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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Kenneth Moll
Conducted by Kelly Crager
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Transcribed by Blair Barnhill**

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 Kelly Crager: This is Kelly Crager conducting an oral history interview with Col.
2 Kenneth Moll. Today is 12 February 2010. I am in Lubbock, Texas, on the campus of
3 Texas Tech University, and Colonel Moll is joining me from his home in Fort Belvoir,
4 Virginia. Colonel Moll, to begin this interview I'd like to get some biographical
5 information if I might. Could you tell me when you were born and where?

6 Kenneth Moll: I was born in California's Central Valley, a little town named
7 Oakdale—that's one word, Oakdale—California in 1927.

8 KC: In 1927. What were your parents' names?

9 KM: Erna and Leo. That's E-R-N-A, Leo Moll, were their married names.

10 KC: Okay, and what did your parents do for a living, sir?

11 KM: Well, my father was a—we had a farm that had come from my grandfather.
12 He farmed some. He was an auto mechanic and salesman, and ended up working more in
13 the automobile field and the farming area, the farm itself which was originally a square
14 mile. Then a corner of that got chopped off for a reservoir dam and so on. Anyway, it was
15 a typical California farm. It was irrigated in part. We grew rice there which was an
16 unusual project, unusual crop back in the 30s, but we were one of the original groups that
17 started raising rice in the Central Valley of California where you could get irrigation and
18 so on, and do it like the Japanese did, pretty much.

19 KC: And what about your mother? Was she a stay-at-home mom?

1 KM: She was a teacher.

2 KC: Really?

3 KM: She was—when I was born she had been a teacher originally and when she
4 got pregnant, why, she quit teaching, and then later on she started teaching again and my
5 parents broke up and she ended up working pretty much full time as a teacher, which is
6 where she had started. So, that was, that was her story. Her specialty was the primary
7 grades, first, second, and third grade.

8 KC: What was it like growing up there in California? You were born in '27, so
9 you would have experienced the Great Depression with a father who was a farmer for the
10 most part. What was life like for you as a child growing up in the Depression?

11 KM: It was depressed. I was eighteen, I think, before I ever got out of the state.
12 We didn't travel very much. We stayed close at home and had very little experience with
13 the broad wide world. My mother, though, being a teacher, did concentrate on giving a
14 good initiation before school and during, pressing us and she was our teacher for awhile,
15 for four years at the school we attended. But she gave us an excellent preparation for the
16 outside world, far superior to what one would expect from such a remote little town. I
17 thank her for making my twin brother and I qualified for the academies. He went to
18 Annapolis and I went to West Point. We got a little bit of fame—a short-lived fame from
19 that fact that there was one twin who was a middie and one was a cadet.

20 KC: I've actually seen a photograph of that, as a matter of fact, of you and your
21 brother online.

22 KM: My brother is dead now. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's several years
23 ago and died a year ago.

24 KC: I'm sorry to hear that.

25 KM: It's unfortunate but these things happen. I myself am now eighty-two so I
26 know my time is coming, as well.

27 KC: You were talking about growing up in the Depression and your education
28 and your mother's influence there. What was it like socioeconomically for you guys?

29 KM: It was, it was the way kids grew up. Some kids were richer and got to travel
30 more than we did, but we had—were well clothed, well fed, well educated thanks to my
31 mother's continuing insistence on that. So we thought that's the way everybody lived.

1 KC: Mm-hmm. Do you remember the general attitude toward, say, the Franklin
2 Roosevelt administration, the New Deal? What kind of political influences did you have?

3 KM: The political influence was non-existent, at least as far as we were
4 concerned. We were in such a small remote little town, but the town itself and my parents
5 and the people we knew, they were all very interested in what was going on during the
6 Depression. Were times getting better or worse? Actually, they didn't move very far until
7 World War II broke out and, as you know, the whole economy then changed. It was just a
8 remote little town that I read about, whether it's in the Midwest or the Northeast or out
9 West, they seem to have that commonality of down to earth, remoteness, if I could say it
10 that way.

11 KC: Okay, now, you mentioned the Second World War and you are a World War
12 II veteran. What do you remember about the early days of the war, prior to your
13 enlistment?

14 KM: That's a good question. Of course, the war for the United States started in
15 Pearl Harbor in 1941. I happened to have my mother's brother, an uncle who was a
16 doctor in Honolulu, so we listened very avidly. Came home from Sunday school—of
17 course, the time was more, it was some three hours advanced from Honolulu—came
18 home from Sunday school, the radio was on and it was announcing about the attack on
19 Pearl Harbor, and so we were much involved in that. They broadcasted to the schools. I
20 was at that point, in 1941, I would have been fourteen years old. [I was] most interested
21 in it but not at all thinking in terms that I was going to get in it personally because I
22 wouldn't be going in the service until I was eighteen and was graduated from high
23 school.

24 KC: Right.

25 KM: I don't think I answered that question adequately. It was just unexpected and
26 a neighbor across the road from us, our nearest neighbor, as a matter of fact, their son had
27 gone in the Army, he'd already been drafted and so we were thinking in terms of Bell's
28 boy. He survived the war but it was a long period for him and four years later, just before
29 the Japanese surrendered I graduated from high school in 1945. Having turned eighteen
30 in April, I was deferred to graduate 'til June and entered then just before the atomic bomb

1 and the surrender. So I was actually only in uniform for about three months before the
2 armistice was signed.

3 KC: What about the home front during the war? As a young boy, as a teenager,
4 what do you remember about things like rationing and keeping up with scrap drives and
5 keeping up with the news and things like that?

6 KM: It certainly, it was a very disciplined—the whole country got behind the
7 effort. I can remember we had a rather old decrepit car, but it ran and we got an A card,
8 an A sticker for the windshield that told you how much gas you could get. As I recall, it
9 was four gallons a week for an A card, and we were mighty happy to have that. If you
10 had a job that took you further then there was a local committee that would look and give
11 you more gasoline allowance if needed. Everything from candy and chewing gum to
12 gasoline was rationed and you were, you felt lucky every time you found they were still
13 in stock and you could buy with these tickets if you needed a ticket for some things like,
14 gasoline, for example. If you had the ticket and the money, why, you could go on for
15 another thirty miles.

16 KC: (Laughs) It seems like a kind of perfect storm of having the need, having the
17 ticket, having the supplies there to purchase them, was often times a pretty wonderful
18 thing I think for children, as I've talked to different people who were on a home front, in
19 terms of toys and chewing gum and shoes and things like that.

20 KM: But the country was united more so than today. There are so many different
21 streams, not that the overall strength was all that much greater but everyone was behind
22 the war and you didn't find—oh, you had shirkers. Some people fled to Canada or
23 something to escape being drafted, but they were disgraced, the shirkers. There were a
24 few even in our little town that decided they didn't want to go to war.

25 KC: And what was the general reaction to them in town?

26 KM: Reaction to them?

27 KC: Yes.

28 KM: I think in one word, contempt. People didn't have any kind of a get even
29 feeling, or—it was just a contempt. There is a guy that is not willing to carry his load and,
30 of course, you had the blue star for every one of your family that was serving in the
31 military that would be proudly displayed in the front window of the house. Two blue stars

1 and later on three because my twin brother and I had a younger, a third brother, and so
2 you had blue stars, and if your son was killed, which fortunately didn't happen in our
3 family, that blue star was changed to gold. So, there were some families on the street that
4 had a gold star in their window and it sounds corny and very simple, but those things
5 were primary during the war and people looked to see what kind of stars you had hanging
6 in your window.

7 KC: It was a very important part of it. This overall larger war effort and the
8 individual's roll in it, individual's family in it.

9 KM: Yes, that's an astute observation, but that's what it was. It was not only a big
10 national effort but also a compilation of a hundred million smaller contributions.

11 KC: Absolutely, that's absolutely correct. All right, now, you mentioned that you
12 would get in right before the end of the war, before the atomic bombings of Japan. What
13 led you to want to enlist?

14 KM: Well, first of all, there was the draft. My twin brother and I turned
15 eighteen—which took effect at age eighteen. On your eighteenth birthday you went in.
16 Our draft—my birthday being on April the 30th, I turned eighteen before graduating as a
17 senior. Actually, the school kept until June, so we were over eighteen but we were
18 deferred, so naturally, or smartly, so we could get our high school degree, but then
19 immediately go in the Navy. My brother and I, my twin brother had taken an aptitude test
20 for a new program that the Navy had. It was called the “Eddy” program, Captain Eddy,
21 E-D-D-Y. He's the one that originated that and there was this new, whole new field
22 involving oscilloscopes. I can remember we went to the 1939 San Francisco World's Fair
23 and saw an oscilloscope and then my brother went and stood in front of a camera and I
24 could go to the receiver on the other end of the room and see my brother. We were both
25 short so I could only see the top of his head. But back in 1939 was the beginnings of the
26 entire universe of electronics and that was a big focus of the San Francisco World's Fair
27 in 1939. I guess I drifted off, but all of the males in the high school class that graduated in
28 1945, June of 1945, were anticipating if they hadn't quit school and joined up, as a few
29 did, were anticipating going into the service.

30 KC: And you chose the Navy.

1 KM: Yes, because we were able to qualify. My brother and I were the only two, I
2 think, from our high school class, about four, five, or six of us—my brother and I stood at
3 the top of our class, or near the top of our class, and we both passed this electronics
4 aptitude test. That's what you'd call it today. In those days, it was a test about this new
5 oscilloscope and electrons chasing each other. To us it was a natural, easy concept and
6 we did well in these tests that we took two or three months before graduating from high
7 school, and that qualified us for this "Captain Eddy's" program that in the beginning
8 went through a little algebra and so on in the beginning, which the course altogether
9 lasted about fifteen months, but it began with just a review of just some mathematical and
10 arithmetical principles and then it went into electronics and see if you could, could work
11 with volts and the concepts that went behind the oscilloscope, which we had first seen at
12 the World's Fair. As I said, we were both very fortunate, both to be well qualified or well
13 suited to this field, and secondly, to get into it at that early point in our career because it
14 served us both well forever after. It gave us a good leg up even though we didn't end up
15 working in electronics, per se. It was a new field.

16 KC: And how well did you do in this "Eddy" program?

17 KM: Sir?

18 KC: How well did you do in the program?

19 KM: Oh, I did very well. A matter of fact, it was a nearly one-year program. We
20 went to boot camp and it tended, I think, there were three segments to it, one-month
21 segment, and then a three-month segment, and then a nine-month segment for a year. I
22 went through most of that except after the war was over and so on, I got discharged about
23 six months before completing the whole thing. But I did well and survived. A lot of the
24 kids got washed out immediately, but those that did get that introduction, they were into
25 electronics before Silicon Valley was and that was something that I think shaped and
26 helped my career progression ever after.

27 KC: I'm sure that it did. Those kind of programs of the Second World War had
28 major lasting impact on the future of American technology, absolutely. You were in
29 toward the end of the war, obviously. What was the atmosphere like in the Navy when
30 you joined? And I'm talking about boot camp, peoples attitude, morale, looking toward

1 the future? What was that early time in the Navy like for you outside of the “Eddy”
2 program?

3 KM: I was supportive. It was, as I mentioned, everybody was behind the war
4 effort. You’d go out, service men would go out on the highway and stick out their thumb
5 and you’d get picked up by the first car or the second or third car that went by. They’d
6 stop and pick up somebody hitchhiking home or whatever destination on the road and
7 there was no hesitancy, no fear from the public that they were going to pick somebody up
8 and then get robbed, or raped, or whatever. It was a whole nation cooperating, and we did
9 hitchhike. We were in California and our home was also in California, but it was about a
10 hundred miles away, and we would hitch hike home for a three-day weekend and back.
11 You didn’t have to stand in the highway very long at all before somebody would stop and
12 pick you up and take you to the next little town, and then you catch another ride, two or
13 three, and then you’d be home before the day was out.

14 KC: What do you remember about the end of the war and the way that it ended?

15 KM: I remember we had gone in the service in June and went to boot camp in
16 Great Lakes, near Milwaukee, and then we were on boot leave. It was too far away from
17 California to go home for a week or ten days, however long boot leave was, but my
18 brother and I were on the streets of Chicago, downtown Chicago, in our sailor outfit and
19 we were so young and naïve and unused to big town partying that these girls would come
20 up and kiss us on the lips and we were embarrassed. We didn’t know how to deal with
21 this. It was a delight. Everybody loved the guy in uniform when peace was declared and
22 the Japanese surrendered. The atomic bomb—well, I can remember also Roosevelt had
23 died. What month was it he died? In May, was it May?

