make life a lot easier if they knew you and knew you would  
21 cooperate and weren't fighting them all the way. One night a young woman woke up one  
22 morning and found herself in a car and she didn't know how she'd gotten there and she  
23 didn't know what had happened to her. And she had been out and she was really worried  
24 about it. She came in and talked to me about it and I went to see the people at the CID  
25 and I said, "Can you find out what happened?" And they came back and said, "Nothing  
26 happened. Tell her she's okay." So that sort of symbiotic relationship helped.

27 LC: Yeah. And was that something that you tried to cultivate in your other  
28 postings, too.

29 AS: Yeah. If I were commander of a WAC detachment, I did.

30 LC: Now, Ann, tell me about the hunts. You said that the witch hunts were  
31 terrible and that rumors could fly all around and would be one way that someone who

1 was disgruntled maybe might go after or cause trouble for someone else. Do you  
2 remember any kinds of incidents where that sort of thing happened?

3 AS: It was particularly bad at the training center where all the women were.  
4 There was always suspicion and you had to be exceedingly careful about your behavior.  
5 I know of times that it happened but I can't come up with specifics.

6 LC: And that suspicion that was around and just kind of in the air, that must have  
7 created difficulties for commanders, for officers, junior officers to sort out.

8 AS: It made it difficult for anybody because it was just a bad time. And I imagine  
9 anybody of my era would say that it was a bad time.

10 LC: Yes, I think that's probably right. When you had orders to go to Germany,  
11 do you remember that? Can you tell me about getting those orders?

12 AS: Well, I had left Fort Sheridan and gone to Fort Riley. A commander there  
13 had been relieved and I was ready for transfer anyway so they sent me there to just hold  
14 on until the new WAC detachment commander could come in. And I don't remember  
15 how long I was there, maybe five or six months. So that was just a holding pattern and it  
16 was a different place entirely because it was combat arms post and there were a lot more  
17 troops. It was fine bunch of women and so when I got orders to go—well, I remember  
18 that they called and told me. It was always a they who called you and we had what was  
19 called Career Management Branch and so they made all the assignments and it was done  
20 in cooperation with the WAC director's office.

21 LC: So this was just within the Women's Army Corps?

22 AS: Just within the Women's Army Corps. So she called and said, "We want you  
23 to go to Okinawa to command a WAC detachment there." And it was, "Please don't  
24 throw me in the briar patch," time. I did not want to go to Okinawa.

25 LC: Why was that, Ann?

26 AS: Well, it was a hard assignment. The reputation was that it was a hard  
27 assignment and so instead I went to Bremerhaven, Germany. And it proved that  
28 sometimes you can control your fate a little bit.

29 LC: Had you informally or formally voiced your reluctance about the Okinawa  
30 idea?

1 AS: Yes, I told them I didn't want to go. "Please send me somewhere else." I  
2 don't remember my words exactly.

3 LC: What had you heard, do you remember, that turned you off of that?

4 AS: That it was a difficult detachment to command.

5 LC: That the detachment had problems?

6 AS: Yes. And I can't remember what they were. I just knew I did not want to go.

7 LC: Okay. Did you know anything about Bremerhaven?

8 AS: No.

9 LC: Well that was good. So when that came up you thought, "Well, clean sheet."

10 AS: And when I got there, one of the best things about it was that the first  
11 sergeant of the detachment was a woman I had worked with at Fort McClellan.

12 LC: Who was that?

13 AS: Her name was Eva Marashki. She was a German citizen and had come to the  
14 United States after World War II. She met a WAC officer who sponsored her to come to  
15 the United States.

16 LC: She sounds like an interesting gal.

17 AS: Oh, she was fascinating. She was a platoon sergeant, training basic trainees  
18 with me and she would get up in the morning and go out to drill and say, "All right  
19 vemen. This is Monday and on Mondays vee all start on our left foot." (Laughs) And  
20 she was wonderful to have in Germany because she spoke the language, knew the way  
21 around, but she was on orders when I got there. She tried to extend and they wouldn't  
22 extend her because they had her posted to somewhere in the United States. So she left.

23 LC: How long had she been in Germany? Any idea?

24 AS: Oh, she had been there probably two years on that tour. She was a good first  
25 sergeant and I enjoyed having her there.

26 LC: Do you remember much about her background in Germany, perhaps during  
27 the war or earlier?

28 AS: She talked about it.

29 LC: Did she?

30 AS: She said that she was in Hitler youth because that was the way you got to  
31 participate in sports activities. I think then later on she said she was in the entertainment

1 business. She was a dog trainer and they did shows and when they shut down  
2 entertainment she was jobless and she worked in a munitions plant, as I recall. One of  
3 the things they did was clean shell cases so they could be re-used. She said it was the  
4 German equivalent of Russian prisoners of war there. The prisoners of war had to do by  
5 hand what the Germans were doing by machine. And she said that when they could they  
6 would take the prisoners' shells and clean them for them.

7 LC: No kidding.

8 AS: Yeah.

9 LC: That's really interesting.

10 AS: Hearing her, she apparently was in a dangerous part of Germany during the  
11 war but I think she had no animosity towards the Americans.

12 LC: I'm sure if she was in a munitions factory that would have been a target for  
13 bombing for certain.

14 AS: At one time—she bought a pineapple. We went to the commissary and she  
15 bought a whole pineapple. I was getting to ragging her about it and she said, "I can have  
16 it. I want it and I can have it." She said, "When I was growing up in Germany, we were  
17 lucky if we got one orange at Christmastime."

18 LC: She sounds like a fascinating person. Was she someone that you kept up with  
19 over the years?

20 AS: I have seen her once or twice at reunions and I have no idea if she is still with  
21 us. She was living in Florida.

22 LC: She sure sounds like quite a gal.

23 AS: She was older than I by some years so I don't know.

24 LC: Well, I'm glad you mentioned her. First of all, let me ask you about  
25 Bremerhaven. Where did you actually live?

26 AS: I lived in the BOQ. The WAC detachment was in the staging area, which  
27 was out in the port area where the ships came in and then we lived over in a series of  
28 BOQs on the dry side. (Laughs)

29 LC: Okay. Now to clarify, you were the detachment commander?

30 AS: Yes.

1 LC: Okay. And what kinds of jobs and work did the women in the detachment  
2 do?

3 AS: Generally staff type jobs in the headquarters of the port.

4 LC: And how many under your command did you have?

5 AS: I can't remember. We also, though—the Navy had a group of WAVES  
6 (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service) there and they lived in the WAC  
7 detachment.

8 LC: How many WAVES? A handful or quite a few?

9 AS: Yeah, a handful. And there was a naval officer, a woman officer who was  
10 sort of their Mother Superior.

11 LC: Sure. (Laughs) So was she kind of the analog to your position?

12 AS: Yes. But she did not have command but we worked together.

13 LC: What rank did she hold? Do you remember?

14 AS: I think she was a full lieutenant.

15 LC: And what was your rank at this point?

16 AS: First lieutenant.

17 LC: Okay.

18 AS: I was promoted to captain while I was there.

19 LC: Okay. So you're moving up the food chain pretty well. Despite that little  
20 problem with the quota back in Roanoke, apparently you'd been doing well since then.

21 AS: Well I was first lieutenant when I got there, a fairly new first lieutenant.

22 LC: And what year did you actually get there, do you remember, Ann?

23 AS: Bremerhaven? Fifty-eight.

24 LC: Fifty-eight? And stayed until '60?

25 AS: Sixty.

26 LC: Okay. And in general, were two-year assignments the rule?

27 AS: Yes. Except for the WAC center. They were usually about a year at the  
28 WAC center. Some people stayed longer.

29 LC: Did you enjoy being in Germany?

30 AS: Very much. And I enjoyed being in the northern part because—this is going  
31 to sound strange—there were not a lot of Americans there. The Americans were down in

1 the southern part of Germany and we were in the British zone. So there were fewer  
2 Americans and I think we saw—well, that’s not true. We didn’t see more of the real  
3 Germany but it was a different environment. And we were close to Holland and close to  
4 Denmark.

5 LC: Did you go up to Denmark, say, for example?

6 AS: I was in Denmark twice. But at the time the Army wanted everybody to use  
7 their leave time and I was one of these who wanted to hold on to my leave time.

8 LC: I can believe that.

9 AS: And we could not cross a national border without a leave paper or a passport.  
10 We didn’t have passports. The military didn’t have them. So you could get a pass to go  
11 up for a day so a lot of my trips were day trips.

12 LC: Okay. Because you weren’t spending your leave time.

13 AS: In addition, there were no other Army women officers there so when I left,  
14 somebody had to be in command at the WAC detachment any time I was on leave.

15 LC: Did you have an XO?

16 AS: No, I didn’t have an XO.

17 LC: Oh, wow.

18 AS: The commander of the band always commanded the WAC detachment while  
19 I was gone and I would be put in command of the band when he was gone.

20 LC: Okay, so you had a male commander who would step in for you when you  
21 were away?

22 AS: Yeah. He would just be given the job during my absence.

23 LC: Right. If anything came up, he would be the one they would go to.

24 AS: And we had all services there so that was interesting.

25 LC: Sure, absolutely.

26 AS: On Armed Forces Day we would have a parade with the Americans and the  
27 Germans and the British, an Armed Forces Day parade and that was always interesting.

28 LC: Did the German military at that point have a women’s corps of some kind?

29 AS: No.

1 LC: That's what I thought. Can you describe, in general, the relationship between  
2 your personnel and the German civilians? Did anything come up there that was  
3 problematical or that you remember as being particularly a good relationship?

4 AS: There were some particularly fine German civilians who worked for the  
5 Army, I thought, and the relationships were generally quite good, I believe. I remember  
6 one time we had a bus that they went to work on—the women. To get from the staging  
7 area into the headquarters there was a bus for them and I heard one—and I'm not sure but  
8 I think the Germans were allowed to ride the bus and I heard one of the women refer to  
9 them as Krauts one day and I got my back up over that and told her that was not an  
10 appropriate way to talk about them. But the relationships were generally good.

11 LC: Did you see, either in your detachment or more broadly amongst the  
12 American service personnel over there, resentment towards the Germans?

13 AS: No.

14 LC: Not really, huh?

15 AS: Uh-uh.

16 LC: That's interesting. Any signs while you were there—this was about thirteen  
17 years after the conclusion of the war—did you see signs of the destruction of the war still  
18 in evidence?

19 AS: Not a lot. The Germans were always working to repair things and it dawned  
20 on me that really it was such a short time after the war that I was there. But no, there was  
21 not—I went to Berlin and there were some things that were left standing in Berlin the  
22 way they were.

23 LC: Yes and still are there.

24 AS: Yeah. But I wasn't conscious of it in the northern part.

25 LC: What took you to Berlin? Were you just wanting to see it?

26 AS: Yeah.

27 LC: Did you have business down there?

28 AS: I just went for an overnight trip.

29 LC: And what impression did you have of Berlin? Did you go to downtown, the  
30 Brandenburg area?

31 AS: Yeah, and took a tour of East Berlin.

1 LC: Now, the wall had not been put up yet.

2 AS: Oh heavens, no. The difference was night and day in East and West as far as  
3 the life and the people you saw. When I was there, Germans were constantly out  
4 walking. It was—speaking German—taking walks and nobody was on the street in East  
5 Berlin. It just looked like sham town. It looked like a movie set with facades and  
6 nothing behind. West Berlin was just alive with people.

7 LC: And a lot of military personnel there out on the streets as well—American?

8 AS: You couldn't see them. We went in street clothes. When we crossed over  
9 into the zone, they took my ID card and I felt almost naked without my ID card.

10 (Laughs)

11 LC: Because you're in civilian clothes and no military ID or anything?

12 AS: Yeah. And they gave it back, but still.

13 LC: Are there other things that you recall about your time in Germany that you'd  
14 like to include here? Was it a good assignment?

15 AS: Oh yes, it was a good assignment. I had Air Force friends who were in  
16 England and I would go to visit them periodically and he was a pilot, an aviator, and  
17 periodically—he had to fly so many hours to maintain his status so every now and then  
18 he'd fly over and get me and I would pay the landing fee. It cost you fifty dollars to land  
19 a plane in the German airport or something like that and he'd come and take me and I'd  
20 go over to England and see them for a while. I went to Scotland, which I enjoyed very  
21 much. Edinburgh is one of the places I want to go again.

22 LC: Yes, it's a beautiful city.

23 AS: I traveled in Spain, which Bob, my friend, had to take a plane back to the  
24 United States so his wife said, "Get a leave." And I said, "Where am I going?" And she  
25 said, "Well, put everything on your leave papers—you know, Spain and Italy." She and  
26 their son and I took off in the car and we flipped a coin to see whether we were going to  
27 Spain or Italy and we went to Spain. Unfortunately I hadn't put Portugal on my leave so  
28 I couldn't get to Portugal.

29 LC: Where did you go in Spain?

30 AS: We went down the Costa Brava and then back over to Madrid.

31 LC: It sounds wonderful. It sounds like a great time.

1 AS: Not if nobody speaks Spanish. (Laughs)  
2 LC: How long were you there?  
3 AS: Oh, probably a week.  
4 LC: Oh, okay. But were you being a tourist most of that time?  
5 AS: Oh yes. Went to lie in the sun.  
6 LC: Right, bake out the chill a little bit, as they say.  
7 AS: She had been in England for two years and still had moss, I think.  
8 LC: Oh, I can well believe it, having lived over there. I can well believe it.  
9 (Laughs)  
10 AS: I enjoyed going to England. I never got to London because they were  
11 stationed at Burtonwood in Lancaster.  
12 LC: So they were up north?  
13 AS: Yes.  
14 LC: Where it's, as you say, very cold.  
15 AS: But I really had never seen bird pulling worms out of the ground and I sat one  
16 time in an officer's club and looked out the window and the birds were just after the  
17 worms. It's too dry—even when it rains here, birds don't get worms. (Laughs)  
18 LC: That's right.  
19 AS: And everything was so green.  
20 LC: Yes, it is. It's remarkable. It's a beautiful country. So you really took  
21 advantage of being in Europe.  
22 AS: To the extent that I could.  
23 LC: Sure. Was it slightly difficult for you to get orders back to the States after  
24 that?  
25 AS: No.  
26 LC: No?  
27 AS: An aside from my being in Europe, early one morning I was changing the  
28 train in Paris and had time to go walk around and I was standing there, just looking all  
29 around me, saying, "Ann Smith from Quitman, Georgia, on the (speaks French)." The  
30 last place I had expected to be growing up was in Paris. That's one of the wonderful  
31 things about the Army, the opportunities it gave me to do things like that. I was thinking

1 at the time, if I had taught school I would have spent twenty years to go to Europe for two  
2 weeks, making enough money, and there I was for two years, compliments of the Army.

3 LC: And you were appreciating it at the time.

4 AS: Oh yes.

5 LC: Not just in retrospect, but while you were actually there you were thinking,  
6 “Wow.”

7 AS: “Here I am. Me.”

8 LC: Yeah, little small-town Ann.

9 AS: And I had recounted that story to my brother and I said he did the same thing  
10 the first time he went to Paris, many years later.

11 LC: Absolutely. I know that feeling. You can’t hardly—you need to pinch  
12 yourself or something in order to believe it. Ann, you were assigned back to Fort  
13 Eustace.

14 AS: Yes.

15 LC: How did that come about and was this a good posting for you?

16 AS: When I was told I was going to Fort Eustace, I was not happy at all.

17 LC: Why was that?

18 AS: Because I had been to Fort Eustace one time and seen it and I did not think it  
19 was a nice place to be.

20 LC: Based on—?

21 AS: Because it just wasn’t—it wasn’t an elegant post like Fort Benning or  
22 something like that. It was just over there and the WAC staff advisor—every command  
23 had a WAC staff advisor. The WAC staff advisor said to me when I was complaining,  
24 she said, “Which is more important, the place or the assignment?” Because it was going  
25 to be my first staff assignment. And she got my attention and I said, “The assignment is  
26 far more important.” So I went to Fort Eustace as a personnel staff officer and had a  
27 wonderful time. Enjoyed the post. It’s very close to Williamsburg and at that time  
28 Williamsburg was still a tourist attraction but not the way it is now. That’s where we  
29 went to shop. Williamsburg was just a special place but not the way it would be now.  
30 And I had a good job, I worked with really good people, they gave me an opportunity to

1 learn, it was my first experience with working with civilians and I learned to respect them  
2 very much. So it was a very rewarding assignment.

3 LC: Now when you say that it was your first staff assignment, for someone that  
4 didn't understand the importance of that, can you just outline that?

5 AS: Let me think. It is—that gets you into, for lack of anything better, a career  
6 path. “Let me start learning to work in personnel and be an administrative officer.”  
7 There comes a point where we had to get out of that WAC track of doing nothing but  
8 WAC duty and a good staff assignment was just an open door to bigger and better jobs  
9 and it was a wonderful background.

10 LC: Now you were, if I understand correct me and please correct me, you were  
11 working on the staff of the post with male officers.

12 AS: Yes, I was working on the staff of the G1, the personnel officer of the post.  
13 The boss was a colonel; there was a lieutenant colonel, Betsy Duke, and a captain and a  
14 bunch of civilians. And we worked in the same headquarters with the commanding  
15 general and it turned out to my advantage that I turned out to be the writer for the G1 and  
16 I wrote a lot of stuff, correspondence with the general's signature, and so I got good  
17 experience that way.

18 LC: Now how did the men treat you, Ann?

19 AS: Quite well.

20 LC: Any stuff around the edge that made you feel less than?

21 AS: No.

22 LC: Okay. So quite collegial, then?

23 AS: Yes.

24 LC: I mean within the command structure, obviously.

25 AS: I think that any discrimination that I ever felt was institutional discrimination.  
26 It was not personal.

27 LC: Okay. Can you explain that a little bit?

28 AS: Well, there was a limit on how many women could be regular Army. That  
29 was one thing. But in law, the law prescribe that there could be one woman colonel in  
30 the Army and she was the director of WAC and if she ceased to be director of WAC and

1 reverted, she reverted back to being lieutenant colonel. That stopped promotion  
2 tremendously.

3 LC: Oh sure, right.

4 AS: So, getting to be a captain was a pretty good career at that time. Majors were  
5 rare and lieutenant colonels were just very rare. So during President Johnson's term the  
6 legislation was changed. The restriction was taken off. It didn't say, "There will be  
7 women generals," it said, "There may be women generals." So on one day, six women  
8 were promoted to colonel, which opened it for everybody. So that discrimination was  
9 against all of us and it was in the system. One time when I was—single people weren't  
10 allowed to go to the commissary. Only families could go to the commissary. That's  
11 another type of discrimination. But the pay was always the same.

12 LC: The pay was not based on—

13 AS: Pay was based on your rank and grade and that was it. A captain is a captain.

14 LC: Okay, so pay across—for male—

15 AS: Of course except for the allowances for families. There was discrimination  
16 there. For example, a male officer could have a wife who was a millionaire and still draw  
17 her dependency allowance. A woman couldn't. Her husband could be completely  
18 dependent on her and she couldn't claim him and a dependent. So those types of things  
19 were what I consider institutional. But I never felt belittled because I was a woman. I  
20 used to raise Cain when anybody would call me a girl. "I'm not a girl." (Laughs)

21 LC: "Already been through that. Now I'm done with that."

22 AS: Yes. Basically I was an old girl.

23 LC: (Laughs) So if that came up you would kind of hand that back to whoever  
24 gave it to you?

25 AS: Yes. But I was truly fortunate in that first staff job because they let me learn  
26 and they helped me to learn.

27 LC: And would you say that there was some mentoring going on as well?

28 AS: Oh yes, there was.

29 LC: And were you liking the idea of staying with personnel?

30 AS: Yes.

31 LC: Why was that?

1 AS: It was more administrative, I think. I could have been—I was a personnel  
2 staff officer as opposed to a personnel operating officer and that distinction is probably  
3 too close but it made a difference to me.

4 LC: Because you felt like you were more at decision-making level rather than  
5 implementation or something like that?

6 AS: I guess.

7 LC: You mentioned in the material that you provided Ann, that your time at Fort  
8 Eustace coincided with the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

9 AS: Yes.

10 LC: Did that have any effect on the work that was happening at that base?

11 AS: Oh yes. Fort Eustace is a transportation command and in addition to all the  
12 trucks and airplanes we had a boat company and they ran tugs. We had people there who  
13 were qualified ocean-going tug captains so before the Cuban Missile Crisis started they  
14 had all taken off and gone somewhere out in the Atlantic for a training exercise and they  
15 just stayed there. They didn't come home for a long time. (Laughs) I was leaving—  
16 someone was bringing a foot locker into the BOQ and the people living next door, her  
17 husband was off on the exercise and when she saw that foot locker walking in, she  
18 thought that they had made a mistake and they were supposed to be bringing it to her  
19 house to back up his things to send away. But it was an interesting time.

20 LC: Was it a frightening time as you remember it?

21 AS: It was a tense time, I think, more than frightening. We had to make a report  
22 to the chief of transportation in Washington every night and I wound up being the one  
23 who knew more about the figures than anybody so I made the report every night. It was  
24 the first time, the only time I've ever worked on a shift and worked the four to midnight  
25 shift and I liked it because I was usually up around midnight anyway so I'd just go home  
26 and go to bed and then get up and have the whole day to do things.

27 LC: Right and then go to work at four.

28 AS: And then go to work at four.

29 LC: Can you, if you remember, describe that report, what it was that you had to  
30 provide each evening during this time period?

1 AS: We had to keep up with—it was very complicated as to what category troops  
2 were in as far as readiness was concerned and we had to keep up with the strength in each  
3 group. I could not come up with a good explanation but it was whether they were  
4 immediately deployable, what their training status was, and it was an everyday thing to  
5 report.

6 LC: And that persisted for the length of the crisis?

7 AS: I can't remember how long it was.

8 LC: Okay. Did you pay much attention to, say, the president's televised  
9 statements and the newspaper and everything that was going on that was in the public  
10 record? Were you aware and paying attention to that, reading the newspaper and so on?

11 AS: I don't recall taking the newspaper then (laughs) but I remember keeping up.

12 LC: Was there other unusual activity on the base that you remember?

13 AS: Not now. One of the things in my personal life was we had a very active  
14 little theater group there.

15 LC: Oh really?

16 AS: Yes. And we had a lot of well-educated young men who had been drafted.  
17 The director had a drama degree from Yale or someplace and they were just fine young  
18 people. So I got to be in several plays. But that was true in Bremerhaven, too. It was a  
19 very active little theater.

20 LC: Now this was sort of an unofficial activity, I'm sure.

21 AS: Yes.

22 LC: How did enlisted people and other officers who might have been interested in  
23 this kind of find each other? Was it just kind of on the grapevine?

24 AS: Well, it was a part of special services. One of the interesting things to me  
25 was I was one of the few officers who did that and most of the other people were young  
26 enlisted men and there was no problem of dealing with his being the boss at night and my  
27 being an officer in the daytime. If they saw me in the rehearsal, I was Ann. Outside I was  
28 captain.

29 LC: Right. So rank never got kind of boiled up.

30 AS: No. It wasn't in the way but it was always there.

1 LC: Do you remember some of the productions you might have put on? Were  
2 they things that were written on the base?

3 AS: Oh, no.

4 LC: They were actual plays? Like, would you do Tennessee Williams or  
5 something?

6 AS: We didn't do Tennessee Williams but we did do *The Crucible*.

7 LC: No kidding.

8 AS: Yeah.

9 LC: That's interesting.

10 AS: That was in Germany. One of the interesting things about that was the dress  
11 rehearsal, we invited the German Navy and they came. They were fascinated with the  
12 plot.

13 LC: I'll bet. Arthur Miller would love to hear this story; I'm sure. (Laughs)

14 AS: I got to play the part of Elizabeth Proctor and it was the only time I played  
15 someone who wasn't just another version of Ann Smith. That was very rewarding, being  
16 in that. We did *Once Upon A Mattress* and *Matchmaker* and just—stuff.

17 LC: It sounds like a great thing to be doing outside of work.

18 AS: It was. And it was quite popular.

19 LC: Oh I'm sure it was.

20 AS: On the post because it was someplace to go and it was free.

21 LC: And it was entertainment. And in general, people do like live entertainment  
22 and people they knew, too. That's the other thing. Now were you able to continue with  
23 that kind of work as your career went on?

24 AS: No.

25 LC: So Fort Eustace was the last time really that you were able to do that?

26 AS: Yeah, it's the last time I did it.

27 LC: Upon the end of this particular tour you were assigned back to Fort  
28 McClellan, is that right?

29 AS: Yeah. It was interesting—you asked if I were mentored in that job. When  
30 my boss, the colonel, found out that I would be going to McClellan to go to the advanced  
31 course, he said, "Well, you're going to have to write a staff study when you get there."

1 And he assigned me the job of writing a staff study. Now that type of mentoring—and it  
2 was a practical problem but he wanted me to see how a staff study works and what you  
3 have to do.

4 LC: So you would know. You would have some—

5 AS: So I would have had some experience. You appreciate things like that.

6 LC: Yes, absolutely, a heads up, as it were. What did you actually work on as  
7 your subject?

8 AS: I don't remember. What he told me to.

9 LC: Whatever he told you to, okay. Now, the school at Fort McClellan lasted for  
10 approximately how long?

11 AS: Six months.

12 LC: And what was the content? What were you supposed to be getting out of it?

13 AS: Well, it was the WAC officer advanced course and it was to train us more in  
14 staff type assignments.

15 LC: Was it a lot of classroom work, then?

16 AS: Oh yes, all classroom work.

17 LC: And who were the instructors? Were they both men and women?

18 AS: Occasionally we would have an instructor come over from the chemical  
19 school to teach something but generally it was all women.

20 LC: And these would be women of what sort of rank?

21 AS: Majors.

22 LC: Majors and above?

23 AS: Well, occasionally lieutenant colonel but most of them were majors.

24 LC: Were any of them—go ahead, Ann.

25 AS: Captains, too.

26 LC: Okay. I wondered if any of the instructors that you had there stand out in  
27 your mind.

28 AS: Well, yeah. One of the ones who was one of the best Army instructors I ever  
29 had was a woman named Ruth King. She was a major and she taught us nuclear weapons  
30 employment and she was an outstanding instructor. Most of them were very good. There

1 were one or two who weren't as effective as others but it was a fairly difficult course and  
2 we were all captains and majors in the course.

3 LC: Is there anything you can recall about the content of that particular course?  
4 Was it an unclassified presentation?

5 AS: Yes, it was unclassified but in order to teach it you had to have gone through  
6 the classified training. It was interesting because you were trying to forget everything  
7 you had learned.

8 LC: Okay, right. Did you get some physics in with this as well as some Army  
9 protocol?

10 AS: Only to understand maybe what an atom is and the difference between fission  
11 and fusion and what the effects are of that and the effects of the weapons. There were  
12 problems in figuring how the weapon would affect an area based on theoretical  
13 weapons—a half-kiloton or something like that did not have the characteristics of the real  
14 half-kiloton.

15 LC: So you were seeing some of those theoretical problems as well?

16 AS: Yes, you were seeing how much the area of blast would be and how far it  
17 would reach and those types of things.

18 LC: And did you also study the actual drops that had been made in Japan at the  
19 end of the war?

20 AS: Not specifically.

21 LC: Did you see films?

22 AS: We saw some films of course.

23 LC: What was it about Major King that made her particularly special?

24 AS: She was enthusiastic. She knew the subject, she could teach, she could  
25 explain the concepts well.

26 LC: Did you have occasion to work with her as your career went along or was this  
27 your only interface with her?

28 AS: The only time I ever was with her was when she taught me.

29 LC: And overall, Ann, was this a useful way to spend some time for you as a  
30 captain?

31 AS: The whole course?

1 LC: Yes.

2 AS: Yes. The people in the class—there were probably thirty of us in the class—  
3 and they were people that I would know for the rest of the Army.

4 LC: People that you would come across?

5 AS: Yes, and whom I would work with or who would in some way influence my  
6 career. One of my classmates later became the head of the career management branch.

7 LC: Now who was that, Ann? What was her name?

8 AS: Maida Lambath.

9 LC: M-e-h?

10 AS: M-a-i-d-a.

11 LC: Okay. And she became head of career management?

12 AS: Uh-huh.

13 LC: Was she someone who you worked for later on?

14 AS: No, I never worked for her.

15 LC: You said that there were about thirty in the class.

16 AS: I think about thirty.

17 LC: Now, you gals lived on post, I'm sure.

18 AS: Yes.

19 LC: Did you socialize outside of class?

20 AS: With each other?

21 LC: Yes.

22 AS: Oh sure.

23 LC: Yeah, so you were sort of more or less kind of becoming acquainted in  
24 addition to—

25 AS: Well, we lived next—my suitemate was a major and she had a bedroom and a  
26 living room and my bedroom connected to her living room so eventually became my  
27 living room, too. (Laughs) When we started, it wasn't. I was a captain and she was a  
28 major and it was her living room. (Laughs)

29 LC: But as time went on—

30 AS: And we were up and down the halls together and that was good, too, because  
31 also there were young lieutenants living in the building and they got to see some of the

1 more senior officers and realized that we were having to work hard to get through that  
2 course. It was not easy.

3 LC: It wasn't escape.

4 AS: No.

5 LC: Did you have work that you had to do in the evenings to prepare and so  
6 forth?

7 AS: Oh yes.

8 LC: And were there tests?

9 AS: Oh yes, were there tests.

10 LC: Okay. So this wasn't just a "sit back and let it soak in."

11 AS: It was not a ladies course.

12 LC: Okay, you had to engage.

13 AS: Yes.

14 LC: And was there any competition set up there?

15 AS: Yes. Well, there was going to be someone who was the top student in the  
16 class and it was based on test grades, scores, and other intangible things.

17 LC: Did you sort of get engaged and wrapped up in the competition or were you  
18 pretty much angling to do the best you could and however it came out is how it came out?  
19 Or neither of those?

20 AS: Well, like most people I would have like to have been first but it was a matter  
21 of doing it the best you could do. I think we had four major tests during the course and  
22 then we had to be studying something that was reasonably geopolitical and we had to  
23 make a major report on some area of the world and then we had to write a staff study and  
24 we had to speak and teach. All of those things worked into the overall class standing.

25 LC: So this was a multi-faceted program that kept you running, I would say.

26 AS: Yes.

27 LC: Did you graduate? Was there any kind of ceremony?

28 AS: Oh heavens, you can't graduate without a ceremony.

29 LC: I wondered. (Laughs) Do you remember that? What was it like?

30 AS: Well, we always graduated in the chapel because that was where we had the  
31 best seats and it was more appropriate and the band played and we had a speaker and we

1 were granted our certificate and the top student was honored and friends and families all  
2 came. So it was marked as an important part.

3 LC: Now did family members of yours attend, Ann?

4 AS: My mother and my brother came.

5 LC: Is that right?

6 AS: Yeah.

7 LC: How was your mother doing at this point?

8 AS: Oh, she was fine.

9 LC: Was she terribly proud of you at this point?

10 AS: Always.

11 LC: I would think, yeah. And because it was in Alabama, this was not such an  
12 extended trip for her.

13 AS: No, it wasn't bad. From South Georgia it was not really a bad trip.

14 LC: And she was in good health until her accident in 1964?

15 AS: Yes.

16 LC: Okay. I'm sure that this was an extremely—she was probably very, very  
17 proud of you, I imagine. Ann, from the school, what happened in terms of your next  
18 posting?

19 AS: I stayed as an instructor.

20 LC: And was that kind of a plum position?

21 AS: I asked for it.

22 LC: Did you?

23 AS: Uh-huh. I liked to teach and I thought it would be a good assignment and  
24 two of my good friends from the class stayed so there were three of us. So that was—I  
25 wanted to do it. The next thing we do, as soon as we were assigned we were sent to Fort  
26 Benning to go to instructor training. You can't teach in the Army until they send you to  
27 instructor training somewhere. I've been through it three times. (Laughs)

28 LC: And this would have been the second time, am I right?

29 AS: Yes, I went through it in a sense. The first time I was at McClellan and then  
30 this time and then in a later time when I was instructing again.

31 LC: And how long were you down at Fort Benning?

1 AS: I was down—I can't remember. The instructor training course is probably a  
2 couple of weeks and then I stayed to go to nuclear weapons deployment course, the  
3 classified portion of it, because that's what I was going to teach.

4 LC: You were going to teach the nuclear weapons deployment?

5 AS: Yes.

6 LC: So you, like Major King, had to take the classified—

7 AS: Yes.

8 LC: Can you tell me anything about that course or how it went and what the  
9 distinctions were?

10 AS: Well, you were in a locked building all the time. You couldn't study when  
11 you went home because you couldn't take anything with you and it was all done in that  
12 building. There were two of us women and the rest men. All the instructors were men,  
13 of course, and the other woman was one of my classmates from the WAC advanced  
14 course.

15 LC: Now who was that?

16 AS: Her name was Betty Fraser, F-r-a-s-e-r.

17 LC: Was she a captain as well?

18 AS: She was a major. She was the one with whom I shared the living room.

19 (Laughs)

20 LC: Oh, I see. So the two of your gals went and took it. Okay, I see.

21 AS: The other one went through the instructors training and came back and we  
22 did share a little motel suite while we were there.

23 LC: Now you said you took the courses in a locked building and couldn't take  
24 anything off site.

25 AS: Yes.

26 LC: What kinds of things were they teaching you about, the types of weapons that  
27 were in the arsenal and that sort of thing?

28 AS: The types of weapons in the arsenal but mostly the effects of them; how do  
29 you determine what the effects may be; how you aim them; how you figure their  
30 accuracy and that sort of stuff.

31 LC: So was there a lot of math in there?

1 AS: Not a lot of math. It was a lot of logic, I think. You had to learn the various  
2 terms like error in range and error of deflection and circular error probable and how those  
3 three worked with each other and I'm talking with my hands. (Laughs)

4 LC: Okay, you're illustrating. (Laughs)

5 AS: The thing I am most proud of is that I finished second in the class.

6 LC: That's not too bad. How big was the class?

7 AS: I don't know. There were probably twenty of us.

8 LC: So you cottoned on to this?

9 AS: Oh yeah, I liked it. I thought it was fun. The man who came out and taught  
10 was, I think, a field artilleryman who had every right to be tough.