24 KC: April of ’45.

25 KM: April of ’45. I felt that his—well, I felt personally, and I have since in my
26 further reading, I’ve felt kind of, I’ve been ambiguous, I guess, uncertain of what I think
27 of Roosevelt. He did a lot of great things, but in the end of his life I think he perjured
28 himself, prostituted himself for whatever, for his own personal reasons and when he died
29 I can remember seeing the headline—when was it he died? April, you say, or May? I felt
30 that he’d been hanging on and risking my life and millions of others lives with an old
31 man in a position that he should’ve given it up to somebody that would’ve been more

1 capable of running the country. So I found a conjunction there of things that were
2 happening so fast, Roosevelt died, I graduated, I went in the Navy, I went to boot camp,
3 got introduced to military life, and went out of the state for the first time in my life. I got
4 a train in Oakland and went back to Chicago and up to Milwaukee to Great Lakes, the
5 first time we'd been out of the state. So many things were happening so fast and then the
6 end of the war. I formed, not immediately, but over reflection, over the next year or two
7 or three, I formed some rather firm positions that a lot of the times didn't agree to what
8 the history books now tell you about how popular Roosevelt was and how sad it was he
9 died. He was serving himself for the entire last year of his life, not the country. I was, and
10 remain to this day very bitter about his seizing that fourth term for his own personal
11 gratification and not the country's.

12 KC: Very interesting, interesting. What about your future when the war is over?
13 You'd been training in the Navy. You'd been preparing to go to war. Now the war is
14 over. What's next for Ken Moll?

15 KM: That's a good question. We were, I think it was, what I've said already
16 indicates—we were a poor family. We weren't—we had enough to eat, we had a house
17 that was paid for, but we were poor. We didn't travel. We did do anything luxurious. We
18 didn't have parties. It was just a small-town world and suddenly we're out in this big
19 world going across the country in the Navy and in uniform. When the war was actually
20 ended we were graduated from Great Lakes and went out to Del Monte, California. The
21 big Del Monte Hollywood hotel had been taken over and we actually lived there for two
22 or three months. In the meantime, in order to get my own education, which I knew I
23 couldn't afford, I had to find it some way. I had written my congressman and asked him
24 about an appointment to one of the academies, and unbeknownst to me my brother, twin
25 brother—we were identical. We did things together, we did think alike and often acted
26 alike but we didn't always communicate to the other what we were doing. So, I wrote to
27 my congressman and asked him about an appointment—"Bud" Gearhart was his name.
28 He was from Fresno, which was eighty miles away in the Central Valley. I'd never even
29 been to Fresno in my life. But anyway, he said, "Go take a test," which we did it at
30 Presidio, or I did at the Presidio in California, and my brother did the same thing but we
31 didn't tell each other.

1 KC: Is that right? You had no idea your brother was applying, as well?

2 KM: Sir?

3 KC: You had no idea your brother was applying, as well?

4 KM: No. No, as a matter of fact, he wrote back, he said, “Are you in any relation
5 to Kendall Moll of Oakdale who applied?” But anyway, we were together at the Del
6 Monte Hotel. It took me to the Navy electronics program in late 1945 when I got a
7 telegram that said “From: Bud Gearhart,” it said he was giving me a principal
8 appointment to West Point. I think I had taken a government military test in San
9 Francisco in the summertime. I guess I did pretty well because he gave me the primary
10 appointment to West Point. In the meantime, in the Navy, they had announced, one night
11 that we’d all sit down at the Del Monte hotel, this swabbie sort of meal, but it was a
12 resort Hollywood hotel, the whole setting then conflicted with the military austerity of
13 our schooling there. Anyway, we were at the meal, and they announced as they would
14 have announcements before the meal. The captain or the commander or whoever it was
15 would get up and announce different things that people ought to know. He said there was
16 a—those who are interested in an appointment to the Naval Academy should check in
17 with the executive officer on the third floor, give their names. I went up and put my name
18 in. My brother didn’t. We didn’t really talk about it. Our opinion was we weren’t
19 conflicting, we weren’t competing with each other, we just—here, let me stray a minute
20 off the subject, the immediate subject. If you’re a twin, an identical twin, and raised in a
21 little town and nobody can tell the one from the other, you get so tired of being just half a
22 person, that then sometimes we would do things without telling the other. In this case,
23 we’d both applied, written to the congressman. He wrote me back and said, “Are you any
24 relation to Kendall Moll of Oakdale who had applied to go to one of the academies?”
25 Anyway, I took the test, my brother didn’t bother to do that and suddenly now we’d been
26 in the Navy six months, we were still together. They announced the following seamen
27 should report to the exec’s office and he read off a number of names, one of which was
28 mine, and the others had applied for Annapolis, as well, so I knew what was—we were to
29 get information on up there at the exec’s office. It was to go to Annapolis. In the
30 meantime, I had gotten just a day before or so, the result of the exam that I had taken at
31 the Presidio months earlier in the summer, a primary appointment to West Point. “Did I

1 want it?" I wired back, "Yes, I'll take it." Within a day or two they had this
2 announcement at the hotel where all the sailors were that they could apply to go to
3 Annapolis. I said "Kendall, I've got mine. Why don't you go on up instead of me?" They
4 had read my initials. He'd applied, too, but for some reason they left his initials off. So
5 K.L. Moll, that's me, told K.D. Moll, my brother, "Kendall, they mistook us once again
6 and announced the wrong Moll. They read off your name but it was really me they were
7 after, but I don't want to go. Why don't you go on up there and just pretend they were
8 right all along." So he did, he went up there and he put his name down to go to the Naval
9 Academy prep school and the course is that he was able to do that and then was sent to
10 Annapolis and entered in July of 1946, entered the Naval Academy. Meanwhile, I had
11 already received my appointment in the fall of '45 but wasn't to start until July 1st 1946. I
12 checked in at West Point and he checked in the same day at Annapolis and that put us
13 on—in kind of an unusual situation. I think we weren't the first twins that ever graduated
14 from separate academies, but we were the only ones during that time period. There were
15 several, it wasn't a big deal, but there were two or three articles and various squibs wrote
16 about this curiosity and since we looked, looked alike, only in our own family could
17 people really tell us apart. There are a lot of pictures in several articles about twins at
18 different academies. So, I bet maybe really more than you wanted to know, but that's
19 how it happened that we both entered separate academies on July 1st 1946.

20 KC: That is very, very interesting. What did you want to do? You entered the
21 military academy, what did you want to do when you were finished? What area did you
22 want to go into, was it infantry, or artillery? What did you want to do?

23 KM: Well, that's an interesting question, and I was so youthful, so
24 unknowledgeable in the ways of the world. I didn't know enough to really tell the
25 difference very much. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I wanted to get a college
26 education and this was the way to do it. In those days, in 1945, I had made a study of
27 this—it cost something like ten thousand dollars to get a four-year college education.
28 That is if you work during the summer and didn't spend a lot of money on cars and
29 women, it still cost ten thousand dollars. Well, we didn't have anywhere near, or I had no
30 prospect of ten thousand dollars to get myself a college education and yet, primarily
31 because of our mother's inspiration and urging, we both wanted to get the education and

1 this was the route to do that. That's really what set me to take the exam for West Point in
2 the first place and then to follow up with the application to Annapolis. I didn't really care.
3 It could have been one or the other as long as I'd get the education. I'm not sure if I really
4 answered your question but that's why I obtained, then, from the congressman the
5 appointment to West Point and when the chance to go to Annapolis, or at least go to the
6 Annapolis preparatory school came up I told Kendall, "I've got mine, why don't you go
7 up and you enter the program?" They screwed up as I think I said. They announced his
8 initials but it was really mine that they were after. I was a guide, and so he went up and
9 did that. I used to kid him, he wouldn't really respond very vigorously to this, but I used
10 to kid him that I got both appointments. He didn't like that very much, but anyway that's
11 the way I saw it.

12 KC: Well, tell me about life there for you at the military academy.

13 KM: I certainly will—must preface that by saying I didn't know what to expect. I
14 had read brochures and applied to be a West Point cadet and the government information
15 so—but I really had no idea what to expect. The Navy discharged me so I had about four
16 or five months to go home and do what I wanted before I got on a train to go back to
17 West Point. I helped my mother paint the house. The house needed painting and I spent a
18 couple of months painting the house and doing some other things. Then I got on a train
19 and went back and stayed at the Thayer Hotel at West Point, which is on the grounds, of
20 course, and went up the next morning to hitchhike a ride to where we were supposed to
21 check in, down in the cadet barracks. Officer, a field grade officer, obviously a West
22 Pointer that was on the staff, a teacher probably, he picked me up, took me on down there
23 and he said, "This is going to be a rough four years for ya'. I hope you're prepared for it."
24 I didn't really know what he was talking about, but then you get into the central area at
25 West Point, which is where they put you into a very straight up, hard, brace, stand at
26 attention, and then they forget about you for fifteen minutes and you see how if you're
27 willed or not. It was—it had been that way at West Point, still is to a large extent, been
28 that way for one hundred fifty years nearly, but I didn't, had no idea what really to
29 expect. I went out in front of the Thayer Hotel and hitchhiked a ride. A field grade
30 officer, on staff obviously, picked me up and took me down, dropped me off at the

1 central area where I reported in as a new cadet and I didn't know where things were
2 going to go. Fortunately, they didn't give me much time to think about all of that.

3 KC: So how well did you do with the curriculum and the discipline and the
4 training and all of that there at West Point?

5 KM: Well, I did pretty well. What was my—I think I graduated in the top one
6 hundred or near the top one hundred out of—how many did we have there? Six-hundred-
7 seventy, I think. So I stood well within the top twenty percent. Academics were easy for
8 me. The physical regime was tough, but compared to some of these kids that had never
9 exercised or done any work—one poor guy, I remember, he couldn't even open his rifle
10 chamber. He didn't have enough upper body strength to do that. Compared to that, I was
11 in pretty good shape. So, I went with the flow. Plebe year is supposed to be a shock, but
12 only if you're not used to doing things the hard way, not used to—my life had not been
13 so luxurious that I wasn't able to handle it. I'm not sure if I said that right, but anyway I
14 have read ever since, and have felt ever since that plebe year, even Beast Barracks,
15 wasn't all that bad. Sure, you had to do things that you'd never done before. You were
16 made to look like an idiot, but really it wasn't anything life threatening. I think that's
17 about all I can say about that.

18 KC: All right, now, when do you finish your time there at West Point?

19 KM: How did I finish my time?

20 KC: When, when did you graduate?

21 KM: Oh, I graduated in 1950.

22 KC: You graduated in 1950. So this was spring of '50?

23 KM: Yes, eighteen days, eighteen days before Pearl Harbor. Not before Pearl
24 Harbor, before the Korean War invasion, we graduated. My roommate went in the Army.
25 I always wanted to go in the Air Force. I stood high enough in the Air Force slots, they
26 start with the number one man in the class and he gets to announce what service, what
27 branch he wants to go into. Then they gradually get filled up as you go down through the
28 whole class, and the last guy in the class, he has to take whatever is left. I had all the
29 choices but I had just gotten through our summer trips and the Air Force shows and the
30 F-80 comes screaming along at Mach one—or so they said, wasn't really mach one—but
31 I thought, "Gee, that's for me." So the announcement came, and I stood, as I said I think

1 about somewhere around a hundred out of six-hundred-seventy, all the spaces were still
2 available, the different branches were available. I said I wanted to go to the Air Force. In
3 those days, and you should record, I'm sure you have it in your records, but in those days
4 between the National Security Act of 1947, which established the Department of Defense
5 and the Department of the Air Force, there hadn't been an Air Force before, there had just
6 been the Army Air Force. In 1947, they made them into three services. Pending the Air
7 Force Academy, which didn't start producing graduates until, I think it was 1960 I think
8 was their first class, certainly not their first class but the first class at the Air Force
9 Academy. There was a period of some thirteen years that they would take a quarter of the
10 class at West Point and a quarter of the class at Annapolis and they would go to the Air
11 Force. Neither the Army nor the Navy liked that one damned bit. The Air Force was a
12 separate service due to the 1947 National Security Act and so they were losing it.
13 Anyway, the summer trips, which was where I saw the F-80 come screaming across and I
14 said to myself, "I want to be a fighter pilot." They had to do some Air Force things, too,
15 West Point did and Annapolis did. So some of their people were going to volunteer as I
16 did to go to the Air Force and they let us go. By the time—let me say it a little different—
17 eighteen days after we graduated, and we'd made our choices several weeks before we
18 graduated, but we'd gone in, we'd been commissioned second lieutenants in the Army or
19 the Air Force. Eighteen days after we graduated the Korean War broke out, and my
20 roommate, who had decided to go in the infantry, he and I were going to spend our sixty
21 days graduation leave after West Point together. He lived in San Diego and we were
22 going to terrorize the entire southern California. We had all kinds of plans that we were
23 going to hitchhike a military flight over to Hawaii and do all kinds of things. By the time
24 that sixty days was up he was in the Pusan Perimeter. He'd been called up immediately to
25 the 2nd Division at McChord or at Seattle and put on a boat and they steamed over there
26 to Pusan and he got off that boat and went into the Pusan Perimeter and he was fighting
27 for his life before I ever checked in for flying school sixty days later to Texas. He'd won
28 a Silver Star and he'd done all kinds of things before I ever even got my wings.