11 LC: Absolutely. He'd been through some of this stuff before only probably  
12 without conventional weapons anyway. Ann, upon returning to Fort McClellan then, you  
13 began as an instructor. Was there a set course that would start at a particular time that  
14 you then became part of the delivery of the curriculum?

15 AS: We had two basic officers/OCS (Officer Candidate School) classes a year and  
16 one advanced officer class. So we taught both of them.

17 LC: And, for example, how many lectures would you be given? How long would  
18 you have in each class, that their attention was devoted to what you were teaching?

19 AS: Well the curriculum is set up—the program and the instruction/curriculum  
20 was set up so they had a given number of hours of military customs and courtesy or a  
21 given number of hours of methods of instructions or whatever. So you were assigned a  
22 course to teach and so you taught all of it but certainly you were assigned more than one  
23 course at the same time. So you would be teaching one thing to the basic officers and  
24 another thing to the advanced officers.

25 LC: And you would be delivering these simultaneously or in time?

26 AS: Well, it's not exactly simultaneously. (Laughs)

27 LC: But over the course, say from January to June, you might be teaching in both  
28 of the schools. You would be delivering different content in both of the schools.

29 AS: And the classes were sometimes three hours long, three-hour blocks. That  
30 was particularly true in nuclear weapons because there's a lot of practical stuff and so  
31 you would go in and do the whole course for three hours.

1 LC: That's a lot of teaching time.

2 AS: I happened to like to teach early in the morning because you get it over with.  
3 That was fine because a lot people didn't want to. So often I was able to do most of my  
4 teaching in the morning. One of the difficulties was when you had a class of lieutenants;  
5 every one of them had to teach a class that you had to prepare that person for. You taught  
6 them how to do it then you watched them dry run it and tell them what they could do  
7 better and then you went and graded them at the actual instruction. That was time  
8 consuming.

9 LC: Absolutely, yes, because there's both the hours spent watching delivery and  
10 then there's the advising element of it, too. Did you like doing this, Ann?

11 AS: Yeah. I didn't like that a lot, that particular aspect of it. As far as teaching is  
12 concerned, I liked it and I liked to teach adults.

13 LC: And did you have it in mind that you might try to extend this particular  
14 assignment that you had?

15 AS: No.

16 LC: No? You wanted something—

17 AS: Yeah.

18 LC: Ready for a change?

19 AS: You do that then it's time for something else.

20 LC: Okay. And your next assignment was with G3, is that right?

21 AS: Yes, at Third Army Headquarters at Fort McPherson, Georgia.

22 LC: Now am I right in thinking that Fort McPherson is south of Atlanta  
23 somewhere?

24 AS: Yes.

25 LC: Okay. That's also the headquarters of the Third Army?

26 AS: Yes.

27 LC: Okay. What were you supposed to be doing with G3 there?

28 AS: Well, I was a plans and training officer and at the time we were having a  
29 huge buildup for Vietnam and that got to be a major part of my concern. Where are we  
30 going to put them; how are we going to get clothes on them; how are we going to train  
31 them? We had troops living in tents because there was just not enough barrack space

1 because they were expanding the Army so much then. We had post commanders buying  
2 some more troops because the more troops you have, the bigger your mission and the  
3 more money you can get. It was, in a way, a difficult time.

4 LC: You arrived there at what point? Do you remember the date?

5 AS: No.

6 LC: Nineteen sixty-five, sometime.

7 AS: Probably the summer of '65.

8 LC: Okay, so the big deployments of ground forces had already begun.

9 AS: Yes.

10 LC: It was a difficult time because there was so much going on?

11 AS: That's one thing and then another thing was—I just remembered—there was  
12 a project going on called Project 100,000. Anyway, they were experimenting with  
13 bringing in many more lesser-qualified soldiers and training them and that was difficult  
14 because you were having to develop programs for people who weren't as capable of  
15 learning. I think it was a social experiment. "Let's see if the Army can instill ambition in  
16 people who may not have had it before and give them skills they didn't have before."  
17 And on top of everything else, I think it was a difficult time for a social experiment but  
18 probably a good idea.

19 LC: Now when you say, less qualified soldiers, how do you mean?

20 AS: Academically.

21 LC: Okay. So not high school graduates?

22 AS: Maybe not high school graduates and maybe with lower test scores.

23 LC: Were these people ones who had been in effect rejected by earlier drafts?

24 AS: I don't know.

25 LC: Okay. But your sort of end of this project was to try to develop—

26 AS: Our end was watching this and reporting on it and keeping up with how it  
27 was going on.

28 LC: And so how would you do that, establish some kind of markers?

29 AS: Recording systems and there were all sorts of experimental things that were  
30 going on. In the early stages of the Halo program they were jumping out of airplanes.  
31 You would jump out high and open low. It was interesting, too, because there were a lot

1 of coordination with the G1, the personnel people, and most of the people in G3 don't  
2 have—because they're plans and operations—don't have a lot of brief for the personnel  
3 people. So I was the go-between because I could talk to both of them.

4 LC: And you'd had experience in G1.

5 AS: Yeah, I could talk personnel. (Laughs)

6 LC: And so did you find yourself trying to explain the apples to the oranges and  
7 vice versa?

8 AS: Well, sometimes just trying to make them understand each other's problems  
9 or concerns.

10 LC: Now where did you live while you were working at Fort McPherson? Did  
11 you have a BOQ there as well?

12 AS: No, no. I had an apartment.

13 LC: Okay, so you were off base?

14 AS: Yes.

15 LC: How did you locate the apartment? Was it somewhere that a lot of officers  
16 had stayed?

17 AS: No, I think I probably got an apartment finder, a brochure or something. I  
18 don't remember.

19 LC: Where was it? Do you recall? How far from the base?

20 AS: It was about two miles from the post.

21 LC: Did you enjoy living back in the more or less Atlanta area? I know it's a  
22 ways south but was it nice to be back there?

23 AS: Oh yes. Very nice. My brother was living there at the time as he always is.

24 LC: As he always is, right.

25 AS: In fact, the day my household goods were delivered, he went to the apartment  
26 and accepted them for me because I was still in Alabama. I enjoyed being there.

27 LC: Ann, thinking back to that time when you were living off base, can you  
28 describe what race relations were like in this time period in south of Atlanta and in that  
29 area?

30 AS: Well, where I lived was strictly a white area and apartment. I was sort of a  
31 strange thing to most of the people in the apartment because they saw me coming and

1 going in uniform and most of them hadn't seen that a lot. The race relations when I was  
2 at McClellan the last time in the advanced course, that was when things were bad because  
3 all of the bad things were happening in Birmingham and we had a bus burning in  
4 Aniston. I recall that we were specifically told not to go off post.

5 LC: This was while you were in the school?

6 AS: This was while I was in the school. I have seen, over my years of being in  
7 this area, I have seen such changes. I have to go way back. When I was a lieutenant, if  
8 we had an enlisted women who perhaps needed to go into Aniston to get shoes because  
9 the Army couldn't fit her, I would not take one of the African American troops to town.  
10 We would get an African American NCO to take the person to town because we didn't  
11 want to stir up confrontations. And how things have changed in these fifty years. People  
12 who think there is no change are wrong. There's been a lot of change. When I was  
13 living in Atlanta, I was not conscious of it then.

14 LC: Did it come up again later? Did you see much later when you were in  
15 Washington?

16 AS: No. Oh, I was in Washington when Martin Luther King was killed.

17 LC: Yes, do you remember that?

18 AS: Oh, do I really remember that.

19 LC: Tell me everything you can recall about that. Where were you?

20 AS: I was in the Pentagon. The week before—I think—I had driven through the  
21 grounds of the National Cathedral and Martin Luther King was speaking. It was being  
22 broadcast and you could hear it outside. So very shortly after that he was killed and I  
23 went out to the river entrance to the Pentagon and looked over towards the district and  
24 one of the saddest things I have ever seen was black smoke rising over the Capitol. That  
25 was so sad. The next day I went over to Fort Meyer to pick up some laundry and the lady  
26 who worked there was an African American woman and I knew she lived in the district  
27 and I asked her, I said, "How was it yesterday?" And she told me about having to walk  
28 home because she couldn't get any public transportation and the difficulty of it. I was  
29 there during the march on the Pentagon. The things that were going on during my  
30 various tours in Washington were just historic.

31 LC: Absolutely, yes, and that's something that we'll include as we go forward.

1 AS: One day in my second tour in Washington I was going to work one morning.  
2 I worked in the building with the energy department in the district and there were some  
3 protestors standing out there giving out anti-nuclear stuff and blocking my getting to  
4 work and making me use the wrong steps—you know, those sort of annoying things. I  
5 refused to take his little brochure and he said, “Well don’t I have a right to express my  
6 opinion?” And I said, “Yes, and I have a right not to take it.”

7 LC: Did he have a comeback or was he kind of surprised?

8 AS: No. (Laughs)

9 LC: I thought not. That would be when you were working—that would be in the  
10 late seventies?

11 AS: Yes. The Pope came then and I was working across the street from the  
12 Smithsonian so I got to see his throne and then we had a big march of Christians going on  
13 and then we had the tractors. It was an exciting time to be in Washington.

14 LC: Absolutely. I mean there really isn’t a time that’s dull to be in Washington  
15 but the things that you recount are extremely interesting. When Dr. King spoke at the  
16 National Cathedral did you hear him, Ann?

17 AS: No, I could only hear him outside because I had some friends visiting and I  
18 was showing them the Cathedral and we just rode past.

19 LC: And it happened to be going on as you came by. What did you make of Dr.  
20 King? Did you have an opinion about what he was doing?

21 AS: Yes. I think I might not have agreed with him all the time but he was going  
22 about something that needed to be done in a better way than most people.

23 LC: Now by that are you talking about his—

24 AS: The non-violence, even though there was violence. I was there on one of my  
25 tours when Resurrection City was in meeting, when he was there. That was the “I Have a  
26 Dream” speech, I guess—around that period. So there had to be someone, I think, to do  
27 the sorts of things and it had to be someone with charisma and that could get things done.  
28 I read the full speech “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” And it was fairly recently. I was  
29 so impressed with how he put it together from his head while he was in jail.

30 LC: Have you been to the King Center there in Atlanta?

31 AS: No.

1 LC: It's worth going to.

2 AS: Well, I haven't been to the Carter Center either. (Laughs)

3 LC: Well, there you go. That's a good one, too. (Laughs)

4 AS: There's a lot I haven't seen in Atlanta.

5 LC: Well, I recommend both of those when next you're in Atlanta with time on  
6 your hands and nothing to do.

7 AS: That's the problem.

8 LC: I know it is. (Laugh) Let's talk a little bit more about Fort McPherson. Your  
9 work there lasted for the regular two year period?

10 AS: I wasn't there the full two years.

11 LC: Why was that?

12 AS: Because the director of the Women's Army Corps retired and Elizabeth  
13 Hoisington became the director and she asked me to go to Washington and work for her.

14 LC: How did she know you?

15 AS: She had known me at Fort McClellan.

16 LC: Under what circumstances, at the school?

17 AS: She came in as the WAC center commander when I was there teaching.

18 LC: Okay. So she had seen you in action, as it were.

19 AS: Well, she had seen me around.

20 LC: What kind of relationship did you have with her, just a kind of nodding  
21 acquaintance?

22 AS: No, it was closer than that. She knew me well enough to know my name and  
23 I knew her well enough to call her colonel.

24 LC: Ann, effectively, she pulled you up to be on her staff, is that right?

25 AS: Yes.

26 LC: Okay. What position did you take in Washington with her?

27 AS: It was called plans and operations officer, I think. There was the director, the  
28 deputy director, the executive officer, and the junior officer. I was it—and sergeant  
29 major. That was the office.

30 LC: So she had a staff of what? Five or six?

31 AS: No, she had a staff of four.

1 LC: Four. Okay. That's incredible. That's amazing. For someone in her  
2 position that's just amazing. How did you get along her?

3 AS: I enjoyed her. I did not—I was not as efficient and as good as she would  
4 have liked me to have been.

5 LC: What does that mean, Ann?

6 AS: That means—it's hard to describe it. She, as a young officer had had the  
7 same job that I now had and I could not live up to what she had done or her expectations.  
8 Not that I could not, I did not.

9 LC: What was she looking for that you didn't do, as you think back now? What  
10 do you think?

11 AS: Probably more ambition and more efficiency.

12 LC: What was a day like for you?

13 AS: Well, first you had to get to the Pentagon. (Laughs)

14 LC: Right, which wasn't always easy, is that right?

15 AS: Well, frequently I took the bus. It was easier than driving. And we started  
16 each day with a staff meeting and then the day was full of—one of the things I was  
17 responsible for was uniform programs, as in garments and uniform programs and there  
18 are always meetings about something, about changing the uniform and doing something  
19 and the other Army women's services were involved, like the Army Nurse Corps and the  
20 Army Medical Specialist Corps. If somebody wanted to do something to the uniform,  
21 like get a new sweater, we would have meetings to discuss that. At the time, women  
22 were going to Vietnam and we were having a hard time getting enough uniforms for  
23 them. More and more women were coming in the Army and it was just an effort to get  
24 uniforms. We were tracking them by ones and twos. "Where are the overcoats that we  
25 can issue to the troops?" And the women going to Vietnam had an increased allowance  
26 of uniforms because of the weather conditions. So I was involved with that a good bit.  
27 We also, at the time, had a fitting unit that traveled the country. An officer, her name was  
28 Bailey, who later became Director of the Women's Army Corps, she had a group of  
29 young enlisted women and they traveled the country doing fashion shows. It was a  
30 recruiting thing so periodically they would come back into the Washington area and have

1 to get re-outfitted with uniforms and that sort of thing. So I'd get involved in that. I  
2 enjoyed my life in the Pentagon.

3 LC: Where were you living, Ann?

4 AS: I was living in Arlington.

5 LC: In an apartment?

6 AS: Yes.

7 LC: Whereabouts in Arlington, just for those who might know the city?

8 AS: Off of Columbia Pike.

9 LC: Okay. And you had not lived in Washington before.

10 AS: No.

11 LC: Was this quite exciting to be in the capitol area at the Pentagon each day?

12 AS: It was. Looking back on it, Washington changed so much between the two  
13 times I was there. I enjoyed it more the first time because it was easier to get around.  
14 You could go to Georgetown and find a place to park and wander or you could go to  
15 Alexandria Old Town and it was just not nearly as congested as it is now.

16 LC: Yeah. When you said, "Go to Georgetown and find somewhere to park," I  
17 just thought, "Oh, no." And did you have a car during this time period?

18 AS: Yes.

19 LC: Okay. So you were able to get around on the weekends and evenings by  
20 yourself.

21 AS: My first chore was finding how to get into the parking lot at the Pentagon.

22 LC: How did they restrict that then? Did they have it controlled?

23 AS: No—just finding it. My parking place was in the south parking lot and the  
24 only way I could to the south parking lot was to go through the north parking lot and I  
25 knew there had to be a better way. And one Sunday I just went out and rode around until  
26 I could find it.

27 LC: Did you locate the way in?

28 AS: Yes. And frequently I did drive a good bit and during that assignment there  
29 was a woman attacked in one of the stairwells at the Pentagon. And after that they had a  
30 shuttle that would pick up women at the doors at night and in the afternoon and take them

1 to their cars. It was a soldier with a shotgun rider and they would wait until you got in  
2 your car and pulled out.

3 LC: Did they, to your knowledge, solve the crime of the assault?

4 AS: I don't know.

5 LC: But it changed things?

6 AS: Yes, it changed things and it made them conscious of security. The big  
7 mystery was remembering where your car was.

8 LC: Right, I'm sure. It's a massive, massive parking lot.

9 AS: And then when it was so hot and you had on your greens and having to walk  
10 out to the car and find it and get in the hot car was miserable.

11 LC: Yes. What kind of building security was there at the Pentagon? Did you  
12 have to wear a badge or something to get in?

13 AS: Not then.

14 LC: You just walked in and out?

15 AS: Walked in and out.

16 LC: Nobody at the door? No metal detectors?

17 AS: The busses came in under the Pentagon; you got out and walked up.

18 LC: Wow, that's extraordinary too, to think of that. Ann, if you don't mind, let's  
19 take a break here.

20 AS: All right.

**Interview with Ann Smith**  
**Session 3 of 4**  
**March 31, 2005**

1 LC: This is Dr. Laura Calkins at the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University,  
2 continuing the oral history interview with Col. Ann Smith. Today's date is the thirty-first  
3 of March, 2005. I am on the campus of Texas Tech in Lubbock, Texas, and I'm speaking  
4 to Ann by telephone. She is at her home in Alabama. Ann, you and I have been speaking  
5 but I want to say again, good morning and thank you for resuming our interview. Let's  
6 start, if you don't mind, by exploring how it was that you were assigned to the US Army  
7 Command and Staff—Command and General Staff College in 1968.

8 AS: I was working for the director of the Women's Army Corps and was selected.  
9 It was, for lack of a better word, competitive because there was only a limited number of  
10 women who were selected to go into the class and I was one of the ones who was  
11 fortunate enough to be selected to attend the nine month course at Leavenworth. At one  
12 time they only let women go to the short course, which was six months, and was mostly  
13 for the Reserve components but a couple of years, I think, before I went they opened the  
14 long course, as they call it, to women and I was one of four or five selected to go that  
15 year.

16 LC: Did you sort of make friends with the other women who were in your year?

17 AS: I'd known them all.

18 LC: You had already known them all?

19 AS: Oh yeah. Small world.

20 LC: Can you recall for us their names? It would be interesting to have that kind  
21 of class composite.

22 AS: Oh, Joanalys Bizelle. J-o-a-n-a-l-y-s B-i-z-e-l-l-e. Colleen Brooks. I'm  
23 drawing a blank on the other one.

24 LC: That's all right, you did great. (Laughs) And did they have specializations  
25 within the women's Army Corps or did they have specializations that were different from  
26 yours?

27 AS: In general, no, because early on we all did the same thing. We trained  
28 trainees, we went and recruited, we eventually got a staff type assignment and all of us

1 had staff assignments because that was part of the name of the college—Command and  
2 General Staff.

3 LC: Well, Ann, can you tell me a little bit about the curriculum? What was the  
4 intention behind the courses that we taught and what exactly you studied?

5 AS: Well, it was to prepare you as majors—well, senior captains, majors, and  
6 lieutenant colonels—all the women who went were lieutenant colonels—for higher staff  
7 positions and command. They would be going into the battalion command and higher  
8 demand and to the DA (Department of the Army) staff and general staffs on larger  
9 commands like divisions and brigades and it was very heavily weighted of course  
10 towards the combat arms function and the support of the combat arms. If we did a big  
11 class project it might be set in a brigade but it might concentrate on the logistics part or  
12 perhaps on the personal management aspect but command was the heart of the course and  
13 it was during Vietnam so of course it was so much related to Vietnam and all the tactics  
14 of—I felt, since I know so much about tactics—all of the tactics were based on Vietnam.  
15 It was interesting, to me, an interesting story. I had gone to nuclear weapons employment  
16 school at Fort Bennett before I was assigned as a WAC student to McClelland so I was  
17 qualified to be a nuclear weapons specialist, employment specialist—one of the few in  
18 my particular section of course, so not everybody went. So one day one of the teachers  
19 was instructing a young major who stood up and said, “Major Smith, as an outsider”—I  
20 hadn’t been promoted then—“as an outsider, how do you feel about the future of nuclear  
21 war?” And most of the men knew—I was the only woman in this group—they knew my  
22 background and I stood up and took off on him (laughs) because I said, “We are using the  
23 most impractical version of nuclear war.” I said, “You’d think they were spray tanks on a  
24 cargo plane and you spray the world and you’re still ninety percent effective in your  
25 mission.” He never asked me another question.

26 LC: Now, you were sort of, as it were, armed and ready for that.

27 AS: I wasn’t expecting it, of course, but I had the background to make a comment  
28 and he did know it.

29 LC: What was his intention there? Was he kind of trying to lure you into a trap or  
30 what do you think was going on?

1 AS: Well, in that situation, he was such a rare breed that they frequently would do  
2 something like that, maybe to get a different view, maybe to be funny, but they always—  
3 they used to have a chaplain in each section, maybe a woman, but they always said,  
4 “Excuse me, chaplain, excuse me, Major Smith.” And one day I said, “If you have to  
5 excuse yourself for saying it, you shouldn’t be saying it.” And the chaplain didn’t like  
6 being singled out either.

7 LC: That was interesting. Did that kind of create a sort of harmony between the  
8 chaplain and maybe the female lieutenant colonel or the female majors?

9 AS: Oh, we all liked each other. (Laughs)

10 LC: I’ll bet.

11 AS: If you didn’t like somebody it was certainly on the ground. We were  
12 suffering together, all of us.

13 LC: Now by suffering, I wonder if you’re being facetious or if you’re talking  
14 about the workload.

15 AS: Oh, just going through it. On one occasion while I was a student we changed  
16 groups. We went through three different groups during the course, about fifty or fifty-  
17 five. Norman Schwarzkopf got sat right behind me.

18 LC: No kidding?

19 AS: Yep. He was my section leader.

20 LC: Now, if you gave him a phone call now, would he remember that?

21 AS: I don’t know. The last time I saw him (laughs) was on Fort Meyer or Fort  
22 Meyer and he was a major general and he was mowing his yard. I was just driving by  
23 and stopped and spoke to him. I doubt that he would remember me now.

24 LC: That’s interesting. He was mowing his own yard. That’s probably a good  
25 sign, I think. He’s a heck of a guy. It’s worth, since we’re talking about him, to just ask  
26 you, can you give any kind of review of his performance in the Gulf War conflict? I  
27 mean, did you pay much attention to him specifically?

28 AS: Of course I paid attention because I have known him. Not intimately and  
29 certainly not in the biblical sense but of course I was interested and I have great respect  
30 for him. Even when he was a lieutenant colonel he was considered, in military parlance,  
31 a comer.

1 LC: Really?

2 AS: He was highly regarded, he had been in Vietnam, he had commanded there  
3 and people deferred to his judgment.

4 LC: Now, at the time that he's sitting behind you in class, he had already  
5 commanded troops in Vietnam?

6 AS: I'm certain he had.

7 LC: I think so, too.

8 AS: I've sort of lost track of the sequence of things but he had been in Vietnam  
9 and if he had been in Vietnam as an infantryman he had certainly commanded something.

10 LC: Can you tell me much about the tactics that you did study? Was it air  
11 mobility and those kinds of things that defined the Vietnam conflict as different from  
12 previous American engagements?

13 AS: Yes, it did, but it struck me at the time that all the tactics were Vietnam and  
14 that was not all the world of the Army. We were learning to be active in Vietnam but  
15 look what's happened since.

16 LC: Was there much attention being paid to, for example, a potential land war  
17 with Soviet tanks coming across German or had that kind of thing backed away into the  
18 shadows?

19 AS: Some of the technical program lessons and exercises of course involved that.  
20 In fact, one time I remembered in one of the class program exercises they had tanks come  
21 in across the Tiber Pass and I thought that was highly impractical.

22 LC: Yeah, that's not exactly tank territory over there. (Laughs)

23 AS: And then another time we had an exercise and it was based on terrain. They  
24 needed to have a certain type of terrain and they put it in the Gulf and terrain actually was  
25 Israel and Egypt to get water rights. And all of us knew that at that time it was totally not  
26 going to happen but some general came and saw it and they had to change the whole  
27 exercise because he didn't approve of using that particular scenario with that land  
28 because it wasn't possible at that time.

29 LC: It didn't add up.

30 AS: To him. We were smart enough to understand.

1 LC: That's very interesting. You suggested just briefly that there wasn't a great  
2 deal of consideration of Middle Eastern problems. Is that—does that sound right? Is that  
3 fair?

4 AS: Let's see. What all had happened by then? (Laughs) I don't remember.

5 LC: Okay.

6 AS: I remember though – this is one of the interesting things. We had students  
7 from all over the place. I mean, we had Yugoslavians, and Israelis and Egyptians and  
8 Africans and a lot of Vietnamese of course and Parisians and they were scattered out  
9 among us and they did have a plan that they did not put warring factions in the same  
10 room.

11 LC: Is that right?

12 AS: Um-hm.

13 LC: I was going to ask you about the social atmosphere. That's an interesting  
14 insight.

15 AS: The social atmosphere there was when you were in school, it was very  
16 important. I went to a party one night that the Allies were giving and they had a good  
17 time. Now you would not find a Pakistani doing anything with Indians probably but each  
18 country did a presentation during the course of the training that was "Know Your  
19 World," I think they called it. So the Columbians would do their presentation and one  
20 day India was doing its presentation and my buddy from Pakistan was there checking out  
21 the enemy. (Laughs)

22 LC: (Laughs) Is that right? Well, did the Americans who were attending classes  
23 have kind of a dicey situation once in a while?

24 AS: No, I don't think so.

25 LC: Okay.

26 AS: They took the—the Allied students went on a lot of trips and one time they  
27 were in Washington DC and a couple of the South Americans who insisted, "We're  
28 Americans." You know when you talk about Americans you talk about us. And they  
29 said, "We are Americans." So they were somewhere—Rock Creek Park or someplace—  
30 and somebody decided to rob them and they're standing there saying, "We're not  
31 Americans, we're not Americans." (Laughs) One time somebody was being critical of

1 Venezuela for its oil policy and this Venezuelan stood up and said, “We are not trying to  
2 escrew the Americans.”

3 LC: “We’re not trying to escrew them?”

4 AS: Escrew. (Laughs) Which has become a standard for me. “I’m not trying to  
5 escrew you.” (Laughs)

6 LC: Well, so you got a chuckle out of this as well as I’m sure you got a broader  
7 view of both the international situation and the work of command.

8 AS: It was a very great learning experience because we were exposed to so many  
9 cultures if we chose to be exposed.

10 LC: Right. So you could kind of make it what you would as an individual. You  
11 could engage or just not?

12 AS: Surely. When you’re in a room with fifty or fifty-five people or so and  
13 you’re sitting next to one person—we were at big tables, two-person tables—and you  
14 were assigned the person with whom you sat so you could talk to people or not.

15 LC: And I guess, Ann, that these interviews will display that you kind of wanted  
16 to get to know them or find out a little bit more rather than sit there and bit quiet, I’m  
17 sure.

18 AS: Oh, I enjoyed being invited to have dinner with the Danes or to play liar’s  
19 dice with the Swiss officer who could not understand why we would lie and I was trying  
20 to show him how to play. “But you lie.” “Yes, it’s the object of the game.” (Laughs)

21 LC: About how big was the class?

22 AS: Eleven hundred?

23 LC: Really?

24 AS: It’s one of the biggest classes they ever had and it may have been not quite  
25 that many but it was big.

26 LC: And any guess as to the percentage of international folks who were enrolled?  
27 Was it ten percent?

28 AS: If I had my yearbook I could tell you.

29 LC: Really?

30 AS: (Laughs) Yeah, because it was in the yearbook. There was sort of a  
31 breakdown of how many countries and how many people.

1 LC: Well where is the yearbook?  
2 AS: In the other room. (Laughs)  
3 LC: Oh, okay.  
4 AS: I didn't know I might need it. (Laughs)  
5 LC: Well we don't want to send you to the other room. Let's keep you right  
6 where you are. Were you promoted during that year?  
7 AS: Yes.  
8 LC: And how did that come through? How did you find out about it?  
9 AS: By happenstance. Promotions were held secret. "Don't tell until the  
10 commander calls you in and tells you," and that sort of thing. And this was at a time  
11 when promotions had just opened up. They had promoted six women from lieutenant  
12 colonel to colonel and it had just opened standings so there was a backlog of majors who  
13 had not been selected because they couldn't be. There was nothing wrong with them but  
14 they just couldn't be selected.  
15 LC: Because there was that numerical cap?  
16 AS: Yeah.  
17 LC: And had the cap been essentially removed?  
18 AS: What happened was during President Johnson's presidency they didn't say,  
19 "You can have a general or generals." They would just remove the grade restrictions  
20 because the original grade restriction was, "There will be one colonel and she will be  
21 director of the Women's Army Corp." By taking that restriction out it just opened  
22 everything. It did not say, "You will have a general," but it meant you could. So at one  
23 fell swoop people were promoted so there was this backlog of majors. The woman who  
24 was senior on that list had been a major for about twenty years, I think, and they started  
25 working through it. And so I had been not selected the year before and this year was  
26 selected. And I went and talked to somebody and I knew who had been promoted that  
27 day. There were promotions every day coming out almost and she knew that I was on the  
28 list so she had not told me and nobody was supposed to tell me and she did. (Laughs)  
29 Unwittingly, because I said something about the other person who was a friend of mine.  
30 But that's very convoluted. Anyway, I found out.

1 LC: And how long had you been at the rank of major? How many years had you  
2 had that rank?

3 AS: Let's see. I was promoted in '68 and I think I was major in '64.

4 LC: Okay, so you'd only been a major four years.

5 AS: Yeah, but I had already been considered once. I was promoted in '69.

6 LC: In '69, okay. So four and a half years or something on that order.

7 AS: Yes.

8 LC: Wow. That twenty years in rank at major, that's really something.

9 AS: And they stayed.

10 LC: Yeah.

11 AS: And one of these women I remember was a logistician and people she had  
12 trained kept getting promoted and she just was stuck. But it cleared out a list.

13 LC: Absolutely. And as you say, there were then many promotions in that period  
14 of time. A lot of them.

15 AS: Yeah. I can't guess how many but I'm glad I was one of them.

16 LC: Now, as you came to the end of the nine month course, did you know what  
17 your next assignment was going to be? How did you find out?

18 AS: Well, the career management branch told me.

19 LC: And did they do that when you had just a little time left at Fort Leavenworth  
20 or was it arranged earlier? Do you remember?

21 AS: I can't remember how long it was but I had—there was a six month lag  
22 between the time my predecessor left and I went so I stayed at Leavenworth as a—you  
23 know what a snowbird is?

24 LC: I think that's someone who comes from up North, isn't it, to get away?

25 (Laughs)

26 AS: No, it's someone who goes to an Army school before it starts and maybe has  
27 to hang around for three months doing something. If you have to hang around after  
28 school you're a blackbird. So I was a blackbird.

29 LC: You were a blackbird.

30 AS: Yeah. And at Leavenworth I had to wait for a Vietnamese language class to  
31 start so I could go to it before I went to Vietnam.

1 LC: And how long did that language class—  
2 AS: The whole process was about six months.  
3 LC: Okay.  
4 AS: I went to Vietnam in January on New Year's Day.  
5 LC: Of 1970?  
6 AS: Um-hm.  
7 LC: Okay. Where did the Vietnamese language class that you attended take  
8 place?  
9 AS: El Paso.  
10 LC: And was it an Army class?  
11 AS: It was Defense Language Institute.  
12 LC: How long did that class go?  
13 AS: It was an introductory course and it seems to me maybe six weeks. I can  
14 remember. They had various courses. They had long courses for people who were going  
15 to be linguists and that sort of thing and then they have the course that taught you to say,  
16 "Hello."  
17 LC: And that was yours?  
18 AS: That was it. I was in a class full of young lieutenants who were going over to  
19 work with the Vietnamese. It was less than effective. (Laughs)  
20 LC: Really? Who was the instructor?  
21 AS: Vietnamese.  
22 LC: Was this someone who was not necessarily skilled at teaching or was it the  
23 curriculum or the pace? Why didn't it work very well?  
24 AS: Because it is a difficult language. It's a tonal language and if you get the  
25 wrong tone you've said something entirely different and it's very hard to get.  
26 LC: Now, Ann, let me ask you about the reaction of the young lieutenants to  
27 having a lieutenant colonel in their class who is a female who is going to Vietnam.  
28 AS: It didn't bother them.  
29 LC: It didn't at all?  
30 AS: Not that I was aware of.

1 LC: Did they make friends and kind of make you part of the group and make you  
2 part of the crowd?

3 AS: Yes.

4 LC: Good. Do you remember any incidents during that language training time  
5 that are worth sharing?

6 AS: Well, one of the instructors invited me to dinner one night and I enjoyed that.  
7 It was the first time I ever had nuoc mam. And then when I went to Vietnam her husband  
8 invited me to dinner in Vietnam.

9 LC: Oh really?

10 AS: She liked me a lot.

11 LC: Okay. So she had arranged that with him, I'm sure.

12 AS: Yeah.

13 LC: What did you know about the position that you were going to take up in  
14 Vietnam before you got there?

15 AS: Well, having worked in the WAC director's office, I was aware of the  
16 advisors to the Vietnamese Women Young Forces Corps and I didn't know a lot about it  
17 but I knew the first advisor who went there. In fact, I knew all of them one way or  
18 another and I was replacing one of my best friends. And the reason I had to wait to go  
19 was because she extended.

20 LC: Ann, it would be helpful, to the extent that you can, to tell us who those  
21 predecessors in that position had been, including you mentioned the first one.

22 AS: Kathleen Wilkes.

23 LC: Any idea what year she went over or when that would have been? Would it  
24 have been before—?

25 AS: Well, by big Tet and that would have been '68. I think the third one was  
26 there. I'm not really sure of the dates. The second one was Judy Dennet, Judith Dennet,  
27 then Virginia Chaffen. I replaced Lorraine Rossi. Joyce Eastlick replaced me and I've  
28 got a gap. And the early ones, there were two, one who was advisor to the director and  
29 one who was advisor to the training center commander. And so there were usually two of  
30 us there plus an NCO to the training center.

1 LC: Were there two American women assigned there when you were there, Ann,  
2 as well as an NCO?

3 AS: I don't remember.

4 LC: Okay. You went out there in January of 1970.

5 AS: There were a lot of American women in Vietnam but there were a few  
6 assigned to headquarters MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam). Two at  
7 least—one colonel and one lieutenant colonel during my time there.

8 LC: Do you remember who they were?

9 AS: Alice Long was one of them.

10 LC: She was at MACV?

11 AS: Yeah, Elizabeth Branch.

12 LC: Any idea what they were doing?

13 AS: Alice was the administrative assistant in the office of the J-1 and Betty  
14 Branch, after she finally got there, her background was in operations but she wound up  
15 being the chief of history for MACV.