29 KC: That's incredible.

30 KM: I think I'm drifting off subject of your question. Maybe I better let you ask
31 another one or ask the same one again.

1 KC: No, no, no. That's perfectly fine. That's an incredible story how quickly that
2 happened. What did you think about this North Korean invasion of South Korea and
3 America's role in it? There you are freshly minted, second lieutenant, going to go into the
4 Air Force, what did you think about this invasion and what it meant for the United
5 States?

6 KM: That's a good question, and the answer is I didn't know. I hadn't been out of
7 the country at all, so I didn't know what it was like over in Korea, and I didn't get there
8 really until 1953. I did go over, after getting my wings, to Japan, but I flew there for a
9 year before I got to Korea, and got in combat there. It was puzzling. Now, I've since—I
10 was just looking at that the other day for some reason—I have since written an article
11 about those days the Japanese, I mean the North Koreans, had decided they were going to
12 go down and sweep down all through South Korea and take Pusan and shut off the
13 Americans from coming in. As I recall, this was an article that I wrote, I don't have the
14 exact title, but an article that was published in *Air Force Magazine*. It was twenty-two to
15 twenty-seven days is what they had said, the North Koreans, that they were going to get
16 down there to Pusan and they had it all plotted out just how far they were going to go
17 every single day. The timing, the twenty-two to twenty-seven days, obviously came from
18 their estimate of how long it would take America to reinforce and get substantial forces
19 into Korea from Japan or wherever we could get them from. If they could take the whole
20 peninsula by twenty-two to twenty-seven days, then too bad, Dad. There was no way the
21 U.S. was going to go in there except by a D-Day kind of landing which we were unlikely
22 to do. What happened was that the North, the Soviets had prepared this war plan for the
23 North Koreans, and as I say I have this article that I wrote for the Air Force. I'd be glad to
24 make a copy and send it to you.

25 KC: Please do.

26 KM: The staging, the six weeks that they had plotted, they could take, the North
27 Koreans could take to get down to Pusan, and that was time enough. Twenty-two to
28 twenty-seven days was what they allowed, that was less than six weeks, but they wanted
29 to shut off Pusan and the U.S. ability to just send a troop ship over there to Pusan and
30 reinforce. They had proceeded halfway down the peninsula at a fairly leisurely pace,
31 actually they could have taken the entire South Korea in a period of just days if they'd

1 really pushed hard at it first. What they overlooked was air power, and when air power
2 came in and they started smashing all those railroads, railroad bridges, which was the
3 way you transport in Korea down from North Korea, down to the Pusan area in the south,
4 was through sort of like how California had all of these little streams flowing into the
5 Yellow Sea, and bridges that the railroads went across and so on. When the F-51s from
6 Japan, when the U.S. F-51s came in they decided to focus on the bridges and they cut all
7 those bridges down and the trains, North Korean trains were stopped and sometimes
8 they'd be there for days while we would come in and pound the hell out of it. What the
9 Soviets, who prepared these plans for the North Koreans, planned to do it all in twenty-
10 two to twenty-seven days, what they'd overlooked air power. It never once occurred to
11 them that they couldn't get those forces all down to Pusan because the railroads couldn't
12 proceed beyond the next ravine where they had to have a bridge that they no longer now
13 existed. An interesting story. So this was all in retrospect much later. My roommate, by
14 the time I reported into flying school sixty days after graduation, he was already in the
15 Pusan Perimeter fighting for his life and got a Silver Star, a major achievement, three
16 pages in the official Army history of just taking a small platoon that he was the platoon
17 commander and evading a great hoard of North Koreans that had killed everybody else in
18 the company. His name is Al Fern, F-E-R-N, from San Diego. He won a Silver Star for
19 that achievement, and all of this was done before I ever even reported in for flying
20 training. [Al Fern, one of our dearest and closest friends, suffered a stroke and had
21 symptoms much like Ken's. Al died on 6 Nov 2013 in Austin, TX, where he had lived in
22 a retirement home near his youngest daughter.] It was wild times, and it was, as I said
23 earlier, 1953, before I myself was able to get over there and fly in combat on a temporary
24 assignment from Japan.

25 KC: Where do you go for flight training? Where here in Texas did you go?
26 Lackland?

27 KM: No, I didn't go to Lackland. I went to a base north of Dallas, Perrin Air
28 Force Base. It's up, there's a big lake, a dammed lake between Texas and Oklahoma. I
29 can't remember the name of the lake. It was at Perrin Air Force Base, about sixty miles
30 north of Dallas. I flew the T-6 there. They asked—this was a six-month program. We
31 flew the T-28, as well, but mainly the T-6—they ask you at the end of this six months—

1 that's the first half of flying training and your advanced school is another six months—
2 what you wanted to do, and I said, "I want to be a fighter pilot. I want to fly one of those
3 F-80s that they used to advertise that they fly 580 miles an hour," which was not exactly
4 accurate. I did, I said I wanted to be a fighter pilot, and I qualified for some—I don't
5 know how they judged people, and I certainly didn't consider myself any hot shot special
6 pilot but I did get through all the different segments, landing, learning the landing pattern,
7 navigation, all of that stuff I did get through. So anyway, I stood well enough that none of
8 the instructors I guess black balled me from going into fighters and that I'd kill myself in
9 the first year. I went to then from six months of primary flying training, which lasted
10 from September to whatever, about February or March, where I went to the advanced
11 school at Phoenix at Williams Air Force Base and learned to fly the F-80 there. Total all
12 together was a year flying training, and then they sent me to a two-month gunnery course
13 at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas.

14 KC: What did you think of the F-80?

15 KM: Well, I thought it was really, at that time it was the hottest thing in the skies
16 except the F-86. When I was in flying training somebody flew through in an F-86 and I
17 thought, "Hot damn! That really is it. I got to fly the F-86," which I was able to do three
18 years later, but it took me awhile.

19 KC: Right, right. So how well would you think that you did in all of your both
20 primary and advanced flight training?

21 KM: I think that, well, I know I wasn't in the bottom segment of the class because
22 they washed them out, they washed about somewhere between a third and a half of the
23 people out, wouldn't make it through flying training. I made it through the first half. I
24 was not the best pilot by any means. There were some guys that even I admit who were
25 better pilots than I were, but I did reasonably well and when I said I wanted to go to the
26 jets, even in fighters, they had the F-51 prop job that you could go to, and there was only
27 one jet school and that was the F-80. I asked for that and I was approved and ended up
28 going to the jet school, as it was known as, at Williams Air Force Base, near Phoenix
29 where I learned to fly in the T-33, which was simply an F-80, a two-seat version of the F-
30 80. Then on to Nellis Air Force Base, we had gunnery, and drop bombs, and so on. Got
31 that training in Las Vegas. From there over to the Far East, I thought to combat, but I

1 ended up going to Japan, stationed in a squadron defending Tokyo. I was there for the
2 better part of [one year] before I got a chance to get into the Korean War, which I never, I
3 didn't serve a full tour there. I got, I was there for sixty days and got something like
4 thirty-eight missions, which was a third of the hundred missions, but not a full. If
5 somebody went over there for a year they'd fly a hundred missions. I never flew a
6 hundred missions.

7 KC: Now, this was, these were combat missions?

8 KM: Combat missions.

9 KC: In the F-86, or the F-80?

10 KM: I didn't make that clear. I should've. It was the F-80. The F-80 existed at
11 that time, 1953. The F-86 existed but I didn't get the chance to fly that until a couple
12 years later back in the U.S.

13 KC: Tell me about your time in Korea. Tell me about arriving in Korea, tell me
14 about the missions you had there, tell me everything you can.

15 KM: I got to Korea. They said since I was already in theatre flying the F-80, that I
16 wouldn't have to go through the full check out program, that ordinarily people that come
17 into the 8th Fighter-Bomber Group at K-13, K-13 was at Suwon, which is twenty miles or
18 so south of the Inchon River, south of Seoul. K-13 was the F-80 base and that's where I
19 got assigned. Because I'd been flying the F-80 in Japan, it was pretty cursory, the check
20 out, gave me about one ride. They took me on one so-called, maybe it was two combat
21 missions. You really didn't get into any combat. You didn't see any guns being fired or
22 see anything being fired at you. They'd just take you over the bomb line into North Korea
23 a little ways and you'd beat up some little community or something. You'd drop your two
24 1,000-pound bombs in a rice paddy somewhere that wasn't—they really were more
25 legitimate targets than maybe I'm making it sound—you didn't drop them in a rice paddy
26 except by mistake. These bombs were sizable enough to do a lot of damage. So, what I
27 did, I was assigned I thought to Korea, but when I got to Japan they said, "We've totally
28 depleted our squadron strength in Japan. We've got a squadron there that is supposed to
29 be defending Tokyo and they don't have anyone but second lieutenants with no
30 experience. So you got to, we're not going to send you over to Korea. You are going to,
31 you are stuck there, you're assigned there." It was basically, [one year] before I was able

1 to get into combat over in Korea. I was flying the air defense of Japan. When I did go to
2 Korea to K-13, as I mentioned, it was to fly F-80s and it was pretty routine stuff because
3 we'd been dropping bombs like that in gunnery practice in the squadron in Japan for a
4 couple years. I guess what I'm saying is I had a lot longer time to get acclimated and
5 accustomed to the things that were being done than some of the guys who were sent
6 practically straight over from gunnery school at Nellis [Air Force Base], straight over to
7 combat in Korea.

8 KC: So you had a little more time to familiarize yourself with the F-80 and its
9 capabilities and things like that before you got to Korea, then, is what you are saying?

10 KM: Yes, sir.

11 KC: What about these combat missions you were flying in Korea? When did they
12 start and what were they like for you?

13 KM: The first three missions were kind of just to get you used to the idea that you
14 were going into combat and they'd take you up, and the flight leader would put you on as
15 number four in the flight and take you up with two other experienced, two experienced
16 guys and the flight lead plus number four was Ken Moll, the new boy on the block. Then
17 we'd go up and we'd bomb some smoke stack or maybe some remote village. We never
18 were able to know what it was, but it was up over the bomb line in North Korea. We did
19 three of these missions fairly close in and then it just became routine. I did these, I think
20 it was thirty-eight missions. Well, I had three to start with, so I did another thirty-five
21 within a couple of months. I had been assigned, not assigned to Korea for a full career,
22 but just to go from Japan to get sixty days experience in combat, which I thought was a
23 great concept. The problem with it was that the minute they started I volunteered and I
24 got over there in the first group and then they shut the whole program down. Nobody else
25 got to go. This was an unusual circumstance where I was able to get this combat
26 experience over a third of a tour all in sixty days and then back to Japan again just flying
27 the air defense of Tokyo. That was at Johnson Air Base—I'm jumping around here—but
28 my base in Japan was Johnson, near Tokyo and Yakota. It's all in the central plain there
29 of Japan. [Then Ken was sent up to Niigata, on the Sea of Japan, facing Vladivostok to
30 the north west. This was a tour of duty lasting a couple of months, where he was base
31 commander of a defense unit with a few planes. I know, as I was there with him. I had

1 come over to Japan on an arrangement where wives could come over if we lived at our
2 own expense. As newlyweds (29 Dec 1950) we decided to take advantage of this. I am
3 surprised that he doesn't mention Niigata by name. Perhaps it is a "senior moment" of
4 forgetfulness, which we all have, or he is showing early signs of dementia in 2010. Our 4
5 months in Niigata were memorable. The occupation ended during our time there and we
6 were invited to countless parties and celebrations by the mayor and other dignitaries.
7 Incidentally, Niigata, a huge city, was designated as an alternate A Bomb target if
8 Hiroshima was unavailable for any reason.] Northwest of there, about 150 miles on the
9 other coast, the Sea of Japan, looking across the water, we were looking across the water
10 to Vladivostok, and this is Russian territory. The Russians never attacked us, but they
11 wanted to make sure they had some forces up there to dissuade that. At [Niigata] Air
12 Base the Japanese had, during the war, had erected a big field there, it was I think ten,
13 twelve thousand feet. Anyway, [Niigata] Air Base, it came down right to the surf of the
14 Sea of Japan and our alert shack was right there and we would keep two pilots and two F-
15 80s on alert in case the Russians ever came over three or four hundred miles from
16 Vladivostok over to the Sea of Japan to attack Tokyo. So, we considered ourselves air
17 defense protectorate force for Tokyo. It was interesting, though, and as a first lieutenant
18 by this time with not very many flying hours at all, I was the base commander. I wasn't
19 base commander, I was the detachment commander [at Niigata] for these three F-80s that
20 we had kept up there waiting for the Russians to come attack us. It was the wild west, is
21 the best way—there was no air control or anything. To fly in the United States today and
22 go up and take off through air traffic control and go up and fly across the United States or
23 anywhere within the United States is a big deal with all kinds of flight planning and
24 clearances and so on. There was nobody in those years, at that time anyway, in the Sea of
25 Japan there was nobody else in the sky except my F-80. So, you could go up and we'd
26 have sometimes cloud layers that would start about 300 feet off above the surface of the
27 ocean, and go up to 35,000 feet. They weren't thunderstorms or anything, they were just
28 clouds, and you could go up there and do anything you chose to do. I used to go up and
29 do acrobatics on instruments, and do loops and rolls and so on. Fortunately, I never got
30 into a spin or I would've been in deep trouble.