16 LC: I thought that name sounded a little familiar to me.

17 AS: She lives in Washington now. Alice Long died several years ago.

18 LC: But Betty Branch is still with us?

19 AS: Yes, she's on the foundation board.

20 LC: Okay. That's interesting.

21 AS: (Laughs) Small corps.

22 LC: It is, and your recall of who was where and when is terrific. I mean this is  
23 exactly the kind of stuff that's so helpful in mapping out the situation that you enter in  
24 January.

25 AS: Kathleen Wilkes died several years ago but her sergeant is still alive. Her  
26 name was Betty Adams and she lives here.

27 LC: Oh yes, and I've had a little bit of correspondence with Betty.

28 AS: Okay.

29 LC: Your trip over to Vietnam, do you remember it?

30 AS: (Laughs) Do I ever! (Laughs) I left around midnight, I guess. It was dark  
31 when I left Atlanta and I went to California and I sat next to two flight nurses who went

1 to sleep every time the plane took off. I had no one to talk to. (Laughs) I was going out  
2 into this unknown and found how big the Pacific is and how long it takes to get across it.  
3 I got there and it was January in Georgia when I left and it's not bad cold but at least it's  
4 cool and my predecessor, Lorraine Rossi, and one of the men—small world—the man  
5 who met me was a colonel who was the husband of the women who had been the  
6 secretary in the WAC director's office.

7 LC: Oh, no kidding?

8 AS: Yes.

9 LC: Well, that's interesting.

10 AS: And so they met me at Tan Son Nhut—muggy, miserable and it looked like  
11 the grimmest, darkest place I had been in. I wasn't afraid. That wasn't it, but it just was  
12 uninviting. And when I left I realized it was so much brighter. Well, it wasn't. I was  
13 just used to it. (Laughs)

14 LC: Just used to it, that's interesting.

15 AS: We went to the BOQ and I said, "Oh, well, I can go to sleep." I had not  
16 really been very familiar with jet lag (laughs) and I was accustomed to having helicopters  
17 flying over all the time. (Laughs) My room, which was the room assigned to the advisor  
18 to the women, had been a closet. It had room for me and a single bed, a chair, a little  
19 desk, and a cabinet, which was a closet-type thing, and it had a bathroom and it was fine.  
20 (Laughs)

21 LC: Now this was your office?

22 AS: That was my bedroom.

23 LC: Oh, that was your bedroom, okay.

24 AS: My office was in the Vietnamese complex in the same building as the  
25 director and then my American office was in MACV headquarters.

26 LC: And how much time did you spend between them? Can you give the  
27 distribution between the two? How did you spend your time, mostly at MACV or—?

28 AS: I spent all the morning with Vietnamese and if I traveled with them it was a  
29 whole day thing or some such but there wasn't that much to do for me. Most of it had  
30 already been done. They had gotten all the equipment and if they needed something—  
31 they needed a jeep one time, a good example—they had to go to a board made up of

1 Americans and Vietnamese and justify it. So that was interesting, helping them do that.  
2 But part of the time we didn't have an administrative officer in MACV headquarters.  
3 That was before Alice Long got there and I filled in doing that in the afternoon for a  
4 while.

5 LC: Let me ask a little bit about the Vietnamese Women's Armed Forces Corps  
6 itself. Can you sketch out what kind of an entity we're talking about in terms of size and  
7 structure and mission?

8 AS: I don't know how many there were. They were all in one corps but they had  
9 a group with the Air Force, the Army, and the Navy, who had their own structure. I think  
10 one of the worst things we did for the Vietnamese was saddle them with our personnel  
11 system.

12 LC: Really? Why do you say that?

13 AS: Well, because it was inefficient because a mechanic is a mechanic in many  
14 ways. You can do it in the Army. They were not interchangeable because their MOS  
15 (Military Occupational Specialty) were strictly service-related and a lot of things were  
16 common. Their personnel system was just like ours, the personnel management system.  
17 Their MOS system was just a carbon copy of ours. They had a personnel manual that  
18 didn't have an index in it and I set about one day to index that thing, cross reference  
19 index it, and that's when I realized how inefficient it was. (Laughs)

20 LC: Because you were really getting to grips with the structure and sort of seeing  
21 it?

22 AS: Well, if you cross-index something you learn a lot about it.

23 LC: You get the idea, uh-huh. You get it deep.

24 AS: Now, a mechanic, an automobile mechanic is an automobile mechanic. The  
25 ones in the Army could do Air Force automobiles just as well as anybody else and they  
26 could have been interchangeable but no, they had to have our system. I don't know, it  
27 was a minor point but I just thought it was inefficient.

28 LC: Yeah, so the segmentation—

29 AS: We always do it better, you know. We know how to do it.

30 LC: So you were saying that within the Corps they had units assigned to each of  
31 the service branches of the South Vietnamese army.

1 AS: Well, no, they had people in the Army—

2 LC: I'm sorry, yes, right.

3 AS: —with the Army and with the Air Force and they had parachute riggers and  
4 used a lot of clerical type things. They had all had gorgeous handwriting. (Laughs) I  
5 can't remember their using computers but I'm certain they did. You know, data input  
6 and things like that.

7 LC: And can you have at a guess at the strength, the womanpower strength, if you  
8 will, of the Corps?

9 AS: No. I probably knew but it's long gone.

10 LC: Oh, okay. Who were the people that you were working directly with? Do  
11 you remember their names and their ranks?

12 AS: Yes. Well, the first director was a lieutenant colonel who was later promoted  
13 colonel and her name was Hoang, H-o-a-n-g. I can't remember what—the Vietnamese  
14 last name is the family name and Hoang was truly her first name but she was Colonel  
15 Hoang. And the deputy was a lieutenant colonel name Hang, H-a-n-g.

16 LC: Did you develop a relationship with either of them or both of them? I mean  
17 kind of beyond your professional interaction?

18 AS: It was hard to do in some ways because they couldn't socialize. They  
19 couldn't afford to socialize.

20 LC: What do you mean by that, Ann?

21 AS: Money.

22 LC: Okay.

23 AS: Colonel Hoang invited me to dinner at her home one time and I met her  
24 parents. Her father had been a government official and she told me that in the early days  
25 in the war when the advisors first came in they did a lot together but the cost of rice and  
26 those types of things just made it impossible. And I tried several times to get her to come  
27 have dinner with me at our officer's club and she kept turning me down. But one night  
28 she agreed to come and she came and we had dinner. We traveled together occasionally  
29 and then we would always eat together. She liked things American. She spoke beautiful  
30 English, Chinese, and French.

31 LC: No kidding?

1 AS: And I was invited to things with them. One night there was a big party that  
2 one of the Vietnamese generals was putting on at one of the hotels and it was a very nice  
3 party. I didn't find out until later that he got credit for the party. My counterpart had to  
4 pay a lot for that party, probably more than a month's salary and I just thought it was so  
5 unfair.

6 LC: Now how did that—what was behind that? Why was that the case?

7 AS: Well, I don't remember what the party was but there were a lot of Americans  
8 there and she was just—

9 LC: By virtue of her position having to—

10 AS: Yes. She was there so I was there. It was just—she had to help pay for it.

11 LC: And would you say that her salary was probably substantially less than her  
12 equal in rank who was a man within the South Vietnamese—

13 AS: Well, the man was a general.

14 LC: Okay, uh-huh.

15 AS: I imagine they did not want for money. I don't know that.

16 LC: But you suspect.

17 AS: And I suspect that he could have had entertainment funds and it was well  
18 after the fact that I realized what had happened. But I enjoyed being with them.

19 LC: You mentioned meeting Lieutenant Colonel Hoang's family.

20 AS: Yeah.

21 LC: Can you describe the house or anything about that evening? Who was there?

22 AS: Well, she was a widow—at least, there wasn't a husband—and she had at  
23 least one son. Lorraine Rossi got to know them a lot better because—I'm not sure.  
24 There was more socialization, I think. All I remember is a very pleasant evening and the  
25 best crab asparagus soup you could—I mean, yeah, crab asparagus soup—you could  
26 possibly ever want.

27 LC: That sounds gorgeous.

28 AS: And you know, rice and meat, and just pleasant. Her parents didn't speak  
29 English but she interpreted for me.

30 LC: Let me ask about the—

31 AS: And I was pretty good with chopsticks.

1 LC: You were pretty mean with the chopsticks. (Laughs)

2 AS: Yeah. Before I went to Vietnam I mentioned I was going and a waiter in a  
3 Chinese restaurant in Kansas City taught me how to use them. (Laughs)

4 LC: There you go. (Laughs) That was good.

5 AS: And now that I have arthritis I can not use them at all.

6 LC: Oh, that's sad. But in your day you were pretty mean with those.

7 AS: Oh yeah. One day I was eating in a Vietnamese mess hall and this young  
8 man sitting across the hall from me never stopped eating and he never took his eyes off  
9 me.

10 LC: No kidding.

11 AS: Just shoveled it in. (Laughs)

12 LC: (Laughs) Well, did Lieutenant Colonel Hoang and the women who were  
13 serving under her; did they appear in uniform all the time?

14 AS: Yeah, they had a uniform and they always looked neat and clean. Now they  
15 might have on flip-flops with their uniform. I saw Colonel Hoang in stockings one time  
16 and that's—they had—it was a little building next to our office that was their barracks  
17 and the way they lived—I don't know how they looked so neat and clean all the time.

18 LC: Now was that because the barracks were in pretty bad shape?

19 AS: It was just a little building and the most they had for looking at themselves  
20 was a hand mirror.

21 LC: Wow.

22 AS: And I got the notion that they needed a full-length mirror so I went to one of  
23 the Americans who was in the supply and asked her if she'd get me a mirror and it was a  
24 standard door-sized mirror and I took it in one day. Colonel Hoang was away at the staff  
25 college then and I gave it to Colonel Hung and it was in my office. I said, "I have  
26 something for you." And she came in and oh, she was just so excited and it stayed in my  
27 office for a month and I thought, "What is she going to do with it?" Well, she did  
28 something that I would never have thought of doing. She cut it in half and put half in the  
29 barracks and half in the office.

30 LC: Smart girl.

31 AS: Yeah.

1 LC: She's a smart cookie.

2 AS: And they had what looked like an old towel to clean their feet at the front of  
3 the office so I went and got a raffia door mat. I don't know where. I conned somebody  
4 out of theirs (laughs) and I took it in and just put it in front of the door one day. Colonel  
5 Hoang came up and she said, "Oh, I have dreamed of having one of these." (Laughs)  
6 And you realize how little things matter.

7 LC: And in this context, how they make such a big difference.

8 AS: Yes.

9 LC: That's very telling. Let me just clarify where their offices were located.

10 AS: On the Vietnamese compound adjacent to Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base.

11 LC: And what was—you've mentioned the two lieutenant colonels. How much  
12 did they have in the way of staff personnel there at that location?

13 AS: I don't remember. They had a driver.

14 LC: Oh yes.

15 AS: And a car. No, a jeep. They had a jeep. And they had clerks in the office  
16 but I don't remember how many.

17 LC: Okay. And was this a kind of bustling office? Was there a sense of things  
18 being done and attended to or was it more laid back and less pressure?

19 AS: It did not seem to be very pressable. This is an interesting story to me. Well,  
20 all my stories are interesting.

21 LC: I know they are. (Laughs) You're right.

22 AS: But just before I left, Colonel Hoang wanted a new jeep and she had to go  
23 before a committee of Americans and Vietnamese to justify the jeep. And I had been to  
24 too many briefings with the Vietnamese where they sit, sat, and stood, and read every  
25 word on the charts in Vietnamese and it was just deadly. So I talked to her about it. I  
26 said, "Don't read it to them. Let them read it. You don't need to read it." She said,  
27 "Well, how will I know when they've finished?" I said, "They'll stop looking at the chart  
28 and look at you." She did, it did, it worked, and she was so surprised. Sure enough, they  
29 quit looking at that and looked at her and she went on. And somebody told me later,  
30 "That's the best briefing I ever heard a Vietnamese give."

31 LC: (Laughs) It's very diagnostic of the atmosphere there.

1 AS: Yeah.

2 LC: Did things change at all for you in terms of the workload or the kinds of  
3 activities that either the Armed Forces Corps or you were involved in when the US and  
4 the South Vietnamese troops entered Cambodia in May of 1970?

5 AS: I wasn't aware of it. I was aware of the restrictions that were being placed on  
6 going there because I wanted to go into the area they called Parrot's Beak to visit  
7 someone and I had to get special permission from my general to go.

8 LC: Now, who was your general?

9 AS: Oh, shoot. I can't remember his name. This is the general who was the J-1.

10 LC: Oh, okay.

11 AS: I've lost his name right now.

12 LC: And you wanted to go up to Parrot's Beak for what purpose?

13 AS: A birthday party.

14 LC: (Laughs) And whose party was it going to be?

15 AS: Lieutenant Colonel Patton who I had known in the Pentagon. His troops  
16 called me and said, "We're having a surprise birthday party for the colonel. If we come  
17 get you, will you come?" I had been there once before. He had invited me to a party to  
18 christen their new swimming pool over Valentine's Day so the men knew me and we  
19 were friends. That's all we were. (Laughs)

20 LC: Right. And they wanted you to come to the party.

21 AS: Yes.

22 LC: And did it work out?

23 AS: Sure.

24 LC: So you got permission?

25 AS: Yeah. The first time I went up he had them put a bed, an extra bed, in his  
26 hooch in a little room and he made sure that I locked the door when we went to bed and  
27 the second occasion he said, "I knew something was happening because they put another  
28 bed (laughs) or cot."

29 LC: So he had a suspicion something was happening but he couldn't think—

30 AS: Something was happening. (Laughs)

31 LC: Now you said his name was Lieutenant Colonel Patton.

1 AS: Yeah. Not kin to the general.

2 LC: But spelled the same way?

3 AS: Yeah.

4 LC: Okay. And that must have been—I mean, did you know him very well, then?

5 AS: Well, we worked across the hall from each other in the Pentagon for probably

6 all the time I was there so it was a Pentagon hall. I had a window and they used to come

7 to my office to look out the window to see if it was raining.

8 LC: (Laughs) Okay. And so from that little acorn great things grew, including

9 your trip to the Parrot’s Beak. Now what was he doing up there?

10 AS: Commanding a helicopter.

11 LC: Oh, okay. So, helicopter units?

12 AS: Um-hm.

13 LC: So this second trip that you made up there was around the time of the

14 incursion or afterwards?

15 AS: It was while we were—it was during because there were restrictions on going

16 there.

17 LC: You have eluded a couple of times to different trips that you made around

18 Vietnam. Were there others that you remember that you could tell us about and what the

19 purposes of them were and where you went?

20 AS: I went most of the time with Colonel Hoang. She would be going to visit a

21 unit somewhere and I would go with her. I had—there was a beautiful beach that I went

22 into that area one time. She arranged for me to have a flight around a Buddha that was

23 very well known and I flew with a Vietnamese Air Force pilot in a little plane. A

24 delightful trip, taking pictures all the time and there wasn’t any film in my camera.

25 LC: Oh no.

26 AS: But for the life of me—Vung Tau, I think is where it was. And that’s when I

27 realized probably how gorgeous Vietnam is from the air. The shoreline just looks like

28 someone took a piece of chalk and drew it down and everything is green and lush and

29 pretty.

30 LC: Where else might you have gone on these inspection trips or visits around?

31 AS: I didn’t keep a diary. I should have but I didn’t.

1 LC: Well you've got it all in your head.

2 AS: But I don't. (Laughs)

3 LC: (Laughs) You've got quite a bit of it. Did you ever get up into, say, the  
4 Central Highlands? For example, Dalat or Pleiku, Kontum, or anywhere?

5 AS: I did but I don't remember.

6 LC: Okay. What about further north or to main American bases like Cam Ranh  
7 Bay?

8 AS: Oh yeah, I was in Cam Ranh Bay. I had friends who were there.

9 LC: You—I'm sorry, what?

10 AS: I had friends who were stationed there.

11 LC: Right. And so you probably went up to visit them at some point.

12 AS: Yeah, I was there at some point. (Laughs)

13 LC: (Laughs) Well, did you ever go further south down into the deep delta?

14 AS: I don't recall.

15 LC: What was an average day like, a day that you weren't traveling? You said  
16 you spent part of the time, part of the afternoons over at the MACV complex.

17 AS: I'd get up, have some coffee, drive my buddies over to MACV. I had a car.  
18 My job had a car and I had four men who rode with me everyday and I'd put them off  
19 and then I would go over to the Vietnamese compound and do—make work frequently  
20 because she didn't need me, truly. They had already built up everything they needed and  
21 they had everything going. And to me it was a be-there job oftentimes. And I, in the  
22 afternoon, usually would go over the MACV. I had to check my mail and see what sort  
23 of porn I'd gotten from Denmark.

24 LC: Okay, uh-huh. (Laughs)

25 AS: And when you're in Vietnam you want any piece of mail you can possibly  
26 get. (Laughs)

27 LC: Right.

28 AS: Just something to open.

29 LC: Just anything.

30 AS: Yeah.

1 LC: Would you say that the position was one that didn't necessarily need to exist?  
2 Was it more pro forma?

3 AS: I think so, in the later days. I'm certain when it first started it really needed  
4 to exist if they were going to establish something because they had established a training  
5 center, a structure, and WAC detachments all over the place.

6 LC: And you mentioned the equipment issues but most of that had already been  
7 resolved.

8 AS: Yes.

9 LC: Were you thinking much about the progress of the war? Did you ever feel  
10 insecure when you were driving back and forth around Tan Son Nhut?

11 AS: No.

12 LC: No mortar attacks?

13 AS: The closest thing I came to anything unpleasant was I was in downtown  
14 Saigon one time and a grenade when off by the USO (United Service Organizations).  
15 And I don't know why it did. We had a curfew. We had to be in at ten o'clock unless we  
16 had special permission to be out and oftentimes if we would go into Saigon to have  
17 dinner, then we would go up to one of the hotels and sit on the roof and have a cup of  
18 coffee it was just unreal to be doing that in such a really civilized way watching mortar  
19 rounds going off on the horizon.

20 LC: And do you have a distinct memory of that?

21 AS: Sure. I also have a memory of the roach that walked across my coffee cup.  
22 (Laughs)

23 LC: And was this a monster-sized roach?

24 AS: Pretty good-sized.

25 LC: I'm thinking it might have been. (Laughs)

26 AS: The most monstrous one I ever saw—my bathroom had a john and a lavatory  
27 with a shower and a curtain over it. It had a curtain on it and one day I was taking a  
28 shower and all of the sudden the largest roach in creation landed on my bony chest. He  
29 had come off the shower rod. That's the biggest one I ever saw. (Laughs)

30 LC: (Laughs) And that was way too close. (Laughs)

1 AS: I also had a gecko in my room and that was good because they ate  
2 mosquitoes.

3 LC: Yeah, geckos are friendly and good to have around.

4 AS: One day I opened the cabinet and a gecko fell off and landed on me. I don't  
5 know who was more surprised, he or I. I didn't mind him though. (Laughs)

6 LC: Did you have a sense of being in a war zone? It almost sounds surreal, sitting  
7 at the top on the outside café area of a hotel and watching a war.

8 AS: Yeah, there's surrealism about it because of the way life went on. We  
9 worked until x o'clock—whatever it was, I don't remember—whether there was work or  
10 not. You know, work expands to fill the time available and that was certainly true in  
11 Vietnam. We couldn't have a shorter day because the people in the field were working.

12 LC: So you would keep on.

13 AS: Yeah. You'd be there. Now some of the people—one of my good friends  
14 worked in the assignment business there and he had to go in every night to call  
15 Washington because of the time difference. You'd go to town and go to Saigon and here  
16 was this bustling city. You walk down the street—I had a picture taken in front of one of  
17 the buildings that a lot of newscasts were made from. I think it was the old opera house  
18 and I deliberately had a picture take there so I'd know I'd been there.

19 LC: Really?

20 AS: Because it was an unreal time for me.

21 LC: You know that grenade going off that you mentioned—that didn't rattle you  
22 or kind of bring the conflict pretty close to you?

23 AS: I thought about it but—one time I was on a ferry. I don't know where I was  
24 going but I was on a ferry and there were these bodies floating by and all the people  
25 were, "VC! VC!" I don't know whether it was VC (Viet Cong) or not.

26 LC: Was there sort of jubilation?

27 AS: Yeah they were real—

28 LC: "Got 'em?"

29 AS: Yeah, "Got one."

30 LC: "Got one." That's very strange.

1 AS: One of my memorable experiences—we were walking down the street one  
2 day in Saigon in my little green cord uniform. Here came two young men, obviously  
3 having a good time in from the field after being thirsty, walking toward me and I  
4 wondered, “What is going to happen?” Well, they saluted and the senior one said, “Good  
5 afternoon, cutest ma’am.”

6 LC: What did you think?

7 AS: It made my day.

8 LC: I was going to say. (Laughs) That’s interesting. In general, did you find that  
9 the American men over there were willing to accept that you were a lieutenant colonel?

10 AS: Sure.

11 LC: Any incidents that seemed to undermine your authority as a senior officer? I  
12 mean, you’re a senior officer at this point.

13 AS: No.

14 LC: Nothing like that?

15 AS: Uh-uh.

16 LC: That’s remarkable.

17 AS: There were two young men who were MPs, a young black man and a young  
18 white man and they were out on the street all the time and I frequently passed them and  
19 we had this—I never talked to them—but we had this thing. We’d give each other the  
20 peace sign as I went past.

21 LC: How did that start?

22 AS: I don’t know. I started it probably one day. (Laughs)

23 LC: (Laughs) That’s interesting and leads me to ask about your sort of broader  
24 sense of the American investment in Vietnam. And of course you’re keenly aware that in  
25 the States the upset, the temperature is rising in opposition to American involvement.  
26 What did you feel in your own mind? Not as an officer but in your own mind, what were  
27 you thinking about this whole epic in which you had this little role?

28 AS: Hmm. I’m trying to remember what I thought.

29 LC: Did you think we should get the hell out of there?

30 AS: I didn’t think we were accomplishing a lot. I thought we were putting too  
31 good a face on what we were doing. I never went to the five o’clock follies but hearing

1 the stories of the five o'clock follies and the body count—I guess the body count was the  
2 thing that got to me the most because it just was—I can't describe it, I'm sorry. I'm not  
3 emotional; I just can't find a word. (Laughs)

4 LC: That's okay. I mean, it was certainly a frustrating situation for many, many  
5 Americans, both those who were in Asia and those who were in America to get to grips  
6 with.

7 AS: When I came home, I didn't have any sense of resentment towards it but most  
8 people don't expect a woman to have been there.

9 LC: That's right.

10 AS: But I went out to lunch one day in Atlanta and it was in January and the  
11 waiter looked at me and he said, "You have a beautiful tan. Have you been to the  
12 beach?" I said, "No, Vietnam." (Laughs)

13 LC: What was his response?

14 AS: Nothing. I did have a beautiful tan. (Laughs)

15 LC: (Laughs) He was absolutely right.

16 AS: Sure.

17 LC: Were you aware or did you see evidence of others who, having served in  
18 Vietnam, were kind of taking it on the chin at all?

19 AS: No, I didn't see it because I came from Vietnam and went to an assignment at  
20 Richmond Arsenal. The military was pretty well accepted in Alabama.

21 LC: That's right, it's not uphill there.

22 AS: I lived in an apartment complex where nobody paid me any attention. As far  
23 as my being different, I put on my little green suit and went to work every day.

24 LC: And this was beginning in early 1971.

25 AS: Yeah.

26 LC: And what was your job there?

27 AS: I was the secretary of the Missile Ammunitions Center and School. Are you  
28 familiar with a secretary of a school?

29 LC: No, that's what I wanted to ask you about.

30 AS: It's the administrative officer.

31 LC: Okay, so the chief administrative officer, essentially?

1 AS: Yeah. I was in charge of personnel, civilian personnel, security, the library—  
2 let's see if there's anything else. All schools have one and they're just the administrative  
3 person.

4 LC: Was this a good posting for you?

5 AS: It was until we got a new commander who did not like me.

6 LC: Now when did that happen?

7 AS: That happened probably—I stayed there till '73 so it probably happened in  
8 '72. The commandant retired and we got a new commandant and he just—he was the  
9 only person I ever worked for that I neither liked nor respected.

10 LC: How did you guys get off to a bad foot? Had you known him before?

11 AS: Never.

12 LC: How did it—what started it going south?

13 AS: One of my other jobs was overseeing the bookstore. Almost every school has  
14 a bookstore and he had—and there are limits on what you can sell in a bookstore, things  
15 related to the training mission of the school. And he got this notion that he was going to  
16 run it as a small business. And I guess he used his idea of how you ought to run a small  
17 business and he was doing things that were crooked. He was stocking things that should  
18 not be in there and the young lieutenant that was running it technically answered to me  
19 but this man was—they finally closed it. They had a closeout sale and closed it and he  
20 didn't like my bucking him. He didn't like me. (Laughs)

21 LC: It sounds as if this was less about you than about anybody in that position, the  
22 position you held, who was doing their job.

23 AS: Yeah, I think so. He went so far as to ask the IG (Inspector General) to find  
24 something bad about me. The IG told me.

25 LC: Really?

26 AS: Later. And I asked him one day, the colonel, if I could talk to him and he  
27 told me, "No, I don't have time to talk to you." And you don't do that to your staff  
28 members. I was one of his immediate staff.

29 LC: You reported directly to him.

30 AS: Yes.

1 LC: Was this—do you think there was some gender issue going on here or was  
2 this guy wired for conflict?

3 AS: I don't know. I don't know how I got crossways of him. The assistant  
4 commandant for the whole time I was there, he had I had locked horns one time over  
5 something and I said—I went in and I said, “I have three things I would like to say to  
6 you. I want to do a good job here. I can't do it without your support and if I was wrong,  
7 I apologize.” And we never had another moment's problem.

8 LC: That was a very reasonable set of things to say and I'm sure that you were,  
9 just having spoken with you, Ann, I'm sure you were equally reasonable with the other  
10 fellow, just something—

11 AS: Well, it was obvious I didn't like him.

12 LC: Well and clearly he was —

13 AS: And I called my career manager and I said, “I am not doing myself any good  
14 here, I am not doing women in the Army any good here. Please get me out.”

15 LC: And how long did it take before you got a response?

16 AS: Very quickly?

17 LC: Really?

18 AS: She had talked to me before and asked if I might be interested in going to  
19 Leavenworth to teach because they finally were willing to have a woman instructor. And  
20 I didn't hear anymore about it and when I called her I said, “Is that still a possibility?”  
21 And that's where I went.

22 LC: This was in 1973.

23 AS: Yeah.

24 LC: Were you the first or among the first women instructors?

25 AS: I was the first after World War II.

26 LC: No kidding.

27 AS: Yeah.

28 LC: Okay. Well, Ann, let's take a break right there.

29 LC: Well tell me about that. This is Thanksgiving Day, what? Nineteen seventy?

30 AS: Yeah. And they were having a service and it was Christian chapel. I didn't  
31 understand a word that they said. (Laughs)

1 LC: And they were having a Christian Thanksgiving, which is obviously an  
2 American holiday.

3 AS: It was also interesting to go occasionally to a Buddhist temple.

4 LC: And you did that, too?

5 AS: Yeah. And then there's this strange little religious sect called the Cao Dai  
6 that's a mixture of Buddhist, Roman Catholic, who knows what else (laughs) and I went  
7 to their temple one time.

8 LC: You know, Winston Churchill was here yesterday and commenting that his  
9 grandfather, the prime minister, was one of their patron saints, one of the patron saints of  
10 the Cao Dai sect.

11 AS: Really?

12 LC: Um-hm, which of course he thought absolutely hilarious because it's just his  
13 grandpa, or as he called him, grandpapa. Did you go out to Tay Ninh and to their big  
14 temple out there?

15 AS: Yeah.

16 LC: What was that like?

17 AS: Fascinating!

18 LC: I'll bet it was.

19 AS: And there was a monk who took me around, spoke very good English. One  
20 of their emblems, as I recall it was just a huge globe and I don't think it was the globe of  
21 the world, I think it was the globe of the globe. And I took off my little shoes and  
22 trooped around in there and their theology just seemed to be such a combination of stuff.

23 LC: Something from everywhere.

24 AS: And then one time I went out on a little platform out in the water to see this  
25 wizened old man who was some sort of oracle. Not understanding a word that was going  
26 on but being duly respectful. (Laughs)

27 LC: Absolutely. (Laughs)

28 AS: I went with my counterpart.

29 LC: And what did she make of it? Did she have any comment?

30 AS: She wanted to go herself and took me. I don't know what she made of it.

31 LC: But you trooped along?

1 AS: Oh sure. Never miss an opportunity.

2 LC: Well, absolutely.

**Interview with Ann Smith**  
**Session 4 of 4**  
**June 21, 2005**

1 LC: This is Dr. Laura Calkins of the Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University,  
2 continuing the oral history interview with Col. Ann B. Smith. Today's date is the twenty-  
3 first of June, 2005. I am in the upstairs offices of the Special Collections Building on the  
4 campus of Texas Tech and the colonel is speaking to me by telephone from her home in  
5 Alabama. Good morning again, Ann. We've been speaking for a little while but I want  
6 to thank you again for your time today.

7 AS: It's nice talking to you again.

8 LC: Ann, let's start where we left off, which is in 1973, your assignment to teach  
9 and the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. Can you tell me how  
10 that posting came about and certainly there were some special things about that posting.

11 AS: Some time before that my assignment officer called and asked if I would be  
12 interested in going to teach at Leavenworth. They had finally decided that they wanted to  
13 have a woman on the faculty. I said yes and it never went anywhere. And so as time  
14 passed I realized that my boss and I were never going to get along with each other and I  
15 needed to get out of that assignment because I was not doing myself any good and I  
16 certainly wasn't doing Army women any good because his opinion of them was based on  
17 our not getting along. Now, I realize that it was my responsibility to get along with him,  
18 not his to get along with me, and when that happens you do your best to get away from it  
19 to make it better for everybody. So I called Col. Shirley Hines and said, "I need to get  
20 out of here and is there any chance that opportunity at Leavenworth is still open?" And  
21 she checked and called back and said yes. And so that's now I wound up on my way to  
22 Leavenworth.

23 LC: Now, correct me if I'm wrong, as the first women instructor after World War  
24 II?

25 AS: Yes. There had been one during World War II and that was the situation, I  
26 was the first since then.

27 LC: And did any other women join the faculty while you were there?

1 AS: Yes. Now, there were women on the support staff, quite a few of them. A  
2 logistician came in while I was there.

3 LC: Do you remember her name?

4 AS: Charlotte Phillips.

5 LC: And what can you tell me about her? Did you two kind of club up?

6 AS: No.

7 LC: She was in a different area?

8 AS: I was in the Department of Command and she was in the Department of  
9 Logistics. I knew she was there. I can't remember how far it was into my tour that she  
10 came but we didn't have a large overlap. And of course there were always women  
11 students at the college.

12 LC: What was your relationship with the women students who might have come  
13 through your classes? Did they kind of look up to you, do you think?

14 AS: No, we'd all known each other before. (Laughs)

15 LC: Oh, okay, so there was no—

16 AS: I was a lieutenant colonel, they were majors and lieutenant colonels and our  
17 paths had crossed considerable.

18 LC: Oh, okay, so there was no danger of them holding you up—putting you up on  
19 a pedestal.

20 AS: No.

21 LC: (Laughs) What about the male students? Of course there were hundreds and  
22 hundreds of men, I would think, in each class. Is that accurate?

23 AS: Of course they had mixed feelings about me but I taught in an area that—it  
24 wasn't like sending me in to teach tactics. I felt generally well received. I did not feel  
25 any animosity from the students. I was there and a part of the system.

26 LC: What about other instructors in the department? How did you kind of mesh  
27 with them?

28 SM: I had a grand time with them. It happened that one of the men who had  
29 taught me when I was a student was on the faculty with me and he had sort of made the  
30 path comfortable for me because he thought a lot of me. And I had a sponsor and a  
31 supporter on my way in and so the people in the—the Department of Command was an

1 odd mix of people. The chaplain, who was always assigned to Leavenworth, was in that  
2 department and we taught things like leadership and personnel management and things  
3 like that so it was the soft skills and not the hard ones. So that made a difference.

4 LC: Was the curriculum already set for you when you arrived?

5 AS: Oh yes.

6 LC: And how did you familiarize yourself to the point where you felt comfortable  
7 teaching or did you already have everything you needed in terms of expertise and  
8 background?

9 AS: No, I didn't have everything I needed but they had very comprehensive  
10 lesson plans already prepared and I was told that under a previous commandant, that if he  
11 opened three doors he expected everybody to be saying exactly the same thing. I could  
12 not have taught under those conditions. I don't memorize, I teach from cards, and it's not  
13 my style to do rote stuff.

14 LC: And who was the commandant at this time?

15 AS: Right this minute he is completely lost. I'll come up with it.

16 LC: Oh that's okay.

17 AS: (Laughs) He was a major general.

18 LC: You mentioned that there was this one fellow who had been an instructor  
19 when you were a student there who made things a little bit easier. Can you tell me  
20 anything more about him?

21 AS: Well, specifically, nothing unusual and he left shortly after I got there but the  
22 group in that department was very welcoming and I made friends with a lot of people in  
23 the other departments, too because I'm gregarious—also garrulous.

24 LC: Garrulous, yes. You mentioned to me last year, in fact, that there was  
25 some—

26 AS: The general's name was Cushman.

27 LC: There you go. See, you knew it would come to you. You mentioned last  
28 year, when we were talking about some of these things that there was at least some  
29 undercurrent every once in a while, a suggestion that you were some kind of token.

1 AS: One of the women on the staff told me one day some man had said that—  
2 token—up in command. And I said, “Well, I am. I’m the only one here so certainly I’m  
3 a token. You don’t have to take it pejoratively”

4 LC: She was upset because she had taken it pejoratively.

5 AS: Yes. She thought I was being criticized. Well, maybe I was but I wasn’t  
6 going to take it that way.

7 LC: And you mentioned to me that you had coined a term around this experience.

8 AS: Yeah, minority paranoia.

9 LC: Yeah. Can you explain what you mean by that?

10 AS: I think that people who are put in that position can let themselves feel that  
11 they’re carrying the weight of their kind on their shoulders.