1 KC: Yeah, I would think so. What did you think about the ending of the Korean
2 conflict; the way that the fighting stopped there with the armistice and the truce? What
3 did you think about that?

4 KM: I was puzzled. I really had never imagined it was going to end in that
5 fashion. We went back later, my wife and I, with the military, a retired military group,
6 and we went to Panmunjom where they'd had the three years of peace negotiations with
7 the North Koreans. It was surprising then. I couldn't understand it any better when we
8 went there than I could understand it before we went there. It was a Cold War, Stalin-type
9 of Cold War competition. My wife and I later on—this was fifteen, twenty years ago
10 now—we went over with my West Point class, a number of people from my West Point
11 class, Air Force, and we went to Panmunjom, which is still there, negotiations were going
12 on but they didn't mean anything, nobody expected them to do anything and they
13 themselves didn't show any interest in having any kind of a peace. It was just all kind of
14 a show. But anyway, when they put us on buses, there were about thirty or forty, I guess
15 in our West Point group that had gone over from Washington over to Japan and then
16 Korea. They took the buses up from Seoul, where our hotel was, to Panmunjom. Before
17 we went there they said, "This is no man's land. You won't see any animals here. They
18 don't graze cows." The area where the negotiations were held had been going on now,
19 when we were there, they'd been going on periodically for some thirty, I guess. [These
20 negotiating sheds looked just like the pictures I had seen of them decades before, in
21 newspapers and news magazines like *Time* and *U.S. News*.] Unbelievably rustic,
22 primitive, the unpainted lumber that the negotiating shacks were made of, and they had
23 little flimsy-looking single-glass-pane windows, and at the window on one side were our
24 forces, because the line of departure, or the boundary was supposed to be running through
25 the shack. Our forces were on one side of the room and on the other side were these
26 North Koreans. We used to call them "gooks." I don't know whether there's anything
27 wrong with that or not but we always felt that it was a pejorative word. They were
28 standing on the north side of this flimsy shack with single-pane stained yellow glass,
29 flimsy looking. We were cautioned not to look at the soldiers, don't look these North
30 Koreans in the eye. Pretend they're not there, and so we would go in there and get the
31 lecture, a little talk, five or ten minutes. Then we'd troop on out to our buses and drive on

1 back through the demilitarized zone, which was some ten, twelve miles as I recall, back
2 to South Korea [Seoul]. It was weird. It was other worldly. [We boarded our bus to go
3 back to Seoul and before leaving the DMZ we stopped at the Bridge of No Return, where
4 U.S. prisoners of war were repatriated in 1953. This was a very emotional experience.]
5 The experience, as you can tell, was graphic and yet I never was able to make out what
6 exactly was going on, what we were proving, and despite the shortage of tillable ground
7 in Korea, they always needed more agriculture than they could get. This rather large, as I
8 recall, it was something like ten miles, demilitarized zone strip across the middle of
9 Korea, nothing grew there. They didn't really have any crops that I can remember
10 because it was all a demilitarized zone. This was strange, not only at the time, but
11 particularly thirty years later, forty years later, when went back it was still the same
12 condition. They preserved it and I guess to this day, it's still being done. That's the way it
13 is. [The Class of '50 "Return to Korea" trip was from 29 September to 5 October 1996.
14 Then there was an optional add-on tour of China from 5 to 16 October, which we elected
15 to do. Classmates and wives totaled about 170 and we stayed in Seoul after flying KAL
16 over there. One of our most important events was dedicating a tombstone-like plaque to
17 the forty-three members of the Class of '50 who died in the Korean War. This is located
18 on the grounds of the Korean Military Academy in Seoul, where we spent an
19 unforgettable day. We also had memorable tours of Panmunjom and Incheon. Ken and I,
20 privately, had taken ten days in Japan before the Korea-China tour began. After thirty-
21 eight years we were anxious to see Japan again and visit old friends there. It was
22 fabulous! Then we flew to Seoul and joined the Korea-China trip with the class. The
23 South Korean government gave us red carpet treatment. Many interesting side trips were
24 offered and we went to Incheon where we were given a luncheon by the mayor and then,
25 on another day, to Panmunjom, one of the most sobering and amazing trips I have ever
26 made.]

27 KC: Very interesting. For someone who grew up during the Second World War,
28 and for someone who is in the early stages of his military career when the Second World
29 War ended, and ended with a lot of finality. Germany surrendered. The Japanese
30 surrendered. That war was over. Very clear. What was your opinion of the ending of the
31 Korean War when it wasn't nearly so final?

1 KM: That's a good question. Of course, it still hasn't been finalized. Everybody
2 thought—and I didn't have any inside knowledge or special intelligence that would tell
3 me different—everybody thought that it would just be couple of weeks. A little hitch in
4 procedures here, but it will all be over here in a few weeks or a couple of months, and
5 that just never happened. It didn't happen, as I think I understand fairly well, because the
6 North Koreans didn't want it to happen. They wanted to keep that, that stress, that Cold
7 War situation where it was. They didn't want us to feel free to, free or comfortable in
8 South Korea.

9 KC: And even to this day, they have gotten, the North Koreans have gotten an
10 awful lot of mileage out of, like you say, the stress between the two sides for propping up
11 their regime and then things like that. All right, so the Korean War has come to an end in
12 one regard or another, one respect or another. What did you plan on doing with the rest of
13 your career at this point? Are you going to stay in or are you going to continue to seek a
14 new command? What do you want to do?

15 KM: That's a good question. My intent was to go for a career. I wasn't—I hope I
16 made this clear: I wasn't assigned permanently to Korea. I wasn't sent to Korea on a full
17 tour kind of thing. I was sent from Japan where I was on a full four-year tour and did
18 complete it, except for the Korean part, which shortened my tour. I intended to go back to
19 Japan, which I did do, and finish my tour in Japan. I had my bride join me and we had a
20 small son by that time, and we left Japan in [January 1954.] I intended to be a, to be a
21 career officer if I were given that option, which I was, and so I went to Air Defense
22 Command near San Francisco at Hamilton Air Force Base, which always said I was able
23 to stay there five years, either in the fighter squadron or in a headquarters supervising the
24 F-86 squadrons there. I always said those were the best five years of my career.

25 KC: Why do you say that? What was so special about this time?

26 KM: Well, first of all, it was in California, which I knew. Not some Midwest
27 state, or Texas, or Maine. It could've been a lot of places. I like California. It was close,
28 within one hundred miles of my home town. I had relatives there. I knew the area. I liked
29 the area, and I thought all this plus being an active F-86 air defense squadron, this is
30 heaven. I guess that's the best answer to that. I never did go anywhere else that I felt as
31 comfortable and as, just elated to be able to be doing this kind of duty. I don't know if I

1 answered your question or not but it seemed a natural progression. You came back from
2 the Far East, I was lucky enough to get to go to Hamilton Air Force Base. After five years
3 I went to England, volunteered to go to England because you can't stay longer than five
4 years at any single base, or at least you shouldn't, or they send you to some ice island.

5 KC: Did your family go with you to England?

6 KM: Yes.

7 KC: Okay, now, what was going to be your position there? What outfit were you
8 with, and what was your role?

9 KM: Well, I knew I had been at Hamilton about as long as I could, so I
10 volunteered to go to England, thinking I was going to some kind of, going to go to some
11 kind of a fighter squadron job. I did so, put in my papers, but they do, sometimes the Air
12 Force does things without consulting you. They gave me my assignment to England but it
13 was in missiles, and I went over and I was assigned as a Thor missile launch control
14 officer.

15 KC: Had you had any experience, or training in any of this before?

16 KM: They did—when I got my assignment in 1958 to go to England, they
17 assigned me to go to a Douglas Aircraft training facility in Tucson, and then to
18 Vandenberg, so I had about four or five months' training as a launch control officer in the
19 Thor missile. I didn't mind it too much because it was a new thing at that time. Although
20 I knew my flying days, my flying experiences were going to suffer, because once you get
21 over there we were 120 miles, I think, from the air base that I got my flying time from in
22 England. I was up in Lincolnshire in England where they had a Thor site, a Thor wing
23 there. The British had it. We were actually attached to the British. The idea was that we
24 had—at each Thor base there were three Thor missiles with a nuke on the end or, at least
25 we presumed there was a nuke on the end, and they were in one squadron, and then three
26 or four squadrons together made a wing. This was up in Lincolnshire, about five hours
27 north of London by road where the Thor missiles had been emplaced. At the same time
28 the Jupiter missile had been emplaced in Italy and Turkey and there was some cross feed
29 there between Thors and the Jupiters, but anyway I was in the British part. I went up
30 there, volunteered to go because I thought that missiles were coming weapon of
31 distinction, and maybe that's where the action was. Turned out it was not nearly as

1 exciting or as important as I had originally guessed, but I had gone into it. So I tell
2 people, I've been saying for years, I was one of the first people in the missiles. Here is a
3 fighter pilot going to England into the Thor missile. There was another group that had
4 gone to Italy and Turkey for the Jupiter missile, but for some reason they never really got
5 the Jupiter missiles up in force. In England, though, they did. So, for two years I was a
6 Thor launch officer up in Lincolnshire and would drive, about once a month, I would
7 drive down to Mildenhall and Lakenheath where we had our aircraft and fly T-33s, get
8 our flying time out of there, and then come back on a Sunday night all beat up after three
9 days of flying all over Europe, and get in our car and drive back up to Lincolnshire.
10 Anyway, at the end of two years they brought us home. They wanted people with some
11 experience, any experience in missiles. Now, recall this is in the late '50s and everybody
12 that came back from that group that I was with there in Lincolnshire went to Vandenberg
13 Air Force Base, which was a missile base, missile training base and all of that. I went to
14 SAC (Strategic Air Command) headquarters.

15 KC: Really?

16 KM: SAC Headquarters personnel. Well, they wanted me for—as somebody that
17 knew about missiles to help with the airman training program in Strategic Air Command,
18 which was just gearing up. They had the Atlas and the Titan and all the missile, the
19 Minuteman, all the missile forces were coming on the big build up and nobody with any
20 experience except the few guys from the Thor program in England, nobody knew
21 anything about these. So, SAC headquarters brought me back to airman personnel to help
22 plan these training programs and go to the training conferences at Sheppard Air Force
23 Base, for example, or Chanute Air Force base. It was because then I was in SAC
24 headquarters, anybody with missile experience or anybody with a missile specialty was
25 much in demand in these years that was in, let me think, that was about 1960 time period,
26 but because I was in SAC personnel, I was able to get this specialty identification
27 removed from my records. So, I tell people that I was one of the first people in the
28 missiles and absolutely the first guy out.

29 KC: (Laughs) Missiles just didn't have the attraction for you that fighters did.

30 KM: No, so I went back to flying fighters at Western Air Defense Force. Well, I'd
31 been in Western Air Defense Force, but they brought me back to SAC personnel which

1 had its own limitations, but it was interesting in its own sake. I was in the training side of
2 it so I got to fly all over, all around the country in a T-33, and see how the flying training
3 program was coming, not bombers. They weren't under any illusion and I didn't know
4 anything about B-47s or B-52s. Anyway, that's what took me to SAC Headquarters.

5 KC: Okay, okay. Now, in 1962, in October of 1962, of course, we have the
6 infamous showdown between the United States and the Soviet Union over missiles in
7 Cuba, the Cuban Missile Crisis. What do you remember about that? I think that your
8 perspective would be especially valuable. Tell me about what you remember about the
9 Cuban Missile Crisis.