12 LC: In other words, you are the representative of this group and you bear  
13 responsibility?

14 AS: Yes. And the men, I don’t think, suffered that. If there were an infantryman  
15 there who was not a good instructor, he’d just be a poor instructor. But if I had not been  
16 reasonably good, all women would have been judged by me. I believe that.

17 LC: And is that because you were sort of the first one to hold this job? Is that an  
18 essential to it or is it more because the Army itself is obviously structured in such a way  
19 as to have a greater representation of men than women?

20 AS: No, it wasn’t that. I put myself in the position of any minority who is sort of  
21 carrying the flag. In any endeavor, if you are the first—this may not be a general  
22 conception. It may be a personal thing that I came up with but I did—I always want to do  
23 a good job but I did want to do a good job so that other women would not be judged by  
24 me as being bad because I was a woman. And it wasn’t the system that did it to me. This  
25 is internal.

26 LC: I’m sensing, Ann, that you felt this way at the time. This isn’t a retrospective  
27 thing.

28 AS: No, I felt that way at the time.

29 LC: And of course you know 1973 was really kind of the spiking point for the  
30 beginnings of what we now call the women’s movement in this country. Did you feel  
31 any extra burden because of that?

1 AS: Unh-uh.

2 LC: No?

3 AS: No. One advantage I had was that I had been to Vietnam.

4 LC: Why was that an advantage?

5 AS: Because it was a mark of belonging, in a sense. You'd been to Vietnam.

6 LC: So you had some credibility as a result?

7 AS: I think so.

8 LC: Okay. People, students and faculty members, sort of had to take you with a  
9 little more grit, a little more substance?

10 AS: I think, because that was the card everybody needed to get punched and not a  
11 lot of women were there.

12 LC: That's right.

13 AS: And I had the ribbons to prove it. (Laughs)

14 LC: Tell me a little bit more about the curriculum. Were you teaching a particular  
15 class or more than one class?

16 AS: I taught everything—if I can recall, I taught everything that our department  
17 taught. But more than anything I taught in the personnel management and in those  
18 leadership things like motivation and discipline. We taught the drug and alcohol stuff.

19 LC: How important was, for example, that element in the curriculum as you  
20 encountered it?

21 AS: Oh, I think it was considered—sometimes the people in command called us  
22 the Red Stain upstairs because we had all the touchy-feely things.

23 LC: They called you the Red Stain?

24 AS: As in Communists. (Laughs)

25 LC: (Laughs) Absolutely. So that would have all been in jest, I'm sure.

26 AS: Yes. As I said, we had the chaplain, we had the lawyer, we had all of the—  
27 and we had a lot of combat arms and my boss was an infantryman but still we were—the  
28 AG (Adjutant General), officer and all the non-combat arms and logistics was just full of  
29 logisticians and those sorts of things.

30 LC: Let me ask if—you mentioned drug and alcohol issues were part of what you  
31 had to teach. Was there also a component that dealt with race differences?

1 AS: Oh yes. It was an interesting thing. The classrooms had fifty or so people in  
2 them and for a lot of the work we divided them into about fifteen-person work groups.  
3 And when we were teaching racial harmony, for the lack of a better word, and awareness  
4 and sensitivity we were divided into different categories, at least the instructors were, by  
5 ethnic groups or different groups and my particular group was the Appalachians and how  
6 a people from Appalachia and people who think like that, how you have to deal with  
7 them in a structured environment. Because when fishing season starts they're ready to go  
8 fishing. It's a different lifestyle completely. So we had African-Americans,  
9 Appalachians, American Indians—I can't remember all of the groups but it was  
10 interesting because of the readings we did that gave us a different slant of how people  
11 think and how you have to deal with them in a controlled environment.

12 LC: Overall, do you think that the way the curriculum was structured on that issue  
13 was a helpful approach? Do you think it accomplished the purpose?

14 AS: Well, I think it might have made us think a little bit.

15 LC: Okay. And that's probably a pretty good outcome, actually, rather than just  
16 blowing through and not taking it in at all.

17 AS: In one group we had a Catholic priest and we were talking about ways of  
18 changing behavior and I was talking about aversion therapy and so we kept talking about  
19 it and talking about it and all of the sudden he had an absolutely, ah ha experience  
20 because what he had heard me saying was virgin therapy.

21 LC: (laughs) So clarity broke through.

22 AS: And we looked at the Milgram tape and those types of things. It was during  
23 an era of being more—I don't know how to describe it.

24 LC: It was a time different than this one, that's certain.

25 AS: Yeah. At the time I could have told you the differences but we were into  
26 motivation and trying to understand why, which was probably needed coming down from  
27 Vietnam.

28 LC: Let me ask you a little bit about that because your station, your duty at Fort  
29 Leavenworth actually encompassed a time period where everything in Vietnam changed.  
30 You started there in 1973 and were there until '75. I wonder if, for example, you

1 remember the release of the POWs (Prisoner of War) and the conclusion of the Paris  
2 Peace talks and then the release of the American POWs.

3 AS: Specifically I can't say. Sometimes I get my student year mixed up with my  
4 being there, my two and a half years as faculty. Back to being, if you will, the token, it  
5 was really interesting that frequently the commanding general would put me on a  
6 committee. Invariably he had me and the Marines represented. There was a Marine  
7 colonel. I think he wanted a more forthright opinion than he would get from some  
8 people. I made him very mad one day. (Laughs)

9 LC: What did you do?

10 AS: He asked something and I gave him my honest answer and he just thought I  
11 was wrong. I mean he couldn't accept what I told him that I thought I saw because he  
12 didn't want to believe it.

13 LC: Do you remember what the circumstances were?

14 AS: Nah. Don't remember.

15 LC: But he just was shocked probably.

16 AS: Yeah. But it was a very interesting sort of relationship.

17 LC: Well in some way he probably had a somewhat difficult, slightly complicated  
18 duty to discharge, too, which was to oversee the work of the first woman on the faculty.

19 AS: Well, I was so far removed from him. Truly, I wasn't on his screen at all,  
20 other than when he wanted some different people to look at an issue.

21 LC: And then you were drafted into that.

22 AS: He made drastic changes in the way the school operated and it was very  
23 resented by the students often, and the faculty.

24 LC: What kinds of changes?

25 AS: Well, he decided that the Army had too much grade distortion. Everybody  
26 expected to have an A and he decided that we weren't going to award but x percent of As  
27 and that means you've got to make a hard decision and the students resented that highly  
28 because they'd been told they're the top fifty percent of the Army and they believed it.  
29 So to have someone come in when everybody was used to getting As on an assignment  
30 and for us to be told we couldn't give but one and for them to be told only one was going  
31 to get it, now that's cutthroat.

1 LC: Yeah, it sets up some very difficult dynamics.

2 AS: And we'd get students who didn't do too well going and complaining to their  
3 faculty advisor who were then going to the instructors—we were all in the same boat but  
4 it was difficult.

5 LC: How did you feel when your tour there came to its end? Were you glad  
6 you'd had the opportunity?

7 AS: Oh yes. And I had intended to retire from there.

8 LC: In 1975?

9 AS: Around there.

10 LC: What was your thinking about retirement?

11 AS: Well, I was a lieutenant colonel. I didn't have any hope of getting to be a  
12 colonel and I had, by that time, over twenty years of service. Thinking back, I probably  
13 couldn't get a better assignment than that.

14 LC: And what changed your mind?

15 AS: I got a better assignment.

16 LC: At this point, as a lieutenant colonel, were you speaking with people in  
17 personnel about what might be available or were you kind of sailing on your own,  
18 thinking, "Yes, I'll retire," and then something kind of cropped up?

19 AS: Yeah.

20 LC: Okay.

21 AS: And at the time when it popped up I was talking to the deputy commandant at  
22 a party and he said, "Oh, you should definitely take the assignment." At the time, and it's  
23 still going on now, we had a command selection process and I had not been selected for  
24 command. And so that tells you something. If you're not selected for command you're  
25 probably not going any further. It doesn't assure that you're going any further but it  
26 opens the door for it. And somebody who had been selected to command one of the  
27 training battalions at Fort McClelland turned it down and they offered it to me. That  
28 made perfect sense to me, that at least it was an opportunity plus I thought of it as a  
29 challenge and a good assignment because I enjoyed training troops.

30 LC: So you left Fort Leavenworth for McClelland in 1975. Do you know roughly  
31 when you arrived there at McClelland?

1 AS: In the summer.

2 LC: And how long did you expect you would be there? A year?

3 AS: I didn't have any anticipation of how long I would be there. That's where I  
4 was going and that's what I was going to do.

5 LC: Now did consideration for promotion accompany the command post?

6 AS: Well, I would be considered at the normal time for consideration. It didn't  
7 give me any leg up on early consideration. It was just at the time that I should be  
8 considered. But I knew—and everybody in the Army knows that command is greatly to  
9 be desired.

10 LC: Yes. Crucial for getting on up the line. Tell me about your year then at Fort  
11 McClelland as commander of the First Women's Army Corps Training Battalion.

12 AS: It was a grand year. (Laughs) I had a good time. I enjoyed training troops, I  
13 worked with good people, I had good people in the battalion, the company commanders  
14 and first sergeants and my boss. It was just a good time. It was fun. I mean there were  
15 some rough spots.

16 LC: Who was your commanding officer?

17 AS: Shirley Hines. Col. Shirley Hines.

18 LC: And what was your position?

19 AS: She was the WAC center commander.

20 LC: And how many training battalions were there?

21 AS: When I first got there, there were three and then one of them closed out and  
22 we had two. Back in the olden days, when I was first assigned there as a lieutenant we  
23 only had one training battalion and it was the one I was commanding so I went home.

24 LC: Yeah, it sounds like it. It sounds like it must have been in some way kind of  
25 feeling a little bit of a full circle that you were back at McClelland. How had it changed?  
26 I know you had been in and out of there but you started there in 1953.

27 AS: We had so many more troops undergoing training. The curriculum was  
28 different. When I was a student officer we got to fire a Carbine for familiarization.  
29 When I was there as the battalion commander they were firing the M-1 for qualification.

30 LC: Wow.

1 AS: And the commanding general of the post had somehow staked his reputation  
2 on how well the women did on the range. He was determined, no matter how long you  
3 had to stay out there; you would have a large number of women qualified. There was  
4 pressure.

5 LC: This was his thing, his emphasis? What was his name? This was the  
6 commander of Fort McClelland?

7 AS: Kingston. There were two Kingstons in the Army, brothers. He was one of  
8 them.

9 LC: And these were both very senior people.

10 AS: He was a brigadier general.

11 LC: You said that there were some rough patches, too. Do you remember any of  
12 those that you can share or what the circumstances were?

13 AS: Well, he threatened to court martial me one time. (Laughs)

14 LC: Okay, well that's pretty rough.

15 AS: That's rough.

16 LC: That qualifies. What was going on with that?

17 AS: We were having probably a reunion, a WAC reunion or something that was a  
18 big do and the Fourteenth Army Band, which was the only all-women's band—I guess in  
19 the world, military band—at that time was being disbanded and they were going to play a  
20 final concert. They had a male warrant officer as their commander. Well, always before  
21 there had been a woman commanding the band. So they were scheduled for the  
22 performance to start at eight o'clock. I was standing out back waiting for General  
23 Kingston to come. He was never on time for anything. So at eight o'clock the band  
24 started because nobody was there. I was out back. Oh, I was the officer in charge of this  
25 whole circus so I was out waiting for the general and the band started and he was furious  
26 and I made the serious mistake—this was a Friday night—of saying to his aide, “Well,  
27 the general's always late.” It was bad enough that they had started without him because  
28 that was my fault, too, of course, but then saying something like that. And Saturday  
29 morning Shirley Hines called me and said, “What did you do to the general? He wants to  
30 see you first thing Monday morning.” So first thing Monday morning I was in his office  
31 and the aide and the secretary had disappeared. They had left.

1 LC: It was just you and him?

2 AS: Yes. And thank goodness he had practiced what he wanted to say to me and  
3 he knew it real well and it didn't take but about five minutes. He had been known to  
4 speak off the cuff for a lot longer than that and when it happened to me, everybody said,  
5 "Don't worry, it's happened to all of us." That's a personality quirk of his. And they had  
6 just sent in a special efficiency report on me that was going before the promotion board  
7 and he threatened me with withdrawing that efficiency report and he said he ought to  
8 court-martial me for disloyalty.

9 LC: For disloyalty to him?

10 AS: Yeah. And when he finished I said, "Is that all, sir? Thank you, sir."  
11 Saluted, about faced, and got out of there as fast as I possibly could.

12 LC: Did you think there would be serious repercussions?

13 AS: I didn't know. It would have surprised me if he had withdrawn that  
14 efficiency report and if he had, that was the only report I had for command and so yes, it  
15 could have been very—I didn't know I was going to get promoted. It surprised me when  
16 I did but I certainly wouldn't have if he had withdrawn that efficiency report.

17 LC: In hindsight do you see that as an important turning point or he just gave you  
18 a kick in the pants and that's about it?

19 AS: Well, he didn't carry through on it. It would have been a very important  
20 turning point if he had carried through on it.

21 LC: When were you actually promoted to colonel?

22 AS: Seventy-six. And that's why I had to leave First Battalion, because it was a  
23 lieutenant colonel slot so I couldn't stay. I asked to stay but they said, "No, you can't."

24 LC: What did they have in the way of possibilities for you as a newly minted  
25 colonel?

26 AS: I stayed on post.

27 LC: To do what?

28 AS: There was a group called the Headquarters Command that had the MPs and  
29 the support troops and we had a supply and transportation battalion on post at times and  
30 they were all part of Headquarters Command and I was commander of it.

1 LC: So approximately how many personnel were you responsible for in this new  
2 position?

3 AS: We had one MP company and a headquarters company and the battalion,  
4 which was—I have no idea how many people were in it. We had two MPs companies,  
5 I'm sorry. So it was a nice little bunch of people.

6 LC: And you got to stay at McClelland, as you've said.

7 AS: Yes.

8 LC: Was that important to you, to be able to stay there?

9 AS: I was glad to stay. They didn't have any place for me at the time to put me so  
10 it was fortuitous that that position was available.

11 LC: Were there issues that came up that kind of tested your abilities in that  
12 position? Any difficulties arise that you can tell us about or command decisions that you  
13 had to take?

14 AS: Only one big one and I don't want to talk about it.

15 LC: Okay, sure. You were there from 1976 to 1978.

16 AS: Yeah.

17 LC: Were you again giving thought to possibly retiring at this point?

18 AS: Well, you're always sort of thinking about it but the coloneling branch called  
19 me one day and offered me the chance to go to—I've forgotten where—Germany, I  
20 think, and I said, "I really don't want to go." They called me back one day and said, "We  
21 want you to go to Bayonne, New Jersey." I said, "I surely do not want to go to Bayonne,  
22 New Jersey."

23 LC: That just wasn't very appealing at all.

24 AS: Well, the third time he said, "We have an assignment for you in  
25 Washington." "I don't want to go to Washington." He said, "Well, the packaderms have  
26 decided. Either you go or you retire." I said, "I'll go."

27 LC: Now when he said the packaderms, for someone who doesn't get that  
28 reference, what did you understand that to mean?

29 AS: The big boys.

30 LC: The big boys. (Laughs) So they had decided this was your third pitch and  
31 you could swing and hit it or not.

1 AS: And it was an assignment that was open and that I fit the qualification for, at  
2 least on paper.

3 LC: And this position—I'm looking at the notes you provided—was Director of  
4 Casualty and Memorial Affairs for the Army.

5 AS: Yeah, in the office of the Adjutant General.

6 LC: Okay. Where were you stationed?

7 AS: In the Forstall Building.

8 LC: Which is?

9 AS: It's right across the street from the mall and the Smithsonian. Out of my  
10 window I could see the Friar Gallery and what's more, I had windows on two sides.

11 LC: That sounds okay.

12 AS: I mean, that is something! (Laughs) People would come to my office and  
13 say, "How did you get this?" I'd say, "It came with the job."

14 LC: Well tell me about the work there as the director of this office. What things  
15 did you have within your responsibility area?

16 AS: One of the first responsibilities that we had at that time, we were the office of  
17 records of all of the prisoners of war and mission in action. Their personnel records were  
18 in my office as opposed to the normal place you would have them. And at the time we  
19 were still having hearings on determination on missing in action, whether to declare them  
20 as dead or continue them on the Army roles. During Korea, when you were captured  
21 your life stopped. If you were captured as a captain you came out as captain with no  
22 accumulated time. In Vietnam, if you were captured or MIA (Missing in Action) your  
23 whole career continued.

24 LC: Your career clock, essentially.

25 AS: You continued to gain longevity, you got raises as your cohort got raises and  
26 that was a big consideration because many of the families—well, there were several  
27 reasons. Some of them were monetary. Others were just absolute family ties. They  
28 wanted an answer. "Is my son dead? Are you still looking for him?" Those types of  
29 things. Particularly some of the wives, they wanted to get on with their lives but there  
30 were people who were shot down or captured as captains and then by the time Vietnam  
31 was over they had been promoted to colonel because all of their contemporaries had

1 been. So it was interesting. We were having hearings and they were in my office  
2 complex.

3 LC: Now were these public hearings? Could anyone attend or family members?

4 AS: Family members if they wanted to and we had a hearing officer. But the  
5 problem is, all of this was on the family to prove that person was alive and that's hard to  
6 do.

7 LC: Impossible.

8 AS: Yeah. But that was one of the important things that we did. Probably the  
9 most important thing that we did was take care of soldiers who died or who were  
10 seriously ill. All of the death reports came into our office and we had sergeants who  
11 maintained contact with the families. We were in contact with them on getting the  
12 remains home. And if somebody was seriously ill, I mean the doctors determined he was  
13 seriously ill, we would bring the family daily reports. It was hard work but it was  
14 rewarding work because the people were doing something and doing something that was  
15 important to somebody. That, I think, was one of the most important things that office  
16 did.

17 LC: Would you speak with family members when they were in the building on  
18 various kinds of business?

19 AS: They didn't come in to the building very much. We also oversaw Arlington  
20 Cemetery and the others. There were three cemeteries that did not revert to the VA when  
21 the VA took over most of the cemeteries: Arlington National Cemetery, the cemetery at  
22 the soldier's home, and the cemetery at West Point. And we had a shared responsibility  
23 with the Corps of Engineers for the maintenance and upkeep of all of that at those three  
24 cemeteries. So that was a fascinating part of the job.

25 LC: Yeah, tell me about what kind of things you had to oversee as far as, for  
26 example, Arlington affairs.

27 AS: Well, the adjutant general's office was responsible for the budget so that was  
28 probably one of the more important things because it had to be defended before  
29 Congress. And it took me a little while to learn that when you're presenting the  
30 president's budget, you must present it as if you like it.

31 LC: As if it is your own.

1 AS: Yes. And you're not permitted to say, "But we really need a million dollars  
2 for roads." Which I did one day, in essence.

3 LC: Did you?

4 AS: Yeah. I had not understood the rules and I got sort of sandbagged. But be  
5 that as it may I told them what I thought.

6 LC: Now was this up on the hill somewhere?

7 AS: Yes.

8 LC: So you were actually up there testifying?

9 AS: Yeah, to a committee.

10 LC: And you told them that maybe there were some repairs that needed to be  
11 done?

12 AS: Yeah. (Laughs)

13 LC: Oops. (Laughs)

14 AS: Yeah I planned out how much a mile of roads cost when I was in that job and  
15 the superintendent of the cemetery let me think he worked for me. It's such a prestige  
16 place and I learned a good bit. One of the things I did that I was proud of, most of the  
17 people who worked for me were civilians and most of them had never seen a military  
18 funeral so I arranged to have some training time for them. I called it training. And the  
19 cemetery sent its bus over and we let them see a funeral because that's what they were  
20 dealing with.

21 LC: Did you yourself go over on any regular basis over to Arlington?

22 AS: Fairly regular. I had a permanent visitor's pass so I didn't have to worry  
23 about getting in and finding a place to park. But a lot of people want to go to Arlington  
24 and so frequently on the weekends if somebody was visiting and had never seen it we'd  
25 go over. But I went over on a fairly regular basis just to talk to them and see what was  
26 going on. Like, when the president would lay a wreath I would certainly be there. I had  
27 a fleeting thought and it fled.

28 LC: That's all right. Maybe we'll get that one back. Can you describe the  
29 protocols for actually being able to be buried at Arlington, at least what they were when  
30 you were there? Do you remember those?

1 AS: Generally. Anybody who honorably retired could be buried there and people,  
2 veterans, who had a Purple Heart or a Silver Star or higher could be buried. Spouses,  
3 adult dependent children, and then other people as determined by the president.

4 LC: Where there any particular burials that you remember during that period that  
5 you attended?

6 AS: The chief of cemeteries for the VA (Department of Veteran Affairs) died and  
7 I went to his funeral because there were close ties between us and them. We worked  
8 together a good bit.

9 LC: Oh sure.

10 AS: It was the prettiest casket I have ever seen. I would have loved to have had it  
11 in my living room as an end table (laughs) or a coffee table. It was mahogany. It was  
12 gorgeous.

13 LC: (Laughs) Of course Arlington is a hugely moving place in the American  
14 mind, I think. Did you feel a special sense of responsibility, some kind of important  
15 feeling?

16 AS: Oh certainly. It's a national monument for sure. And one day I was on a  
17 committee with a general who had never been to Arlington. So I asked him if he would  
18 like to tour and one Sunday I picked him up and took him over and we were on one of  
19 those high spots where you look out and see these markers and he said, "All those  
20 graves." And it was just—it really hit him. It's a wonderful thing to go out to Arlington.  
21 The superintendent used to have a picnic on the Fourth of July and you would go out in  
22 front of Lee Custer's house and watch the fireworks. My fleeting thought was when  
23 President Carter was president and they had a memorial service for some group, and I  
24 cannot remember which one it was, but it was an amphitheater and everybody was  
25 there—the Supreme Court, a bunch of senators, and all that sort of stuff. But my  
26 memories of it, my greatest memory, there was an Air Force, I think, quartet who sang,  
27 "Precious Lord, Hold My Hand," and it was absolutely—and they were singing a capella.  
28 And all of the sudden while they were singing a bird started chirping along with them and  
29 at the end the president said, "All I can think of to say is, Amen." And it was such a  
30 touching event. General Marshal died just as I was retiring and I was on leave and I was

1 really sorry because I never saw a big funeral and that's probably the last truly big one  
2 there will be.

3 LC: General Marshall, Secretary of State?

4 AS: Yeah. I'm sorry, I misspoke. Omar Bradley.

5 LC: Omar Bradley, okay.

6 AS: Yes. And my office had the funeral plans and about once a year you pulled  
7 out the plans and reviewed them to be sure that they were correct.

8 LC: And that you were ready.

9 AS: Yeah, and that the Army was ready. The military in Washington was very  
10 much involved in things at Arlington because the troops belonged to them, the old guard.

11 LC: Absolutely. Last year you mentioned when we were talking that on occasion  
12 when you were going to work you encountered protestors. Do you remember that?

13 AS: (Laughs) Oh good grief, yes. (Laughs)

14 LC: What can you tell me about that?

15 AS: Well, they were frequently around the Pentagon and it made it hard to get  
16 into the Pentagon. I was in the same office as the nuclear energy people so the people  
17 decided they didn't like them and so they blocked our doors and we had to go in  
18 roundabout. We couldn't go in the front door, we had to go in roundabout and they were  
19 standing out there trying to give us things and I didn't take it. And one of them said,  
20 "Don't you think I have a right to say what I believe?" I said, "Yeah, and I have a right  
21 not to read it." The big thing was the year the farmers came to Washington on all their  
22 tractors.

23 LC: Nineteen-eighty, I think.

24 AS: And they blocked out driveways so we couldn't take our cars in and so  
25 people parked on the street and then the police towed them away or gave them tickets.  
26 That was fun. (Laughs)

27 LC: Did you just kind of take these things in stride?

28 AS: You didn't have much choice.

29 LC: Did you ever feel threatened?

30 AS: No. There was an entrance to the parking that was outside one of my  
31 windows and I could watch what was going on a lot of times and we would—one time, I

1 don't know which group it was but they were all lying down in the driveway. So the  
2 police would come and pick them up by their feet and pull them off and they'd come  
3 back and lie down again. The police would pull them off. So they were persistent. I was  
4 also there when the Christians came and it was one of the first big gatherings of  
5 fundamentalist Christians and they were over on the mall. And the lieutenant colonel  
6 who worked with me and I were walking around watching all of them and observing and  
7 this woman came up to us because we were the only thing in uniform I guess. She said,  
8 "I can't find my group." We said, "Well, what group were you with?" "I was with the  
9 New York group and I can't find them." We said, "Why don't you look for banners and  
10 see if you can find them." (Laughs)

11 LC: That was helpful. (Laughs)

12 AS: And then I was there when the Pope came.

13 LC: Yeah, tell me about that experience.

14 AS: Well, he was on the mall or he was going to appear on the mall and we went  
15 over during the week and watched them put up the platform and all that sort of thing. I  
16 asked a good Roman Catholic friend of mine if she was going down to see the Pope. She  
17 said, "No, I'm going to watch it on television. I can see better." So I decided that's what  
18 I'd do, too.

19 LC: But certainly his arrival there had to have been a huge event.

20 AS: Oh, it was. And I was there during Reagan's first inauguration. It was a  
21 gorgeous day. It was warm and sunny and so this same friend and I caught the Metro and  
22 went in to see that and we perched on a lamppost along the parade route. It was funny  
23 because they had some little fancy designs that we could stand on.

24 LC: So you just climbed up?

25 AS: Yeah. Stood on them and watched the parade. (Laughs)

26 LC: Do you know about where you were on Pennsylvania Avenue?

27 AS: Probably not far from the Martyr Station, if there is one. I really don't know,  
28 but it was right on the parade route.

29 LC: So I take it you had no official duties that day. You were on your own.

1 AS: I was on my own. I thought later, “I wish I had volunteered to march in the  
2 parade.” It would have been a long walk but it would have been a memorable  
3 experience.

4 LC: You were there nonetheless.

5 AS: Yeah, I was there.

6 LC: You stayed until—well, the president was inaugurated in January of ’81 so  
7 soon after that did you come to the point where you decided that you were in fact going  
8 to retire?

9 AS: I had been in that job for two and a half years so there was somebody else  
10 waiting in the wings for it. I could have stayed two more years but I didn’t want to be  
11 somebody for whom they had to find a make-work job. So that was a good indication to  
12 me it was time to retire.

13 LC: Did you have some mixed feelings about going toward the end of your  
14 military career? I mean you say you could have easily stayed in that position for another  
15 couple of years if circumstances had allowed.

16 AS: Well, I wouldn’t have been in that position and I didn’t really want anything  
17 else. There area a lot of jobs you could just sort of fill time in and I didn’t want one of  
18 those because I had had a very rewarding time in that job. Interesting things happened  
19 and it was a challenging job, and enjoyable. It sounds awful to say you enjoyed dealing  
20 with the things we did but it was. It was a good time. A good friend of mine said, when  
21 she retired she said, “I want to do it on my terms.” And I agreed with her. I don’t want  
22 them to tell me I have to retire. And it was a good time.

23 LC: And certainly a high point. I mean, you’ve indicated how important you felt  
24 this work was and that you had had a hand in really important things—the POW/MIA  
25 resolution issues. During that time did anything come up with regard to relations with  
26 Vietnam, with Hanoi, the government in Hanoi?

27 AS: Not for me. Now, we had—the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii,  
28 where all the identifications were made, was a part of my office and we had the mortuary  
29 in Dover, Delaware and in Oakland that were also a part of the activities of my office so  
30 that was an interesting part, too. You asked me if I ever talked to parents. Every now  
31 and then some irate mother would call and I would get her. One day Mrs. Smith called

1 and Mrs. Smith was very unhappy because some of her son's possessions had not been  
2 sent home. Among them were illegal weapons but I specifically remember that his dingo  
3 boots did not come home with his possessions. I don't remember how he had died but  
4 she was very irate and just berating me. And I was not being mad at her, I was just,  
5 "Mrs. Smith, I understand." And finally she said to me, "Nobody gives a shit about my  
6 son and nobody cares." I said, "I care, Mrs. Smith, and I am listening to you." (Laughs)  
7 And then another retired mess sergeant called and the Army had turned down—his son  
8 had shot himself in the head playing Russian roulette. His son was an MP and the Army  
9 had ruled that his injury was due to his own misconduct. He should have known enough  
10 not to hold a weapon to his head, especially as an MP. But he was permanently  
11 handicapped and disabled. The sergeant thought the Army ought to reverse the findings  
12 and it had been reviewed by everybody but he was one I talked to. Sometimes I'd be in  
13 the office late and I'd pick up the phone but anyway, he threatened to go to "60 Minutes"  
14 and all the things to get attention for his son's case. I told him about the Army Board for  
15 Correction of Military Records and I said, "That is your only recourse because they can  
16 change anything." He had never heard of it.

17 LC: Really?

18 AS: As much as he didn't like what we were doing, he would call me every now  
19 and then to ask me advice. And that was an interesting turn on things, I thought. Mostly  
20 I dealt with people on paper but it was still dealing with human lives.

21 LC: You know, in crucial national issues that obviously continue even down to  
22 the present day—

23 AS: Well, there was a fire in the embassy in Pakistan during that time and an  
24 Army warrant officer was killed and that was very difficult because all of his records  
25 were in the same building with him. So it was almost impossible to do an identification.  
26 The only thing we had—we couldn't find his dental records, we couldn't find his civilian  
27 dentist—nothing. But he had very crooked teeth and when they would describe to his  
28 wife she said that she identified him from that, she accepted the identification from that.  
29 That was one of those cases that got all sorts of interest from the packadersms.

30 LC: These are difficult issues for you to negotiate, too.

1 AS: Well, the sergeants who worked for me worked with that sort of stuff all the  
2 time but that one got high-level interest.

3 LC: Was that because—what was the reason?

4 AS: Because it was in Pakistan and because it was a military man and there was a  
5 fire and the generals decided that they had to manage it.

6 LC: They had to get involved in that one.

7 AS: Uh-huh. And the sergeant would have done it a lot more efficiently.

8 (Laughs)

9 LC: Ann, as you think back on your career and this has come up a couple of  
10 times, but I wonder how you feel about your service in Vietnam. In the context of  
11 everything else that you did was it something that you still think was an important part of  
12 your career path?

13 AS: Yes, I think it was because at the time it was where the action was. It was a  
14 strange time and you don't go out and drink coffee on the top of one of the biggest hotels  
15 in Saigon and watch the artillery flares from beyond. It was an unreal sort of life. War  
16 was all around but it wasn't there. I never felt particularly frightened. It was not the  
17 most rewarding assignment I ever had but I'm glad I had it.

18 LC: How do you view the Vietnam conflict generally? I mean, is this something  
19 you've given much thought to, whether the United States—

20 AS: You can't help but think of it now.

21 LC: Because of Iraq?

22 AS: Yeah. And because of how we don't learn.

23 LC: Can you say a little more about that? What do you mean?

24 AS: There are different wars. There are totally different wars but we still seem to  
25 fail to think of the consequences. It seemed to me, since I'm such a tactician and  
26 strategist—

27 LC: You are, actually.

28 AS: —that it was ridiculous to think that they were going to welcome us with  
29 open arms in Iraq and be so glad to have us and that we didn't plan for anything that  
30 happened after got there and won. For example, having no security for such things as  
31 their treasures, their museums, and we are, it seems to me, totally oblivious to other

1 people's cultures. Ours is so good we have to give it to everybody. (Laughs) And I'm  
2 not being un-American or un-patriotic. I just think we're not realistic.

3 LC: About our planning for another nation and its development?

4 AS: By assuming that because we have it they want it. They may want some of  
5 us but they don't want us superimposed upon them. I just finished reading a book called  
6 *The Battle for God*, and it's about fundamentalism in Protestant Christianity, Islam, and  
7 among the Jews and the roots of fundamentalism. And a lot of it is peoples not  
8 understanding other cultures. Fascinating book.

9 LC: And so by this lack of understanding they then become intolerant and then  
10 have to do something about the culture they can't tolerate? Something like that?

11 AS: Yeah. And that a lot of fundamentalism—and this isn't just in religion, I  
12 think—is because people can't deal with change. They don't adjust to it well and they  
13 want to hold onto what was and modernization is an anathema. So there. That's my big  
14 word for the day, and that's off the track.

15 LC: Well, but it's an interesting sort of commentary because it does have to do  
16 with why there's so much, for example, public support for the American mission Iraq,  
17 Operation Iraqi Freedom.

18 AS: I think everybody, almost without exception, would support the soldiers and  
19 want them success. But the policy is another thing and I think the policy was forced upon  
20 us and we may have become a little bit more jaded about it. I may be speaking only for  
21 myself. I have become more jaded but I never was very un-jaded.

22 LC: And you know, I wonder if you can kind of draw parallels between the fact  
23 that you were in Vietnam in 1970, which many historians and command personnel who  
24 were there think was a turning point year when the United States had sort of won part of  
25 the war but couldn't figure out how to meet the needs of domestic complaints about the  
26 length of the war and couldn't figure out how to, essentially, get out of South Vietnam  
27 and leave it as a functional and secure entity. And I wonder if you see that we're having  
28 sort of some of the same problems in Iraq. We can't really figure out how to get out,  
29 leaving a functional and secure political entity behind us.

1 AS: Well, I think in both cases we certainly underestimated our enemy and helped  
2 create some of our enemies but I'm not a deep enough thinking to draw large  
3 conclusions.

4 LC: I think you've done pretty well. Ann is there anything I haven't asked you  
5 about in the course of the interview that you've been thinking, "Gosh, I hope she asks me  
6 something on that topic?"

7 AS: You've been ahead of me all the way.

8 LC: (Laughs) Well, Ann, I want to thank you very much for the time that you've  
9 taken and that you've invested in this oral history interview and all the insights that  
10 you've contributed and you've done so very freely and I want to thank you for that.

11 AS: Well, you're welcome. I've enjoyed it.