10 KM: I have written articles about the Cuban Missile Crisis, but I haven't reviewed
11 them lately. First of all, Castro was a bad guy, and he was the one that allowed the
12 Soviets to emplace missiles in Cuba. I remember that—where was I? I was at the Naval
13 War College in some kind of a school. It wasn't a full year course, but it was some kind
14 of a school that I was attending when the whole Cuban Missile Crisis broke out. I was in
15 SAC headquarters and they said that, they called me up and said, "We need you back
16 here right now. Jump in your car. Leave that school and come on back." So I had to rush
17 back to SAC headquarters. The atmosphere was, was kind of spooky, and nobody knew
18 what would happen. When I got back to SAC headquarters, where I was in plans, up right
19 in the back of the flagpole practically, we were back almost right next door to General
20 Power's CINCSAC (commander-in-chief, Strategic Air Command) office. Frequently,
21 we would go down to the SAC underground—the underground command center is under
22 SAC headquarters in Omaha, as is widely known now. They made a movie about that
23 with Gregory Peck, as a matter of fact. The atmosphere with the Soviets and the Cuban
24 Missile Crisis was very tense. I'm trying to remember, I can remember rushing back. I
25 was at the Air University at some school that—I think it was a missile age school or
26 something, one of the six-week courses, and I remember they called everybody back
27 because of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and I go back to my office. Leave this school and
28 drive hurriedly, don't get any sleep, don't stop anywhere, and get back here as soon as
29 you can to my office at SAC plans. Everybody was so busy with current operations at
30 SAC headquarters when I got back that nobody would bother with plans. They wouldn't
31 even talk to us. So I rushed back only to then spend the next few weeks doing nothing

1 because nobody was interested in talking about long-range plans. They were too busy
2 with short range things. We would also have a substantial role in designing and assisting
3 in the SAC underground command center, which was interesting itself because you go
4 down these endless stairs right under the headquarters where they had the—oh, what was
5 the movie that they made with Gregory Peck? Anyway, the big displays, the twenty-foot-
6 high displays for the CINCSAC to sit there and watch the map of the world and where all
7 the missions are going. It was a very Hollywood type atmosphere at SAC headquarters.
8 My only problem was that I didn't really have anything to do. I was the plans guy. I had
9 nothing to do with operations. I had never flown a bomber, a B-52 or a B-47, never been
10 in a bomb wing. I was not really of any use to the current operations guys and nobody
11 was interested in long term planning. So the Cuban Missile Crisis and the SAC
12 underground command center were more curiosities to me than the actual work places. I
13 still felt like I was an Air Defense pilot.

14 KC: Interesting, interesting. What did you think about the conclusion of the
15 Cuban Missile Crisis in terms of political leadership, in terms of military options, how it
16 all turned out?

17 KM: I have thought about that, wrote an article or two, although I don't have
18 those fresh at hand. The Cuban Missile Crisis was kind of the height of the Cold War, in
19 that along with the Berlin Airlift and all that. The Cuban Missile Crisis, in my view, was
20 most intense, most scary, most uncertain part of the Cold War. Otherwise, we seemed to
21 be pretty much on a preordained track, both the Soviets and the U.S. The Cuban Missile
22 Crisis and Castro himself had been kind of a pretty unstable character, left a lot of things
23 wide open. To this day I think that if things had maybe gone a little bit differently it
24 could've turned out a lot, lot different.

25 KC: All right, well, why don't we take a break there for today, Colonel?

Interview with Kenneth Moll

Session [2] of [2]

Date: 26 February 2010

1
2 KM: Good enough. The Cuban Missile Crisis, of course, was unprecedented and I
3 remember a little earlier I was in Strategic Air Command headquarters in the plans shop
4 and we had an office that looked out right at the front entrance across the street, to the
5 officers' club, and so on there in Omaha, Offutt Air Force Base. Early on in the
6 presidency, Kennedy actually came to SAC to visit us and we watched Kennedy and the
7 CINCSAC then, General Tom Power, walk kind of in front of us from wherever their
8 cars had stopped, I guess, and went into the entrance to SAC headquarters. So, that was
9 my one sighting of JFK. Thomas Power was the successor to Curtis LeMay. There had
10 only been one CINCSAC before. It was LeMay after SAC was established in the '50s.
11 When he finally retired, why, Thomas Power took over. General Thomas Power was kind
12 of an egomaniac. He was a boy general in World War II, and did well in Asia from what I
13 understood, but he kind of became an egomaniac and I never did like him very well. I
14 remember one time I was at a meeting of all the staff, and I was sitting in the back and
15 they were briefing him on a death that they'd had in a missile silo where a sergeant had
16 gone down. There was something wrong with the Titan missile. It was leaking fuel, and
17 this is very toxic, of course. No one seemed to know exactly what the problem was. This
18 sergeant said, "Well, I'll go down and check it myself." Which he did, and he got
19 down—these things are about 80 feet deep—he got down near the bottom and the fumes
20 then overcame him and he just fell over. Another sergeant said, "Oh, my god. I'm gonna
21 go get him." He did. He went down and then he, too, died, and that made the headlines.
22 Then Power ventured the cynical comment that he deserved to die. It was a dumb thing to
23 do, but none of us are exempt from doing dumb things. I thought that it illustrated
24 Power's personality that he wanted to be another Curtis LeMay, which he wasn't. So,
25 SAC was doing great things, defending the free world and all of that then, and in those
26 days when the Cold War was at its height with the constant airborne command post, was
27 my particular slot. I helped invent the whole system of worldwide, nationwide anyway,
28 with one in Europe and one in Asia. An airplane command post would be in the air
29 somewhere at all times. We weren't going to make ourselves completely subject to an

1 attack. Suddenly, a missile came down on the ground and got everybody. There would be
2 a command post up in the air, somewhere hundreds or thousands of miles away with the
3 whole staff that would be able to then exercise a counterattack or do whatever we needed.
4 We were working on how to get the alert code out to the forces. There was one missile
5 system—I've forgotten the name of it. I'll think of it as soon as we hang up. It went, you
6 launched it, and it went straight up, and boosting itself going faster and faster straight up
7 'til it ran out of fuel, and then it coasted up to something like eighteen miles or something
8 like that. It would broadcast a go code. It would broadcast an alert code saying, "War is
9 on. Initiate the attack plan." Those were the kinds of things we were thinking about in the
10 intense days of the Cold War. What were we going to do? Where we were going to put
11 children, school children? They had them exercising in their pictures in the histories of
12 the kids hiding under their desks. That was the only solution if there was an attack. A
13 teacher was supposed to get the kids underneath their little desks, so if the roof fell in
14 they would at least have the desk to protect them. It was a hyper kind of a situation. Hard
15 to conceive now but not manic, and maybe not that hard to conceive, either, because we
16 have a lot of varied threats of different kinds. At least more was known about the threat
17 then than is known today about some of the things that are threatening us, we don't know
18 exactly what they are.

19 KC: Tell me about your role in all of this at SAC. I mean, you're talking about a
20 variety of different things at a very, very high level here. (Clears throat) Excuse me. Tell
21 in some more detail about the types of planning and the missile systems and the warning.
22 Tell me all about this. It's very interesting stuff.

23 KM: Under General Power, or it may have been under LeMay, too. There had
24 been—no, it was while I was there. It was soon after I came, within a year after I came
25 back from England in 1961. They said, "We've got to get some advance thinking in. We
26 can't just go on, day by day. We've gotta get some people looking to the future and what
27 is this new war, and what kind of systems do we need?" So, they formed a Space Plans
28 branch of some twenty or thirty officers pulled in from all around the command at SAC. I
29 was picked for reason—I was in SAC headquarters at the time, but assigned an obscure
30 position in personnel, which is where they'd sent me when I came back from England.
31 Everybody else went, with the missile experience, went to Vandenberg, but I was

1 assigned to SAC headquarters in personnel. Turned out they wanted somebody who knew
2 something about missiles to represent personnel in deciding school courses and the
3 allocations of effort and so on.

4 KC: How did you feel about this assignment? Everybody else goes to
5 Vandenberg. You're at SAC headquarters in personnel.

6 KM: I was horrified. I thought of myself, still thought of myself as a fighter pilot,
7 and here I am suddenly at SAC personnel going to conferences down in Texas about how
8 many people shall we send to the missile engine, missile booster school, and so on. It was
9 not very exciting duty, but I was there less than a year and they formed this space branch
10 at SAC and pulled in people from around the command, and myself who was relieved to
11 go from personnel now over to this advanced plans shop of some thirty people in the
12 plans shop right underneath, right at the front of the headquarters. So we were privileged
13 to see a lot of things that were beginning to happen and talk about ideas. Many of the
14 ideas were so classified that you couldn't even share it with others in the office. There
15 were several projects going on there amongst—in another section, there were six of us, I
16 think, in my section. I didn't even know what they were. Turned out they were missile
17 space reconnaissance kind of a projects that the U.S. Air Force was devising at that time
18 so we could tell what the Russians were doing. Until we were able to overfly Soviet
19 Russia with missiles, we could do it once in a while with an errant bomber or something,
20 but that was very dangerous and tended to get shot down by the Soviets. We didn't have
21 any way to tell, to survey what was going on in Russia. How many air fields did they
22 have? Did they have missiles and if so where were they emplaced? Those kinds of
23 questions needed to be answered. Certainly we felt they did. We'd better know what they
24 were doing and where we oughta aim our air missiles. So, we were able, the U.S. was
25 able to devise some means, some very highly classified, some, most of them I knew
26 existed, to some extent things like the U-2, but I didn't have access, or didn't have a need
27 to know. So, nobody ever, I never saw any official information on it. I just knew they
28 were there. We discovered that the Soviets didn't have anywhere near as many missiles
29 emplaced as we had feared. Now remember, this is in, this is in early '60s, early to mid
30 '60s. It was really before, it was not before *Sputnik* because *Sputnik* was when? 1959, I
31 think?

1 KC: '57 I believe.

2 KM: '57, and that was the beginning—at that time I was in Air Defense
3 Command in the Pacific Coast, and it was flying interceptors, F-86 interceptors with the
4 top, you could climb up to 50,000 feet very slowly at the top, and that's as far as you
5 could go. Of course, the missiles were circulating around at a couple hundred miles orbit,
6 and the *Sputnik* was beeping around the world. A major world propaganda blow, that the
7 Soviets beat us into space. They had *Sputnik* going around the world, so everybody
8 thought they were on their way. We found out later that they didn't—they, the Soviets—
9 did not have anywhere nearly the, near the number of missiles that we thought they did. I
10 learned that not officially, but just simply from reading the open press in later years. That
11 whole time period there in the late '50s and early '60s was just plain weird, and we would
12 go down sometimes for briefings or for some presentation to the SAC underground
13 headquarters, which was underground. It was in an excavation about three stories down
14 below the headquarters. You went downstairs and sat up there and the commander,
15 commander Powers, General Powers, had the center, he was at the center and all his aides
16 had seats beside. You looked through glass windows down at these huge screens that
17 would project graphs or whatever. They were about twenty feet high, the screens were. It
18 was otherworldly. They made a movie of it. I can't remember the name of the movie.
19 Was it was Gregory Peck or somebody? Anyway, it was the center of the western world's
20 resistance, right there. So, I'm talking a long time and maybe repeating myself. Any other
21 questions?

22 KC: No, no, no. That's what I want you to do, believe it or not, is to tell me about
23 the times that you had here and the things that you were involved in. I think that's terrific.
24 How long were you at SAC there in Omaha?

25 KM: I was at SAC four years. I was there, they wanted me, the term was four
26 years. They wanted me to renew, and I had been there since 1960-61. I came back from
27 England and had been there four years. [We returned from England in March of 1961 and
28 Ken reported for duty at SAC HQ, Offutt AFB, near Omaha NE. We bought a house in
29 Bellevue NE, near the base.] So it was 1965 I was going to—left, and my four-year term
30 was going to end. I decided I really wanted to get out of SAC and go where the action
31 was to Southeast Asia. I got to Saigon in 1965 when things were just beginning to get

1 hot, and we were, we had to live off base. We actually lived within sight of the palace in
2 Saigon. That was, those were interesting, that was an interesting year. What I did, my job
3 in Vietnam, was to set up a courier operation that would take material around the entire
4 theatre. Reconnaissance photographs that had been taken the day before by an F-4
5 reconnaissance aircraft wing we had there at Saigon, at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. That's
6 the main Saigon airport. There was an F-4 reconnaissance wing, and they would fly all
7 over Southeast Asia taking pictures and photographing whatever the authorities
8 determined oughta be in today's attempt to take what photographs they would want, and
9 they'd come back and they'd work to develop those photographs all evening long. Then
10 they would be ready in plain brown packages at midnight. I was in charge of the
11 operation to distribute those throughout the theatre because yesterday—at midnight, then,
12 yesterday's photos were available. I never saw them because they were always wrapped
13 in plain brown packages, but they were loaded on. We had a crew chief and I was—
14 ended up with four T-39 aircraft. A T-39 is basically an executive jet version of an F-86.
15 I had a lot of F-86 time , so they figured I could fly the T-39 which was a beautiful
16 airplane to fly. It had two engines, unlike the F-86. It had two engines outboard and four
17 seats in the Sabreliner. It can be compared to a Learjet. It was heavier but about the same
18 size and more durability actually, but it used more fuel. So, the Learjet, more Learjet's
19 were sold than T-39s and Sabreliners. Anyway, these four birds, then, we would take off
20 at or around midnight and, in effect—it would vary during the year—but in effect there
21 were two different routes that we took. One would be, we would go up to Da Nang from
22 Saigon, which is practically due north, and then go across Cambodia, the upper part of
23 Cambodia which was a no-man's-land area, but you could fly at 35,000 feet across to
24 Laos. Then, in Laos and to some extent at Thailand we would land at American bases and
25 drop off the pictures, the reconnaissance pictures that had been taken the day before, the
26 ones that had been processed and wrapped in plain brown wrappers and given to us at
27 midnight. They'd been taken the day before. Now, these were to be taken to these bases
28 in Thailand, particularly, and Da Nang and issued to the pilots at the morning, at their
29 morning briefings, the F-4 pilots, the fighter pilots that were going to take off that next
30 day, and go on their, to their particular targets in North Vietnam. They had to have,
31 certainly wanted to have a photograph of what it looked like and directions of which way,

1 all kinds of attack instructions and since I never flew—well I did. I flew a couple
2 missions in the back seat but I wasn't really, didn't have the understanding of the F-4
3 attack aircraft that the designated pilots had and I was just a back seater. That's a side
4 comment to make the point that I knew a little bit about what the missions were like that
5 the F-4s flew because I'd been on a couple of the missions myself as a back seater. A
6 friend of mine headed also, what they called the close air support in the jungles north of
7 Saigon. The raids weren't all up to North Vietnam, of course. A lot of the action, maybe
8 most of the action was in the jungles in South Vietnam. The way we would respond to
9 those jungle actions was on ground forces. Of course, the U.S. Army had, what was it, a
10 million people or something like that on the ground in Vietnam? Also, we attacked the
11 other actions that the North Vietnamese forces had just moving around in North Vietnam.
12 When things would get hot they would retreat into Cambodia. We weren't supposed to go
13 into Cambodia and we never did. That's our story anyway. So, because I had a friend
14 who commanded the U.S. forces, the reconnaissance forces I guess, that would attack the
15 North Vietnamese in the jungle, I got a chance to ride in a little L-1, a Piper Cub type
16 airplane with one of the spotters. Instead of coming in at 40,000 feet and dropping from
17 an F-4 at way high altitude or the B-52s would drop a whole string of 500-pound bombs,
18 and they'd go along, bombs would keep impacting for half a mile sometimes. You could
19 actually see the traces when you were up at 30,000 feet. You'd look down and you'd see
20 these round footsteps where the B-52 had unloaded its bombs out there in the middle of
21 the jungle, hoping to get somebody. Of course, they did. They killed thousands, but you
22 couldn't really verify it. Down low where ground support, the Air Force spotter aircraft,
23 Piper Cub type airplanes would help with the ground battle, and would bring in a flight of
24 four. Let's say a flight of four F-4s had just taken off and was coming into help the U.S.
25 Army in a particular situation there in the jungle. All of this action, this would not happen
26 at 40,000 feet or anything like that. This was down in the weeds. In order to direct the
27 planes, usually a flight of four F-4s, sometimes other aircraft but let's just say a flight of
28 four F-4s with a couple of thousand-pound bombs, I can't remember exactly what the
29 bombs were but, the F-80s would carry couple of thousand-pound bombs in lieu of the tip
30 tanks on the, on the end of the wing. Since they didn't have the tip tanks with all the fuel,
31 so they could go a great distance, you couldn't stay up there very long, but if you were

1 just gonna go up twenty or thirty miles and drop a couple of thousand-pound bombs on
2 the enemy. That's what they'd do. They'd drop the tip tanks off the F-80, and hook a
3 thousand-pound bomb on each end, wing tip, and you'd go up there and drop those and
4 come right back to the base and land a get another couple. That was—I'm relating now
5 more of my Korean. I apologize. Some of these memories are from my Korean combat as
6 opposed to Vietnam. Where I was going in the account is in Vietnam much of the action
7 was just north of Saigon, and it was jungle action. We had our own forces there, and sort
8 of a front, but so much of the battle was brought from the air. We had the B-52s, which
9 would come in from, I think Guam, would drop a whole string of bombs. You could just
10 see where they'd gone. It could've been yesterday or it could've been last year that these
11 big bomb holes in the jungle. Sometimes they caught troops there and I'm sure
12 sometimes they didn't catch anybody. Anyway, the B-52s did do bombing. There were
13 other close air support kind of missions where F-4s would come in, and they wouldn't
14 drop a bomb unless they were directed to a particular target. The spotter might have
15 somebody in a little group of trees, say, or they would tell the fighter pilots, the people in
16 the Cub aircraft, the spotter aircraft would call to the flight of four, usually F-4s, to come
17 in and they would direct them visually. "See that cliff over there on the side of that
18 mountain and up to the right there's a little light kind of open spot? That's where you
19 want to hit." Those were the kinds of instructions that the spotter would give to the
20 fighters, because they couldn't see anywhere nearly as much, near as much as the spotter
21 who's down there in the weeds almost. Then they would come in and drop their bombs
22 where they were directed, and it was sometimes very effective. Sometimes the bombs
23 were lost, but anyway, that was it. I had a chance to go up and see a good friend of mine,
24 who had a unit of several spotter aircraft up there that would support the Army divisions,
25 the Army ground forces, and I got to ride in the back of a, on a couple missions, in the
26 back of one of the little Cub aircraft and watch this lieutenant direct flights in. At that
27 time I was a major, but he was in command. There was no doubt about it. He knew what
28 he was doing. I just sat in the back kind of huddled up and scrunched down and watched
29 the action. Sometimes you could actually see, well, you could see the bombs impacting.
30 Sometimes you could actually see the forces on the ground, or at least their
31 entrenchments. Many times the bombs missed or their target was nonexistent, but other

1 times I've seen them. I remember one particular flight, one particular mission. There was
2 a long series of entrenchments, and they just walked those bombs along those trenches,
3 and god knows how many people were killed. The—I could go on, but much of what I'd
4 say would be repetitious. Those were the kinds of things we did. So maybe I better give
5 you a chance to talk, and ask another question or two.

6 KC: Sure, sure. Now, when you left SAC back in 1965 and you said you wanted
7 to get out of there. You wanted to go where the action was. What did you know about
8 what the U.S. was doing in Southeast Asia at that time? How aware were you of
9 American policy and American activity there?

10 KM: American—well, let me answer it in two parts. I knew pretty well what the
11 air, the kind of Air Force flights that I would have and what the missions would be like
12 from Korea, where I had flown the F-80s and in Vietnam I flew the T-39 Sabreliner, as I
13 said, but I had other flights that I'd hitchhike a ride on an F-4 on one or two occasions or
14 a Piper Cub. In Vietnam, I think I knew pretty well what the action was that I was going
15 to get into because it was, at the ground level, similar to much of Korea. Except in Korea,
16 in Korea we had some frontline action and some deep all the way back to the Yalu River
17 actions, and that varied. So, I'll try not to confuse any Korean memories with the
18 Vietnamese memories. I don't think that's a good answer to your question. Maybe
19 another question has occurred while I'm talking.

20 KC: Well, no. I'm just thinking in some broad terms. Obviously having
21 experience in Korea, you knew the types of missions, or had a good idea of the types of
22 missions, and the kinds of delivery systems and things like that, but what about the
23 overall involvement? What about the political aspects of U.S. involvement and the way
24 the United States was beginning to pay more attention, become more involved in
25 Southeast Asia? How aware were you of the goings on there?

26 KM: Well, I was well aware, and I subscribed to, had a daily paper, I think I had
27 *Newsweek*, or *Time*, or both. The subscription had come in the mail. I would follow what
28 was going on. My viewpoint in the mid '60s was governed more than in Korea. Well, I'd
29 been a history student when I was at SAC Headquarters. My wife and I had gone to night
30 school to get a history master's degree, University of Omaha. So, I was more historian
31 inclined, more attuned for what to look for and what was important in the written

1 histories in Vietnam than I was in Korea, fifteen years earlier. The things I looked for
2 were, I watched, I saw the demonstrations. We had a French villa, about half a dozen of
3 us had rented a French villa that was available, available in Saigon, and we would go up
4 on the top of the villa, designed in that tropical region. They had a rooftop party room. It
5 was open, really, it just had a roof on it to protect you from the rain, or a canvas or
6 something and we'd watch the action at night. The night action was interesting because
7 you could see—you were three miles from the airport and about halfway, more than
8 halfway into town from the airport, but you could see the firefights at night. They called
9 them firefights because of the shells. They had the Gatling gun, the machinegun that
10 would just spew out a whole waterfall of gleaming red bullets. You could see the stream.
11 The waterfall was bullets going straight down into some Viet Cong hideout or some
12 target that they could see from the ground. The aircraft were C-130, four-engine, or C-
13 123, two-engine aircraft with a Gatling gun mounted in the side where they'd take the
14 door off and put a Gatling gun down there pointing not ahead or behind, but pointing
15 straight out the side. They would circle Saigon. All evening long they'd go around.
16 They'd be in touch with ground sites that were getting attacked or whatever
17 communications they had. They would—something would trigger their interest and
18 they'd start firing down there and we were sitting on the top of our French villa, our
19 hooch, we called it, and we'd usually have a martini at that point watching this action.
20 Never really came into town. It was always surrounded a couple miles away, two or three
21 miles away. You could watch out of the side of the C-130 or C-47, these Gatling guns
22 with red tracers that were pouring down fire on Viet Cong. It was weird, even at the time
23 we were very conscious of what a strange world, what a strange situation this is where we
24 are sitting here, just like a cocktail party, and there's real action. People are dying out
25 there and so it was unlike any other war situation that I have seen or read about.

26 KC: Sure. What was it like for your family when you are assigned to Vietnam?
27 You wanted to go. What was it like for your family knowing that you are going to go into
28 yet another war?

29 KM: Well, the family was well placed, well established. The kids were going to
30 school. They knew how long I was going to be there. The other people, other professional
31 officers were going, either you were gonna go—some chose not to go. I chose to go early

1 to get—which turned out to be very fortuitous decision because conditions deteriorated
2 over several years until '68 Tet and the home environment was so bad that anybody in the
3 war was—public resistance, public opposition to the war was very noticeable. You
4 were—in some cases I was, in a couple cases I was cussed out. I had gotten in a fistfight
5 once with people who were on the home front that were not sympathetic to the war or
6 sympathetic to those who fought it. That's another whole topic, but the, what the war
7 would be like, I didn't really know except that I was going to be based at Saigon. We
8 lived three miles, our hooch, as we called it, was three miles from the base. I owned a
9 motor bike that I'd drive back and forth to the missions since I took off about midnight
10 every day. I'd leave the house about ten-thirty at night and there was a curfew so nobody
11 else was on the streets, or it was just military traffic. There wasn't any civilian traffic.
12 There were a lot of dogs around, homeless dogs. I remember one time I hit a dog, didn't
13 kill him, but he made a big howl and I kept on going on the little motor scooter. Those
14 were the hazards of driving to work, is you had to watch out for the dogs. Then you
15 would accomplish your mission. In our case, we'd take off about midnight and get back
16 at 6:00AM and then there were always official duties that I had to take care of because I
17 was a detachment commander. Sometimes I'd have to see my boss or others, so I might
18 be around for much of the morning before I'd finally go back and some sleep at home. It
19 was just like going to a job, or very much like going to a job. I guess, that's about as
20 much as I can say about what it was like.

21 KC: Okay, okay. Now, as I understand it, before you got there or around the same
22 time that you got there, the standard way that this was operated was that you would have
23 these courier planes that would be based out of somewhere else, on TDY (temporary
24 duty) and they would be flying the photograph missions of the F-4s and then the courier
25 missions flying throughout Vietnam, but it wasn't permanently stationed in Tan Son
26 Nhut. Were you there for the permanent stationing of this effort for the couriers and the
27 flights?

28 KM: Yes. I was there when that happened for—initially when the war first started
29 and before I got there, they would assign a T-39 that was perhaps from Tachikawa in
30 Japan or Clark Airbase in Manila. They would go over for six weeks to Saigon and
31 provide support, but then it was, became more and more clear that the war was going to

1 last awhile, it became a bigger war. They decided to assign, what eventually was—we
2 had three T-39s I think—but I got over there in 1965, after volunteering to go over from
3 SAC headquarters, I arrived there. I had just put in my letter of application to go into
4 combat, which went to Air Force personnel people at Randolph Air Force base that I
5 would fly in the T-39, which is an appropriate airplane for SAC headquarters, and the
6 generals were always going someplace. It was an executive jet was what it was. When I
7 got there, I found out that I was assigned as a T-39 pilot. I got the letter from Randolph;
8 they assigned me over there as a T-39 pilot. I said, “They’re crazy in San Antonio.”
9 Everybody knows a T-39 is not a combat airplane, but when I got that they were just
10 establishing it. Previously, they’d get a T-39 in from Japan or Clark or someplace, as I
11 said, and they’d be there for maybe six weeks, a couple pilots. They would fly all the
12 missions and then they’d go back home. Somebody would come in from some other base
13 in the Far East theater, but I got there just at the time they decided we gotta stop this
14 foolishness of six weeks at a time and get our own aircraft here at Tan Son Nhut in
15 Saigon, which is what happened. We got three birds and twelve pilots. I think there were
16 ten or twelve pilots, and I was the senior one. So, they said “You’re the commander.
17 You’re gonna set this up.” This was in late ’65. So, the whole point is that many of the
18 missions that we flew were not new. They had been missions, such as that had been
19 flown before. In ’64 as the war in Vietnam gradually tightened up, as you know from the
20 history the French were involved. Anyway, we got deeper and deeper in the time that I
21 came in was a transition when it went from a temporary TDY, temporary duty kind of
22 situation where a couple of pilots would bring one airplane in and they would take turns
23 flying it for four weeks, or six weeks or something, then go back home and some other T-
24 39 would come in and do it. This was the transition, now, where we had the permanent
25 operation at Saigon. Eventually, we ended up with, as I say, four or maybe five birds all
26 together and ten pilots initially. Later on that grew to twelve or fifteen. I can’t remember
27 exactly what the numbers. That was the scale of it that we would, our whole mission then
28 was Saigon centered and we were to fly routes and deliver material around through the
29 theatre, and take people. I guess I’ve said enough about that mission. I don’t need to say
30 more.

1 KC: No, that's perfectly fine. One of the things I was curious about is you're
2 going to be in charge here. Can you tell me how you set up, what was involved in setting
3 up this permanent station for what you are doing there with the T-39s and courier
4 missions?

5 KM: We were assigned to a support unit, a support group, and I was just a T-39
6 section. So, I didn't have anything to do with the paper work on the personnel records of
7 the maintenance sergeants or the officer pilots, or anybody else connected with the
8 mission, connected with that operation. Very frequently there would be coordination, or
9 whatever, just like any management job. It required a good bit of time to deal with
10 problems of hangars, for example. Where you going to keep the hangars? Where are you
11 going to keep the aircraft? What about the rules for barbed wire around, or sand bags
12 around the emplacements, which many of the F-4s had? Did we want those? It turned out
13 that, for the most part, we didn't use those, and maintenance questions. We didn't
14 maintain. We had some sergeants, but heavy maintenance and changing engines and that
15 sort of thing was done by the support group, the maintenance support group at Tan Son
16 Nhut. So, there was a lot of coordination just to keep the T-39 operation going. I got
17 involved in some of that, but for the most part the support group, the people in charge of
18 running the base, they took care of those kinds of things. We went out and we would
19 brief, and of course, file our flight planes, all the flight rules, and cautions whatever. We
20 were in charge. They didn't try to tell us on that, but for the ground support side of the T-
21 39s was mainly a base function, and I didn't get that much involved in it.

22 KC: Sure. All right, now, part of the, other part of this mission wasn't just flying
23 these courier missions, but you were also flying some people. You're flying high-ranking
24 individuals during this time, as well, as my understanding.

25 KM: Yes.

26 KC: Who were you flying around?

27 KM: Well, we flew General Westmoreland frequently. We were, had a bird really
28 at his call. I can remember—and we got to know him, and he got to call us by our first
29 names and that sort of thing, well before the end of the term. Something had come up one
30 morning I was out there. I didn't have a flight but I was out there. That was your duty
31 station, whether you had a flight that day or not. I was there and they said, "General

1 Westmoreland's office just called. He wants an immediate flight to go up to Da Nang."
2 So I said, "Fine, we gotta have a spare aircraft here, and I'm on the spare crew, and
3 another pilot and I will take care of the mission. We will be ready when he arrives." So,
4 we were ready and he climbed in the airplane and as soon as he, as soon as the sergeant
5 pulled up the steps that were internal, were part of the airplane. You just pulled up the
6 steps and that was part of one of the windows. We started our engine and went out. We
7 had first crack at—because General Westmoreland was number one priority—first crack
8 at the runway and we just took off, took a very familiar heading, which we all knew
9 exactly where we wanted to go. The route, so it was very routine kind of thing as far as
10 we were concerned. Then we got up there. He said we were to land not at the main field
11 at Da Nang, but where the Marines were. I can't remember the name of it, but a little bit
12 southeast of the main airport at Da Nang. We landed there at this Marine base, and they
13 said, "Just pull over to the side here," and wait, I don't wanna get out. So he got out and
14 went to talk to the Marine three-star—may be having a little mental relapse here. I can't
15 remember his name, a tough Marine general. Not Green, but he was the commander in
16 Southeast Asia at the time, a Marine commander at the time. So he said, "Just pull off to
17 the side of the runway." It wasn't an active field, but it was a good strip that was plenty
18 sufficient for us. He said, "Pull off to the side here," and we shut down both engines I
19 think, or maybe we kept one going. Sometimes you'd keep one going so you'd have
20 enough electricity, enough juice to get the other engine started, and then be able to go
21 back home without having any auxiliary equipment on not necessary on the field.
22 Anyway, General Westmoreland got out, and he walked over to the Marine
23 commander—mental block. I can't—it was like General Green, but that wasn't, it wasn't
24 General Green—and they walked over the corner of the air strip out in the middle of
25 nowhere, nobody in sight. One hundred yards or so from our airplane, and they huddled
26 there. They just talked for twenty or thirty minutes. Then General Westmoreland turned
27 around and walked back to the airplane and climbed up and into his seat and he said,
28 "Okay, I'm ready to go. Take me home." So, we took off, and this is, oh, about 350
29 miles, 400 miles as I remember. So we took him back, an hour flight back home and
30 before the day was out he was back in Saigon in his desk. He and General Walt—that
31 was the Marine general's name.

1 KC: Yeah, Lew Walt is what I was thinking.

2 KM: Right, and he and Walt had had a good long conference about something.
3 That was an untypical mission. Usually we would, when General Westmoreland would
4 go with us, for example, to see his wife Kitsy, who was in Manila. We'd take him over
5 every six weeks or month or something, and he'd get a weekend off. He could go and see
6 his wife in Manila. For the most part, our missions were daily. Three daily missions, and
7 then we'd have these on call support missions to go somewhere and pick somebody up. I
8 flew Ambassador Lodge's wife one time to, I think to Bangkok in Thailand. I never flew
9 him. I saw him a couple of times, but never flew him. The highest authority really was
10 Westmoreland. He flew with us frequently enough to call us by our first name.

11 KC: What was your opinion of General Westmoreland?

12 KM: Sir?

13 KC: What was your opinion of General Westmoreland?

14 KM: Personally, he was a very personable fellow, as you know. My opinion, and I
15 should emphasize that my opinion was based more on what I read than what I could
16 actually observe. He was over his head. He'd been a very successful, a striking figure of a
17 man, tall and good looking. He was first captain at West Point, and was featured on *Life*
18 magazine. I can remember when I was a kid reading about him. He had everything going
19 for him, but I think mentally he was over his head compared to General Abrams, who
20 came over as his deputy. General Abrams then relieved Westmoreland who came back. I
21 always suspected maybe this was based more on the things I read than anything I
22 observed, that the Army made Westmoreland Chief of Staff just to get him out of
23 Vietnam and put somebody with a little more imagination in there, which Abrams was a
24 better general, in my view, than Westmoreland was. Anyway, he was most personable.
25 He'd call me by my first name. I'd call him by his first name, General.

26 KC: (Laughs) Right.

27 KM: I even got to know his wife just a little bit, Kitsy, just to greet her when we
28 landed with him when we go back to Manila every six weeks or so to see his wife. I
29 didn't answer your question very well, except that that's about as good as I think anybody
30 who's just a pilot for somebody can and they never see him in action. They don't see
31 their major decisions. My readings and my observations of the entire Vietnam War were

1 that he was—he, Westmoreland—was not up to the task. Abrams was a much more,
2 much more competent general by, in so far as emphasizing the hearts and minds of the
3 people, et cetera, et cetera.

4 KC: Another one of the people that you knew in your time there in Saigon, and
5 this is what I've picked up from the questionnaire that you have filled out for us, is
6 Heinie Aderholt. Of course, a colonel at the time, but then General Aderholt was a very
7 influential figure there in the Air Force. Tell me about Heinie Aderholt.

8 KM: Heinie Aderholt was my roommate, well, we weren't roommates, but six of
9 us rented a hooch in Saigon, and Heinie Aderholt was one of them. He was an action kind
10 of a guy, and personally I considered him kind of an idiot. He was a bull in a china shop,
11 socially. His wife was—was she in, not Da Nang. Where was—anyway, his wife was in
12 the theatre, and there were six of us together so Heinie and I had a good many
13 discussions, and were kind of, I won't say buddies, but we were on a first-name basis, as
14 you had to be if six guys were just living together in a rental place. He was impulsive. He
15 was definitely aggressive. I'm trying to recall some good Heinie Aderholt stories. He was
16 a, his language was pretty spicy, but he was a very clever guy. If I wanted a companion to
17 go into combat, Heinie Aderholt would've been a guy, one of the top choices I think. I
18 didn't explain it very well, except he was, he was not a social person. He would cuss a
19 lot. He would make decisions based on a situation, then by god no matter who it affected,
20 whether it was you, or himself, or everybody he lived with, why, he'd charge ahead and
21 do it. I have to go back to some of the notes and letters that I'd written at the time about
22 Heinie because he's, he was a figure unlike any other. As you know, he made general. I
23 think he got one star. I don't think he ever got more than that, but he was the kind of guy
24 we needed over there and I have a great admiration for him.

25 KC: What was your impression of Vietnam, the country and the people? That's a
26 very, very broad question, but what can you tell me about just the physical presence of
27 Vietnam? What can you tell me about the people of Vietnam and the way they were
28 affected by the war?

29 KM: The people of Vietnam were plain farmers, many of them I think were,
30 couldn't even read and write. They were plain. They were whipsawed, and much of this
31 is, most of this is based upon my readings since I got back. The French had left kind of a

1 mess there when they pulled out. The Viet Cong, and the communists, and the communist
2 China, the influences there seemed to whipsaw the citizenry back and forth. It was my
3 impression, though, that the Vietnamese people were hardly involved in the war at all,
4 personally. They were subject to the damage, and the bombing, and the shooting, and so
5 on, but personally they were kind of apart from it. It was these two forces from outside
6 the country, the Americans and the North Vietnamese that were fighting a war on their
7 territory. I had a great sympathy for them. This is because of what they had to undergo. I
8 remember one time I got a ride from Tan Son Nhut. It was over to the coast. We were
9 up—it was with my West Point roommate, Al Fern, who was a colonel in the Army there
10 at that time. He said, “Ken, we are going over to Cam Ranh Bay, going over to the coast,
11 and then on up the coast to Cam Ranh Bay. Would you like to come along with us?” I
12 said, “Sure.” They were with, in an Army airplane, and we were flying along about five,
13 six thousand feet, which was much lower than I was used to. We’d go up 30,000 feet and
14 you couldn’t see anything from there, couldn’t see anything happening on the ground. I
15 looked down and I saw a whole bunch of cars or vehicles lined up along a road and I said,
16 “Al, what in the world is that down there, all those vehicles on the road?” “Oh,” he said,
17 “that’s a road block. They are taking their, they’ve stopped traffic on the road.” It was
18 between Saigon and the city over on the coast that I can’t remember momentarily,
19 anyway. I got a mental block. But it was the road from Saigon over to the coast. He said,
20 “There’s the VC, Viet Cong road block and they are extracting their taxes or whatever
21 from everybody in order to let them pass.” I said “So, why don’t we go down and do
22 something about it?” Well, we were in a lightly armed Army aircraft at about 20,000 feet.
23 He said, “No.” He said, “We’re not gonna try to do that.” We went over and landed on
24 the coast and then we went a little further up on the coast with this Army bird. Al took us
25 up there to, well, it might’ve been to Cam Ranh Bay. Anyway, then we were coming
26 back. I looked out and the sea was to the left and the land was to the right and we were
27 coming back south along the, southwest along the coast of Vietnam. Out to sea, I saw this
28 great big sudden bright flash, and I looked and there was a ship out there. It was a Navy
29 destroyer or something. It was shelling inland, firing inland at some target. It could’ve
30 been Marines there. I don’t think the Navy was fighting on the shore land. I said, “What
31 in the world is that?” He said, “Oh, those are five-inchers from a destroyer out there. He

1 is shelling the inland.” I said, “Well, we’ve gotta fly right through that, that line of fire
2 there if we are going to go further south along the coast here to get to Saigon.” He said,
3 “Oh, we’ll survive.” So, as we got into that line of fire then they put their nose down, and
4 full throttle on that helicopter, and we scurried right through that line of fire. We could
5 see the shells impacting in shore, on land, but we couldn’t see what the target was or
6 anything, but that was the way it was. The VC that had stopped the traffic in the middle
7 of Saigon, halfway up the coast from Saigon, the helicopter wasn’t going to challenge
8 that. We really had to let them do what they wanted on the ground pretty much.

9 KC: Sure. All right, what did you—before you come home, you leave Vietnam in
10 November of 1966, from what I see.

11 KM: That’s correct.

12 KC: How did the American presence in Vietnam change during the year you were
13 there? You were based out of Saigon, which is the busiest place in Vietnam, in South
14 Vietnam at the time. How did the American presence change during the year that you
15 were there?

16 KM: That’s a good question. I’m sure that there are many sociological kinds of
17 questions that, sociological kind of perspectives that other people could pick up on that I
18 wouldn’t. Basically, the presence—we were newcomers in Thanksgiving time of 1965.
19 By the same time, ’66 when I left, they were getting kind of tired of us. You know, the
20 Americans had moved out of the hotel. They were in a hotel when I first got there. We
21 just stayed in that hotel downtown. What was the name of it where all the Americans
22 stayed? So for a couple of weeks, several weeks I stayed in a hotel before I moved out to
23 the hooch that we’d found, and we were, then we didn’t go downtown very often because
24 we had no need to. Our job was at the base, and our home was halfway there. The town
25 itself, even the place where we lived was affected by the war. It was a classic French
26 colonial, Southeast Asia kind of a town, earlier with all the French influence and—beauty
27 is too strong a word, but it was a pretty town. It was a refined town. By the time I left, it
28 was just another wartime town. It was kind of like Seoul in, or Suwon in Korea, during
29 the Korean War. The biggest danger—of course, there was a curfew, I think I was at
30 eleven o’clock or twelve o’clock, and when you’d drive out on a motor scooter, when
31 you drive out to the base, which was three or four miles from the hooch that we had.

1 We'd go out there for the flight line. There was nobody on the street except dogs. You hit
2 a dog, it would give you quite a spill, so that was the biggest hazard we had there, was
3 what was out looking for food in the evening. Let me take a break here for just a moment.
4 Let's press on. My wife's leaving the apartment here, another occasion. Back to the
5 subject at hand. I've given you much more information than I think would be of interest
6 to anybody, but I'm more than pleased to address any, anything else that you might have
7 special interest in, or have we pretty well covered the waterfront?

8 KC: Well, I don't think that you have provided information that we don't need. I
9 think it has been a really interesting, fascinating, amount of information, and your
10 perspective is truly a unique one. Let's work on bringing you back home from Vietnam.
11 You leave Vietnam in November if 1966. When you get back to the United States, what
12 kind of reception did you receive? Did you notice any perceptible changes in the country,
13 in the year that you were gone '65-'66, and how were you received when you came
14 home?

15 KM: That's a good question, and I have thought about that quite a bit. I actually, I
16 received—well, I got back—in summary, hardly anybody knew I was gone, or cared that
17 I was gone. I got more interest and certainly more opposition before I went over than I
18 did after I came back. They reaction of the public was ho-hum. They didn't care that I
19 was a professional officer, and that's the kind of thing professional officers get paid to
20 do, so quit your bitchin' and proceed on with what you're supposed to do. I was assigned
21 to a very interesting position in the Pentagon in advanced plans. General Les Bray, who
22 was a two-star at concepts and doctrine division in the air staff. So, it was a most
23 interesting assignment, but from the standpoint of the home life, the wife and kids were
24 still in the home, and I'd just moved back in. I was assigned, as I say, back to the
25 Pentagon, then a research associate for a year at Johns Hopkins, and I never got out of
26 Washington. Maybe that's my problem. The reception I got home, the World War II type,
27 home are the heroes that won the war, and all that. That was not the case at all. We didn't
28 get any of that, that you were just a professional officer. That's what you're getting paid
29 to do, so no complaints.

1 KC: Right. Okay, now, as the years went by, following your experience in
2 Vietnam, did you pay much attention to what was going on over there? Did you keep up
3 with the war?

4 KM: Oh, yes, yes. I did to the extent of my reading of the American press. Now, I
5 didn't communicate with anybody still over there. I didn't really know anybody still
6 there, except for the lady that used to keep our house. What was her name? There were
7 six of us, including Heinie Aderholt. We wondered sometimes, and Heinie and I talked
8 about it for a couple, a few times, because he and I were roommates for awhile. Later on
9 we both got our own separate bedrooms, but we were, shared the same room for awhile.
10 We used to wonder if she was a VC spy or not, but she took care of all six of us, would
11 prepare dinner, and kept the house clean. Her family, where they were, her children, and
12 her husband, we never got any information. It used to worry me a little bit. I'd talk to
13 Heinie about it and he never, he didn't seem to be very worried, so I decided I wasn't
14 going to worry about it, either. When we got back home it was, life is the same, and if I
15 was looking for a hero's welcome, then I was bound to be disappointed. So, I was struck
16 really by the, by the difference, the distance between what Americans' daily life, and
17 daily concerns were compared to what ours had been for that year in Vietnam. I'm not
18 saying that very clearly, but it, the World War II situation was different. I was in World
19 War II at the end, but never went overseas, and was in for a year. At the end of World
20 War II, particularly V-J Day, you were heroes if you wore a uniform. There was none of
21 that having to do with Vietnam, and a lot of people, well, you didn't know. When you
22 talked to somebody you didn't know whether they sympathized, were with, supported the
23 Americans who went over there, or didn't. I had, I think I had mentioned before, I had
24 one or two occasions where I almost got in a fistfight with people who objected to our
25 messing around in Southeast Asia.

26 KC: Tell me about that.

27 KM: Well, on one occasion, this is before I ever went over there. I went out to
28 California to get a ride from Camp Stoneman to, oh, Air Force base—mental block, there
29 north of San Francisco, where the flights over to Southeast Asia would originate.

30 KC: Travis, probably?

1 KM: Travis, yeah, of course, Travis Air Force Base. I went into town. I had gone
2 out to get a flight, but they didn't have a flight. I was on the list of people to go along
3 with 60 or 80 or 180 other people who were going, so they would take us according to
4 priority of when we checked in. So, I went into town one time to a bar to have a drink or
5 two. Not to get drunk but just to get off base. I got to talking to the bartender and told him
6 I was on my way to Southeast Asia. Then he let me have it. He said he thought that the
7 Americans had no business over there and he didn't think anything favorable about my
8 contribution, or didn't pat me on the head, or goodbye American hero, World War II style
9 departure. It was not. I encountered that then, and when I came back I remember one time
10 I had been gone for a year, and that's what I knew. I was just getting started on a whole
11 new assignment in the Pentagon—people we knew, in the place where we rented, which
12 we later moved out of that atmosphere. But I remember a party one night, and a fellow
13 told me what he thought of Vietnam baby killers and so on, and he really was insulting.
14 We almost got into a fistfight and I walked out. This was after I had returned from a year
15 of service over there. So, for a great portion of the people, at least in Washington, D.C.,
16 which maybe not the heart of America, but at least in Washington, I didn't get any
17 sympathy, but sometimes cursing from anybody except fellow soldiers.

18 KC: Now, when you came back from Vietnam, you spent some time with the
19 Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well. Is that correct?

20 KM: Yes, yes. I had a full tour with the Joint Chiefs, and prior to that time I had
21 been a research associate at Johns Hopkins under a two-star, Major General Les Bray,
22 was the head of concepts and doctrine, and he sent me over to the School of Advanced
23 International Study on studies on, not K Street, but downtown D.C. The head of that
24 school, oh, I can't remember. I got a mental block. He died two or three years later. I was
25 just there at the School of Advanced International Studies, not on K Street, but near there,
26 it was Johns Hopkins. It was a Johns Hopkins graduate school. I stayed on the floor, on
27 the sixth floor with the research associates. There was a woman across the hall who had a
28 Mao poster on her wall, and she was studying international relations, but she clearly had
29 a different perspective than I did, and others there. We would get together once a week,
30 and have sessions, discussion sessions, academic environment, graduate school
31 discussions and so on that are beloved of the schools. So, I was able to dip my toe in that

1 water for about a year before then I got my assignment to the Pentagon. I didn't answer
2 that very well, I don't think, except that on one or two occasions I did encounter people
3 that were actively and vocally hostile to the whole idea of anybody going over to fight in
4 Southeast Asia.

5 KC: Okay. What did you think about the ending of the Vietnam War? What was
6 your opinion of the way it came down?

7 KM: Well, I thought about that a great deal and, of course, the Vietnamese won.
8 We don't like to talk about that. It's a very unpopular thing to say. Certainly, you can't
9 write it, but we are the ones that left, and they stayed. So, I was disappointed in America,
10 in my fellow citizens for giving up, making it so politically impossible for LBJ to do
11 anything other than assent to our withdrawal from Southeast Asia, and turn the whole
12 country over to the North Vietnamese, which is what has happened.

13 KC: As you look back on it, Colonel, how do you think the Vietnamese War, your
14 participation in the war in Vietnam, most affected your life?

15 KM: How did it affect my life?

16 KC: Yes.

17 KM: Well, that's a good question, and I have to confess kind of, maybe a little bit
18 of shame that I hadn't really thought about it in those terms. It was, to me it was another
19 assignment, like my assignment to England had been, except in England I had my family
20 with me, and in Vietnam I didn't. I think, in retrospect, I have deliberated on this a little
21 bit, I'm sort of disappointed that it didn't have any effect at all. Of course, no doubt it did,
22 but other than the absence from my family, other than our personal inner family
23 commitment there for a year to Vietnam, nobody else much cared. So, unlike World War
24 II where the greatest generation can celebrate as long as any are left, that Vietnam was
25 just kind of, you're a professional officer, that's the kind of things professional officers
26 do. Some people go to War College and other people go to Vietnam, and that's exactly
27 what my situation was. Some of my friends went to War College and made general, and
28 some of us went to Vietnam, and didn't make general. So, that's not really a very good
29 answer, except to say that it didn't have in any way the save the world context of World
30 War II. You got back and nobody seemed to care that you had spent, devoted a year of
31 your life over there in Vietnam. That's about as much as I can say, I guess, on that topic.

1 KC: Okay. Well, I have just one last question for you. As a historian, as you look
2 back on America's experience in that war in Vietnam, what do you think the legacy of
3 the Vietnam War is for the United States?

4 KM: Well, that's a very good question. I have given a lot of thought to it. I'm
5 continuing, or hope to continue further research, further development of my ideas on that
6 legacy. Where things stand now is that I don't think our legacy is, that there is any
7 legacy, or positive legacy anyway, of the U.S. influence in Vietnam. I think that the fact
8 that the communists, the North Vietnamese have taken over the whole country, speaks for
9 itself. So, the legacy of American efforts there is non-existent, or at least I can't see it.
10 But the direction of the country, the focus once LBJ left office and we got on the current
11 course, Southeast Asia just disappeared off the radar scope of the U.S., as far as I'm
12 concerned. It's focused now on that whole area where I never have been. That is between
13 Athens on the left side, and Bangkok on the right, and that whole distance where all of
14 the action is now has risen. As far as Southeast Asia is concerned, it's just been erased
15 from the map. I think the legacy, I think the strongest legacy is a deterrent to America
16 getting too deeply involved, or very deeply involved in any other, any other region of the
17 world. We struggled with communism until they finally self-detonated in the late '80s,
18 but the whole Vietnam chapter seems almost invisible now. Whether it had happened or
19 not, the world isn't that much different. I'm not answering that in any great, brilliant
20 depth, but the legacy of Vietnam is hard to define. Is there one? Maybe that's the most
21 important question.

22 KC: Well, all right, Colonel. Is there anything else you would like to add to this
23 interview before we put a close to it?

24 KM: Nope. I think, certainly I've talked enough, and I appreciate your patience
25 and your interest, and your very perceptive questions. You could tell from my answers,
26 were sometimes difficult because I haven't contemplated them as much as I should, or I
27 wasn't that ready to contemplate them. Anyway, if I can help further give me a call,
28 otherwise, thank you for your courtesies.

29 KC: I really appreciate it, Colonel. Thank you very much.